

Claim of Reuben H. J. Garland

Reuben H. J. Garland, a farmer and “railroader” in Georgia submitted a petition to the commissioners of the Southern Claims Commission (1871-1880), which awarded monetary compensation to southerners who could prove that they had been loyal citizens of the United States and that the Union army had appropriated property from them during the Civil War. Local agents of the commission, called “special commissioners,” recorded witnesses’ answers to a series of “interrogatories” devised by their superiors in Washington, DC.

Testimony of Reuben H. J. Garland (1871)

Reuben H. J. Garland, claimant, being duly sworn deposes & says...

11. Did you ever furnish any aid, or any supplies or stores, or property of any kind, to or for the so-called Confederate States, or any State in rebellion, or to the army, navy, militia, home-guards, armed forces, or military organizations thereof, or for any officer, soldier, or sailor thereof? If so, state fully in regard to the same....

Contributed some money & aid in providing clothing &c for company of rebel soldiers ... raised in Upson County Ga, may have sent provisions &c to friends in this company....

19. Were you ever threatened with damage or injury to person, family, or property on account of your Union sentiments? If so, state when, by whom, and what the threats were.

Was never threatened with damage or injury on account of his union sentiments....

22. Did you ever do anything for the United States Government or its Army, or for the Union cause during the war? If so, state fully what you did.

Never did anything for the United States or the Union army or cause during the war.

23. Had you any near relatives in either the Union or confederate armies? If so, state who and how related to you. Did you contribute anything to supply them with military equipments or with money? State fully as to the same.

Had no near relatives in the Union Army. Had an uncle ... in the Confederate Army. Contributed some money to supply this uncle’s company with military equipment & sent his uncle such things as he needed during the war.

24. Have you owned any confederate bonds, or any interest or share therein, or had any share or interest in any loans to the confederate government; or did you in any way contribute to support the credit of the so-called Confederate States during the late rebellion?

Held some Confederate bonds which he received in trade. Was interested in no other rebel loan & did nothing further to support the credit of the Confederacy during the war....

31. Did you ever receive any pass from any officer of the confederate government, or from any person having or assuming to have authority to issue the same. If so, who gave you the pass; for what purpose; for what period of time; did you sign or swear to any promise or obligation in order to get it, or swear or promise to "bear true faith and yield obedience to the Confederate States;" did you use the pass, and for what purpose?

Received some passes from Confederate provost marshals to pass to & from ... during the war; took no oath & signed no obligation to obtain said passes.

33. At the beginning of the rebellion did you sympathize with the Union cause, or with the rebellion? What were your feelings and what your language on the subject? On which side did you exert your influence and cast your vote? What did you do, and how did you vote? How did you vote on ratifying the ordinance of secession? After the ordinance of secession was adopted in your State, did you adhere to the Union cause, or did you "go with the State?"

Sympathized with the union cause at the beginning of the rebellion, felt & talked in opposition to secession, exerted his influence privately and voted against secession.... After the beginning of hostilities against the United States Deponents sympathies were with the State & its cause and he did not want to see his state overthrown....

Summary Report (1871)

Reuben H. J. Garland, of Upson County, in the State of Georgia

Claimant contributed to raise a confederate company for service during the war, and may have sent some of the company, certainly did send some to his uncle in the service. Collected and received confederate war taxes and held rebel bonds. Received passes from rebel provost-marshal. Was opposed to secession, but after secession went with his State, and his sympathies were with his State and its cause; and after swearing to all this, the independent rebel and traitor has the "cheek" to ask the Government of the United States to treat him as a loyal adherent to the Union and the Government during the war. We reject the claim.

A. O. Aldis
J. B. Howell

Commissioners of Claims

Source

Claim Reuben H. J. Garland, Upson County, Georgia, Southern Claims Commission, Barred and Disallowed Claims, 1871–1880, Records of the United States House of Representatives, Microfiche Publication M1407, Record Group 233, National Archives, Washington, DC.

Claim of John Hawk

John Hawk submitted a petition to the commissioners of the Southern Claims Commission (1871-1880), which awarded monetary compensation to southerners who could prove that they had been loyal citizens of the United States and that the Union army had appropriated property from them during the Civil War. Local agents of the commission, called “special commissioners,” recorded witnesses’ answers to a series of “interrogatories” devised by their superiors in Washington, DC. Hawk presented his pardon granted by President Andrew Johnson as evidence of his loyalty. The commissioners generally considered pardons as evidence of disloyalty to the Union. As they noted, “pardons were granted ... to persons who had given aid and comfort to the rebellion.” As such, they asserted, “Union men had no occasion to ask for pardon.”¹

Testimony of John Hawk (1872)

5. Have you ever taken any amnesty oath? If so, when, where, and under what condition? Have you been pardoned by the President? If so, when and where, and upon what conditions?

I took the amnesty oath to the Federal Government in the year 1865 and claim that I am entitled to and received full pardon and amnesty for anything I might have done during the war.... I claim that I am a loyal citizen of the United States.

Summary Report (1873)

Unfortunately there is still a large class of citizens who cast their fortunes with the confederacy and who are in sympathy with Mr. Hawk; some of these, in conversation with the commissioners, speak imperiously and contemptuously of “your Government,” like one owing allegiance to some other sovereignty of power. We trust and believe that the bitter sectional feelings engendered by the war and the causes which produced it will pass away with the present generation, and in due time, though it cannot be in one day, the citizens of the United states will become a homogeneous people, united in their support of the General Government and devotedly attached to all its free institutions.

¹ Summary Report, 1873, Henry Ormsby Disallowed Claim, Marshall County, Mississippi, Summary Reports of the Commissioners of Claims in All Cases Reported to Congress as Disallowed Under the Act of March 3, 1871, Southern Claims Commission, 1871-1880, Records of the United States House of Representatives, 1789-1990, Microfilm Publication P2257, Record Group 233, National Archives, Washington, DC; Summary Report, 1878, John H. Gibbons Disallowed Claim, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, *ibid.*

A. O. Aldis
O. Ferris
J. B. Howell

Commissioners of Claims

Source

Claim of John Hawk, Marshall County, Mississippi, Records of the United States Court of Claims, 1835-1966, Case Files for General Jurisdiction Cases, 1855-1966, Record Group 123, National Archives, Washington, DC, Docket No. 3,719.

Claim of Nancy Hancock

Nancy Hancock, a widow in Tennessee during the war, identified herself as a loyal citizen of the Union. After the war, Hancock submitted a petition to the commissioners of the Southern Claims Commission (1871-1880), which awarded monetary compensation to southerners who could prove that they had been loyal citizens of the United States and that the Union army had appropriated property from them during the Civil War. Local agents of the commission, called "special commissioners," recorded witnesses' answers to a series of "interrogatories" devised by their superiors in Washington, DC. The commissioners in DC required claimants to prove the loyalty of the property owner at the time of its appropriation. By law, a woman's property as well as her labor and future earnings became her husband's on marriage. Hancock's property, however, had been appropriated after her husband's death and therefore after she had inherited it and after she had become the rightful owner. As a result, she only had to prove her own loyalty and not her husband's loyalty. This source presents an excerpt from Hancock's testimony, in which she explained her loyal citizenship and property ownership, and the commissioners' "Summary Report," in which they explained their decision.

Testimony of Nancy Hancock (1874)

Deposition of Mrs. Nancy Hancock who deposes and says

my name is Nancy Hancock, age fifty one years Residence Bradley Co, Tenn. am am a farming. I am the claimant and interested in the claim....

5. On which side were your sympathies during the war, and were they on the same side from beginning to end?
6. Did you ever do anything or say anything against the Union cause; and if so, what did you do and say, and why?
7. Were you at all times during the war willing and ready to do whatever you could in aid of the Union cause?

My sympathies and those of my deceased husband was for the union cause from the beginning to the end and was ready to do anything in our power to aid the union cause. We were recognized as union men and union men coming from neighborhoods further South and East who were seeking to find a way to get through the mountains to the Federal lines and we repeatedly hid protected and fed them till they could go on to the union lines.

8. Did you ever do anything for the Union cause or its advocates or defenders? If so, state what you did, giving times, places, names of persons aided, and particulars. Were the persons aided your relations?

9. Had you any near relatives in the Union Army or Navy; if so, in what company and regiment, or on what vessel, when and where did each one enter service, and when and how did he leave service? If he was a son, produce his discharge-paper, in order that its contents may be noted in this deposition, or state why it cannot be produced....

I aided my deceased husband and my eldest son James who just eighteen and becoming to conscription to go through to the Federal lines. My husband was prevented joining the union army by bad health – came back when the union army took this part of the country and soon afterwards died. My son James joined the federal army but was not mustered in on account of ill health.

11. Did you ever voluntarily contribute money, property, or services to the Union cause; and if so, when, where, to whom, and what did you contribute?

12. Which side did you take while the insurgent States were seceding from the Union in 1860 and 1861, and what did you do to show on which side you stood?

13. Did you adhere to the Union cause after the States had passed into rebellion, or did you go with your State?

14. What were your feelings concerning the battle of Bull Run or Manassas, the capture of New Orleans, the fall of Vicksburgh, and the final surrender of the confederate forces?

My husband and son took off what money they could get when they went to the union lines. We took the side of the union in 1860 and 1861 and talked for it and my husband had some difficulties with extreme secessionists on account of his union views and sentiments. We remained for the union for the last and our feelings and views were not changed by confederate victories or defeats and whatever my husband did that seemed to favor the rebels was done through compulsion and coercion but being a woman they could not make or persuade me to do anything against the union cause. After the state was declared separated we both adhered to the union cause....

18. Were you ever threatened with damage or injury to your person, family, or property on account of your Union sentiments, or were you actually molested or injured on account of your Union sentiments? If so, when, where, by whom, and in what particular way were you injured or threatened with injury?

I do not now recollect any particular threats or who made them though I know some threats were made by the rebels and and after

my husband and son went to the union army I was considerably molested and took a cow and some hogs and sheep from me and about twenty acres of corn. I never got any pay for any of this property.

19. Were you ever arrested by any confederate officer, soldier, sailor, or other person professing to act for the confederate government, or for any State in rebellion? If so, when, where, by whom, for what cause; how long were you kept under arrest; how did you obtain your release; did you take any oath or give any bond to effect your release; and if so, what was the nature of the oath or bond?

20. Was any of your property taken by confederate officers or soldiers, or any rebel authority? If so, what property, when, where, by whom; were you ever paid therefor, and did you ever present an account therefor to the confederate government, or any rebel officer?

I was never arrested – nor I don't think my husband was so coerced that for a short time he joined or was connected with a Regiment in Bradley County known as the Squirrel Regiment made up of union men but with a secret understanding that they were going to the federal army. The union men went into this because they could elect their officers and thus avoid being forced to join other Regiments. In a short time they all or nearly all found means to get away from this county from the Regiment and go to the union army that was then in Kentucky....

21. Was any of your property ever confiscated by rebel authority, on the ground that you were an enemy to the rebel cause? If so, give all the particulars, and state if the property was subsequently released or compensation made therefor.

22. Did you ever do anything for the confederate cause, or render any aid or comfort to the rebellion? If so, give the times, places, persons, and other particulars connected with each transaction.

None of our property was confiscated though it was talked about or threatened. I never did anything for the rebel cause. Nor did my husband except dissembling awhile. He belonged to the Squirrel Regiment [a]while. Was aiding union men to get through the mountains to the federal armies. But I have gone in the night repeatedly and carried provisions to union men who were lying out to avoid arrest and waiting [to] get a guide to pilot them through the mountains....

25. Were you in the civil, military, or naval service of the confederacy, or any rebel State, in any capacity whatsoever? If so, state fully in respect to each occasion and service.

No....

The following questions will be put to female claimants: 69. Are you married or single?... Was your husband loyal to the cause and Government of the United States throughout the war? Where does he now reside, and why is he not joined with you in the petition? How many children have you?... Were any of them in the confederate service during the war? If you claim that the property named in your petition is your sole and separate property, state how you came to own it separately from your husband; how your title was derived; when your ownership of it began.... If a widow, when did your husband die? Was he in the confederate army? Was he in the civil service of the confederacy? Was he loyal to the United States Government throughout the war?... Did you ever belong to any sewing-society organized to make clothing for confederate soldiers or their families, or did you assist in making any such clothing, or making flags or other military equipments, or preparing or furnishing delicacies or supplies for confederate hospitals or soldiers?

I am a widow. I married William H. Hancock about thirty years ago. He was loyal to the cause of the United States throughout the war. He died the 23rd of March 1864. We had six children.... I suppose all these children are interested in this claim.... I could not be influenced or persuaded to do anything for the confederate cause or for anything in any way connected with it or with its hospitals.

Summary Report (1879)

Nancy Hancock, of Bradley County, in the State of Tennessee

The claimant, Mrs. Nancy Hancock, is the widow of William H. Hancock who died March 23, 1864, leaving six children, all of whom, except John the oldest were under 16 years of age at the close of the war.¹ The property was taken, chiefly after his death, so that the question of his loyalty is not of much importance. It appears, however, from the testimony of Mrs. Hancock & from other witnesses, that her husband was unquestionably a loyal man. He voted "no convention" & "no separation." He aided union men & refugees to escape to the union lines. His house was a well-known stopping place for men trying to escape over the mountains to Kentucky & union men were always sent to him for aid & he assisted them in reaching the federal lines. In the latter part of '62 or fore part of '63 the violence & coercion of the rebels was very strong in his part of Tennessee. A large body of union men trying to reach Kentucky were arrested & sent to Southern prisons. At this time to escape from these persecutions the union men organized a regiment ostensibly on the confederate side, but with a secret understanding that they should desert or go to the federal lines. The claimant enlisted & had a company made up entirely of union men. Within six months nearly all the men had deserted & gone to the federal lines. The regiment was disbanded & Hancock & his oldest son James went through to the federal

¹ The commissioners required beneficiaries over the age of sixteen at the close of the war to prove their loyalty to the Union.

lines in Kentucky, where they remained until Eastern Tenn. was occupied permanently by the union forces, and he could come home safely. He came home & soon died. His son James offered to enlist in the union army in Kentucky, but was not mustered in. During his absence a party of rebels came to her house, called her husband a Lincolnite & said her her husband had run away to the Yankees & they took a horse, steer, sheep, & hogs, corn & fodder. The loyalty of the deceased William H. Hancock, his widow, and his oldest son James, fully proved. The other children were minors....

Source

Claim of Nancy Hancock, Bradley County, Tennessee, Southern Claims Commission, Allowed Claims, 1871–1880, Records of the Land, Files, and Miscellaneous Division, Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, 1775-1927, Record Group 217, National Archives, Washington, DC.

Claim of Joseph Bacon

Joseph Bacon had been born a slave in Georgia. He submitted a petition to the commissioners of the Southern Claims Commission (1871-1880), which awarded monetary compensation to southerners who could prove that they had been loyal citizens of the United States and that the Union army had appropriated property from them during the Civil War. Local agents of the commission, called “special commissioners,” recorded witnesses’ answers to a series of “interrogatories” devised by their superiors in Washington, DC. Some formerly enslaved men before the commission presented their services to the Union army, especially as soldiers and laborers, as evidence of their loyal citizenship. Other former slaves before the commission, like Bacon, offered contributions to the Union cause that emerged from the enslaved experience, such as escape, disobedience, sabotage, dissembling, and spreading rumors. This source presents an excerpt from Bacon’s testimony, in which he explained his loyal citizenship and property ownership, and the commissioners’ “Summary Report,” in which they explained their decision. The commissioners generally devoted less attention to the loyalty question in black claims than in white claims, usually assuming that former slaves had automatically sympathized with the Union. They were much more skeptical, in contrast, that former slaves had owned any property. They believed that former slaves often claimed property owned by their former masters and mistresses, and moreover they assumed that black people were naturally indolent.

Testimony of Joseph Bacon (1873)

1. What is your name, age, residence, and occupation?

My name is Joseph Bacon Sr. I was born in Liberty County a slave and made free when the Union Army came into the County. I am about 74 years of age. My occupation a farmer and the claimant in this case....

6. Were you ever, directly or indirectly, or in any manner, connected with the civil service of the so-called Confederate States; if so, how, when, and where, and upon what conditions?

No.

7. Did you ever hold any office or place of trust, honor, or profit under the confederate government, or under any of the States or Territories subordinate thereto; if so, state the nature and character of the office, the place at which, and the period for which you held it?

No....

10. Were you ever an officer or soldier in the confederate army; if yea, when, where, how long, and when did you leave such service?...

No....

15. Were you directly or indirectly, or in any way, connected with or employed in the quartermaster's department of the confederate service, or the commissary's department, or the medical department, the engineers' department, the ordnance department, the impressment service, the provost-marshal's department, or any other branch of the confederate service?

No....

18. Were you ever in any service, employment, or business of any kind whatsoever for the confederate government, or its army or navy? Did you ever furnish any aid, or any supplies or stores, or property of any kind, to or for the so-called Confederate States, or any State in rebellion, or to the army, navy, militia, home guards, armed forces, or military organizations thereof, or for any officer, soldier, or sailor thereof? If so, state fully in regard to the same. Did you ever give any information to any officer, soldier, or sailor of the confederate army or navy, or to any person employed by or for the so-called Confederate States, or acting on their behalf, or for their benefit, which might aid in any way any military or naval operations carried on against the United States? State fully in regard to the same.

No....

26. Were you ever threatened with damage or injury to your person, family, or property on account of your Union sentiments? If so, state when, by whom, and what the threats were.

We were not allowed to open our mouths on the Yankee side during the war. If we did some punishment was the penalty.

27. Were you ever molested or in any way injured on account of your Union sentiments? If so, state fully all the particulars.

I was not molested but many a poor slave was punished so they died. I was old enough to know when it would do to talk and so escaped. I had no opportunity to contribute anything. After the army came into the county I worked for them night and day ... grinding corn. Worked for them 4 or 5 weeks.... I was glad to do for them. Some of them made me present to pay me. Some did not. I made no charge....

40. At the beginning of the rebellion did you sympathize with the Union cause, or with the rebellion? What were your feelings and what your language on the subject? On which side did you exert your influence and cast your vote? What did you do, and how did you vote? How did you vote on ratifying the ordinance of secession? After the

ordinance of secession was adopted in your State did you adhere to the Union cause, or did you “go with the State?”

At the beginning of the rebellion I sympathized with the Union Cause. When I first heard of the war I felt very glad and I said to my colored friends there was a hard time coming but it would all end for our good. I gave all the influence I had on the Union side. The cords were drawn pretty tight on the slaves. We had to walk straight & do all our work by thinking and that was the way I acted and done till the Yankees came. We all rejoiced and felt happy then....

43. If the claimant be a colored person, ask the following questions: Were you a slave or free at the beginning of the war?... How and when did you come to own the property named in your petition? How did you get the means to pay for it?...

At the beginning of the War I was a slave and became free when the Union army came into the county.... I was a driver¹ for some years before the army came in.... First off I got a mare from my Father who died.... I rang the bell on Midway Church & they gave me ten dollars cash and I took that and bought my first cow. I was a cooper and gave some of my work for a sow pig and from [my] horse, cow, and sow I raised stock for 20 or so years before freedom. I had plenty of stock all the time to sell and to supply myself with pocket money and with such things as our master would not give us.... My master never interfered with me and my property at all. I know legally the property was his but a master who would take property from his slaves would have a hard time.... I have heard of masters taking corn & horses from their slaves. I don't know how often. Any master could do it if he had a mind to. Such a master would not get much out of his slave unless he whipped it out of them and when they had to do that it was poor work....

Summary Report (1876)

Joseph Bacon (col.^d) of Liberty Co., in the State of Georgia

The clmt. was a slave of Thos. Mallard. He was a driver—had a gang of 46 slaves under him. He was allowed to own property. Rang the bell in Midway Church for which he got \$10. He seems to have been the leading negro on the plantation & claims much more property than any of the others. There is no doubt of his loyalty, & that our soldiers took what he had.... His ownership of the horse is fairly proven. He bought it of Simon Cassell.... Cassell says he [Bacon] had 2 cows & 1 steer. Quarterman says two were half grown. But as these animals were on his master's plantation & were driven off with his master's cattle, & no proof by any white witness that he owned the number ..., we allow only for 3 animals. The witness Quarterman says Mallard [Bacon's former owner] allowed his slaves to cultivate an acre of corn & an acre of rice. The clmt claims much more, but we allow what we think he really had.

¹ Drivers oversaw the work of other slaves.

A. O. Aldis
O. Ferris
J. B. Howell

Commissioners of Claims

Source

Claim of Joseph Bacon, Liberty County, Georgia, Southern Claims Commission, Allowed Claims, 1871–1880, Records of the Land, Files, and Miscellaneous Division, Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, 1775-1927, Record Group 217, National Archives, Washington, DC.