

War of The Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies

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On November 8, 1861, Pro-union civilians in East carried out coordinated guerilla attacks against nine railroad bridges in anticipation of a Union army attack that never came. Five bridges were damaged, and quickly repaired. Thus, the attacks had no practical military impact, but they did cause the Confederate government to declare martial law and to arrest dozens of conspirators and numerous prominent known Union sympathizers who were either suspected of being involved or just grabbed for convenience.

One very prominent and outspoken captive, William "Parson" Brownlow, editor of the pro-Union Nashville Whig, wrote the following:

"..upon the 6th day of December, they marched me off to jail - a miserable, uncomfortable, damp, and deperate jail - where I found, when I was ushered into it, some one hundred and fifty Union men; and, as God is my Judge, there was not in the whole jail any piece of furniture, except a dirty old wooden bucket and a pair of tin dippers to drink with."

Judge Levi Trehwitt, of Cleveland (my great, great, great grandfather) had been arrested on November 19 and, with several prisoners, was transferred on December 9 to a Confederate prison in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. There was no question that Judge Trehwitt was sympathetic to the Union cause, but no credible evidence that he was connected with the Union army nor that he had anything at all to do with the attacks.

The appeals documented in these Confederate records declared that he was innocent of any wrongdoing. Beyond that, most of the appeals declared that, rather than participate in an uprising, on the eve of the attacks he calmed a mob in Cleveland, encouraging the participants to publicly in opposition to the brewing uprising, and been effective in calming demonstrators by encouraging them to go about their daily business in peace and leave fighting to the armies.

This excerpt consists of letters sent to the Confederate court in mid-December asking for the release of Judge Trehwitt. The first of these appeals was from Col James W Gillespie, who had arrested him. Another was signed by 34 residents of Bradley County and endorsed by Col Gillespie and Lt. Colonel D.M. Key, and 16 other members of the Confederate army.

Judge Trehwitt died in prison in Tuscaloosa at age 64 on Jan 31, 1862.

KNOXVILLE, TENN., January 20, 1862.

On the 19th day of November last I arrested and brought to this place Levi Trehwitt, esq., of Cleveland, Tenn. This arrest was made under an order from Col. W. B. Wood, commanding the Sixteenth Alabama Regiment, who at that time was the commander of this post. The arrest was ordered because Mr. Trehwitt was suspected of a knowledge of the burning of the railroad bridges and the plans by which it was done. He was retained here for some weeks and then sent to Tuscaloosa by order of General W. H. Carroll, who succeeded Colonel Wood in command. There was no trial or investigation of the charges so far as I know or have understood.

JAS. W. GILLESPIE,
Colonel Forty-third Regiment Tennessee Volunteers.

His Excellency JEFFERSON DAVIS,
President of the Confederate States of America:

Your petitioners, the undersigned citizens of Bradley County, Tenn., humbly represent and show unto your excellency that Levi Trehwitt, who is now as they understand confined in Mobile as a prisoner of war, is one of the old, influential citizens of Bradley County, Tenn.; that he is about sixty-five years of age and has been for the past few years afflicted with paralysis and as they now understand is sick and in the hospital at Mobile. They further state that said Trehwitt was a very useful man at home. We therefore pray that said Levi Trehwitt be released from said confinement upon his becoming a loyal citizen and taking an oath to support the constitution of the Confederate States of America; and as in duty bound will ever pray, &c.

WILLIAM GRANT.
T. L. HOYL.
JNO. B. HOYL.
[And 31 others.]

We, the undersigned officers in the Confederate service, fully concur with the above petitioners.

D. M. KEY,
Lieutenant-Colonel.
[JAMES W.] GILLESPIE,
Colonel Regiment Tennessee Volunteers.
[And 16 others.]

STATE OF TENNESSEE,
Bradley County:

Personally appeared before me, the undersigned, an acting justice of the peace and duly authorized to administer oaths within and for the county and State aforesaid, John Blackburn, a man of undoubted truth and veracity and entitled to credit when on oath, and made oath in due form of law that at and about the time the rebellion in East Tennessee took place and about the time that it was understood that Clift was encamped with a regiment of men for the purpose of going to the State of Kentucky there was some disquietude in the settlement in which he resided, and in consequence thereof a meeting of divers of the citizens was held for the purpose of taking steps in relation to the condition of the country,

some talking of going and joining Clift in his rebellion, and at said meeting Levi Trewhitt, who as he now understands is confined at Tuscaloosa or Mobile as a prisoner of war, was present and opposed all and everything that had any tendency toward rebellion and advised them to go on with their ordinary business and keep out of all rebellion and to keep away from Clift, and by the exertion and influence of said Trewhitt said settlement became quieted down and the citizens went on with their ordinary business he all the time opposing any rebellion whatever, and none of said neighbors and citizens went to Clift or into the rebellion to the knowledge of affiant.

JOHN BLACKBURN.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 16th day of January, 1862, and I certify that the said John Blackburn is a man of undoubted truth and veracity.

J. B. HUMPHREYS,

Justice of the Peace for Bradley County, Tenn.

STATE OF TENNESSEE,
Bradley County:

Personally appeared before me, the undersigned, an acting justice of the peace and duly authorized to administer oaths within and for the said county of Bradley and State of Tennessee, Edmund Ramsey, a man of undoubted truth and veracity and entitled to credit when on oath, and made oath in due form of law that, in the summer of 1861, there was a company of men organized in the settlement where he resided who called themselves as home guards, furnishing their own arms, &c., and after General Zollicoffer issued a proclamation requesting said companies to stop drilling, Levi Trewhitt, whom he now understands to be confined in Tuscaloosa or Mobile as a prisoner of war, used his exertions and influence to get said company to cease drilling and by the aid of his exertions and influence said company was procured to cease drilling and obey said proclamation; and further states that at or about the time it was understood that Clift was encamped with a regiment of men in Hamilton County about forty miles distant on the north side of Tennessee River there was some disquietude among the citizens in the settlement where he resided and a meeting of some of the citizens for the purpose of taking steps, and a different meeting from the one in the settlement of G. R. and Benjamin Hambricht as to going and joining the said Clift, and at said meeting said Levi Trewhitt opposed everything that had any tendency toward a rebellion, and advised the persons there assembled to keep out of said rebellion and not to join or go to Clift but to go on with their ordinary business, and by the aid of said Trewhitt's exertions and influence said disquietude was suppressed and said persons procured to go on with their business, and no person to affiant's knowledge went to said Clift or into the rebellion in any manner.

E. RAMSEY.

Sworn to and subscribed before me the 16th day of January, 1862, and I certify that the said Edmund Ramsey is a man of undoubted truth and veracity.

J. B. HUMPHREYS,

Justice of the Peace for Bradley County, Tenn.

STATE OF TENNESSEE,

Bradley County:

Personally appeared before me, the undersigned, an acting justice of the peace and duly authorized to administer oaths within and for the county and State aforesaid, G. R. Hambricht and Benjamin Hambricht, men of undoubted truth and veracity and entitled to credit when on oath, and made oath in due form of law that at and about the time the rebellion was taking place in East Tennessee there was some disquietude in the settlement in which they resided in said county, and that there was some talk among the neighbors as to what they should do relative thereto and as to going and joining Clift who they understood was encamped for the purpose of going to Kentucky and consequently a meeting of divers of the citizens for the purpose of taking steps in the premises, and affiants learning that fact went to the residence of Levi Trewhitt whom they understand now to be confined at Tuscaloosa or Mobile as a prisoner of war and procured him to go and be where these said persons were to assemble, who did go to said place and there opposed every thing or movement that had any tendency to a rebellion in East Tennessee and through his influence and exertions the people in said settlement were quieted and all tendency to rebel in said settlement was put down by his advising them against rebellion and to go on with their ordinary business and let Clift and his rebellion alone and keep themselves out of rebellion, and thereby the citizens went on with their ordinary business and none went into the rebellion to the knowledge of affiants.

BENJAMIN HAMBRICHT,
G. R. HAMBRICHT.

Sworn to and subscribed before me the 16th day of January, 1862, and I certify that the said G. R. Hambricht and Benjamin Hambricht are both men of undoubted truth and veracity.

J. B. HUMPHREYS,

Justice of the Peace for Bradley County, Tenn.

STATE OF TENNESSEE,

Bradley County:

Personally appeared before me, Joseph H. Davis, an acting justice of the peace and duly authorized to administer oaths within and for the county and State aforesaid, Welcome Beard and made oath in due form of law that about the time that he understood that there was a rebellion in East Tennessee and that about the time he understood that Clift was encamped with a regiment of men in Hamilton County on the north side of the Tennessee River about twenty-three miles from the settlement of affiant for the purpose of going to the State of Kentucky there was some disquietude in the settlement of affiant and a meeting of divers persons near to affiant for the purpose of taking steps in relation to the rebellion, and affiant saw Levi Trewhitt whom he now understands is confined at Tuscaloosa or Mobile as a prisoner of war and held a private conversation with him who stated that he was opposed to all rebellion, and when they went where the crowd was affiant proposed that the said Levi Trewhitt make a speech to the crowd relative to what they had best do, and then the said Trewhitt gave them a talk in which he advised them all to keep out of all rebellion and go on with their ordinary business and by the aid and influence of

said Trewhitt every person there assembled was procured and did agree to keep out of all rebellion and keep away from Clift and his rebellion and go on with their ordinary business, and the said Trewhitt especially advised them to keep out of Clift's rebellion.

WELCOME BEARD.

Sworn to and subscribed before me the 17th day of January, 1862, and I certify that the said Welcome Beard is a man of undoubted truth and veracity.

JOS. H. DAVIS,

Justice of the Peace for Bradley County, Tenn.

STATE OF TENNESSEE,

Bradley County:

Personally appeared before me, Joseph H. Davis, an acting justice of the peace for the county of Bradley and duly authorized to administer oaths within and for the county and State aforesaid, Alexander A. Clingan and made oath in due form of law that at or about the time of the rebellion in East Tennessee and at the time he understood that Clift was encamped in Hamilton County on the north side of Tennessee River about twenty-four miles from the residence of affiant Levi Trewhitt, whom affiant now understands to be confined at Tuscaloosa or Mobile as a prisoner of war, came by where affiant was and procured affiant to go with him to where some persons were to assemble for the purpose of taking steps as to what they should do and to assist him in suppressing anything that might occur tending to a rebellion and affiant did go. At said meeting the said Trewhitt made a speech or talk to the persons there assembled and advised them to keep out of all rebellion and especially to keep out of the Clift rebellion and to go on with their ordinary business and by the aid and assistance of the said Trewhitt said persons all agreed and promised to keep out of all rebellion and go on with their ordinary business.

A. A. CLINGAN.

Sworn to and subscribed before me the 17th day of January, 1862, and I certify that the said Alexander A. Clingan is a man of undoubted truth and veracity.

JOSEPH H. DAVIS,

Justice of the Peace for Bradley County, Tenn.

CANNON'S STORE, January 20, 1862.

His Excellency JEFFERSON DAVIS,

President of the Confederate States of America:

We, the undersigned petitioners, humbly request that E. Hodges and W. E. Hodges, citizens of Sevier County, Tenn., and who were sent to the military prison at Tuscaloosa and are as we understand now at Mobile, Ala., be released from prison and set at liberty by their giving full assurances of their loyalty to the State of Tennessee and the Confederate States. We also believe that the said Hodges have fully atoned for the crimes they have committed and that justice is fully satisfied in their cases. We, your petitioners, would further represent that men more guilty than they have been released and nolle prosequi