4271

Evidence in the cases of James Peacock and R. L. Bingham

Charge - Smuggling

Rec'd No. Grs. D.C. April 13th 1863

Office of the Chief of Police
Army of the Cumberland

In the case of James Peacock and R. L. Bingham, who are charged with attempting to smuggle goods through to the enemy, the following evidence was taken before Wm. Truesdail Chief of Army Police

Office of Chief of Police
Army of the Cumberland
Nashville, March 9th 1863.

James Peacock

States that he has been staying out on the Hillsboro Pike for the last three months.

A young man by the name of Glass who has a cousin by the name of Henry Smith that is aid to General Preston Smith.

This young man Glass came to me on Wednesday last and brought me two orders one from his cousin Henry Smith, the other from General Smith, at the same time he brought me three letters. I only recollect that one was addressed to Roberts of Nashville. The other was addressed to Memphis & Chicago, the last I think was addressed to a lady.

The orders from the two Smiths were for goods for their own use. I called the letters and orders containing 31 $ and gave them to a negro boy to give to Mr. Bingham. I sent a letter to Mr. Bingham requesting him to fill the orders at Nashville, at the same time I sent a letter to be mailed to my brother, Reading, Penn. which is here produced and marked A.

Mr. Bingham did not fill the orders. I requested him to send the goods to me to be sent down south. I had previously requested Mr. Bingham to send me for my own use some paper and envelopes. This he done. I send Mr. Bingham a letter from some other parties living at Columbus requesting goods, these orders were in part filled, these orders were for certain individuals to get them a coat and trimming and for other small things, I do not recollect.

These are about all the orders I have sent in for goods belonging to those who are engaged in the Rebel service or for any one to carry them south. I do not know of Mr Bingham ever sending or carrying out goods before this. I regarded him as a friend to the Southern Cause. I know of no one who is in the habit of carrying contraband goods South.

J. Peacock

Office of the Chief of Police
Army of the Cumberland
Nashville March 10 1863

Statement of R. L. Bingham,
I reside on the Hillsboro Pike

two and one half miles from town.

I know nothing about Mr. James Peacock having any thing whatever to do with any smuggling operations excepting as herein stated. I know that Mr. Peacock has been living at Mr. Pryor Smiths for the last two or three months. I have always supposed him to be a Union man, having heard him dispute to that effect. I am informed that he is dependent upon the Odd Fellows and his friends for his support. I think he has no means of his own to operate on in any smuggling operations ~~or~~ any thing else.

Sometime ago I bought some corn and things from Pryor Smith and my team has been going there pretty regularly for the last four or five weeks.

I had brought in letters once or twice for Mr. Smith. I brought in one letter for him to Seiy East - one directed to Mr. French, unsealed which was in relation to bagging and rope - I brought in a letter from Mr. Smith to Mr. Hamilton in the city. The letter was written by Mr. Glass in relation to a negro belonging to him, hired to Mr. Hamilton.

The orders and papers from Peacock found on me Saturday were brought in to me by the negro boy on Friday evening. There were three sealed letters. The orders were inclosed in an envelope directed to me - I opened the envelope and looked at them and my wife proposed to burn them - I stated that there was no use in that, that I should not buy the things. I placed the orders on the mantle piece Friday night, they lay there until the next morning when I picked them up and put them in my pocket - I intended to return the orders with the money inclosed, on Monday when my teams were to go back. My teams were to bring wheat to town on Saturday. The money in the note of Peacocks was a twenty dollar Chattanooga bill and ten was I think on the bank of Monticello, Va.

Mr. Peacock came to my house on Sunday morning and gave me three dollars to purchase a pair of shoes for his negro boy. I got the shoes.

He has never sent any other orders to me and I have never brought in any ~~other~~ letters for him excepting the three found upon me. I had forgotten that I had those letters with me on Saturday and

should probably have taken them home with me had I not been arrested. had forgotten to mail them, I knew nothing about the contents of the letters.

I have never had any correspondence with Peacock in relation to smuggling or carrying goods and information through the lines to the Enemy. I dont know of Peacock receiving or having any other orders or papers relating to carrying goods and information through the lines to the Confederates. I did not intend to attempt to fill those orders or to get them filled. I know nothing either personally or in any other way about Peacocks having any connection with any other smuggling operation.

About six weeks ago Mr. S. P. Smith made a proposition to me concerning the purchase of some negroes in town. He asked me if I could not buy him a likely boy if he would pay me for it. He said he wanted some for his own use. He said his negroes had all attempted to run away, and he had taken them away and hired them out. He said he had taken them where they would

be free by the proclamation of the President. He did not say anything about sending any negroes off besides his own. I dont know of him sending any besides his own. I know nothing further about Smiths negro operations.

I did not attempt to buy him any- he furnished me no money - I told him likewise that I had never bought a negro in my life and I could not do it for him.

I know of no others running off negroes or attempting to do so - know of no one planning to do any such thing.

All the orders I have ever received from Mr. Peacock in relation to goods or information to go to the Confederates were found upon my person on Saturday. I have been a Union man from the beginning.

R. L. Pinghan

Murfreesboro, March 13/63

Statement of S. S. Knight.

After being duly sworn deposeth and says about four weeks ago I went from Nashville out to Pryor Smiths to carry a letter to him from Mr.

Newcomer, while at Mr. Smiths a man by
name of Bingham came to said Smiths
said he was buying cattle for the U. S.
Government. He brought with him and
gave to Mr. Smith a lot of wool over
shirts (I do not know how many)
he also brought with him and gave to a
man by the name of Ford (who was at Mr.
Smiths) a saddle Bags full of something
I do not know what was in them. Mr.
Ford asked Mr. Bingham if the guards on
the road examined the saddle Bags, and
he said they did not. Bingham also had a
bundle tied in the Boot of his buggy which
looked to me to be a bundle of letters he
gave the bundle to Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith
remarked to Bingham that Newcomer
had six negroes in Nashville ready to
bring to him and wanted Binghams
advice, Mr. Bingham advised Smith
to buy them, telling him he could make a
handsome profit on them by running
them south. Mr. Smith and Bingham
had a long private conversation
which I did not hear.

Silas S. Knight

Office of Chief of Police
Army of the Cumberland
Nashville, March 9/63

Statement of Mrs. S. A. Gordon,

I reside two miles or a little more from town on the Hillsboro Pike. Mr. Rufus L. Bingham resides within a hundred yards of our house. I came to town with him on Saturday. It was convenient former to come in with him and he is using my team and driver. I should not have come in on Saturday had it not been that my pass would not be good after Saturday.

I do not know Mr. Peacock. I have never received any orders or letters or other papers from Mr. Peacock to be delivered to anyone whatever. I know nothing about the orders or other papers found with Mr. Bingham on Saturday last. I did not hand them to him and did not know that he had any such papers in his possession. I have never received any orders or papers from any confederate officer or soldier asking my aid or the aid of anyone in conveying to the confederates goods or information.

I have never aided in any way.

I have never aided in any way

in conveying goods or information to any Confederate officer or Soldier or any other person to be taken to the Confederate army. I do not know what my negro boy has done in this respect. no letters or papers have been left at my house to be carried by any person to the confederates. There have been notes left for my neighbors, but they were simply letters to and from friends, not containing information for the army or anything of the kind.

I don't know of anyone who has been engaged in attempting to convey to the Confederates, goods or information.

I have been in town several times lately, but always upon my own business.

I have sometimes taken newspapers out for Dr. Burns, who lives, some seven miles beyond me. It was a friend of Dr. Burns who asked me to take them out. I don't know what he may have done with them after he read them. I don't know whether Dr. Burns is for or against the Union. My negro boy has conveyed no orders, papers, goods or information against the military regulations with my consent. Mr. Bingham has generally

been called a Union man; but has been rather quiet lately – has always been a quiet man, since I have known him.

Sally A. Gordon

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 9th day of March. 1865.

Statement of James Gordon, (colored)

I have carried papers from Mr. Peacock to Mr. Bingham three times. Whatever I carried the first two times was in envelopes. The last time, what I took was wrapped in a piece of paper.

The first time I carried papers was not more than ten days ago. I brought the last papers Mr. Bingham on Friday last. I carried a letter in which I think there was money from Mr. Bingham to Mr. Peacock, either last week or the week before. I carried a package once from Mr. Bingham to Mrs. Smith at the house where Mr. Peacock is staying. Mr. Bingham told me there was cambric in the package. I have carried newspapers from Mr. Bingham to Mr. Peacock. I carried the package to Mrs. Smith at the time I carried the letter to Mr. Peacock. I have been hauling corn

for Mr. Bingham from Mr. Smiths where Peacock is staying more or less for the last treaty five days. I have carried newspapers back and forth between Mr. Bingham and Peacock frequently.

I have only carried three letters from Mr. Peacock to Mr. Bingham and one letter from Mr. Bingham to Mr. Peacock.

I know nothing about any other letters coming to Mr. Bingham.

Mr. Bingham is looked upon as inclined to Unionism

James his X Gordon mark

Copies of orders and extracts from letters found on the person of R. L. Bingham.

March 4 1863.

Mr. B.

1 Pair of Boots No. 7.
such as you got for Dr. Hunter.
1 Hat like Smith No. 7 1/8.
1 silk pocket handkerchief
2 pair of suspenders.
for S. T. Glass The bill be will charge to Glass.

Young Mr Bill Glass is to start on Saturday next to Shelbyville. The thirty dollars sent You will credit on the bills & the balance charge to account of S. P. Smith. The boots you sent

out to day you put at 8. I sent them to the party and fixed them at 10. That I think is low for them. So you had better charge that for them. It will pay you for your trouble.

J. P.

Mr. P. I also send you 3 letters to be mailed. I delivered Mr. E. C. Roberts. as I understand two ladies will go for goods. Send them out with the best of the order. as the same party will take them out to Shelbyville.

4 yds double width cadet gray cloth. 3 silk Edkfs. 12 tombs. 1 set fine buttons.

This order is for General Preston Smith. brother of our P. O. Smith. Get buttons for both the Gen. & get for Anderson, 7 yds. fine gray cloth. 18 large buttons, 6 small ones. trimming & lace. several yards of it enough for the sleeves. & collar. 1 pair of fine shoes No. 7. 1 pair cavalry boots 2½ 7/4. 1 pair of cloth gloves. 1 Mistin pipe small size. 1 nice brown linen shirt. 1 doz. blacking large size. 30 dolls. belong to this bill. Henry N. Smith, aid de Camp. If you can get the rest out by the messenger on Saturday next by noon will do as I have got the messenger to wait until then.

J. P.

March 5. 1863.

I send a letter you will please to put in the

P. O. put a stamp on it and mail it for me.

J. P.

March 6 / 63.

Get the orders I sent you by mail and send them out. Be respect to send them out on the same day.

March 4 / 63.

Mr. P.

2 fine Combs. Also get a lot of latest papers Louisville, Cincinnatti &c. New York and any others if you can & charge them to Mr Smiths bill. You will please to have each bill put up seperate. You will also have the trimming got for each suit of clothes. Get the finest grey cloth you can as it is for the General & his aid. Send bills for all.

J. P.

Extract from letter of Jas. Peacock to his brother A.H. Peacock. Reading Pa.

He says that while he was away the 7th Penn Cavalry broke into the house & robbed him of all his clothes and papers. He says that the black republican army is composed of the most infernal sett of thieves that ever lived in this or any other land. They do nothing but run about the country and break open houses and rob women and children of their clothing & go into negro cabins

and rob the poor negro of his clothes and what few dimes he may have. It would take a quire of paper to tell all the northern negro stealing army

He has an order for soldiers and guards to pass his stock signed Burnside Co. Beef Contractors.

Letter from John H. Harris dated "Head Quarters Brecton Smith's Brigade, Shelbyville Tenn. Feb. 28 /62. to Dearest Celia, Chicago Ill. says he is endeavoring to get to Chicago, but has an aversion to making the attempt without the whole army to assist him. At the time of the Murfreesboro fight he thought he would shortly have the pleasure of seeing her, but alas for human hopes, the army had to fall back, after obtaining a glorious victory. Hopes to see the end of this glorious war yet, provided the North West only acts as they seem ready to do. Hopes that she is doing her share to aid them. Believes she is doing so.

This is addressed to Miss Cecilia T. Le Bailey. 389 West Lake St.

Chicago Ills.