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Documents relating to the claim of the executor of John J. Bulow, Jr. to be indemnified for property destroyed by the hostile Indians in Florida

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DOCUMENTS

RELATING

To the claim of the executor of John J. Bulow, jr. to be indemnified for property destroyed by the hostile Indians in Florida.

FEBRUARY 9, 1839.

Submitted by Mr. HUBBARD, to accompany Senate bill No. 231, and ordered to be printed.

FEBRUARY 8, 1839.

SIR: I was present in the Senate during the discussion on Bulow's bill, and was astonished to hear a doubt expressed as to the practice of the Indians in destroying all property which had been occupied by the troops. I think myself well acquainted with the history of the war, and I venture to say there is not a house spared, so occupied, though many have been left standing which never had been occupied by the troops as stations. I think on the east of the St. Johns, where I am best acquainted, the opinion, based on the facts, is almost universal, that property once occupied by the troops became thereby a peculiar object of savage vengeance, and was never spared; and some go so far as to say that none other was destroyed, unless the owner was an especial object of dislike, though in this I do not concur.

I know not what were the wishes of others, that their property might or might not be occupied by the troops; but I do know that Mr. Bulow was most violently opposed to such occupation of his property, and thought, or affected to think, that, with his slaves, of which he had more than two hundred, he could defend his own property. And so rude was he in the reception of the officers, that they took possession of his house, and would not admit him to their mess, *at his own table*. He was pressed as a soldier, and, it is said, put under guard for his opposition to this military occupancy of his premises; nay, more: when the post was about to be abandoned, Bulow's wagons, carts, and teams were all pressed to carry the soldiers' baggage, and it was said that he was not permitted to put into them a single article.

The matters above stated did not take place in my presence, but they were of general notoriety, always mentioned as a portion of the history of the times, the *res gestæ* of the war, and never contradicted. I have no doubt they could be proved by fifty witnesses.

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. DOWNING.

HON. MR. HUBBARD, *of the Senate.*

I do hereby certify that on the 17th of February, 1836, I left St. Augustine for the south, as a guide to a detachment of Colonel Brisbane's regiment of South Carolina militia under the command of Major Walker, the first that had been despatched in the direction of Bulowville after its destruction; and that I accompanied the said detachment as far as St. Josephs, the sugar plantation of General Hernandez.

On the route I passed the following plantations, viz: that of Messrs. Hullett & Flolard, of Mr. Pellicer, Mr. Dupont's sugar plantation, Mr. Dupont's cotton plantation, and Mr. Long's plantation. These above mentioned places are from one to eight miles distant from St. Josephs; none of them at this time had been occupied by the United States troops, and when I passed them did not appear to have been injured in any respect by the Indians.

On my arrival at St. Josephs I found that the engine and mill-house, the boiling-house and the curing-house had been destroyed, which buildings had been fortified by the troops stationed there at the commencement of the war.

From St. Josephs I went to Harford plantation, where a post had been established by the troops; there all the buildings were destroyed.

I further certify, that the only property which appeared to have been destroyed by the Indians, upon any of the plantations at Matauzas, within a district of 30 miles, was such as had been occupied or to some extent fortified by the military.

JOHN S. WILLIAMS.

Sworn to and subscribed before me the subscriber, a justice of the peace for the county of Washington, District of Columbia, this 7th day of February, 1839.

JAMES YOUNG.

FEBRUARY 7, 1839.

This is to certify, that the above deponent, John S. Williams, of Harford county, Maryland, is well known to the undersigned personally, as a gentleman of respectability, integrity, veracity, and unblemished character.

JOHN T. H. WORTHINGTON.

FEBRUARY 8, 1839.

I certify that in consequence of a dispute between Mr. Bulow and Lieut. William Williams, arising from the occupancy of Mr. Bulow's plantation by the troops, Major Putnam placed him under arrest, and had him confined in an out-house on his own premises.

JOHN S. WILLIAMS.

WASHINGTON, D. C., February 8, 1839.

I hereby certify that I was aid-de-camp to General Eustis at the time he was assigned to the command of the forces east of the St. Johns river, in Florida. That on arriving at St. Augustine, in February, 1836, it was understood that the Indians had indiscriminately destroyed all the plantations on the Atlantic coast south of St. Augustine. But when the troops moved to the south, it was found that the Indians had destroyed such buildings as had been fortified and occupied by the troops at the commencement of the war, and that most of the others had been left standing by the Indians.

At Matanzas a number of plantations were found to be uninjured, except the buildings of the sugar works of General Hernandez's plantation, St. Josephs, which had been fortified or prepared for defence against the Indians. The Hartford plantation and Bulow's, which had also been used by the troops, were destroyed.

The troops of General Eustis's command occupied the buildings which had been left by the Indians, at General Hernandez's plantations, at St. Josephs, and at Mala Compra ; Mr. McCray's plantation at Tomoka ; and Mr. Samuel H. Williams's plantation, on the Halifax river, near Mosquito.

Soon after the establishment of these posts, General Eustis was ordered to join General Scott, with his whole force, on the west of the St. Johns river, consequently the troops were withdrawn from these posts, and the Indians, as I have been since informed, then destroyed all the buildings which had been used by the troops of General Eustis's command.

A. CANFIELD,
Captain U. S. Topographical Engineers.