

2-7-1857

Report : Memorial of Maj. Alvord

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Recommended Citation

S. Rep. No. 366, 34th Cong., 3rd Sess. (1857)

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 7, 1857.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. WELLER made the following

REPORT.

[To accompany bill S. 573.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the memorial of Major Benjamin Alvord, paymaster United States army, having had the same under consideration, report :

The memorialist prays to be reimbursed for losses sustained by him when wrecked on the steamship "Southerner," on the 27th December, 1854, near Cape Flattery, in Washington Territory.

The claim is sustained by the following affidavits :

Affidavit of Major Benjamin Alvord.

Personally appeared Benjamin Alvord, paymaster United States army, who, being duly sworn, states as follows, to wit : I was directed by orders from the Secretary of War, communicated through the paymaster general, and dated the 26th September, 1854, to proceed from Washington city to my station at Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory. On reaching San Francisco, I proceeded to make a payment of the troops in northern California ; and, after returning, sailed from that city on the 20th December, 1854, on the steamship "Southerner," bound to the Columbia river. When a few days out we encountered a severe gale of wind, and the master attempted to make Puget's Sound for safety ; but in this attempt we were wrecked, on the 27th December, on the coast near Cape Flattery rocks, thirty miles south of the entrance to said sound, the vessel and cargo being a total wreck. Preparing for the arrival of my family, I made considerable purchases in San Francisco of household effects, furniture, &c., preparatory to housekeeping. Besides these, I took with me on the steamer several trunks and boxes of clothing, and other property, and, especially, a small but very valuable library. All this property was lost when I was wrecked, and my loss amounted to at least *one thousand dollars*. I had remaining a little clothing in a pair of saddle-bags. With much labor and watching (for they had been washed away) I saved the muster and pay rolls and vouchers of my recent payment, and other valuable public and official documents in my possession. It

is proper to say that, in devoting myself to securing the public service papers, &c., I necessarily neglected, in a great degree, my private property. The interval which we could devote to the rescuing of property from the waves was only a few hours. What the sea did not wash off the Indians stole from us that same night. Six thousand and five hundred dollars of funds of the pay department United States army I had placed on board, in the hands of an express company, for transportation to Fort Vancouver; these were, fortunately, saved and delivered to me at that post. They were in an iron safe, and thus not washed off from the wreck.

BENJAMIN ALVORD,
Major, and Paymaster U. S. Army.

COUNTY OF CLARK, *Territory of Washington:*

Sworn and subscribed to, at Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, on the 25th day of October, 1856, before me.

C. C. STILES, [L. s.]
Probate Judge.

Affidavit of Ryland J. Ackley, Esq.

Personally appeared before me Ryland J. Ackley, esq., of Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, who, being duly sworn, states as follows, to wit:

I have been paymaster's clerk for Major Benjamin Alvord, paymaster United States army, since September, 1854. He was ordered in that month from Washington city to Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory. On reaching San Francisco, after making a payment to troops in northern California, we sailed, on the 20th December, 1854, on the steamship "*Southerner*," bound from that city to the Columbia river. A severe gale of wind arose when we were two or three days out, and the captain attempted to make Puget's Sound for safety, but we were wrecked, on the 27th December, 1854, on the coast near Cape Flattery rocks, Washington Territory, thirty miles south of the entrance to said sound. The vessel and cargo were a total wreck. I am knowing to the fact that the said Major Benjamin Alvord, expecting to go to housekeeping at Fort Vancouver, purchased considerable furniture, &c., in San Francisco, and I saw him place on board several trunks, boxes, &c., said to contain books, clothing, and other property. All this property was lost when we were wrecked; and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, his estimate of said loss at *one thousand dollars* is correct and just.

He saved of his private property only a little clothing. Of public property he rescued his official documents, including the pay-rolls and vouchers of his recent payment of the troops. The public funds of the pay department, which he had placed in the hands of an express com-

pany for transportation, amounting to six thousand five hundred dollars, were fortunately saved, being in an iron safe, which could not wash away.

R. J. ACKLEY,
Paymaster's Clerk.

COUNTY OF CLARK, }
Territory of Washington. }

Sworn and subscribed to, at Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, on the 25th day of October, 1856, before me.

C. C. STILES, [L. S.]
Probate Judge.

The committee, regarding this claim as just and equitable, report a bill for the relief of Major Alvord, and recommend its passage.