

Sullivan Indiana.

June 27. 1909.

W. J. Isaacs

118 S. 6 Ave.

Nashville Tenn.

Dear Sir:-

Your letter of inquiry relative to the arrest and execution of two Confederate Spies. Col. Wm. Oton Williams, and Lieut. Walter G. Peters June 9. 1863, at Franklin Tenn. is before me and Contents are fully noted.

On said date, about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, said Col. Williams and Peters rode up to Col. John P. Baird's Head Quarters, located at Fort Granger just east of the town of Franklin Tenn. on the Harpeth River, and after saluting said Col. Baird. briefly stated. "We are Inspectors General, on the staff of Major General James A. Garfield," and presented their Official Authority, from Major Gen. Garfield. and proceeded at once to a thorough inspection of the camp. After having ascertained the total number of available troops

The total number of Cannon, And Small Arms and rounds of Ammunition, and Commissary Stores on hand, at said Fort Granger. And about one half dozen of Col. J. P. Baird's choicest Cigars, and \$50 Cash, as they stated they were a little short in finances, and receiving a pass to Nashville Tenn. they mounted their superb blooded Steeds, and in flash were on their way to inspect the Camp at Nashville Tenn. In a moment, it dawned upon the minds of Col. John P. Baird that said inspecting Officers, might be spies, and with an inquisitorial look at Col. Watkins of C. Ky. Cav. and myself, all of whom vied with each other, that they were spies, and had come into our camp for the purpose of ascertaining the exact strength or weakness of our forces, and move in a large force against us, and capture our Command.

Col. John P. Baird in Command of the Union forces at Fort Granger, instantly ordered Col. Watkins with

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Body guards to overtake them, and have them return to the Union Camp at Fort Granger. Hence the two Rebel Spies were overtaken just before they reached the outer pickets of the Union Lines.

Col. Watkins informed them that Col Baird had just received information that the Confederate forces were massing their troops between Franklin & Nashville, and for them to return to Camp Granger and Col. Baird would send a heavy guard to escort them through. They protested very strongly against returning to Col Baird's Headquarters, but Col. Watkins sternly persisted, and they were brought back to Col. Baird's Headquarters.

In a few moments a large guard was thrown around the tent, and when Col. Wm. Orton Williams stepped to ^{the} door of the tent, it dawned on him "We are trapped."

Col. Baird stepped up to Col Williams and raised the white visor from the Cap of Col. Williams, and saw on the band C. S. A. He then drew Col Williams' sword from its scabbard and saw

etched thereon C. S. A.

He then turned to Lieut. Peters, raised the visor from his Cap. And saw on the letters C. S. A. Then reached to the Lieutenant's sword, drew it from its scabbard, and saw etched thereon C. S. A.

Col. J. P. Baird upon seeing this disclosure of their guilt, exclaimed "My God gentlemen, this has been nicely played!"

"Yes. (said Col. Wm. Arton Williams) and came near being a complete success."

Col John P. Baird, immediately telegraphed to Maj. Gen. Gerfield stationed at Murfreesboro Tenn. "Two Officers, claiming to be Inspectors General on your Staff, entered our lines presented their Orders from you to inspect the Camp ascertain the strength of the Union Forces at Fort George, no. of Cannon, and small arms. Also the amount of Commissary stores on hand."

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The means of ascertaining this information, was by Flag Telegraphy."

A response soon came back.
"There are no such men on my staff."
"Try them by Court Martial at once."
"If found guilty as Spies hang them immediately."

A Court was soon in session consisting of twelve men. and I made pledge Advocate of said Court.

Could I have been released from such a task, as trying the guilt or innocence as Spies of such noble looking men as Col. W^m Orton Williams and Lieut Peters were. I would freely have given \$1000. for allow me to say no higher type of manhood, had it ever been my good luck to meet than I saw and found, than that which welled up in the mind and heart of Col. W^m Orton Williams.

Then knowing the fate of Spies caught by their Opposing forces I fairly trembled for the fates of these two men

Step by step as the Court Martial trial proceeded disclosing their guilt as spies. That noble and honest heart of Col. Wm Orton Williams could ^{not} and did not further suppress their guilt as spies, but only begged the leniency of the Court. He full well knew, the penalty of a spy was death by hanging. He begged that they be shot instead of hung.

After the trial had ended, I immediately saw Col. John P. Baird and had him telegraph to General Garfield to have them sent to Nashville Tenn. for punishment but word came back at once, ~~guilty~~ as spies. hang them at once.

I notified them at once of the result. Col. Wm. Orton Williams beckoned me to one side, and stated, I am engaged to be married to Miss. . . . will you be kind enough to have this gold watch and chain, and message, (briefly penned) showing their fate. Sent to her.

I assured him I would. And I think now it was through Mrs Hoffman, and Dr Cliff of Franklin Tenn. that I sent

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the message and watch.

The hour of execution was set for 9 o'clock the following morning. And at the appointed time, north of Fort Granger, about 30 rods, stood a large wild cherry tree with a limb projecting south, from which two ropes were suspended.

While they were being prepared for the execution, Col Wm. Arton Williams requested their hands be not tied, behind their backs. Their request was granted and thus closed the career of two noble looking men.

Wm. A. Crawford
Late Capt. & Bvt. Major.
85th Regt. Ind. Inf.

Sullivan Ind.
July 7. 1909.

W. J. Isaacs.

118 S. 6 Ave Ashville Tenn.

Dear Sir:

Your letter for a full description of the arrest and execution of the two "Rebel Spies", who entered the Union lines at Franklin Tenn June 7., 1863. Therein enclose to you.

The matter of Compensation for this, I shall leave exclusively to you.

Very respectfully
W. J. Crawford.

Local Capt Co. "A" 50 Reg
Ind. Inf & Bot May.

P.S.

I am now 71 years old, hale, hearty. and very supple
Have educated over two thousand teachers.
and have obtained over six thousand Pensions
and increases. Since the Civil War closed.