

HEIRS OF COL. ALEXANDER G. MORGAN.

[To accompany S. bill No. 160.]

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JULY 8, 1854.

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Mr. HOWE, from the Committee on Military Affairs, made the following

REPORT.

*The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred Senate bill No. 160, for the relief of the heirs and legal representatives of Col. A. G. Morgan, beg leave respectfully to report :*

That they have examined the various documents and papers submitted with this bill, and find the history of the case to be substantially as follows :

From a letter of A. G. Morgan to the Secretary of War, dated the 18th August, 1837, on the subject of employing a force to be composed of Western Indians for service in Florida, Mr. Morgan says: "I wrote you a few days since, offering to raise three hundred volunteer riflemen; since which, your order to Major Dougherty has changed my views." The letter last referred to does not appear among the papers submitted to the committee, but its receipt is acknowledged by the Secretary of War, under date of the 5th September, 1837, who says that he has received Mr. Morgan's letter of the 12th ultimo, containing the patriotic offer of his own services, and those of "three hundred backwoodsmen, or bee-hunters," in the capacity of a spy battalion, to operate in Florida, and that General Atkinson has been instructed to accept his offer, and to communicate with him on the subject.

On the 11th September, 1837, General Atkinson, then at Jefferson Barracks, Mo., writes to Mr. Morgan, authorizing him to engage three active, intelligent men, as captains, to raise, under his (Morgan's) directions, a company each of fifty men, to serve for six months after being mustered into service at Jefferson Barracks, but the men to be paid from the time they are enrolled, and promising him the command, with the rank of lieutenant colonel, *if the men can be raised.*

General Atkinson, in a letter to the Adjutant General, under date of the 8th November, 1837, reports that Major Morgan, with a company of fifty mounted volunteers, under Captain Sconce, arrived at Jefferson Barracks on the 2d instant, and embarked on the 7th for Tampa Bay, via New Orleans; that owing to political opposition, and the illness of Major Morgan part of the time, he was prevented from raising a battalion, but that it had been deemed proper to send off the one company, as they were good men, and the turning of them back would have created great excitement."

On the arrival of the company at headquarters, Fort Brooke, it appears that Captain Sconce was directed by General Armistead to report with his company for duty with the Missouri volunteers, which order was revoked on the same day by the following:

ORDER }  
No. 5. }

HEADQUARTERS, FORT BROOKE,  
November 30, 1837.

1. Order No. 4, of the present date, directing Captain Sconce to report with his company for duty with the Missouri volunteers, is hereby revoked.

2. Lieutenant Col. Morgan will proceed with Captain Sconce's company, and report to Colonel Taylor.

By order of General Armistead.

H. GARNER,  
*Lieutenant and Aid-de-camp.*

Upon the back of the foregoing order is the following memorandum:

("General Armistead, without knowing under what circumstances I came to Florida, ordered the spies to consolidate with the lamented Gentry's troop, which I positively and peremptorily refused; and this was his order." Signed A. G. Morgan.)

It nowhere appears that Lieutenant Colonel Morgan (so called) was acting under a commission of any grade whatever, the condition upon which he was promised the lieutenant-colonelcy by General Atkinson, viz: the raising of three companies of volunteers, having failed; or that at any time he had under his command a larger number of men than were included in the single company mustered into service at Jefferson Barracks, under Captain Sconce. At the same time, however, it does appear that he was sometimes designated in the army orders as "lieutenant colonel," and the company raised by him as "the spy battalion;" and under these designations both Morgan and the company were recognised in the following order:

ORDER }  
No. 67. }

HEADQUARTERS ARMY SOUTH OF THE  
WITHLACOCHEE, Fort Brooke, January 12, 1854.

Lieutenant Colonel Morgan, with the spy battalion of the Missouri volunteers, will proceed, on the morning of the 16th instant, to Fort Gardner, and report to Colonel Taylor for duty in the field.

By order of General Armistead.

H. GARNER,  
*Lieutenant and Aid-de-camp.*

So also in the order of Colonel Taylor, of February, 1838, directing the Missouri volunteers to proceed to Tampa Bay, for the purpose of being mustered out of service, he "avails himself of the opportunity to tender to Major Hughes, Captain Russel, Jackson Kurd, as well as the officers and men of the companies, also to Colonel Morgan and the few officers and men of the spies that remained with him, his sincere thanks for the zeal

and devotion with which they have served in the late movement in pursuit of the enemy, as well for the prompt, cheerful, and soldierlike manner they have discharged all the duties required of them, in wading swamps, penetrating hammocks, and various other privations connected with the prosecution of the campaign in an unexplored wilderness, particularly in Florida."

Notwithstanding these apparent recognitions of Morgan as *lieutenant colonel*, and the men composing Captain Sconce's company as a *spy battalion*, it distinctly appears by a letter on file in the Adjutant General's office, that General Jesup, the major general commanding, refused to receive Lieutenant Colonel Morgan as a field officer. That letter is as follows:

"CAMP ON JUPITER RIVER, February 2, 1838.

"SIR: I have the honor to return to you herewith the accompanying papers, forwarded to the major general commanding, with your note (without date) from Okeechobee.

"I am directed by the general to say that he has no legal authority to recognise so small a force as that which you command as a battalion, which should consist of at least two companies, each of equal strength to the whole force which you report. If the general had the power, it would afford him great pleasure to receive Lieutenant Colonel Morgan as a field officer; but unless you have a battalion, it would be idle for him to receive you as a major or lieutenant colonel, as it would be in violation of the law as well as of the instructions of the War Department, and would not be recognised by any department of the government.

"J. A. CHAMBERS,

"*Acting Assist. Adjutant General to General Jesup.*

"Major A. G. MORGAN,

"*Okeechobee lake, Florida.*"

The papers and correspondence accompanying this bill are voluminous, and have been referred to so far only as was deemed necessary to present, in the shortest compass, the true character of the claim; and from which it appears that Alexander G. Morgan *did* render valuable service to the government in the raising of troops in the State of Missouri, as well as in command of the same in the Florida war.

The committee therefore recommend the passage of the Senate bill, allowing compensation at the rate of the pay and allowances of a captain of cavalry, from the 11th September, 1837, to the 18th March, 1838.