

To Benjm. Stevenson,

Late a delegate in congress from the Ills territory, now in the humble station of Receiver of public monies for the dist. of Edwardsville.

Sir

Having read your address to Mr. Charless bearing date the 15th ult. wherein you insinuate that certain charges exhibited against you were published by me, I will for the first time in my life make use of a newspaper to declare that your insinuation is incorrect—a malicious calumny an “unblushing falsehood”

This unceremonious language sir, only returns your assault. If under the erroneous impression that I had attacked your reputation, be it what it may, you had not departed very repeatedly, from that calm spirit of conscious rectitude & dignity which ought to prevail in all discussions, neither you nor your friends would complain when I descend to the same form of expression.—Still I feel no disposition to imitate you in this—for I have during a long course of public service suffered too much by private and public slander, and have discovered throughout your address such disregard of delicacy towards what you imagined my feelings were, and such indifference to the justice and pertinency of some of your remarks, that after this introduction I hope I shall in all I may say, avoid the example.

I recollect reading the piece that seems to have roused you from your retirement—but really I do not recollect the statement relative to your servant, which you say is false and that you can prove it to be so by “hundreds” of persons who served with you. Be that as it may I will seize you a case, which perhaps sir you will recollect and acknowledge—and whether you do or not, I will acknowledge on my part, that the government sustained no injury; tho’ in my opinion, it certainly would had I not detected the attempt. The case is this.—You mustered a black man as a soldier in a company of militia commanded by Capt Amos Souire, in the fall of 1812—he received his pay with the rest of the company—A few days after the company had been paid you attended to draw yours, and claimed pay for a private servant—on investigating this claim, you described the black man mustered on Capt Squires rolls to have been employed in that capacity, and my recollecting to have paid the man as he was mustered prevented me from paying you the compensation of a private servant on his account—Thus it is sir and neither your say so nor “hundreds” of witnesses can prove this case “false”

I will now sir, inform you and all concerned with you, that I never exhibit charges for crimes or misdemeanors in an indirect way—& as you have unexpectedly roused me from my “peaceful retirement” where I faithfully attend to the duties of my office, and endeavor to act in a manner inoffensive to any and satisfactory to all” so far as I have the means and the power, I will venture before I drop you, to ask a few questions—& you have my permission to convert or construe them into any amusement your feelings and retirement may dictate.

When you commenced your political career in the Illinois territory, were you not an officer of high rank in the militia appointed ad de camp to his excellency the governor—brigade major & inspector of the troops that were under his excellency’s command—or rather those he claimed the honor of commanding in the years 1812 & 13? Under these high and honorable appointments did you, or did you not in many instances, place your official signature to muster rolls of companies and detachments of men and horses which rolls were false and prejudicial to the government of the United States? Did you, or did you not, place your official signature to the muster rolls of companies and detachments where there was men who were mustered on two, and sometimes three different rolls for the same period? These sir, are only a few items but they may serve you—They embrace serious charges against an officer of your high standing, and depend upon it, if you deny, my evidence shall substantiate them. You would injure the government by giving men double & treble pay perfectly inattentive or careless of your duty; while you would have the maligancy to complain of me, although at the same time I was doing all I could with the funds in my hands and laboring without intermission—But this is not all—you have yet to learn it seems, that the rules and articles of war

for the government of the U. States, declare that any officer who shall be convicted of having made a false muster of man or horse, or mustering a man or horse that is not in the actual service of the U. States, shall be cashiered, and rendered incapable of holding any office of profit, or honor under the government of the U. States.

After this sir, and a few general remarks on the different publications made in Mr. Charless’s paper, it may be time to close.

When you first commenced your political race in the territory you reside in, I am not aware that you had any desire to injure, or unjustly impeach the reputation of any man—who did not stand in your way. Your thirst to be a great man, however, soon became so powerful that you seemed to have almost lost sight in your electioneering pursuits of all moral honesty. Twas about that time, owing to a deficiency of funds the pay of the militia and rangers became a popular theme or hobby, for demagogues. You caught it, and dashed amongst them without knowing whether their claims individually, were just or not. You appeared to offer your assistance with sanguine expectations to all—and it would appear that you persevered in this until you had promised far more than could possibly be realized under the then existing circumstances—When the people began to find that you had deceived them, I may suppose your situation to have become truly disagreeable. To prevent the storm of infatuated disappointment from falling on your own head and the head of your high territorial dignitary you and he, as worthy friends and partners, met to consult what was best to be done! Instead of telling the people the true causes why their pay was delayed, or any thing like it, you prepared an address to the secretary of war—this address, hastily drew from him a letter censuring me, and a monument of self-extracted praise for you and your compeer.

This monument it appears you still keep, for the eternal benefit of yourself and friend—posted in the public newspapers as the testimonials of your patriotism, honor, honesty and great zeal to serve the people. Yet this monument of yours, if it prove any thing, will only shew how hard his fate was who had to please both the government and the people. It would clearly appear that you merit credit for your zeal—yet how and why, and wherefore? As I have stated, your official conduct would, had not your blunders been detected, have injured the government materially, when funds were not sufficient for those to whom pay was justly due. Still twas I, who was instructed “to guard by all possible means against impostors and fraudulent and unjust claims, however specious the form in which they approached me;”—I, who done my duty so far as I had means, ability and judgment, and who dare not, nor did not vary one iota from my instructions—twas I who must according to this shewing, bear all blame!—Why? Is it because I did not humbug or deceive the people, and then attempt to impose upon the government? Is this so?—Let the documents accompanying this letter speak in reply to that, and to your boardered monument—they are to the point.

I am not of opinion that your “interfering and meddling ignorance” has procrastinated the payment of the troops—indeed I am far from thinking so—and if you wish to know what I do think, I will assure your ‘excellent’ friend and you, that all the meddling in the case, had no effect either one way or the other, in the payment of the troops committed to my charge. Nor can you sir, to sustain your declarations, obtain the sanction of the secretary of war, or paymaster general, that your agency has had any effect in expediting the payment of troops in that territory. The fact is, it was out of your power, except one company near the saline, whose claims never came to my hands. The troops in that territory would have been paid just as soon, and just as they were paid, if you had staid at home and never opened your mouth upon the subject.

You say, that “I have scandalously abused the Illinois militia in my letters to the paymaster general!”—This again is incorrect—I have never written respecting them, but with truth—I have endeavoured to describe them as they really are—and unfortunately, I have had to describe yourself with them.

Your sham pretext for having applied to the secretary of war to take the money out of my hands is not extraordinary—Although it is inconsistent with the pretensions to knowledge you express upon

the subject—it very well accords with some of your old electioneering tales. If you really knew any thing respecting the matter at the time you made the application, you must have known that I was retained for the special purpose of closing the business within my district—if you say you did not know this, then you could not have seen or known any thing respecting the regulations made at the time the army was reduced—and if you were ignorant of them regulations, you could not have known whether I would be retained or not. This is a curious contradiction to your pretext—but let us try it another way—did you not know that I could not be out of service until I distributed the very large sums of money you had stated to the people I held in my hands to pay them?—or did you think the government might procrastinate payment and send me adrift—with these large sums you had stated to be in my possession—me of whom you entertained such groundless suspicions?—or did you or did you not merely desire to get this money into your possession that you and your friend might derive some little advantage by turning it into goods and making payments in that way?—If you will answer the last query in the affirmative, then can the people duly appreciate your “disinterested zeal”—and whether you do or do not the pretext you offered was a very silly one. Indeed sir, I only hope it may be placed to the proper account by those who know us both, and who may know your conduct, situation and circumstances.

Your own previous reports that a sufficient sum of money had been placed in my hands to pay all claims in both territories are sufficient to condemn you when circumstances are viewed. However sir, if you wish to see my letters to the paymaster general published, you have my consent to obtain them—and then, after all your contemptible workings, twistings and endeavors, to incense the people of Illinois against me, I will leave it to themselves to judge us both, and to judge who has fairly and impartially adjusted their accounts and obtained their pay—and who has, and who has not performed his duty uprightly and faithfully. I am now done with you until my conduct can be investigated before a proper tribunal—of the time and place, yourself and friend shall be duly notified.

A. WHITLOCK.

Vincennes, May 12, 1817.
Mr. Stott—You will please to publish the two following documents with the above, all for the exclusive benefit of Mr. Benjamin Stevenson, late a Delegate in Congress from the Illinois territory, and now in the humble situation of Receiver of Public Monies at Edwardsville.—Mr. Charless, at St. Louis, will please insert them for the same purpose. A. W.

The paymaster general has read with attention the letter addressed to the secretary of war by Maj. Whitlock, District paymaster, dated the 16th of October last, which has been referred to him, and he has now the honor of reporting, that Maj. Whitlock, as well as all other district paymasters were called upon by the paymaster general, by a circular letter addressed to them respectively, to furnish estimates of outstanding claims within each of their districts, so far as it could be ascertained; that in consequence thereof Maj. Whitlock furnished an estimate dated the 26th July, 1815, which was received on the 10th of August thereafter; this estimate the amount as “wanting to pay the different description of troops for services said to have been performed in the actual service of the U. States” within his district as amounting to \$233,960 and 50 cents.

The paymaster general further reports, that after the appropriations were made for the payment of arrears due the army, and arrangements had been made relative to the paymasters who should be retained to perform that duty a circular was addressed to each, a copy of which accompanies this report, marked A.—Remittances were commenced to Maj. Whitlock on the 9th of February, 1816 a copy of the letter making this remittance is herewith inclosed, marked — and the remittances were continued from time to time, as the paymaster general was furnished funds as below stated, regarding in the remittances he made the calls of other districts, and the funds periodically placed in his hands by the government.

1816, on the 9th February as } \$ 20,000
above stated } 22d March, remitted 50,000
22d August, ditto 150,000
21st Nov. ditto 60,000

In addition to which major Whitlock was authorised to draw on the 26th October, 1816, for 15,000

\$295,000

Subsequent estimates were made after that of the 26th July, 1815 embracing other troops and calls for further sums than those in the estimate before mentioned; these additional estimates in detached parts, caused some perplexity and difficulty in the remittances to be made. The paymaster general had his eye chiefly turned to the first estimate of \$233,950, and on which document he had reference in the estimate furnished the secretary of war as the probable sum it would require to pay the arrears due the several description of troops in the actual service of the U. States on which the appropriation was made.

The paymaster general admits that his instructions to Maj. Whitlock were in the first instance to pay off discharged rangers, and that from the letters of that gentleman, he stated the causes of delay proceeded from the circumstance of his not being more amply supplied with funds, so that when he commenced his payments, he might be able promptly to execute that duty—for without having funds at once to make his full payments, it caused much dissatisfaction to those who were left unpaid until further supplies were furnished.

At the paymaster general, so far as it has been within his power and in conformity to his letter heretofore referred to marked A, has furnished funds from time to time as he has been supplied, to Maj. Whitlock, yet he perceives from the calls of each claimant to be paid at the same time, together with the irregularity and informal manner in which the rolls were in many instances furnished to paymaster Whitlock as he has often stated, that this officer has suffered much difficulty and perplexity in the discharge of his duty; that from the opportunities the paymaster general has had of knowing his general conduct in the discharge of his duties, he would do him injustice to conclude this report without an expression of his opinion, that no paymaster is better acquainted with the situation he holds and none have been more prompt in executing them both with fidelity and accuracy.

Respectfully, &c.

ROBT. BENT,
Pay Master General,
Paymaster General’s Office,
City of Washington, 26 Dec. 1816.
To the Honble. Secretary of War.

Department of War,
1st. January 1817.

SIR,

Your letter of the 16th of October was duly received, and referred to the Paymaster General, who has furnished the enclosed statement to this department.

The reasons assigned by you for the delay which took place in the disbursement of the seventy thousand dollars remitted to you in February and March, 1816 are entirely satisfactory and had the Secretary of War been advised of those reasons, he unquestionably would have approved of your conduct, in relation to that transaction.

I have the honor to be,
With sentiments of great respect,
Your obedt. Servt.

GEO. GRAHAM.

Maj. A. Whitlock,
Dist. Paymaster
Vincennes Indiana.

J. C. REILEY, & Co.
WATCH & CLOCK MAKERS,
SILVERSMITHS & JEWELLERS
RESPECTFULLY informs their friends, and the public in general, that they have commenced the above business in all its various branches, in the house lately occupied by Messrs. Hale & Wood, and nearly opposite Harlow & Trimble’s store—where they hope by their unremitting attention to business, to merit the approbation of the public.

Vincennes, January 1, 1817.
N. B.—Watches & Clocks, of every description carefully repaired, and warranted to perform—The highest price given for old Gold and Silver

An apprentice, will be taken of good moral habits, to learn the above.

A Gig FOR Sale.
WILL be sold on the 7th June next at public sale, if not previously sold at private sale an Excellent Gig at the tavern door of H. Lasselle, at 3 o’clock a credit of 3 months will be given by giving bond and security. J. BRUNER.
May 23, 1817.

25—3twjel