



Raconteur

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"Gauga" comes from the Native American word She-aw-ga,
which means raccoon

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REIMBURSEMENT CLAIM FILED BY ANDERSONVILLE PRISONER OF WAR, GEORGE LANGWORTHY, CO. D, 12TH U.S. INFANTRY, OF GEAUGA COUNTY

By Claire Prechtel-Kluszens, GCGS Member

When a soldier was taken prisoner, he was likely to be robbed of his money and valuable possessions by the men who captured him, or they might be confiscated at prison. If he kept his money, he was lucky, for it enabled him to buy better quality and quantities of food, clothing, and personal items from sutlers than prison officials could afford to provide.¹ Nearly 195,000 Union and 215,000 Confederate men were incarcerated as prisoners of war.²

When war ended, Rebel authorities surrendered thousands of dollars that had belonged to Union prisoners of war to Brevet Brigadier General John E. Mulford, U.S. Agent for Exchange. Mulford returned some funds to their rightful owners based upon receipts and invoices in Confederate prison records. By April 1866, over \$27,000 still remained in the custody of Major General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, the Commissary General of Prisoners, and claims from over 360 former POWs awaited resolution. Hitchcock requested Secretary of War Stanton grant him authority to "distribute the money to the applicants upon satisfactory knowledge of their identity, at the rate claimed, on the correctness of the same being clearly shown."³

Former POWs continued to file claims through the summer and fall of 1866, even though the opportunity and requirements for doing so were not well publicized.

A blurb in the *New York Times* on 24 September 1866, page 1, indicated that claims "must be filed before October 1" with an affidavit "stating the amount of the claim, the character of the funds taken, and that no part of the amount claimed has ever been returned or its equivalent in rebel currency." In addition, affidavits were required from one or more witnesses "who were actually present when the money was taken, and who must testify to the amount."⁴

The Adjutant General's Special Orders No. 486, dated 1 October 1866, ordered a board of officers be convened to consider the claims. The board consisted of Brevet Colonel Henry Clay Wood, Brevet Lieutenant Colonel F. W. Taggard, and Brevet Lieutenant Colonel James Madison Cutts. In October 1866, the board published a notice in the Washington, DC, *Daily National Intelligencer* that claimants needed to submit their evidence before 15 November 1866.⁵ The substance of this notice was widely copied in northern newspapers, including Cleveland, Cincinnati, and other places.

(continued on page 1828)



REIMBURSEMENT CLAIM (continued from pg.1825)

Ultimately the Board considered 798 claims, but only 275 were approved. The claims files are in the National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, in Record Group 249, Records of the Office of the Commissary General of Prisoners, and are called "Claims Made for Money Taken from Federal Prisoners of War Confined in Confederate Prisons" (NM-68 Entry 81; National Archives Identifier 615449).

George Langworthy (Claim No. 631), served in Co. D, 12th U.S. Infantry, and resided in Bainbridge Township, Geauga, County, Ohio, in September 1866. His claim was rejected due to insufficient proof. From his letter (below), it is evident he did not know the requirements for proof were, and was either never informed of the requirements, or was informed but unable to provide the evidence.

On 26 September 1866, Langworthy wrote to Royal Taylor, the Commissioner of the Bureau of Soldiers' Claims for the State of Ohio, as follows:

Bainbridge Ohio Sept 26th 66
Royal Taylor Esq.

Sir

having this day seen a notice in the Cleveland Herald that Soldiers who were taken prisoners during the war and had money taken from them were to receive the

amount lost. I was a private in Co. D, 12th U.S. Inf. was taken prisoner at the Battle of the Wilderness 5th of may 1864 was taken to Danville from there Andersonville Ga before we entered the Stockade we were examined by Capt Wirz then the cmdg [commanding] Officer there I had taken from me \$138 one hundred and thirty eight dollars if there is any proof rqued [required] please write and Direct to George Langworthy

Bainbridge
Geauga co.
Ohio

On 30 September 1866, Mr. Taylor forwarded Langworthy's letter to Maj. Gen. Hitchcock, Commissary General of Prisoners, "with request that he will please furnish me the required blanks, and instructions." The Office of the Commissary General of Prisoners received the letter on 2 October 1866. A paper in the file is marked "no credit" which indicates no Confederate records corroborated Langworthy's claim for loss of money. Another cryptic note, "See Letter Oct. 11th 1866" may indicate that information about the claims process was sent to either Langworthy or Taylor on that date. Langworthy's letter is also annotated "Bissell's PO" for the name by which Bainbridge's post office was known. Finally, on 9 March 1867, a letter was sent to Mr. Taylor informing him that "the Board has not included the above name [George Langworthy] in its list of approved claims."

A copy of George Langworthy's file has been provided to the Anderson Allyn Room at Chardon Library.

Does Your Ancestor Have a Claims File?

Names of claimants can be found in two places. You can search for names in the National Archives Catalog at <<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/615449>>. Or, you can search the list of claimants posted at <<https://twelvekey.files.wordpress.com/2015/03/civil-war-pow-claims.pdf>>.

To Obtain Copies

To obtain copies of specific files, write to Archives I Reference, National Archives Building, 700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC, 20408, or email archives1reference@nara.gov. Be sure to specify "Claims Made for Money Taken from Federal Prisoners of War Confined in Confederate Prisons (National Archives Identifier 615449)," the claim number, the

claimant's name, and your name, postal mailing address, email address, and phone number.

¹ *Sketches of War History, 1861-1865, Papers Read Before the Ohio Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, 1886-1888*, Vol. II, p. 214-216 (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1888); William Marvel, *Andersonville: The Last Depot* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

² "Facts – The Civil War" at <<http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/facts.htm>> downloaded 15 February 2015.

³ *War of the Rebellion: A compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series II*, Vol. VIII (Serial 121), pp. 721-723, 872-873, 886, 895, 906, 912, 967.

⁴ "Union Prisoners' Claims for Captured Money," *New York Times*, Vol. XVI, No. 4679 (24 Sept. 1866): 1.

⁵ Notice, *Daily National Intelligencer*, Vol. LXVI, No. 16903 (24 Oct. 1866): 3.