

Manassas National Battlefield Park

War For Freedom: African American Experiences in the Era of the Civil War



Resource #7: John C. Brawner Written Claim

(excerpts from records of Southern Claims Commission)

Southern Claims Commission

Claim of John C. Brawner, Prince William County, no. 1335

Claim for \$1,153.75

John C. Brawner

Nov. 21, 1871

I am the claimant. Resided in Prince Wm. Co., Va., during war. Did not own a farm. Rented a farm of 300 acres & over of Mrs. Augusta Douglas. I [gave?] 150 a year rent. I had a family – a wife & 3 daughters & 2 sons. Sons left when the Rebel Army fell back from Manassas. They went back with the army – were not [?] as soldiers. I supposed they were conscripted after they went back. They went into the rebel army. They were both conscripted. I remained until Bull Run 2d & was then broken up and left driven away. I went to some of my neighbors houses. I went to Philip Smiths. I don't know what Smith was. I think his feelings were with the south. My sons were [were] in the army & in prison about 2 years, were taken prisoners by Union forces. Did not hear from my sons during the war. They came home from prison – one of them before the war closed. He was exchanged. Went into the service again & was again taken prisoner.

...

I talked with my sons about going into the rebel army, advised them not to enlist. I talked with others. Opposed it all the time. John Cross & Richard Graham were my neighbors & Wm. [name unreadable]. I think they were all Union men.

...

My sentiments were peace. Let the Union stand as it was & have no war. I talked with Mr. R. Graham & Mr. Lewis [?] & [?]. We were generally opposed to war. I was. Did nothing for my sons while in army.

....

I saw two battles, the two Bull Run battles. Gen. King sent to my house & officers came for supplies. I left the next morning after the battle commenced. House was shelled & balls passing through the house. I went over to Mr. Philip Smith. I couldn't get shelter anywhere else. My age is 72. I was then about 64. Mr. Smith resided north from

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me. I had no sympathy on [page corner is folded down and thus unreadable on this copy] side when the battle was going on. I [unreadable words] feelings naturally run with my sons when [unreadable words] I supposed I wanted them to whip. But [unreadable] had no sympathy with either side, for they [?] brought it on themselves.

....

My sons were of age & I had no control over them, notwithstanding that they listened to me & did not volunteer. In our conversations we all agreed about the war & did not want gov't broken up.

....

Witness: John Cross, sworn says...

I know claimant. Knew him for 20 years. Knew him during the war. I don't know his views before the war about the commencement of war I heard him talking, that he was opposed to secession. That was about all I recollect. I heard him speaking & said he tho't [thought] the southern people ought not to have seceded. He said he was in favor of U.S. Govt. That was about the commencement of the war. Nobody could talk in favor of the Union after the state seceded.

Witness: Jackson Tippins (? of Courts)

I knew Brawner. I lived in Stafford Co., edge of Prince Wm. I know he was no Union Man. I heard him talk. I know the time Mr. Sunderland [?] put up Union flag in Occoquan. Brawner was with the men who cut it down. His reputation was that of a rebel.

Witness: Mary Brawner

The corn was lost at the time of the battle. The battle was all around my father's house, and the Quartermaster came for supplies by the order (the soldiers said) of Gen. King, and stated that he would bring receipts, but the battle came on, and we did not get any receipts. This was the 28th of August 1862 – the day of the second battle of Bull Run. Soldiers came and got the corn; I saw them take it. I heard them say they would bring receipts. I can't say how much corn they took: it was all old corn, — at least there was a small crop growing; I suppose it was part old and part new.....

The cow was killed at that time in the barn-yard. She was found dead in the barn-yard, and of course she must have been killed. She was

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left there when we left the place. I don't know whether they used her for beef or not, because we left the place early the next morning before light. The battle was raging so furiously we could not stay.

The hogs were killed at the same time. I don't remember how many there were. I saw some of them had been butchered: after we went back to the house we saw where they had been butchered.

The horse was shot and died from wounds at the same time.

The house and kitchen furniture were destroyed at the same time: also the garden: the garden was all trampled down, I supposed, and the vegetables destroyed. The farming tools were also destroyed at the same time. The fowls were used at the same time

...

Archive Office, War Department, November 30, 1875

Case of John C. Brawner, Prince William Co., Va.

A man named "Brawner" is mentioned in Official report of the battle of Bull Run and is thanked for services as follows:

"To Messrs McLean, Wilcoxon, Kinchels and Brawner, it is their due to say, have placed me and the country under great obligation for the information relative to this region, which has enabled me to avail myself of its defensive features and resources. They were found ever ready to give me their time without stint or reward." (See Battle Reports, 1861).

[in another hand:] Dec. 11, '71: Reported Rejected.

Archive Office, War Department, March 31, 1879

John C. Brawner, Prince William Co., Va.

Mr. Brawner sold to the Confederate States 3000 lbs. Hay at 75 cts. Am[oun]t \$22.50.

Paid at Centerville, Va., Dec. 9th, 1861, by Capt. John Page, Q.M. [Quartermaster], C.S.A.

...

[in another hand:] REJECTED 1871.