

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

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# In the Matter of A. P. Grover

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A Transcription of Testimony

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From

The Miscellaneous Documents of  
the House of Representatives

October 25, 1867

From  
THE MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENTS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES -  
1868

IN THE MATTER OF A. P. GROVER.  
COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS,

Louisville, Ky., October 25, 1867.

J. B. ENGLISH, sworn and examined.

To Mr. Scofield: I live in Owenton, Kentucky. I know nothing personally about the firing into a steamboat on the Kentucky river. The occurrence took place some distance from where I live. I only know of it by hearsay. I saw Mr. Ton Claxton, the pilot of the boat, a few days afterwards. He had a hole shot through his hat, and he told me it was done on the ascent of the Kentucky river; that he was ordered to stop, and was then fired upon. The boat was the Dove, or the Bluewing, I believe, plying between Louisville and Carrollton.

To Mr. Grover: There were no government arms on board, but it was supposed there were. It seems that James B. Clay sent a letter to our town requesting Captain Holmes to arrest the Kentucky river boat, as she was going up with government arms. Holman declined to have anything to do with it. Then the messenger mounted his horse and left the place. I know Mr. Grover very well. I have not known him to commit any act in opposition to the government. I recollect his mailer a speech in Owenton in March, 1861, and that speech, as I understood it, encouraged secession or rebellion. I replied to it, and took the opposite grounds defending the Union. Mr. Grover said that if the question progressed he would certainly go south; that Mr. Lincoln had his apologists, and I seemed to be one of them. I understood, throughout the whole of the war, that Mr. Grover's sympathies were with the South. He did not take up arms. I was the provost marshal of my county. Mr. Grover came before me and took the oath of allegiance, in 1862. All Mr. Grover's acts, up to a certain point, were with the Democratic party, or the secession party, or the rebel party—the terms seem to be synonymous. We were together in the legislature in 1864-'65. I did say to several gentlemen that I did not know what the matter was with Mr. Grover, that he was acting with the radical party. This was in reference to a vote on a resolution for an investigation into the conduct of military officers. In the speech it Owenton on the third Monday in March, 1861, Mr. Grover said he would go south, and he said to me, " Sir, what way will you go? Will you go north, or south? I told him I did not choose to go either way; that I thought Kentucky was a fixture, and that it was not our business to go either way, but simply to live under the government of the United States, and obey the Constitution and laws. The substance of Mr. Grover's speech was advising the people of Kentucky to go with the South. I was opposing the principles of secession war of rebellion, and we seemed to differ about it. Mr. Grover advised me to take the office of provost marshal, and assisted me to get it.

DUVALL ENGLISH, sworn and examined.

To Mr. Scofield: About the commencement of the war and about the time of the establishment of the federal camp Dick Robinson, near the Kentucky river, we had an organization in the State known as the Kentucky State guard. I was a member of it. A despatch was sent by James B. Clay, who was captain of a State guard company at Lexington, to a gentleman in Owenton, stating that a boat would come from Cincinnati up the Kentucky river loaded with federal arms, and that the boat must be captured. This despatch was sent to Captain Holman, who commanded one of the State guard companies at Owenton, and he refused to pay any attention to it. I afterwards learned that a boat came up the Kentucky river, not loaded with arms, however, and was stopped. The despatch was read at the Baptist association in Owenton at night. The people seemed to be in a great state of excitement and gathered together and went to the lock to capture the boat. A gentleman told me that he was the adjutant of the command, and Mr. Grover brigadier general commanding; that they went to the lock; that the boat did not come up that evening as expected, and that Mr. Grover and the rest went away. The affair seemed to be tragical in the beginning and quite farcical in the end. Jim Ford was the man who said he was adjutant, and Mr. Grover brigadier general commanding. I understood, of course, that he was joking. I have no knowledge whatever of Mr. Grover having any connection with the matter. I remember that Mr. Grover assisted me to get a position in the federal army at Frankfort. Mr. Grover was regarded as being in sympathy with the South ; but I do not know that he took any part in aiding the South. I heard Mr. Grover's speech at Owenton in March, 1861. The gist of it was that if Kentucky did not secede, he himself would pack up and go south. He never did secede, however.

A. HOLMAN sworn and examined.

To Mr. Scofield: Hive in Louisville, Kentucky. I know nothing positively of Mr. Grover's connection with the firing into a steamboat on the Kentucky river in 1861. I was at that time in command of a company of the State guard. I received a notice directed to the sheriff of our county from Mr. James B. Clay for me to bring my company up to Owenton to assist in the capture of a boat loaded with Lincoln muskets and ammunition. I declined doing so. I know nothing of Mr. Grover's connection with the affair, as I was not there. I only have it from hearsay, and I have never heard it from himself.

H. G. SMITH sworn and examined.

To Mr. Grover: I live in Owenton, Kentucky. I have known Mr. Grover since 1848. I know nothing of his encouraging enlistments in the rebel army. I proposed to join the confederate army myself, and consulted Mr. Grover as a friend and as an attorney, and he advised me to return and stay with my family. That was in July, 1862. I was present on the occasion of the stopping of the steamboat on the Kentucky river. It was reported that a boat was going up the river with arms, and that it was to be stopped. Men, women, and children were excited and disturbed about it. I rode over to the river to find out what was going on, crossed and went up to the lock. There was a large number of men there. I did not see Mr. Grover at all. We inquired into the cause of the excitement and found that the whole thing was a misapprehension. I understood that Mr. Grover was there. The crowd was composed of men of all political proclivities. The boat was lying at Burn's landing. I saw no one in command of the crowd. I do not suppose there was anybody in command. It had the appearance of a gathering of people without

organization. It was just a mass of excited people. We were told that the boat had been fired into by Dennis Burns. I saw the old man there. He was drunk. That was the only firing on a steamboat that I heard of. I have had many private conversations with Mr. Grover in reference to the rebellion, and he always contended for neutrality, and thought that Kentucky ought to keep out of the thing. He did not deny the fact that he sympathized with the south, but he was opposed to secession, opposed to fighting, and desirous that men should remain at home and keep quiet. I understood that to be his position all the time. During the last canvass Mr. Jacob, who ran against Mr. Grover, made use of Mr. Grover's votes in favor of the expulsion of two members of the legislature on account of disloyalty, and spoke of the thing to induce men not to vote for Grover. Mr. Grover said he felt justified in voting as he did, and that he had no apology to make for it.

JAMES A. DUNCAN sworn and examined.

To Mr. Grover: I live in Owenton, Kentucky. I have been intimately acquainted with Mr. Grover over twelve years. I am a practicing lawyer. I was a Union man originally, and during the troubles. Our relations have been intimate and confidential. I recollect Mr. Grover's making a speech at Owenton on the third Monday of March, 1861. I also spoke there that day. He and I took the same ground in our speeches as to the position which Kentucky should occupy. That was, that it was the duty of the citizens of Owen county, and of the State at large, to pursue the plan of neutrality that had been broached and was advocated by a number of politicians in the State, in order to avoid taking a hand in the conflict then imminently pending, and to be able to mediate between the contending parties. That was my ground, and I believe that Mr. Grover followed the same course. I know that in all our conversation that was the position he took constantly. He took the ground that no State had a right to secede. My recollection is that his speech at that meeting was exactly in the same line. I recollect the circumstance of the steamboat being fired into on the Kentucky river. Large numbers of citizens went to the river on that occasion. I did not go. Every person was excited about it. Many men went there whom I knew to be strong Union men, drawn there by excitement and curiosity more than anything else. I should have gone there myself if I had had a horse. The people who went were generally unarmed. The conclusion of the whole matter was, that a very clever old gentleman, who is in the habit of drinking, and who was drunk at the time with two or three other cronies as drunk as himself, fired into a regular packet coming up the river. My understanding from Mr. Burns himself was, that he was running an independent affair of his own at his own landing, and that when a boat refused to lie to there, he would compel her to do so. That is the substance of the whole story.