



“The Columbia County Troubles” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, Nov. 3, 1864

Trials of the Prisoners- Further Developments.
Special Correspondence of the Inquirer.

The trial of WILLIAM APPLEMAN, the ex-Justice of the Peace, another of the alleged conspirators was commenced on Monday. Very little testimony in addition to what has already appeared in THE INQUIRER, has thus far been elicited. No new witnesses have been heard in this case. Great uniformity must, of course, characterize the testimony. Organized resistance to the draft and the officers entrusted with the execution of the law, is proven beyond peradventure. It only remains, in these subsequent cases, to ascertain the relations of the prisoners to such organization and resistance. According to the evidence one would think WILLIAM APPLEMAN has been closely connected with these conspiracies.

One of the counsel for the defense, who so summarily deserted poor SAMUEL KLINE on the allegation that “their longer presence might seem to lend some sanction to the jurisdiction of the Commission which was contested, has as suddenly reappeared in the trial of WILLIAM APPLEMAN. On this occasion no protest is entered against the jurisdiction of the Commission. Truly, “consistently thou art a jewel.” SAMUEL KLINE, as he sat alone before this tribunal, deserted by the legal gentlemen who had so ably sustained his predecessor in adversity, wept bitter tears. But alone and unprompted by legal counsel, it is conceded he made the best defense of all. His tears were more eloquent than the sophistries of attorneys. Not a heart around that table was unmoved. After the trial was concluded he selected a clerk of the court as his (?) and he dictated an honest confession of his wrong deeds, promising to abstain from their commission hereafter, and asked the clemency of the Commission.

Mr. GERE, the counsel for the defense, has kept up a brisk cross-firing since his reappearance. Ever effort is made to break down the witnesses for the prosecution, but with little success.

It appears that there were two classes of meetings among these conspirators- the one class open, and the other secret. The former were armed assemblages, confessedly to resist the officers of the law, and there has been no difficulty in ascertaining their proceedings at these meetings. But the secret assemblies are still involved in much mystery. Witnesses seem afraid to make full and unbiased statements in regard to these private proceedings. Much difficulty is experienced in fixing the true character and connection of these secret meetings, save in their opposition to the conscription. It would seem, however, as if they were really branches of the Knights of the Golden Circle; it would seem indeed, as if at some past period authorized agents of the Knights of the Golden Circle had planted the germs of that organization in Pennsylvania, and that these different nuclei gradually expanded; they were but exotics, and could not be expected to grow to their pristine form and grandeur in loyal old Pennsylvania. The instructions of these agents gradually became forgotten; the original forms and ritual were lost, or they

naturally took upon themselves a ruder type in the harder soil of the loyal North. So that none of the imposing grandeur of a great secret order is manifested in these organizations.

HUGH SCHULTZE testifies that he was at a secret meeting a year ago, in Jackson township, near the Waldron Church. He implicates a number of men in this meeting, which was sworn by WM. APPLEMAN "to support the Constitution as it is, and the Union as it was, and to defend each other as far as they could to save one another from the conscription or draft." JOHN DEER presided. He attended another and similar secret meeting near Union Church, about a month and a half after the first. He was sworn in with the rest. He had heard the meetings styled "secret meetings" and "Copperhead meetings," and he had heard them called "Golden Circle." He was asked several times by WILLIAM E. ROBERTS and others, why he did not come to the meetings regularly. He reiterated the object of armed meetings.

Question by Defense-Was not the meeting which APPLEMAN attended held solely for the purpose of devising means to raise the quota?

Answer- No sir, I did not hear anything of that

By Defense-When you said the obligation was to help each other, did you not mean that they were to help each other by peaceable means, that is, by subscriptions &c

Answer- I don't know of hearing that particularly, except they were to help each other and defend each other. They did not say how. According to the way I understood it, if a man was drafted they were to save him from it, and by the signs they were to slip him away.

CHARLES GIBBONS was again examined. He was at a meeting a year ago, where on HADLEY made a speech on slavery, reiterating the course of the speech that the Union League was arming to drive the Democrats off to war, and that they must arm to meet the league. HADLEY and RUTAN (the preacher) led the meeting. WILLIAM APPLEMAN was appointed to organize meetings in other places. APPLEMAN had a revolver at the meeting at RAUTZ's where he threatened to shoot Captain SILVER, the enrolling officer.

By the Defense- What were these secret meetings called?

Answer- They called them the Democratic Union Club; some called them the K.G.C.

By Defense- When you were sworn in did you not hear the whole of the oath?

Answer- I suppose I heard the whole of it.

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RICHARD STYLES was also examined. He repeated the words of APPLEMAN, that there were not prisons enough to hold those engaged in the secret meetings.

By the Defense- Did not WILLIAM APPLEMAN say to you he would support his Government and its administration at all times, as a loyal citizen ought to do?

Answer- I do not recollect any such conversation.

By Defense- Did he not say that in substance when he asked you to subscribe to raise funds to fill the quota?

Answer- Yes sir, a day or two after the arrests were made, about the last of August. He said, however, he was opposed to the prosecution of the war; he thought it was wrong- not the way for Christians to act- and he thought we ought to have peace.

NATHAN J. HESS repeated his testimony in regard to the recent and public meetings, and their object to resist the draft. At the meeting at CASE'S an article in the *New York Day Book* was read, declaring that the draft was unconstitutional.

By the Defense- Did not WILLIAM APPLEMAN counsel the drafted men to be peaceable?

Answer- Not that I know of.

By the Defense- Did he not raise money for bounty?

Answer- I believe he did, I saw him going around for that purpose after the soldiers were up there.

By the Defense- If WILLIAM APPLEMAN had desired to harm the soldiers, could he not have done so?

Answer- I suppose if he had met some one off alone he could have harmed him, but not the forces.

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Witness further said that JOHN KARNES, who was a member, asserted they were the Knights of the Golden Circle, and he reiterated the object was to resist the draft or conscription. He had heard outsiders and some members call it the Knights of the Golden Circle, never heard any other name applied except after the arrests when he had heard that another name had been adopted. All the meetings were [illegible].

By the Defense- From what you heard at these meetings do you know that they were (?) political?

Answer- I do suppose they were in opposition to the party in power; they were also opposed to drafting men and taking them away to war; they said that the partying power had made an unconstitutional law in the conscript act.

By the Defense- Were they not gotten on solely to counteract the (?) of the Union League?

Answer- I do not know that they were.