

4-4-1856

Report : Memorial of E. Linn

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MARCH 4, 1856.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. EVANS made the following

REPORT.

[To accompany Bill S. 138.]

The Committee on Revolutionary Claims made the following report on the memorial of Elizabeth A. R. Linn, praying for commutation and interest for the revolutionary services of Colonel William Linn:

There is no doubt that Colonel Linn was a brave and gallant officer. He lived on the frontier of Virginia, and there is reason to believe he participated and rendered effectual service in all the border warfare with the Indians which preceded the revolution. It is difficult, after so long an interval of time, to trace the history of his military services during the war of the revolution, but your committee are of opinion that the facts hereinafter set forth are substantially established by the evidence. In 1776, George Gibson raised a company on the frontier in the service of Virginia, with which he marched to Williamsburgh. In this company Linn was a lieutenant. The State of Virginia being then much in want of gunpowder, deputed Gibson and Linn to go to New Orleans to endeavor to procure it. They undertook the perilous enterprize and descended the Ohio and Mississippi, then passing through an unknown wilderness, and whose shores were inhabited by powerful and hostile savages. With much address and some peril Gibson succeeded in procuring 12,000 pounds of powder. That part of it which was destined for the frontier was put on board the boat in charge of Linn, who, after encountering all the hardships and dangers of a voyage up the rivers, succeeded at the end of six months in delivering it safely at Pittsburg. The importance of this service may be estimated by the fact that it was by means of this supply of ammunition that Clark was enabled to conquer and retain the northwestern or Illinois country.

In consideration of this service, Gibson and Linn were offered by the State of Virginia a pecuniary reward or promotion in the army. They chose the latter. Gibson received the command of a regiment in which Linn was appointed a captain. This regiment was known as Gibson's or the first Virginia State regiment. During the campaign of 1777, when the American army was much reduced and hard pressed by the enemy, at the earnest request of General Washington,

the governor of Virginia sent Gibson's and another Virginia State regiment to join the continental army; and that State afterwards, by an act of the general assembly, transferred Gibson's regiment to the continental line to supply the place of one of her regiments captured by the enemy. In this service the regiment remained until 1781, when, being much reduced, it returned to Virginia to recruit.—(See the reports on the petitions of William Vawlers and George Gibson, Revolutionary Claims, 256 and 357.) There is no doubt that Captain Linn was with his regiment during this time, and that he participated in all the actions in the years 1778, 1779, and 1780, although there is no documentary evidence of the fact. The next historical evidence of his services is that he descended the Ohio river in a canoe alone to join Clark, who was then descending the river to attack the British and Indians in the Illinois country. At the battle of Pequa, on the Chillicothe plains, Linn commanded a battalion and was greatly distinguished for his bravery and gallantry. After this there is no evidence of his services, but there can be no reasonable doubt, from his character for bravery and enterprize, that he remained with Clark and assisted in the conquest of that noble country.

Gibson's regiment, in 1831, was acknowledged by the Secretary of War to have been a continental regiment from 1777; and by the act of Congress of July 5, 1832, Congress assumed to pay the debt due by Virginia to her officers for half-pay. Under an act of the legislature of that State, Gibson's regiment is one of those expressly named in the act of Congress. The resolutions of Virginia on the subject of half-pay were identical with those of the Congress of the United States. All who served to the end of the war, or were displaced by the reorganization of the army, were included. There can be no doubt, then, that the officers of that regiment were entitled either because they served to the end of the war, or because supernumerary when the new arrangement took place, January 1, 1781.

The only question of any difficulty is to assign to Colonel Linn his proper rank. It is known with certainty that he was a captain; at a later period he commanded a battalion, and was known to his cotemporaries by the title of colonel. Under these circumstances your committee have concluded to give him the rank of colonel. There is no record evidence of his promotion, yet it is a reasonable inference, from the known facts, that he had risen to that grade. The committee report a bill in conformity to this report.