

5-9-1860

Report on a Transfer of the Indian Bureau

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MAY 9, 1860.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. POWELL made the following

REPORT.

[To accompany bill S. 439.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the petition of Mira M. Alexander, only surviving child of Major George Madison, deceased, report:

That George Madison, the father of the petitioner, before he reached the age of twenty-one, was a soldier in the war of the revolution, attached to the command of Colonel Preston. He was also engaged in the battles which were fought by the early settlers of Kentucky with the Indians. He accompanied Generals Scott, Wilkinson, Adair, and St. Clair in the campaigns in the Northwest Territory. He was captain of a company in St. Clair's defeat, in 1791, and, at the head of his company in that disastrous defeat, had his arm broken by a ball. His limb was so torn and shattered, and such was the loss of blood, that he was incapable of moving from the field with the retreating army, and was only saved by the affection of a soldier of his company, who bore him from the field on his back. In Adair's defeat, in 1792, he was shot through the hips.

Immediately after the declaration of war, in 1812, with Great Britain, he raised a battalion of volunteers and repaired to the frontiers of Ohio to save them from the incursions of the Indians, and to drive the English invaders from Detroit. He led on his command in the battle of the 18th January at the river Raisin, and his courage and conduct were conspicuous in securing the victory of that day.

On the disastrous 22d January, at the same place, his was the only portion of the army that maintained their position. He continued the battle after the troops under General Winchester, Colonel Lewis, and Colonel Allen were defeated, and destroyed in the retreat. He ordered back the flag which brought him intelligence from the British line that the captured American general had entered into a capitulation for the surrender of those under his command. At the defeat at the river Raisin he was taken prisoner. He was conveyed to Quebec, and suffered a long and rigorous confinement in that city. The fatigue and hardships encountered by Major Madison during a winter's campaign in a rigorous climate, had enfeebled his constitution before he became a prisoner, and the dampness and coldness of the jail at Quebec fastened

the disease on his lungs and brought him prematurely to the grave. He lingered only a few years, and died in 1816.

The people of Kentucky had just called him to the chief magistracy by an unanimous suffrage. They had, however, the misfortune to see the anticipated grateful installation turned to a funeral. His body was brought from the residence of a friend, some forty miles from the capital, (whither he had repaired in hopes of recruiting his strength,) to the government mansion, that they might have the mournful satisfaction of paying those honors to him, although dead, which they hoped to confer on him while living.

From the evidence of John Smith, Colonel Charles S. Todd, and William S. Waller, on file with the papers, and the evidence of Hon. John J. Crittenden and Francis P. Blair, Esq., who testified personally before the committee, we have no doubt but that Major Madison died of disease contracted in the service and whilst he was a prisoner.

It was also proven before the committee, by the witnesses aforesaid, that the petitioner is the only surviving child of Major Madison; that the petitioner was but five or six years old at the time of the death of her father; that the petitioner is a widow, with several children; and is now blind and poor.

It appears that no pension or bounty land has ever been paid to Major Madison or his descendents. In consequence of wounds received in battle, he, under the existing laws, would have been entitled to a pension while living. At the time of his death, the petitioner, being only five or six years old, would have been entitled to a pension until she was sixteen years old. That, however, was not asked.

The petitioner, the only child of one of the most gallant and meritorious officers and patriots that this country has produced, blind and poor, with a helpless family, now asks relief, to which she would have been entitled under the law, had she before applied for it, but which was not asked, because, though poor, she was unwilling to ask, because she then had means to subsist.

Your committee report a bill for her relief, giving her a pension of \$35 a month for her life, commencing on the 1st of January, 1850. We cause it to date back to 1850 because, at that time, we conceive the proof sufficiently made to entitle her to relief, and for the additional reason that, for a period of ten years, immediately after her father's death, she would have been entitled to a pension, had she applied for it. We ask the early and favorable action of the Senate.