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On the Case of M. Harris

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S. Rep. No. 847, 45th Cong., 3rd Sess. (1879)

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 26, 1879.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. VOORHEES, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted the following

R E P O R T :

[To accompany bill H. R. 3816.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. No. 3816) granting a pension to Mary G. Harris, report:

That Mary G. Harris is the widow of Col. John Harris, late commandant of the United States Marine Corps, who died on the 12th of May, 1864, from disease contracted while in the service of the United States. Record evidence is presented to show that Colonel Harris entered the Marine Corps in April, 1814, and was on active duty until the close of the last war with Great Britain; that in 1815 he sailed in the frigate *Guerriere*, under Captain Decatur, and assisted in the capture of an Algerine frigate; that in 1825 he was made a captain by brevet; that in 1836 he commanded a company of marines in the Creek war; again in Florida, and for gallantry and good conduct during that war, particularly in the affair of "Hatchee Lustee," he was appointed major by brevet; that in 1848 he commanded a battalion of marines in the conquest of Mexico; and that at the period of his death he was in the full discharge of his duties as colonel commandant of the Marine Corps.

That the following favorable report was made at the first session of the Forty-third Congress (Report 294):

The committee recommend an increase of pension to \$50 per month, to Mary G. Harris, widow of John Harris, colonel commanding Marine Corps, in view of precedents. He served in Marine Corps from 1814 to 1857, when he contracted disease, resulting in his death in 1864. Under the laws in force at the time of his disability, his widow would be entitled to pension of \$50 per month, as his rank was equal to that of captain in the Navy. She is in receipt of pension of \$30 per month, under act of July 14, 1862, but on account of long service, high rank, and his right to come under laws prior to the act of 1862, your committee recommend the passage of accompanying bill.

And that this bill passed the House of Representatives June 16, 1874, as recommended in said report. He contracted the disease of which he died, in 1857, and the laws then in force would give \$50 a month to his rank; but the bureau decided that as he remained in the service until 1864 (after passage of the new law of 1862), he could not be considered disabled while in the service, and before the passage of the act of 1862, but stated that, in view of Colonel Harris's service in the Navy, the widow's claim for higher rate of pension would receive favorable consideration from Congress. He entered the Marine Corps in 1814, and was fifty years in the service, and made an honorable record.

Your committee recommend the passage of the bill.