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Report : Petition of E. Connor

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

FEBRUARY 28, 1885.—Ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 411.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 411) granting a pension to Elizabeth Conner, having considered the same, respectfully report:

The material facts in this case are set out in the report of the House Committee on Pensions, made at the last session of the present Congress, being the same submitted on Elizabeth Conner's case by the Committee on Pensions of the House, second session Forty-seventh Congress, as follows:

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill H. R. 6075, after duly considering the same, are of the opinion that Conner was an extraordinarily brave man, and that he was of unusual service to our country in its early history as soldier, scout, spy, and interpreter, and that his aged widow is entitled to a pension under existing laws. Although the official record evidence was lost or burnt, yet from the affidavits of Abraham Williams and James M. Ray, and from history referred to herewith, and all made a part of this report, your committee think the facts are fully established showing that Conner was, as before stated, a brave soldier, and therefore report the bill back and recommend favorable consideration.

STATE OF INDIANA,
Marion County:

Marion circuit court.

Before me, Austin H. Brown, clerk of said Marion circuit court, personally came this the 16th day of May, 1878, James M. Ray, a resident of Indianapolis, in said county, aged seventy-seven years on December 23, 1877, who, being duly sworn, deposeth and saith as follows, to wit:

I became acquainted with William Conner in the spring of the year 1821, and his present widow, Elizabeth Conner, at their family residence on White River, Indiana, four miles south of the present town of Noblesville, he being there engaged as a trader with the Delaware and other Indians, and I then learned from him that he had been long so engaged as a trader with Indians of that region, for many years previous to the war of 1812, and that he was actively engaged as a spy and guide during that war for the United States troops, under the command of General William H. Harrison, in contest with the Indians who had become in that region partially hostile to the United States. That I remained closely intimate with said William Conner until the day of his death, on the 8th of August, 1855; and, further, that in the month of June, 1823, I traveled on horseback, in company with the said William Conner, from his said home on White River, Indiana, to Sandwich, Canada, nearly opposite Detroit, Mich., to aid him in settling his account with a British merchant there, named McGregor, for goods furnished him by the said McGregor to trade with the Indians just previous to the war of 1812, and while on that journey through the State of Ohio we met a party

of several Indians on foot, each dressed in a scarlet blanket which they had just received as their annual present from the British Government in Canada for fighting for said Government against the United States in the war of 1812, and I noticed in passing said Indians that the last one of them stopped short on observing said Conner and scowled sternly at him until we were out of their sight, when the said William Conner remarked to me that it would have been dangerous for him to have met that Indian alone, as his scowl proved that he recognized him as the guide of the United States troops led by Lieut. Col. John B. Campbell to the Mississinwa towns which were burned during the battle of the 18th of December, 1812.

I will also state, as deputy clerk for the circuit court at Connersville, Ind., I issued a marriage license to the said William Conner and Elizabeth Chapman just previous to the 30th day of November, 1820; that I engaged Fielding Hazelrig, esq., a justice of the peace for Fayette County, Indiana, to unite them in marriage.

For further evidence I refer as to the identity of said William Conner's services in the said battle of Mississinwa in December, 1812, to the following extracts from the report of Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell to General Harrison, which will be found on the records and files of the proper Departments in Washington City, which I annex from Dillon's History of Indiana on pages 511 to 513, to wit:

"At four on the morning of the 18th I ordered the reveille to be beaten, and the officers convened at my fire. A short time afterwards, while we were in council, and about half an hour before day, my camp was most ferociously attacked by a large party of Indians, preceded by and accompanied with a most hideous yell. This immediately broke up the council, and every man ran to his post. The attack commenced upon that angle of the camp formed by the left of Captain Hopkins' troops and the right of Captain Garrard's, but in a few seconds became general from the entrance of the right to the left of Ball's squadron. The enemy boldly advanced to within a few yards of the lines, and seemed determined to rush in. The guards posted at the different redoubts retreated to camp, and dispersed among their different companies, thus leaving me without a disposable force. Captain Smith, of the Kentucky Light Dragoons, who commanded one of the redoubts, in a handsome and military manner kept his position, although abandoned by half his guards, until ordered to fill up the interval in the rear line between the regiment and squadron.

"The redoubt at which Captain Pierce commanded was first attacked. The captain maintained his position until it was too late to get within the lines. He received two balls through his body and was tomahawked. He died bravely and much lamented. The enemy then took possession of Captain Pierce's redoubt, and poured in a tremendous fire upon the angle to the right and left of which were posted Hopkins's and Garrard's troops. But the fire was as warmly returned. Not an inch of ground was yielded. Every man, officer and soldier, stood firm, and animated and encouraged each other. The fire became warm on the left of the squadron, at which Captain Markle's troops were posted, and the right of Elliott's company, which, with Markle's, formed an angle of the camp, was severely annoyed by the enemy's fires. I had assisted in forming the infantry composed of Elliott's company of the Nineteenth United States Regiment, Butler's Pittsburgh Blues, and Alexander's Pennsylvania Riflemen, and ordered them to advance to the brink of a declivity from which they could more effectually defend themselves, and harass the enemy if they should attempt an attack on that line.

"While I was thus engaged, Major Ball rode up to me and observed that he was hard pressed, and must be relieved. I galloped immediately to the left wing with an intention of ordering Captain Trotter's troops to reinforce the squadron, but was there informed that the enemy was seen approaching in that direction, and believing it improper on second thought to detach a large troop from that line, which also covered an angle of the camp, I determined to give the relief from the infantry. I wheeled my horse, and met Major McDowell, who observed that the spies and guides, under the command of Capt. Patterson Baine, consisting of ten men, were unemployed. We rode to them together and ordered Captain Baine to the support of the squadron. Seven of them, to wit, James Adrian, William Conner, Silas McCullough, James Thompson, James Noggs, John Ruland, and Joseph G. McClelland, followed their brave leader and rendered most effectual assistance."

I, James M. Ray, further depose and say that the said Elizabeth Conner, widow of the said William Conner, has remained unmarried since the day of his death; and also further depose and say that I attended and was present at the funeral of said William Conner at Noblesville, Ind., soon after the day of his death, which had occurred on the 8th day of August, 1855; and I also further depose and say that I have a distinct remembrance of the said William Conner stating to me, after my personal acquaintance with him in 1821, that, being a spy and guide to the army of General Harrison in the battle of the Thames on the 5th day of October, 1813, he was called upon by the commanders in that battle at the close of the fight to come forward and ascertain certainly whether one of the Indians killed was really Tecumseh, as it was

known by the other spies that he, Conner, had very intimately known him, while dealing with the Indians as a trader before the war, and I am confident the name of the said William Conner, as a spy, will be found enrolled in the proper records of the War Office, among the rolls of the spies and guides engaged for the United States in that battle; and doubtless some time after the date of that battle he was honorably discharged.

And I hereby refer to the United States treaty with the Indians, made at Greenville, Ohio, on the 22d day of July, 1814, General William H. Harrison, and Lewis Cass, as governor, being commissioners. The said William Conner is named as one of the sworn interpreters, as will be found and stated in the United States Statutes at Large, No. 7, page 120, on treaties.

JAMES M. RAY.

In testimony of all of which I, Austin H. Brown, clerk of said Marion circuit court, hereunto set my hand and the official seal of said court, at Indianapolis, this 16th day of May, 1878.

[SEAL.]

AUSTIN H. BROWN,
Clerk Marion Circuit Court.

STATE OF INDIANA,
Marion County:

On this 19th day of July, 1879, comes Abraham Williams, who, being sworn, says that he is now eighty-seven years of age past (born February, 1792); that he served in the Army of the United States, in the war of 1812-'13, in Throckmorton's Kentucky militia, for which his name is now inscribed on the pension-rolls of Indianapolis agency as No. 1241 (2) (a) of the date of 18th June, 1871.

He further says that while in the service in the year 1813, in the month of October, and while in Canada, opposite or nearly opposite Detroit, Mich., he met William Conner, whose widow, Elizabeth Conner, is now an applicant for a pension under the act of Congress of —, 1878.

He further says that at that time said William Conner was in the service of the United States as an Indian spy and interpreter, in which capacity he met him on several occasions at and near to the town of Sandwich, in Canada. He does not now recollect to what particular command said Conner was attached in his capacity of spy and interpreter, but understood then and now believes he was attached to the command generally and directed by the commandants to points of necessity. During the stay of affiant at that and other points in Canada near thereto he met said William Conner a number of times and knows that he was engaged in said service for the period in all of about ten or fifteen days, and believes that he had been with the command from its organization, and during that time he met said Conner quite a number of times. He afterwards, in 1825, became a neighbor and well acquainted with said William Conner, and knew him and his family until the death of said William Conner. When he first met said William Conner in Hamilton County, Indiana, he recognized him at once, and on many occasions afterwards he and the said William Conner talked over the incidents and circumstances of their meeting in Canada.

He has known the applicant, Elizabeth Conner, for the last fifty years and knows that she is the widow of the said William Conner. Affiant is old and feeble, or he would be able to give other incidents of his acquaintance and intercourse.

his
ABRAHAM + WILLIAMS.
mark.

Witnesses:

T. N. WILLIAMS,
WM. PAYNE,
BETTY MASSEY.

I, Fabius M. Finch, a notary public in and for the county of Marion and State of Indiana, certify that on the 19th day of October, 1879, the affiant, Abraham Williams, appeared before me, and after being fully and thoroughly requested to give his recollection of the facts above named, gave with much deliberation and detail the facts above set out, which, at his request, were reduced to writing as above, and after being read to him were subscribed and sworn to as here set out in the presence of the subscribing witnesses. I further certify that I have had an acquaintance of about fifty years with said Williams, and have heard him talk about some of the incidents named in this statement more than forty years ago.

Witness my hand and notarial seal this day and year above given.

[SEAL.]

FABIUS M. FINCH,
Notary Public.

Your committee refer to the following:

[Niles' Register, vol. iii, September, 1812, to March, 1813, Library House of Representatives, page 331.]

GENERAL ORDERS.]

HEADQUARTERS N. W. ARMY,
Franklinton, January 2, 1813.

The commanding general has received from Lieut. Col. Campbell, the official report of his late expedition against the Massassineway villages. The conduct of the colonel and his gallant detachment has been in every respect such as the general had anticipated.

Lieut. Col. Campbell's official account will be transmitted to the Secretary of War; it will be published to the world, etc.

The officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates, who were fortunate enough to have an opportunity of distinguishing themselves by their valor or good conduct are as follows:

Kentucky Dragoons. * * *

Major Ball's squadron. * * *

Pittsburgh Blues. * * *

Nineteenth U. S. Inf'ty. * * *

Spies and guides: Capt. Patterson Bain. * * * William Conner. * * *

(Copy.)

L. HERKILL,
Assistant Deputy Adj't. Gen.

JOHN PAYNE,

First Lieutenant Kentucky V. L. D., and Adj't to Detachments.

Battle was Dec. 17, 1812.

Indians were Delaware & Miami tribes.

John B. Campbell, Lt. Col. 19th Reg. U. S. Inf'ty.

Gen. W. H. Harrison was in command of N. W. Army.

The committee move to amend the present bill by striking out the name "Conner" and inserting the name "Conner," the latter being the proper name of the person in question.

Your committee report the bill favorably, and recommend that it do pass.