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Samuel A. Edmondson [to accompany bill H. R.  
no. 142].

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H.R. Rep. No. 132, 23rd Cong., 1st Sess. (1834)

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SAMUEL A. EDMONDSON.

[To accompany bill H. R. No. 142.]

JANUARY 7, 1834.

Mr. E. WHITTLESEY, from the Committee of Claims, made the following

REPORT:

*The Committee of Claims, to which was referred the petition of Samuel A. Edmondson, report:*

That the petitioner states he went express to convey an order from Gen. Gaines to Nashville after the massacre at Fort Mimms, in August, 1813; that he travelled alone through the wilderness, and through the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations, and that the route then travelled to Nashville was about 500 miles; and that he performed the entire journey in about twelve days. He says he was compelled to expend, in procuring horses and other contingent expenses, about \$240; and that immediately after his return he was taken sick and was dangerously ill with the bilious fever, which seriously impaired his constitution. The object the commanding general had in view by sending an express to Nashville, was to obtain a military force to protect the infant settlements, and to succor his command, and secure the public property from falling into the hands of the Indians. It appears, by a letter from General Gaines, that the petitioner was selected on account of his firmness and intrepidity; and that he executed the hazardous and dangerous trust reposed in him to the entire satisfaction of the commanding general, and that timely assistance was rendered by the militia of Tennessee, which saved the infant settlements and the public property in that quarter. General Gaines states, after the petitioner returned, he let him have one hundred dollars, which he got of the late Judge Toulmin, as he thinks, who was at the time mail contractor, and that he holds the petitioner responsible for said money, and for the bills he has since paid for horses furnished the petitioner on his, General Gaines', order. General Gaines says he thinks the hundred dollars paid by him to the petitioner was charged by Judge Toulmin to the General Post Office.

On what principle General Gaines expects to hold the petitioner responsible for the money paid to him, and for the bills he has paid for horses furnished on his own order, the committee do not know. Whatever money General Gaines let the petitioner have, and for which he is accountable, should be accounted for by such vouchers as would enable General Gaines to settle his account; but in this case it appears that General Gaines himself has not been held responsible for the money paid to the petitioner, and,

therefore, would not be tolerated in holding the petitioner responsible to him; and the horses were furnished, not on the credit of the petitioner, nor for his benefit, but at the request of General Gaines, and for the common good of the country; and the committee do not see what right General Gaines has to charge these bills over to the petitioner.

The committee are satisfied the petitioner rendered very important services to the country, and for which he ought to receive adequate compensation. He prays for a grant of land, and the petition has been referred for several years to the Committee on the Public Lands; and at this Congress that committee was discharged from the further consideration of the petition, and the same was referred to the Committee of Claims. This committee can only recommend an allowance in money, if any thing shall be found due to the petitioner.

He says he incurred an expense of about \$240, but he has not produced any testimony to show how much he did expend, and it seems, from General Gaines's letter, that he paid the bills for horses furnished on his order; and, as the route lay through the wilderness, and that owned by the Indians, it is not likely that a relay of horses was often obtained.

John Petchlym and Charles Juzan say that they lived on the route, about 100 miles apart, and let the petitioner have horses at the time referred to in the petition. They do not say, however, whether they held him responsible to pay for the use of their horses or not, nor whether they have received any compensation from him or from General Gaines.

The committee think the petitioner should be remunerated for all moneys expended while performing the service, and as liberal compensation as has been given to others for like services during the late war, taking into consideration the fatigue endured and the risks run; but the committee do not think he should be remunerated for expenses incurred during his sickness—there is no proof it was in consequence of the service. As similar allowances must have been made by the Secretary of War, the committee will report a bill referring the subject to him to make such further allowance as he shall deem just and equitable.

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DEMOPOLIS, (ALA.) July 20, 1830.

SIR: Your letter desiring me to state the circumstances relative to your having been employed by me as an express to carry certain letters from St. Stephen's to the Governor of Tennessee, and other persons in authority in that State, immediately after the fall of Fort Mimms during the late war, has been duly received.

The fall of Fort Mimms, and the depredations by the Creek Indians upon other points of the settlements of Tombigbee, then almost surrounded by the enemy, gave the most serious alarm for the safety of the whole settlement, and for the public property then under my charge, and no other means of safety seemed within our reach, except a speedy reinforcement from Tennessee, or a sudden descent by a competent force from that State upon the northwestern part of the Creek nation. You were at that time a young, active man, and possessed, as I believed, of the firmness and intrepidity necessary to convey to the authorities of Tennessee information of our situation, and our petition for help; and accordingly I applied to you, and

you promptly undertook the service. Letters were immediately prepared, and you set out for Nashville; having received, also, from me, letters to many persons residing in the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations, requesting them to furnish fresh horses on the moment of your arrival at their houses. You arrived at Nashville, as I expected, in a very short time, and delivered my letters, and, as I had anticipated, the asked for aid was promptly afforded, which saved our isolated settlement from further butcheries, and saved to the Government not only the public property then in my charge as United States factor, but produced an army which rendered the most important services to the Government.

After your return to St. Stephen's, I remember to have paid you one hundred dollars on account of your services; most of which, I presume, was exhausted in defraying the expenses of a serious spell of sickness, which I remember you had after your return to St. Stephen's. The hundred dollars paid you I think I received from the late Judge Toulmin, who was at that time a mail contractor. After your partial recovery from the sickness above alluded to, you left St. Stephen's, and no opportunity has since occurred to settle our accounts.

I hold you accountable for the money advanced by me for the expenses of your trip to Nashville, and also for the bills which I have since paid for horses furnished you on my orders, to expedite your trip to Nashville.

I am surprised to hear that you have not succeeded in obtaining ample satisfaction for the important services rendered by you. Governor Blount, General Jackson, Colonel McKee, and many others of our first men in the State of Tennessee and this State, can testify to your services.

The hundred dollars paid you on account, I presume, was charged, by Judge Toulmin, to the General Post Office, and I remember was obtained with much difficulty at that time, and was the only way you could raise money to defray the expenses of your sickness, supposed to have been caused by your exposure and extraordinary activity in conveying the public letters to Nashville.

I write in haste, and remain, respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,

GEO. S. GAINES.

Capt. SAMUEL A. EDMONDSON.