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Report : Mr. Gallinger

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S. Rep. No. 816. 53rd Cong., 3rd Sess. (1895)

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 24, 1895.—Ordered to be printed.

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

REPORT:

[To accompany S. 2599.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (S. 2599) granting a pension to Caroline E. Wessels, have examined the same and report.

The claimant under this bill is the widow of Bvt. Brig. Gen. Henry W. Wessels. She is about 58 years of age, in very infirm health, and without any means of support.

General Wessels graduated at West Point in 1833, and from that time until he was retired at his own request, in January, 1871, was in constant and important military service. He served in the Seminole war in Florida, in the Mexican war, on the frontier in the war with the Indians, and during the war of the rebellion. He was promoted for gallant and meritorious conduct at the battle of Cherubusco, for gallant and meritorious services at the battle of Fair Oaks, Va., for gallant and meritorious services during the rebel attack on Plymouth, N. C., and for gallant and meritorious services during the war, at which time he was breveted brigadier-general. General Wessels died at Dover, Del., in January, 1889.

General Wessels's valuable services in the Mexican war were recognized by the State of Connecticut in 1849 in voting him a magnificent sword. During the latter years of his life he was a severe and continual sufferer from diseases incurred in the service, and was unable to perform any labor or to earn anything in any capacity.

The following letter from Hon. O. H. Platt is important as bearing on the physical and financial condition of the claimant:

UNITED STATES SENATE CHAMBER,
Washington, D. C., January 19, 1895.

GENTLEMEN: I have introduced a bill giving a pension to Mrs. Caroline E. Wessels, widow of Lieut. Col. and Bvt. Gen. H. W. Wessels. In it I mention \$100 a month, but I suppose \$50 is all that can be claimed. The papers introduced with the bill are the same which were filed in 1891, and they correctly state the circumstances under which a pension is asked, with this exception: The widow then stated that she had an income of \$600 a year from property her husband had left her. Since then, however, the investments have become valueless, and she is now entirely without income. She is sick, probably fatally so; at any rate the condition of her health is such that there is no prospect of life being protracted to any great length.

