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Mrs. Mary E. Hamilton.

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MRS. MARY E. HAMILTON.

FEBRUARY 18, 1898.—Referred to the Committee on Pensions, to accompany S. 3807,  
and ordered to be printed.

Mr. COCKRELL presented the following

PETITION OF MRS. MARY E. HAMILTON, WIDOW OF WILSON A.  
HAMILTON, PRAYING THAT SHE BE GRANTED A PENSION.

*To the Mexican veterans who will hold their reunion in St. Joseph, Mo.,  
in August, 1896.*

GENTLEMEN: In 1846, when there was a call for soldiers for the Mexican war, my late husband, Wilson A. Hamilton, was a volunteer in Capt. John Hinton's company, of Boone County, Mo. Captain Hinton's company went to Independence, Mo.; General Doniphan's regiment was full, and Captain Hinton's company was not wanted and was disbanded. Mr. Hamilton was so anxious to go with General Doniphan's army that he went as a teamster. When General Doniphan's army got to Santa Fe, N. Mex., General Doniphan called for volunteers out of his army to act as couriers to bear dispatches to Fort Leavenworth to announce the safe arrival of his army at Santa Fe.

There were four men who volunteered—Wilson A. Hamilton, John Cooper, Robert Burton, and Robert Raider. The four couriers were supplied with pack mules and army rations, with orders to call for supplies at the United States Government posts on their route through the Indian country to Fort Leavenworth.

After leaving camp, the second morning, Raider turned back; said they could not pass through the Indian country; that they would either be killed by the Indians or freeze to death. The other three went on. At times they had so much trouble with the Indians that they could only make a little fire to make coffee for fear that the smoke would attract the Indians, and would have to rest at night without a fire. At one period of the trip the couriers traveled six days and nights, only stopping a little while at a time to make coffee. The cold weather was so severe that they were badly frostbitten. The Indians followed them at one time, wounded John Cooper, and shot Wilson A. Hamilton in the heel with an arrow.

When the couriers reached Fort Leavenworth and announced the safe arrival of General Doniphan's army in Santa Fe there was public joy in all the United States. The couriers had made the quickest trip that had ever been made in crossing the plains—only eighteen days from Santa Fe to Fort Leavenworth. The couriers were badly frostbitten, and Wilson A. Hamilton, from the heavy weight of revolvers that were belted around his body, was suffering from hydrocele, and his heel and

foot had become so swollen and inflamed that he had to go to Lexington, Mo., to have a surgeon perform an operation in taking out the point of the arrow that had broken off in the heel and foot. From hydrocele, caused by the heavy weight of revolvers around the waist in the travel through the plains, and the wound by the arrow in heel and foot, causing rheumatism, Wilson A. Hamilton was a sufferer through life, and which finally caused his death August 23, 1892.

After my husband's death I wished to apply for a pension. As I wished the evidence of Robert Burton and John Cooper—not knowing if they were alive or where they were—I put a notice in the St. Louis (Mo.) Republic requesting to hear from them and any Mexican war veterans who knew the facts above described. In answer to my inquiry in the St. Louis Republic I received a number of answers from persons who had known Wilson A. Hamilton in crossing the plains in General Doniphan's army. One letter was from Mr. Caldwell, of Iowa, who stated that he had lived near John Cooper in northern Iowa some years ago and had often heard him tell of his being one of the couriers who volunteered to carry General Doniphan's dispatches from Santa Fe to Fort Leavenworth, telling the facts as I had put in the St. Louis Republic, but that John Cooper had been paralyzed for three or four years. Messrs. Hale and Chinn, of Lexington, Mo., were very kind in giving me information that I wished.

I sent my petition, inclosing all the evidence I could get, to the Pension Office. I was notified by the Commissioner of Pensions that there was no record in the War Department that Wilson A. Hamilton was employed by General Doniphan as a courier from Santa Fe to Fort Leavenworth. There is no evidence in the War Department or any public documents of the names of the three couriers who were sent by General Doniphan.

My only chance to secure my claim to a pension is to present it to Congress. As all of my evidence is on file in the Pension Department, I can not send you the papers I would like for you to examine. I send you Mr. Rodgers's statement, whose father commanded a company from Callaway County, Mo., and Wilson A. Hamilton was well known to him. And now, gentlemen of the Mexican war veterans, you will confer a favor if you will join in a petition to Congress that my claim be favorably considered, if from the above facts you think the claim is just.

It is my wish to have my claim laid before Congress next session.

Very respectfully,

MARY E. HAMILTON.

MEXICO, Mo.

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RECORD AND PENSION OFFICE,  
WAR DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington City, December 21, 1897.*

SIR: In reply to your letter of the 14th instant, in which you request, in behalf of Mary E. Hamilton, such information as the records afford relative to the service of her late husband, William A. Hamilton, who is said to have been a teamster and courier with Colonel Doniphan's Missouri Regiment during the Mexican war, I beg to inform you that, after a careful search of the records of this office, nothing has been found relative to the service of the man in question, either as a Missouri soldier or as a courier or bearer of dispatches.

Upon inquiry at the office of the Quartermaster-General, which inquiry was made at your request, no record has been found of persons employed with Colonel Doniphan's command, and the reports of the quartermasters at Santa Fe, whence Hamilton is said to have been sent as a bearer of dispatches, afford no information relative to his employment in any capacity.

The inclosures to your letter are returned herewith.

Very respectfully,

F. C. AINSWORTH,

*Colonel, U. S. A., Chief Record and Pension Office.*

Hon. F. M. COCKRELL,

*United States Senate.*

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UNITED STATES SENATE,

*Washington, December 25, 1897.*

DEAR GENERAL: I send herein a petition of Mrs. Mary E. Hamilton, in which she states her husband's (Wilson A. Hamilton) service.

Please have a critical search of the records of the quartermasters who were at Independence or Fort Leavenworth when Colonel Doniphan's command was organizing, and who accompanied him to Santa Fe, and also at Santa Fe, and give me any trace or record in full of W. A. Hamilton, or Wilson Hamilton, or similar name.

If you find no record or trace, then please send to Gen. W. H. Bell, Commissary-General, with request for similar search of his records. I want once for all and ever to end this question as to any record of his service of any kind anywhere. Your thorough and exhaustive search and full reply will greatly oblige.

Yours, truly,

F. M. COCKRELL.

Gen. GEORGE H. WEEKS,

*Quartermaster-General.*

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[First indorsement.]

WAR DEPARTMENT,

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE,

*Washington, December 30, 1897.*

Respectfully returned, through the Commissary-General of Subsistence of the Army, to Hon. F. M. Cockrell, United States Senate.

An examination of the reports of the quartermasters on duty at Fort Leavenworth and Santa Fe during the war with Mexico fails to show the employment of W. A. or Wilson A. Hamilton in any capacity. No officer rendered reports to this office of persons hired at Independence, Mo., during the Mexican war, and no record is found in this office of persons hired in the command of Colonel Doniphan.

GEO. H. WEEKS,

*Quartermaster-General, U. S. A.*

[Second indorsement.]

WAR DEPARTMENT,

OFFICE COMMISSARY-GENERAL OF SUBSISTENCE,

*Washington, D. C., January 5, 1898.*

Respectfully returned to Hon. F. M. Cockrell, United States Senate.

As the Subsistence Department has not at any time employed teamsters or couriers, the name of W. A. Hamilton or Wilson Hamilton

would not appear upon the rolls of civilian employees of any officer who may have performed subsistence duty in 1846 or 1847, either at Independence, Mo., Fort Leavenworth, Mo., with Colonel Doniphan's command, en route from either of above-named places to Santa Fe, N. Mex., or at the latter place.

SAML. T. CUSHING,  
*Acting Commissary-General of Subsistence.*

UNITED STATES SENATE,  
*Washington, D. C., January 11, 1898.*

DEAR GENERAL: Thanks for your favor of December 31, 1897, touching employment of W. A. Hamilton as teamster under Colonel Doniphan, in which you say: "No officer rendered reports to this office of persons hired at Independence, Mo., during Mexican war, and *no record is found in this office of persons hired in the command of Colonel Doniphan.*" This last clause leaves me in doubt. Certainly there were trains of wagons accompanying Colonel Doniphan's command in his long march. There must have been teamsters driving the teams to these wagons. If so, how and by whom were they employed or hired, or were they detailed soldiers? I am of the impression I had heretofore obtained from your office a statement of the service of such teamsters, especially in one case, of Joseph Longacre.

I often have applications from the teamsters who say they were in Colonel Doniphan's march, and who received land warrants and now want pensions. Please advise me fully in the premises and oblige.

Yours, truly,

F. M. COCKRELL.

Gen. GEORGE H. WEEKS,  
*Quartermaster-General U. S. A.*

[First indorsement.]

WAR DEPARTMENT,  
QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
*Washington, January 14, 1898.*

Respectfully returned to Hon. F. M. Cockrell, United States Senate.

In reply to the application of Hon. Mr. Cockrell for information regarding the services of Joseph D. Longacre, the Quartermaster-General, by letter of April 29, 1885, advised him that the records of this office show that Joseph D. Longacre was employed as teamster by Capt. L. C. Easton, assistant quartermaster, Fort Leavenworth, Kans., from May 20 to June 30, 1847, and by Capt. W. M. D. McKissack, assistant quartermaster, Santa Fe, N. Mex., to August 23, 1847.

Both of the quartermasters named were officers of the regular establishment of the Quartermaster's Department, and rendered reports to this office of all persons employed by them.

Repeated searches in this office for a record of persons employed with Colonel Doniphan's command has failed to show that any officer of the Quartermaster's Department was on duty with the command, or that any officer reported the names of persons employed who accompanied the command as civilian employees or as detailed soldiers.

In the case of W. A., or Wilson A., Hamilton, the reports of Capt. L. C. Easton and other quartermasters on duty at Fort Leavenworth,

and of Capt. W. M. D. McKissack and all other quartermasters known to have been on duty at Santa Fe, during the entire period of the Mexican war, were carefully examined before the indorsement of this office of the 30th ultimo was written returning the request for record of his service, and his name was not found borne upon any report as having been employed in any capacity.

JAMES GILLISS,  
*Assistant Quartermaster-General U. S. A.,*  
*Acting Quartermaster-General.*

