

John McNeill

(– 23 Feb 1850)

The National Intelligencer, February 25, 1850

Obituary

Died, on Saturday afternoon last, at the Irving Hotel, in this city, General John McNeil, a distinguished officer of the War of 1812. His arrival from Boston, where he is Surveyor of the Port, as but just announced to us when we were apprised of his death. This was sudden and unexpected to us, though we since hear that he has long been declining, and suffered much from a painful and protracted illness. He was born in Hillsborough, New Hampshire, and at the time of his death was in the 66th year of his age. In 1812 he entered the army as a captain of infantry, and served with great distinction in that second war of independence. In 1814 he belonged to the first brigade, commanded by Gen. Scott, which opened a most glorious career of arms, in crossing the Niagara Straits and encountering the British veterans of the peninsular war. At the battle of Chippewa McNeil commanded the advance of Scott's brigade, the 11th regiment, Col. Campbell having been wounded in the early part of the action. In crossing the creek the leading regiment of the column encountered a most murderous fire, by which, in a few moments forty men were cut down. He advanced steadily on, with Jesup's regiment next, and at the distance of thirty paces from the enemy they deployed into line; McNeil, of Herculean frame and stentorian voice, called aloud, "Give it to them--take vengeance on them, boys." And again, at the battle of Bridgewater, he had the honor to lead the celebrated Scott's brigade into action, in the face of a British battery of nine guns. In less than an hour the whole brigade was literally cut to pieces. As Ripley and Portel's brigades came into action McNeil redoubled his energies; when the 22d infantry broke, (its Colonel, Brady, having fallen,) McNeil rallied and reformed it. At this period of the action his horse was killed by a cannon ball and himself wounded in both legs by canister shot, a six-ounce ball passing directly through his right knee. At the close of the war he was retained in the army, and served on the Lakes and the Mississippi till 1829, when he was appointed a commissioner to negotiate with the Sac and Fox Indians. At the conclusion of his mission he repaired to Washington, and subsequently resigned his appointment in the army, but only to serve his country in a civil capacity. He was appointed Surveyor of the Port of Boston, which office he filled till the day of his death.

The funeral of the deceased will take place on Tuesday afternoon; of the hour due notice will be given to the public.

The National Intelligencer, February 27, 1850

Military Funeral

The remains of Gen. John McNeill, a brave and patriotic officer, were yesterday conveyed to the Congressional Burial Ground, and there deposited, with military honors. The funeral escort consisted of the Washington Light Infantry, the National Greys, and the Walker Sharpshooters. The President of the United States (Taylor), the Mayor of the city, and a number of naval and military officers followed the remains in carriages. The funeral obsequies were all conducted in a very becoming and impressive manner.

Heitman:

Born New Hampshire. Capt. 11 Inf. March 12, 1812; Maj. Aug. 15, 1813; transferred to 5 Inf. May 17, 1815; Lt. Col. 1 Inf. Feb. 24, 1818; transferred to 3 Inf. Dec. 12, 1820; Col. 1 Inf. April 28, 1826; Bvt. Lt.

Col. July 5, 1814 for distinguished and gallant conduct in conflict of Chippewa U.C.; Col. July 25, 1814 for his gallant and distinguished conduct as commander of the 11 Inf. In the battle of Niagara U.C. and Brig. Gen. July 25, 1824 for 10 years faithful service in one grade; resigned April 23, 1830. Died February 23, 1850.

Major, commanding 11th U.S. Infantry at Chippewa and Niagara. Severely wounded July 28, 1814. Brevetted Lieutenant Colonel and Colonel for gallant conduct in those battles. Colonel 1st Infantry and Brevet Brigadier General, U.S. Army. Resigned in 1830.