

THE PENSION OF JAMES HC RODGERS

So then, what does all this have to do with James HC Rodgers? After James HC died on May the 6th, 1865, the original pension program was still in place. This allowed for his widow Harriet to make application for a pension and she did so on May 19th, 1865.¹ The original application allows for her to collect some funds for both herself and her children. Of course she would list all seven of her children and step children on the form, even though Nancy Jane, Robert, William, and Sally were not actually her children as each would give to her more money. However, the examiner who received the application made a note that four of the children were born before Harriet was married to James HC. A no-no in those days and the children could not be counted toward the pension if they were conceived out of wed lock, which was the original thought of the examiners, or the very least that they had another mother (which was true.) The pension was not allowed. This was when the family moved back to Scotland County, Missouri.

Three years later in 1868, Harriet would then send a personal hand written note to the pension office saying after receiving some sort of denial from the agency.² It is unclear if this denial was from the first request or a second one, but she states that she could prove the things she was saying and hired an attorney to help her get the pension. Mr. Teirney then filed the necessary paperwork with the government and an investigation would ensue as to the validity of the claim. Harriet sent a copy of what apparently had been in the family bible in James HC's handwriting that showed the dates of birth of all the children. Again, the discrepancy that four of the children were born before Harriet and James HC were married was a major red flag to the examiners and again they put a hold on the file. According to both Nancy Jane Rodgers Garrison³ and Robert W.

¹ [Harriet Colvin Original Claim](#)

² [Harriet Colvin Handwritten note #1](#)

³ [Nancy Jane Rodgers Garrison Deposition](#)

Rodgers,⁴ Hiram and Harriet would leave Scotland County in spring of 1866 and by May of 1868 had legally married in Moultrie County, Illinois after being apparently “compelled” to do so. Nancy Jane was eighteen years old and Robert was sixteen during this year, and they did not return to Illinois with their step mother and a nineteen year old Nancy Jane Rodgers married Lewis Fidel Garrison in Scotland County on November 29th, 1869.⁵ Robert W. Rodgers apparently stayed as well and is listed on the 1870 census as living next door to his Aunt Sallie Ann and Uncle John Kestler Ray in the J. Bundage household, along with two cousins, Miranda and Loretta Ray.⁶ The whereabouts of their sister Sally Ann Rodgers are unknown in 1870, and what is known of the rest of her life will be explained later, but it would seem to be logical that she also remained in Missouri.

As stated earlier, Harriet, Hiram, William Henry, Demira, John, and Louisa would leave Scotland County and would return to Moultrie County, Illinois by 1868. Harriet’s handwritten note of September 1868, already cited here in, would launch an investigation into the family that would last for over thirty years and would span the entire country! Investigator after investigator would research the life of Harriet Camlin Ridge Harlan Rodgers Colvin and would conclude in results with far reaching consequences. Of course, in those days time would pass very slowly and the investigators painstakingly traced the children of James HC Rodgers, and since Harriet wasn’t exactly being honest (perhaps not on purpose), all avenues would need to be explored. Through a search of all available legal records and personal narratives, the story would become known.

The first few actions that would occur were not a part of the federal investigation, but would have legal and monetary consequences later. First, Nancy Jane Rodgers

⁴ [Robert W. Rodgers Deposition pg. 5](#)

⁵ [Lewis Garrison and Nancy Jane Rodgers Marriage License](#)

⁶ [John Ray and J. Bundage Census 1870 Scotland County](#)

Garrison would, on August 23rd, 1871, transfer all her rights to James HC's estate to her brother William Henry (Pa Bill).⁷ Basically, this would completely take her out of the loop as far as any pension claim down the road. Nancy Jane and Lewis probably didn't know it at the time. Pa Bill was living still in Moultrie County, although away from his step mother and it is logical to assume that the document signed by Nancy Jane and Lewis Garrison giving up their rights was also an attempt to help him in his bid to receive the forty acres of land left by James HC. It should be noted that this document was completely notarized in Scotland County, Missouri and was discovered in the probate office in the courthouse in Moultrie County, Illinois. The later investigators who examined James HC's probate file would have seen it, too. On February 21st, 1873, Robert W. Rodgers, James HC's oldest son, would also take back what he must have felt was his and for a very small amount of money (even for those days) paid Harriet, his step mother, \$250.00 for the forty acres of land she and Hiram Colvin had been farming.⁸ Pa Bill would then move onto this property and begin to farm it. It is presumed that Harriet and Hiram and her children by both James HC and Hiram left Illinois at this time and moved to Texas County, Missouri. According to the census of 1870, Harriet and Hiram had a small child living with them, a William H. Colvin, as well as John, Demira, and Louisa Rodgers.⁹ Harriet Colvin would then again petition the government for James HC's pension money.

⁷ [Nancy Garrison to Pa Bill Deed](#)

⁸ [Harriet Colvin to Robert W. Rodgers Deed](#)

⁹ [Hiram Colvin Family 1870 Census Texas County, MO](#)