

THE INVESTIGATION: JOHN RAY RODGERS' CLAIM

John Ray Rodgers was born on July 7th, 1861 while James HC was doing his first tour of duty during the Civil War.¹ He lived with his mother and Hiram Colvin longer than any of James HC's other children, being listed with them as late as 1880 at the age of nineteen.² John made an application for pension under the new Dependent Pension Act of 1890 that was previously described. This new law allowed for John to request pension funds independent of his mother, which he did on June 26th, 1891. John claims in his application that his sisters Demira and Louisa are dead. He makes no mention of his two half brothers and two half sisters, and obviously lied about knowing their whereabouts.³

In the pension timeline, this is also the first time that one of Harriet's applications appears in its original form. Her application seemed to be approved at first, but it appears that a reviewer or supervisor vetoed the question and stopped the application for several years.⁴ There is no reason stated for the veto. It would seem that once again a long time would pass before there was any further action on the part of the government. The next document in the sequence is dated November 11, 1891, when it seems the pension office was now going to investigate the claim personally. A special examiner was dispatched to Texas County, Missouri to speak personally with Harriet and with her son John Rodgers.

The first issue at stake seemed to be the discrepancy between what Harriet stated John Rodgers' birthday to be. She explained in her first deposition that John's birth was July 7th, 1861, not July 7th, 1860 as previously stated by Wilkerson Rodgers, James HC's brother in his 1875 deposition. Harriet stated, interestingly enough, that she knew John's

¹ [James HC Handwritten Document #2](#)

² [1880 Texas County, Missouri Census](#)

³ [Declaration of Pension: John Rodgers 6/26/1891](#)

⁴ [Harriet's 7/2/1891 Pension Application](#)

birthday was what it was because she could remember that John was born after President Lincoln's Inauguration of March 1861, "as only a parent would know." She reaffirmed that the family bible record written by James HC before he died was accurate.⁵ The date was important because the new law provided for \$8 a month for the life of a child up to age sixteen and the government would have wanted to know as to the date so they could pay less if possible. This interview also must have included talk of James HC's first marriage to Mary Ann Moore Rodgers Love, too, because the next document is a certified copy dated November 18th, 1891, from Scotland County, Missouri, detailing James HC's and Mary Ann's divorce.⁶ The special examiner also tracked down two people in Scotland County at this time who knew James HC and Harriet as husband and wife as well as two people who knew that Louisa Elizabeth Rodgers had died, as claimed by John Rodgers in his application.

Reuben E. Lancaster states in his deposition that he knew both Harriet and James HC since "long before the war."⁷ John Ridge, who was Harriet's brother, states basically the same thing.⁸ The special examiner then traveled to Howell County, Missouri and spoke to a Mary A. Harris, who was one of Hiram Colvin's daughters from his first marriage who confirmed in her deposition that James HC and Harriet had three children Demira, John (and was the first to state John's middle name was Ray), and Louisa. She stated Louisa died at about the age of eleven.⁹ The special examiner also interviewed a W.H. Harris, who is presumably Mary's husband. He refers to Louisa as "Lizzie" and that she died in the winter of 1873 and that his wife went to the funeral.¹⁰ It would seem that as far as this examiner was concerned, the case was closed. Presumably, he filed his

⁵ [Harriet Affidavit 11/11/1891](#)

⁶ [James HC-Mary Ann Rodgers Divorce Copy](#)

⁷ [Reuben Lancaster Affidavit 12/14/1892](#)

⁸ [John Ridge Affidavit 12/17/1892](#)

⁹ [Mary Harris Affidavit 12/27/1892](#)

¹⁰ [William Harris Affidavit 12/31/1892](#)

findings and that was it. It would seem, though, that other examiners were at work on the other side of the family and would arrive in Scotland County, Missouri to find the rest of the children of James HC Rodgers in July of 1893.

On July 19th, 1893 Lewis F. Garrison of Mount Pleasant Township, Scotland County, Missouri gave a deposition in which he talks about the death of his wife's sister Sally Ann Rodgers. Lewis states that Sally Ann died on January 12th, 1875 at the home of Martha J. Dye from small pox. He further states that Sally had been married, but living separate and apart from her husband and had no children and that he knew this information from the doctors and nurses who attended her and from taking her effects to Sally Ann's mother.¹¹ That same day Lewis' wife Nancy Jane Rodgers Garrison gave a similar deposition, but added that she attended her sister Sally Ann after her death and went to her funeral.¹² After researching the death of my great great grandfather's sister Sally Ann, I discovered her marriage license dated February 22nd, 1872 in which she married Joseph Rath of Clark County, Missouri.¹³ I have been unable to locate a burial site for her, unfortunately.

The next two affidavits to come along at about the same time are clarifications from Elias and Sarah Pierse. First they state that they are sure Harriet had no heirs other than her children with James HC,¹⁴ and second, Elias claiming he was with Louisa Rodgers when she was dead, got the coffin, etc. and that she died on February 12th, 1873, and was buried on February 13th, 1873.¹⁵ His wife Sarah confirms this information.¹⁶ Lastly, Harriet submits a deposition claiming that Demira left home at about age eighteen without her permission on about September 26th, 1870 and hadn't contacted Harriet in

¹¹ [Lewis Garrison Affidavit 7/19/1893](#)

¹² [Nancy Garrison Affidavit 7/19/1893](#)

¹³ [Rath-Rodgers Marriage License 2/22/1873](#)

¹⁴ [Elias Pierse Affidavit #1 7/26/1893](#)

¹⁵ [Elias Pierse Affidavit #2 8/15/1893](#)

¹⁶ [Sarah Pierse Affidavit 8/14/1893](#)

any way. Harriet states she believes that Demira is dead and submits this information on August 28th, 1893.¹⁷ Satisfied as to the *widow's* claim for pension, Harriet was allowed on April 10th, 1894 a total of \$8 a month from the time of James HC's death to her remarriage to Hiram Colvin for a total of \$192.00.¹⁸ In 2007 dollars this would be approximately \$4600.00.¹⁹ Again, this money was to go to Harriet as a part of her pension, but the question of the children had not yet been answered. Technically, she should have shared the money with her children but apparently she did not.

John Ray Rodgers, Harriet and James HC Rodgers youngest son would continue the process to receive his pension on May 3rd, 1895. He had moved away from his mother and step father and was now living in Plum Valley, Texas County, Missouri. He hired A.B. Nichols Company of Washington DC to prosecute his claim.²⁰ Since there was substantially more money at stake, the pension office sent out another special examiner by the name of R.F. Jones to interview several people associated with the case. Of course, Mr. Jones would start with Harriet Colvin in Texas County, Missouri on July 16th, 1895.

¹⁷ [Harriet Colvin Affidavit 8/28/1893](#)

¹⁸ [Harriet's Final Pension 8/1894](#)

¹⁹ Measuring Worth

²⁰ [Plum Valley, Missouri Power of Attorney 5/3/1895](#)