

Pension Record of Samuel J Morrison - Summary

Samuel J Morrison file; Private, Battery D, West Virginia Light Artillery, soldier's original SO 286,449 and widow's certificate WC 357,464; *Case Files of Approved Pensions of Widows and Other Dependents of Veterans of the Army and Navy Mainly in the Civil War and the War with Spain ("Civil War and Later Widow's Certificates")*, 1861-1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Records of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Record Group 15 (Washington DC: National Archives and Records Administration).

The pension file consists of about 100 pages of documents regarding Samuel Morrison's claim for a disability pension and, after his death, his wife's claim for a widow's pension. All quotations in the following report are as written in the documents of the file with no correction of spelling or punctuation.

His discharge certificate is one of the documents in the file and contains the following information: He was a private of Capt. John Carlin's D Company, First Regiment, West Virginia Light Artillery. He enrolled 20 August 1862 and was discharged 27 June 1865 at Wheeling, West Virginia. Samuel was born in Wheeling and was 21 at the time of enrollment, 5' 8" tall, dark complexion, grey eyes, brown hair, and a farmer when enrolled.

Invalid Pension Application

At age 36 Samuel made a sworn statement on 26 April 1879 requesting an invalid pension. In it he said: "My trouble is caused by a running ear which first became sore at New Creek W. Va, it causes me to have Fits or Epilepsy and sore eyes from which I have never recovered and on which I claim a pension. I also received a rupture but can not prove it as I did not know or consult the surgeon as to the character of the injury. Was treated at Hospt. At New Creek." He resided in Wheeling since leaving the service and was there at the time of the statement.

Multiple documents from a dozen relatives, friends and comrades are in the file, shedding significant light on Samuel's life, family, extended family and health. The more genealogically useful and interesting are extracted below.

Affidavit of James T Fleming (Samuel's brother-in-law) on 10 January 1880, who was living in Wheeling at the time and had known Samuel since 1862: ". . . after said Morrison's discharge from the army he was affected by deafness in the right ear and was also ruptured on the left side and is subject to Epileptic fits, his hearing is affected

considerably by the disease in ear as he believes he knows this from being intimately acquainted with said Morrison since his discharge from the army. The above afflictions have affected said Morrison's health & his ability to earn a living by manual labor."

Affidavit of William McAdams (husband of Samuel's wife's sister) on 11 January 1880, who was living in Wheeling at the time: ". . . that he has been acquainted with Samuel J Morrison since 1860 that since said Morrison was discharged just after) he was affected with deafness in right ear" He resided in Wheeling since leaving the service and was there at the time of the statement.

A statement signed by Samuel J Morrison on 19 Apr 1880: "Samuel J Morrison states that he never was in Hospital but once and that was at New Creek W. Va. some time in the winter of 1862-3. was treated for sore ear at that time."

Sworn statement by Samuel J Morrison on 8 March 1884 when he was residing in Brierfield, Bibb County, Alabama: ". . . he contracted epilepsy and lost the hearing of the ear on the right side and contracted hernia on the left side - that for the defective hearing he was treated in the New Creek Hospital in the year 1862 but does not recollect who the surgeon in charge was that for the epilepsy and hernia he was not treated until after he came out of the Army - that for all of these complaints he has been treated by Dr James Cummins who lived in Wheeling West Virginia but he is now dead - that since his discharge he has not been in the military service of the United States - that since leaving the military service of the United States he has resided in Wheeling W. Va. That farming has been his occupation since except about four years in which he has been employed as a nailer - that prior to his entry into the service above named he was a man of good sound physical health being when enlisted a farmer that while not entirely disabled from earning his subsistence by manual labor by reasons of the diseases above mentioned he is incapacitated from regular labor - that he has applied for an invalid pension which is on file in the Pension office and numbered 286,449 Afficant further says that his present post office address and place of residence is Brierfield Bibb County ~~Bibb~~ Alabama. He hereby appoints with full power of substitution and revocation Samson R Sheppard of the same town state and county his true and lawful attorney to prosecute this claim." Samuel Sheppard was a JP for Bibb County. There is a note on one of the file jackets dated 26 Mar 1884 to the effect that Sheppard needs to file a formal power of attorney in order to be recognized as the above is an informal submission.

Sworn statement by J. T. McClure on 7 July 1884: "I have known Samuel J Morrison whose claim for pension is N^o 286,449, Since probably five or six years before he enlisted in the Army. He then lived with a Mr Garvin on a farm about four miles from Wheeling West Virginia - then Virginia. To the best of My Knowledge and belief, he then Showed no Symptoms of Epilepsy, and I never heard of his having any Symptoms of that disease until about the time of his return from the army."

"In the year 1866 I performed the marriage Ceremony for him. Between one and two years previous to his marriage I heard of him being troubled with Epilepsy, and saw him when he was under the influence of that disease. I also understood that his marriage had been postponed from some considerable time in consequence of his diseased condition."

Sworn statement by John S. Garvin on 17 July 1884, who was living in Ohio County, West Virginia, at the time. "I reside in Ohio County, West Virginia about three miles from the City of Wheeling. I have been acquainted with Samuel J. Morrison who was a soldier in Carlin's Battery, for many years since he was a small boy. He lived with myself and my brother on our farm for six or seven years up to and at the time he enlisted. His health was then good."

Sworn statement by Samuel J. Morrison on 19 May 1885. He was residing in Bibb County and was having trouble supplying the requested documentation. ". . . Samuel J Morrison . . . is unable to furnish any of the information called for in sections 1 & 2 of Circular 3-078 from the Pension Office for the reason that these diseases for which he claims and asks an invalid pension namely diseases of the eyes and ears and epilepsy and Hernia although produced by and resulting from exposure while in the Army did not develop themselves until after his discharge and hence his commissioned officers Knew nothing of them and he was not treated for them by the surgeon or assistant surgeon of his regiment. Afficant further says that it is impossible for him to obtain the information of his family physician showing what his physical condition was ^at &^ prior to his enlistment as called for by Sec 1 of Pension Circular 03-474 for the reason that his physicians Dr James and Robert Cummins who attended his up to and previous to his enlistment in the army are both now dead." Samuel went on the describe some of the circumstances that he says created his condition.

Sworn statement of John P Bayha on 4 Sep 1886 in Santa Clara County, California. ". . . my name is John P. Bayha that my post office address is San Jose California – that I am acquainted with Samuel J Morrison have known him since the 2nd day of August A D 1862 that I served with him during the war in the 1st West Virginia Light Artillery – that I was Sargeant of section No 3 of battery D – that Samuel J. Morrison was my wheel Driver – that he was Kicked ~~by~~ about the head by a horse at New Creek West Va and severely hurt that I Kept a diary of our movements from which I make the following extrach and ask that it be made a part of my evidence in this case: We left Cumberland Gap Wa Va on Saturday April 2d 1864 – Left Cumberland Gap at 10 am with three companies of Infantry under Capt Simpson of the 23d Illinois Regt the road being very bad from Cumberland Gap to Clayville, but good from there to New Creek W Va, the Infantry halted at Clayville and then proceeded to New Creek. Our Battery was shipped on cars, when we arrived, with orders to go to Webster W Va, they left at 6 P.M. We went into camp for the night at New Creek Weather Wet Webster W Va Sunday April 3 1864, Had orders for Beef for 5 days Exchanged for bacon, 12th W Va Regt arrived at noon. We shipped in the same train and left at one P.M leaving wagon behind with [?]

to follow tomorrow, left New Creek for Webster at 1 P.M. with 12th Va Regt Infantry, arrived at Webster at 11 P.M. took Horses off cars, left Battery on until to-morrow, health good. "Saml Morrison my wheel Driver on Gun Carriage was Kicked about the head by Horse when about to hitch up to ship guns & Caisons on cars at New Creek today hurt severly."

Sworn statement by Samuel J. Morrison on 13 June 1887. He was still residing in Brierfield, Bibb County, Alabama, at the time and his condition was getting worse: ". . . he asks special action in his said application for the reason following towit:

1st His claim has been pending before the Department for a long time

2^d That while not exactly dependant on the world for charity his health and physical condition are such that he is unable to do any work and has to be supported by the labor of his wife

3^d Because his health grows worse daily and without a change for the better he cannot live much longer and if the Government would make his pension, if allowed, available to him in his lifetime it must be done as early as possible."

A special examiner was appointed in 1887 to resolve the invalid pension claim and he proceeded to interview a number of people and take their depositions.

Deposition of John J Jones, 18 July 1887: "I am 49 years of age Am the Cashier of the Exchange Bank of this city. Post Office address Wheeling W Va. I have known Samuel J Morrison for about 20 years last past Mr Morrison seemed to be in a feeble delicate state of health every time I recollect of seeing him. I recollect of his being carried out of Church one day in a spasm or fit that was at least ten years ago. I never conversed with him about his condition to my recollection. It seems to me that at the time I met him socially he displayed a sort of dullness that may have been occasioned by defective hearing. I have no knowledge of his having been troubled with being disease I never notices any affliction of the eyes. The most I recollect about him it that he was of a dull sluggish ~~disposition~~ temperament which I supposed was due to the attacks of epilipsy. . . ."

Deposition of C. F. Ulrich, MD, 19 July 1887: "I am 60 years of age a practicing physician of 23 years standing Post Office address 720 Main St Wheeling W Va. I have known Samuel J Morrison since the year 1876. I commenced to practice in his family about the year 1878. I was then called to attend his wife in confinement. I did not treat Morrison himself until 1880 I cannot give the exact date of my first treatment of him - I treated him during the years 1880 & 1881 [originally written as 1881 & 1882] principally for nervous disturbances and occasionally for an affliction of the brain. He was not delirious but was wandering & was troubled with sleeplessness. I was unable to determine at the time the cause of this trouble as he did not give me a history of the case He was greatly given to eccentricities and aberrations of the mind but I have no recollection that his trouble was claimed to be due to his army service.. . . I prescribed for him occasionally after 1881 [originally written as 1882] up to the time he left here in

1884 but I have no record of it. A great many of the symptoms I saw I have attributed to masturbation in persons who have no families but he having a family of fine healthy children I did not think his condition due to that although his symptoms would have been caused by masturbation. It might have been also caused by epilepsy. A large portion of the time I treated him he was disabled $\frac{1}{2}$ and at other times he was wholly unfitted for work not that he did not have the physical strength but because of the condition of his nerves."

Deposition of Franklin Painter, 19 July 1887: "I am 53 years of age Occupation clerk Post Office address 909 Alley C Wheeling W Va. I have known Samuel J Morrison for 14 years last past. In 1876 I lived in the same house with him at other times I lived in his same neighborhood."

Deposition of William McAdams, 19 July 1887: "I am 48[9?] years of age Occupation painter Post Office address 119 - 17th St Wheeling W Va. I have been acquainted with Samuel J Morrison since boyhood. He and I were boys together raised in the same neighborhood. He and I married sisters. Morrison was a farmer prior to his enlistment. . . . I served in the 1st W Va Cav during the war in the same Department with Morrison. I met him three or four times during my service. . . . The first fit I ever saw him have was in 1866 or 1867 I helped to take him out of Church."

Deposition of John A Morrison, 26 July 1887: "I am 47 years of age Occupation Nailor Post Office address 67 North York St Wheeling W Va. Samuel J Morrison is my youngest brother. He and I were raised together here in Wheeling He went out on a farm when he was fourteen or fifteen years of age After he went out on a farm I would see him about once a month up to the time he enlisted into the army My brother was always stout and healthy before the war – he was the healthiest one of the boys. I did not know of his having been ruptured at that time. If I remember right he had a difficulty in one ear – I remember of our family physician being at mother's house & prescribing for his ear difficulty. . . . My brother was never bright I might say he was just a little weak in the head He was very easy to offend. I was in Cincinnati during the war & did not see my brother until its close. I saw my brother at my mothers house the same year the war closed. He had been discharged. While there we had a difficulty and I hit him a slap and knocked him down & he had a fit I never knew of his having a fit prior to that. . . . Since 1865 to the time my brother went South in 1884 we both lived here in Wheeling. I learnt him his trade since the war. He worked with me in the Top mill about a year or maybe eighteen months When he became so quarrelsome that I could not get along with him & he quit He quit about 6 months prior to his going South. That is the only time we worked together Prior to that he worked as a roller but he had a fit one day and had to quit that for fear he would fall into the rolls He worked as a roller & farmer principally from 65 up to the time we commenced to work together. . . . For a number of years my

brothers habits were fair but of late years I understand not.”

Deposition of Charles H Deiters, 28 July 1887: I am 55 years of age Occupation farmer Post Office address West Liberty Ohio Co W Va I was late Orderly Sergt Battery D 1st W Va Lt Arty. I was with the Battery during all of its service. . . . I never knew of his being deaf in the service or that he was troubled with any affliction of the lungs. I always considered Morrison one of our toughest men. He was very eccentric in his ways but aside from that he was stout & healthy. . . . I never regarded Morrison as a very bright fellow – he was what I would call a “crank”.”

Deposition of John Garvin, 29 July 1887: "I am 63 years of age Occupation farmer Post Office address Wheeling Ohio Co W Va. I have been acquainted with Samuel J Morrison all his life – ever since he was a small child. He went to live with my father when he was about twelve or thirteen years of age and he staid with him until three or four years prior to the war when he come to work for myself and brother – David B Garvin. He was working for us when he enlisted into the army. There wasn't a stouter young man in the country than he was prior to his enlistment – he was very stout and had always enjoyed good health. . . .”

Deposition of D. B. Garvin, 29 July 1887: “I am 55 years of age Occupation farmer Post Office address Wheeling W Va I have been acquainted with Samuel J Morrison about all of his live. . . .He was never over bright I don't think I ever heard or knew of his practicing self abuse. . . .”

The special examiner, F. I. Darling, stated in his final report of 5 August 1887: "In my opinion there is not the least grounds for a claim to pension in this case but from the information obtained by me I am convinced that the whole case is a tissue of falsehoods from beginning to end." He further stated that, since all sources of information had not been exhausted, further examination was warranted.

The claim was approved for rejection shortly after the report was filed and Samuel and his attorney in Bibb County were notified 16 September 1887. File envelopes indicate his date of death was 3 October 1887 (presumably in Bibb County). At this point Mary Morrison applied for a widow's pension, claim #357464.

Widow's Pension Application

An affidavit submitted by Andrew R Fleming (brother of Mary Morrison) on 26 December 1888, age 43, resident of New Brighton, Beaver County, Pennsylvania, stated the following: "That he was a member of above named artillery and served with the above named soldier that at New Creek W. Va. about April 1864 while in line of duty,

the said Morrison while harnessing his horses was kicked in the head by one of the horses, and was sent to barracks, where we left him, and followed after, while he remained in the service he never appeared the same, easily excited and nervous. After the service he went to work in a foundry at Wheeling W. Va. where afficant was working and only worked a short time and had to give it up, on account of his becoming light, and he would topple over, that shortly afterward he became entirely unfit for work and could do nothing to support his family, and died about a year ago."

The pension file has a jacket in it stating that Mary A. Morrison's application for a pension was filed 5 Jul 1890 by Atty. James A Henry of Wheeling, W. Va., so after Samuel died Mary returned to Wheeling, assuming she was in Alabama with Samuel in 1887, to reside at Alley F and 18th Street. The language in the file strongly suggests that Mary and her younger children went to Alabama with Samuel but there is no direct evidence of this.

Another jacket in the pension file indicates that Mary resided in Wheeling at 1019 Main St by Aug 1891. At this time the pension office was requesting verification of the ages of her children by using the family bible.

A jacket in the pension file has the following information, indicating that Mary did receive a pension:

No. 357464
Mary A Morrison
Widow of Samuel J Morrison
Rank Pvt Batty D
Regt W Va Vol L A
Washington Agency
Rate per Month, \$8
Commencing July 5, 1890
Additional sum of \$2 per month for each of the following children until arriving at the age of 16 years, commencing July 5, 1890

Agnes V Apr 20 1891

Samuel H June 18 1893

Elmer E Dec 22 1895

Issued Dec 21, 1892

Mailed Jany 6, 1893

Fee \$10

Another jacket in the pension file has the same information on it and also includes a notation of "Dropped Mar 28 1917" and "Dead". Further, a critical note, which is very hard to read in its entirety, mentions Mrs Rudd with the date Apr 9, 1897. This would be

Roberta Morrison, wife of Milton Rudd.

Mary clearly received a pension and submitted a request between 8 Sep 1916 and 16 Dec 1916 to increase the pension. She fortunately states her birth date and place of birth in this request:

Application for Increase of Pension Act Sept 8 1916,

Wheeling West Virginia

Number 128 South York Street

Mary A. Morrison's Certificate number 357464 widow of Samuel J. Morrison Battery

D. West Virginia Light artillery, "Private"

Commissioner of Pensions

Washington D.C.

I am pensioned under Certificate number 357,464 because of the service of Samuel J. Morrison I was not his wife during the period of his service in the Civil War. I am entitled to the increase of pension provided by the first section of the act of September 8 1916.

I am seventy four years of age having been born March 15 1842 at Lanark Scotland.

Wheeling West Va.

Number 128 South York Street

Samuel J Morrison died October 3 1887

Witnesses,

Nelle Richardson

Agnes V Thornburg

Mary A Morrison

A final jacket indicates a death date of 16 Dec 1916. Her final pension check for \$60 was returned to the pension office and disbursements were cancelled.