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Indenture, Marshall County, MS, 1 August 1842

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WAR DEPARTMENT,
Pension Office,

18

SIR:

To relieve this office in some measure from a most laborious correspondence, this circular is published; and I now send it to you, not only in reply to your inquiry, but with a view of affording you information which will, in all probability, save you the trouble of addressing other inquiries to this office.

All claims are taken up in the order in which they are received here. Reports, in writing, are made to the persons who transmit or present the papers. But as claimants are often uneasy, if their claims are not immediately attended to, it very frequently happens that in a short time after papers are sent to the Department, letters are sent to urge immediate attention. This course, so far from expediting an investigation, retards it, because it increases the labor of those who are employed here, and, in numerous instances, occasions mistakes, and consequently dissatisfaction to the parties concerned. It is, therefore, respectfully requested that every applicant will wait a reasonable time before making application to know what has been done in relation to his or her claim. But should any reason exist for supposing that unnecessary delay has taken place, or that the papers have been lost or destroyed, and the claimant, or the attorney employed, should deem it proper to ask information, this letter will be sent with a brief answer written on the margin.

The rules of this Department forbid my giving such information respecting military service as is frequently sought. If, in any case, however, information is asked as to the service of a particular individual, for the purpose of substantiating a claim not to be presented to the executive offices at the seat of Government, and the regiment, company, and line to which the claimant belonged, be clearly set forth, as well as the rank which he held, the necessary proof will be furnished, if within the reach of the Department, and not incompatible with the regulations. In some cases, applicants for pensions, before transmitting their papers, ask for information in order to assist them in preparing their claims. In such cases information is generally withheld for very obvious reasons. But there may be a few cases in which information may be afforded to claimants before they make an effort to perfect their claims. Some persons may be so situated that they may find it impracticable to procure the testimony of any living witness, and may resort to the Department for information. If such persons should seek information, they must make a declaration under oath, and so describe the service performed, as to enable the Department to effect the necessary search of the rolls, books, or records of this office, when all proper aid will be afforded them in bringing their claims to a due investigation, and they will be informed whether or not the office contains such proof as will tend to establish their claims; but the answer conveying such information will not specify the service which the rolls may contain.

Supposititious cases are very often stated to this office, and information asked as to the construction of certain acts, when no benefit whatever can be derived to any one from answers to such inquiries. To put a stop to such unnecessary correspondence, it is sufficient to say, that it is out of our power to bestow time in answering inquiries of this nature. But where an individual has a claim of a doubtful character, and first wishes information for his guidance, before subjecting himself to the expense of taking evidence, if the individual be named, and all the facts connected with the case be clearly set forth, the party will be informed as to the course most advisable to pursue.

Much solicitude is often manifested by pensioners when they remove from the limits of one agency to those of another, and apply to have a change in the place of payment. On their making proper application, according to the prescribed rules, steps are taken to make the necessary arrangements for a transfer. It cannot, however, be immediately effected, because we have to wait, in most cases, till we can hear from distant agents, from whom information is derived as to the time to which the pensioner was last paid.

The regulations of September 29, 1836, as to the vouchers required to be presented at the pension agencies, when the pensioners or their attorneys demand their stipends, must be strictly adhered to, because they are deemed essentially necessary in order to guard more effectually against a repetition of fraud, as heretofore practised by the production of forged papers.

Persons frequently transmit papers to this office without any letter showing by whom they are sent. All such papers will hereafter be placed on our files, and there remain until the necessary inquiries be made by the parties concerned. This rule is found to be necessary to prevent frauds as well as mistakes. All correspondents are requested to be particular in writing their names legibly, and to give the name of the post office or post town to which they wish answers to be addressed.

I am, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

Commissioner of Pensions.



J Sedgwick
Commr. of Pensions

FREE

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Mrs Amelia Treadwell
Lamar,
Mississippi.

