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Scanned in the Innovation Hub: Pension file discoveries

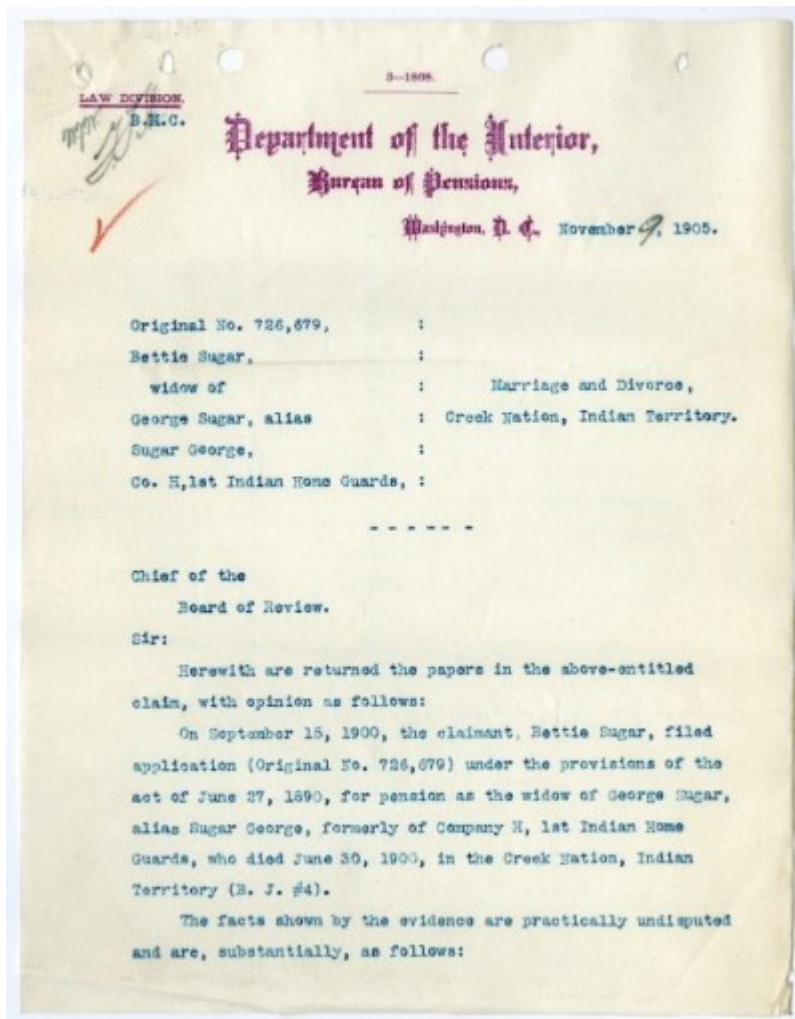
We are fascinated by the remarkable stories found within military pension files. They often contain valuable details about family history, as told through military veterans themselves, or through their widows and dependents who provided evidence of their relationship to a soldier.

As a researcher, did you know you can help uncover these stories by digitizing records in our Innovation Hub in Washington, DC? You can scan military pension records, bounty land files, and more. You take home a digital copy of your scans, while we upload a copy to the Catalog, attributed to you. Learn more about how you can make access happen in our [Innovation Hub](#).

Today we share a few of the interesting stories recently found within pension files while scanning in the Innovation Hub. What will you discover when you scan with us?

Approved Pension File for Bettie Sugar, Widow of 1st Sergeant Sugar George (alias George Sugar), Company H, 1st Indian Home Guards (C-2496362)

Widows of veterans often applied for pensions, and sometimes proving you were the legitimate spouse could be complicated. For the pension of George Sugar (aka Sugar George), his widow Bettie Sugar had to first prove she was divorced from her first husband.



Approved Pension File for Bettie Sugar. National Archives Identifier 77155990

Bettie Sugar was born into slavery in Alabama and lived enslaved in the Creek Nation for much of her life. She married a man named Peter Smith, also enslaved. After the war and emancipation, they continued living together for a few years, until Peter apparently left and married someone else.

Some years later, Bettie married George Sugar. When George died around the turn of the century, Bettie filed for his pension. The Pension Office inquired if she had divorced her first husband, making her George Sugar's legal widow. However, she didn't have a legal divorce while living in the Creek Nation. She explained, "I never got a divorce from Peter Smith but when he married again I thought I had the right to marry again." The Bureau of Pensions agreed: if a marriage was legal according to the law of the land where the person married, it was good enough for the Pension Office. The same rule applied to divorces. Also of note in this file is a copy of Bettie Sugar's assets. She inherited from her husband seventy head of cattle, nine horses, 160 acres of land and \$12,500 in cash.

Approved Pension File for Louisa Phillips, Widow of Private Ervin Phillips,
Company D, Osage County Regiment of Missouri Home Guards (WC-330719)

State of Missouri }
County of Miller } ss

On this 7 day of
May AD 1890 personally appeared
before me Mrs Louisa Phillips
Widow of the late Ervin Phillips
Dec. who was a private Co D Osage Co
Mo H Guards. and submitted the
following original record of the
Date of the births of Children
as follows.

Birth

Louis Phillips	Born	Dec 1 st	1847
Robertson Anne	"	" Sept 10	1847
Michole	"	" August 15	1849
Delila	"	" April 29	1851
Louisa Jane	"	" June 24	1853
Ervin	"	" July 12	1855
Emiline	"	" Sept 18	1857
Sally Ellen	"	" March 24	1860
David	"	" December 9	1861
Margaret Eloina	"	" March 6	1864
Mary Catherine	"	" December 22	1865
Lezard	"	" Febry 10	1868
Delenia Christ	"	" May 22	1871
Barlow	"	" October 10	1873

SOSEPT 5 - 1880
MORNING
OFFICE

Approved Pension File for Louisa Phillips, National Archives Identifier 81219726

Louisa Phillips applied for a Widow's Pension after the death of her husband Ervin Phillips in 1881. Louisa and Ervin were married on April 11, 1844 and had fourteen children together. At the time of Phillip's death they had three children under the age of 16 living at home in Central Missouri. Louisa could not read or write, so she had help from her brother Daniel. Daniel did all of the interviews found within the application, and while literate, he was not a proficient speller. Here's an example of a statement from Elisha White written for Louisa Phillip's application on page 17:

"I lived most of the time A naibar to Ervin Phillips and have none him ever sence the ware and have warked with him and have sene him once a month and have herd him complain of

Cidney and Bladder disease the results of Cronick direa"

Beginning August 15, 1890, Louisa Phillips received \$8 a month from her husband's Civil War pension until her death on May 14, 1909.

Private Lewis Martin, Company E of the 29th Regiment of the US Colored Troops



Approved Pension File of Private Lewis Martin, National Archives Identifier 74193368

In this file, Private Lewis Martin's official Certificate of Disability for Discharge includes an image of Martin, seated, showing the two amputated limbs he'd received in battle at the [Siege of Petersburg](#) on July 30th 1864. Photographs are a rare find in pension files. Martin was plagued by pain from his amputation sites as well as where shots had grazed his shoulder and temple, but did go on to marry Mary Jones after the war in 1869. His file documents requests for an increase in his pension, which raised from an original pension of \$20 to \$50 per month over the decades. He dropped off the Pension Office's rolls in 1895.

In-person volunteer opportunity! Polar expedition transcribe-a-thon

It's hot outside; chill out with us in the Innovation Hub! Join us Thursday, August 23, 2018, from 10 a.m.–12 p.m. for a [Polar Expedition Transcribe-a-thon](#).

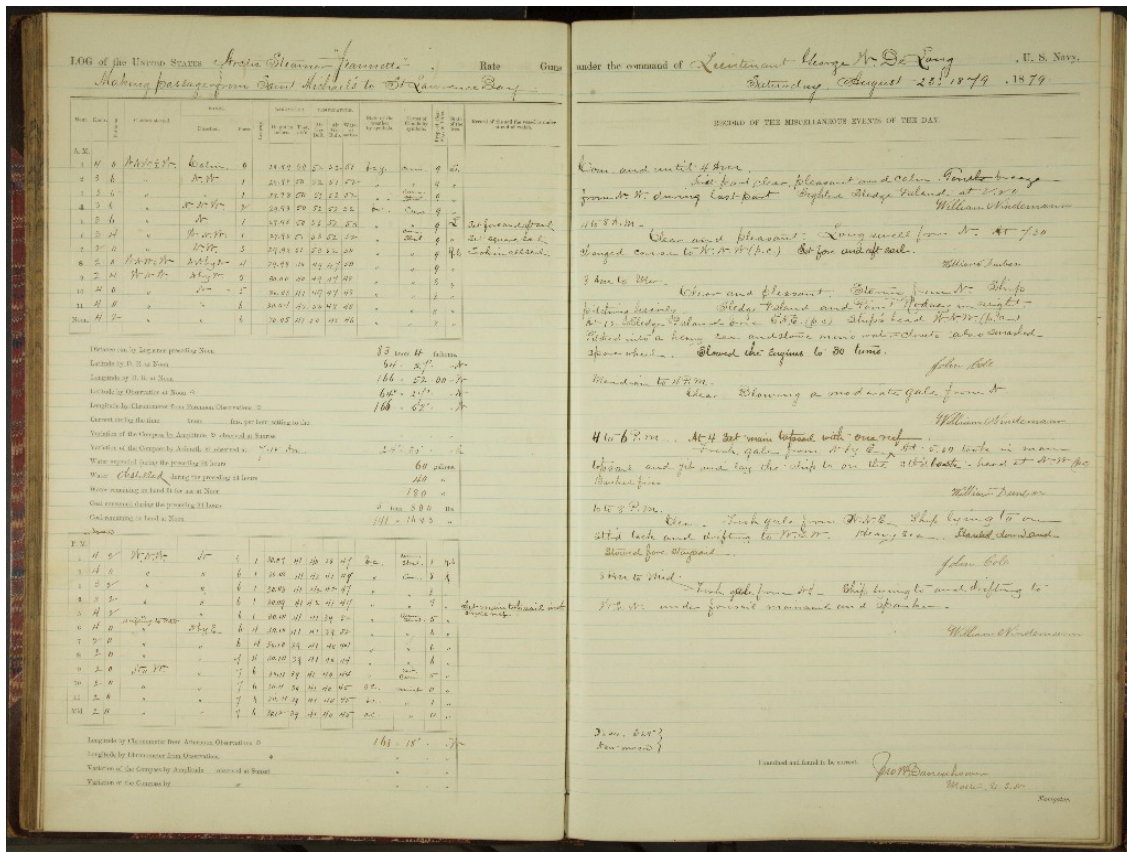
On July 8, 1879, the USS *Jeannette* set sail from San Francisco in a daring attempt to reach the North Pole by pioneering a route from the Pacific Ocean through the Bering Strait.



USS Jeannette, National Archives Identifier 1903667

Just two months after setting sail, the *Jeannette* became trapped by ice and drifted for almost two years before being crushed by ice floes and sinking north of the Siberian coast.

Miraculously, the four logbooks of the USS *Jeannette*, which contain meteorological conditions, instrument readings, and sightings of ice floes and auroras, survived. We're looking for your help to transcribe and uncover the valuable information within these logbooks.



Logbook of the USS Jeannette, National Archives Identifier 6919191

We hope to see you on Thursday, August 23, 2018 in the Innovation Hub. You'll learn more about the USS *Jeannette* from a subject expert, and a National Archives staff member will provide guidance on transcribing in the National Archives Catalog. No prior experience is necessary, but please bring your own laptop.

Can't join us in Washington, DC? We'll be streaming the event on [Facebook Live](#). Learn more on our [event website](#).

Citizen Archivist Road Trip Update!

Ten stops down; 2 to go! We've had a very busy summer on our Citizen Archivist Road Trip and tomorrow we arrive in the Big Apple! Visit our [Missions](#) page Friday as we bring you records from the National Archives at New York City. You can help us tag and transcribe records relating to passenger arrival records, fugitive slaves, criminal case files, and much more!

Get Started Tagging and Transcribing!



Questions or comments? Email us at catalog@nara.gov.



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