Widow’s Claim for Pension.

Martha Misemer, January 27, 1866

HL_MSS_21-07_02 Folder 61

Transcribed by Aimee Kling

For English 618: Research Methods in English

Instructor: Dr. Brian Gastle

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Introduction to the Series

This transcription and its attendant annotations, explanatory material, and bibliography were prepared by students in ENGL 618: Research Methods in English, the required gateway class for the MA in English degree program at Western Carolina University (WCU). The learning outcomes for this class include the following:

1. Conduct appropriate, effective, and ethical scholarship.
   a. Effectively find and use advanced research tools (handbooks, databases, guides, bibliographies, etc.) appropriate to a subject.
      • Students will be able to use a wide variety of such tools and evaluate those tools.
   b. Find appropriate advanced research (print and electronic scholarship) and apply that research to specific disciplinary questions or issues.
      • Students will be able to find a variety of scholarship, evaluate both the appropriateness and rigor of that scholarship, and incorporate that scholarship correctly and effectively.
   c. Develop accurate bibliographies and reference citations.
      • Students will be able to annotate, abstract, and cite materials following standard MLA format.

2. Understand the process by which the texts we use are made available.
   • Students will be able to conduct basic editorial work and evaluate the editorial work of others.

All work is presented as submitted by the graduate students. While they take great care with their transcriptions and annotations, errors are possible. As they learn throughout this class, good scholarship requires meticulous research and corroboration by authoritative sources. Our objective is to provide transcriptions and annotations of WCU’s Special Collections materials that will be useful to the institution, students, scholars, patrons, and all users of our library’s resources.

If you wish to submit an emendation or correction for this document, please email Dr. Brian Gastle (bgastle@wcu.edu).
Introduction to Document:

This manuscript consists of several separate, related documents: a one-page Widow’s Claim for Pension, dated January 27, 1866; an undated Claim for Widow’s Pension, With Minor Children; a two-page excerpt (dated March 14, 1867) from a document verifying the information provided in the Claim for Widow’s Pension, With Minor Children; and a cover sheet and casualty sheet concerning the death of Henry M. Misemer, dated May or June of 1865.

Hunter Library’s copy of this manuscript, six pages in total, has been printed from microfilmed versions of the original files. As such, some of the pages are cut off at the margins and some pages are clearly missing so the content is incomplete. However, the pages within the manuscript provide a wealth of invaluable information for those interested in researching the Misemer family further.

Martha J. Misemer, the widow whose pension application is included in this manuscript, was born Martha Jane Bogart in 1835. She was the second wife of Henry Marshall Misemer, who was born in 1832 and killed in the Sultana Disaster, the deadliest maritime accident in the country’s history, on April 27, 1865. The Sultana was a steamboat that was designed to carry 376 total passengers and crew and was typically used for commercial voyages. However, on April 23, 1865, the ship took on prisoners of war from Confederate prisons to be delivered to Union territory and freed. More than 2,200 people were on board the ship when its boilers exploded on April 27, killing 1,195 people, including Henry Misemer, who was being held prisoner along with many of his kinsmen (“The Sultana Disaster”).

Henry’s widow, Martha, applied for a pension in January of 1866, with accompanying evidence and support for her petition being added to the file as late as March of 1967. Although this manuscript does not include the results of her application, the National Archives catalog contains verification that on April 23, 1867, she was awarded $8 per month (equivalent to about $161 today), effective April 28, 1865 (Department of the Interior Bureau of Pensions (Veterans Administration).

This manuscript also identifies the four children Martha was left to raise after Henry’s death: Mary Elizabeth Misemer, Henry’s daughter by his first wife, Margaret Brown Misemer; Charles F. Misemer; Margaret E. Misemer; and Laura Caroline Misemer. Martha was further awarded $2 per month (equivalent to about $40 today) for each of her three children with Henry (Charles, Margaret, and Laura) as part of her pension, effective July 25, 1866 until the date each child turned 16. Later, in January of 1869, that certificate was amended to include Mary in the pension funding, adding an additional $2 per month in support for her care, effective July 25, 1866.

Given the detailed identification information provided in this manuscript (including verified birth names, dates, and locations, as well as names of many family members and acquaintances), this
is an ideal resource for anyone interested in researching the genealogy of the Misemer family, those affected by the Sultana Disaster, Civil War history, feminist history, and more.
Editorial Statement:

This transcription is a diplomatic edition, which means the formatting (including spacing and line breaks) and content (including errors and peculiarities in grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.) have been retained in its original form whenever possible.

One exception occurs with the sixth and final page of the manuscript, which consists of four distinct US Army documents laid side by side. In order to allow scholars to access each document independently as needed, each transcription appears on its own page, clearly marked to represent that they appeared on a single page in the original manuscript. An image of the original page appears as well (see Appendix).

Because the pages of this manuscript are scanned copies of the originals, some of the words on the top, bottom, and right margins are cut off. The transcription includes any text, including partial words, that can be seen on the scanned copies to reflect the original manuscript as accurately as possible. As such, some words and symbols in those locations are left incomplete.

A large portion of this manuscript consists of typed government forms that have handwritten information filled in. To differentiate between typed and handwritten text on these pages, any text that was handwritten appears in underline. For example:

   (Signature of Claimant): Martha J. Misemer

In this case, the words “Signature of Claimant” were typed on an official government form and enclosed in parentheses, while “Martha J. Misemer” was handwritten on a designated line.

Exceptions appear on pages 3 and 4 of the manuscript, which consist entirely of handwritten material and no typed text. On those pages, underline of text is not used to indicate that it is handwritten.

The manuscript includes several different samples of handwriting from contributors to the various documents, each of which were relatively easy to decipher. However, there are a few things to note:

- At the time of the creation of these documents, the long (or medial) S symbol (ſ) was in common use, and it is used throughout the document in cases of words with double S’s in sequence (e.g. Tenneſsee). For ease of readability for modern scholars, I chose to eliminate that symbol from the transcription (so, for example, Tenneſsee became Tennessee).
- Due to discrepancies between the size of the typed text and handwritten text throughout the manuscript, many consecutive lines that appear in this transcription to be uneven in
length were aligned in the original text. I have chosen to honor the line breaks based on the content of each line, rather than attempting to maintain consistent line lengths.

- In some of the handwritten sections, and in many of the sources I consulted in my annotation of this manuscript, the Misemer family name is spelled inconsistently. Some of the spellings include Meismer, Messimer, Mismer, and Mesmer. I have reflected those spelling variations where they were handwritten in this transcription, but in my annotations, I have chosen to be consistent with the spelling most commonly used, including by Martha Misemer herself: Misemer.

Due to the formatting of some of the pages, some content that fit on one page in the original manuscript continues onto a second page in this transcription. Each page is clearly labeled at the top to identify which page of the original manuscript is represented.
WIDOW’S CLAIM FOR PENSION.

State of Tennessee

County of Monroe

On this 27th day of January, 1866, personally appeared before me, a County Court Clerk of a Court of Record in and for the County and State aforesaid, Martha J. Misemer a resident of 7th district in the County of Monroe and State of Tennessee aged 30 years, who, being duly sworn, makes the following declaration, in order to obtain the Pension provided by the Act of Congress approved July 14, 1862: That she is the widow of Henry M. Misemer who was a Corporal in Company F commanded by Capt Jacob P. Brient in the third Regiment of Tennessee vol. Cavalry in the War of 1861; that her maiden name was Martha J. Bogart and that she was married to said Henry M. Misemer on or about the 9th day of February, 1859, at near Madisonville in the County of Monroe.

1 William H. Moore was a “book and job printer” who operated at this address, according to a blurb in The National Republican from 1868 (“Calendars for 1868”).

2 Martha Jane Misemer (nee Bogart) was born in 1835. She was married to Henry M. Misemer from 1859 until Henry’s death in 1865. They had three children (Charles, Margaret, and Laura), and they also raised Mary, Henry’s daughter from a previous marriage. After Henry’s death, Martha eventually remarried Dr. Ezakiel (sometimes spelled Ezekiel) Daniel in 1872, and she died in 1882 (“Martha Misemer;” “Ezekiel Daniel”).

3 The Act of July 14, 1862 awarded pensions to injured Civil War soldiers or their surviving widows and minor children (United States Pension Bureau).

4 Henry Marshall Misemer was born in 1832 (“Martha Misemer”). He was married to Margaret Misemer (nee Brown) from 1855 until her death in 1857. They had one child, Mary Elizabeth. Henry then married Martha Jane Misemer (nee Bogart) in 1859. They had three children (Charles, Margaret, and Laura). Henry enlisted in the Union Army in 1862, joined Company F of the 3rd Regiment of the Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry, and rose to the rank of Corporal before being killed in the Sultana Disaster in 1865 (“Soldier Details – Misemer, Henry M.”).

5 Jacob Phineas Brient was born in 1833 and died in 1896 (“Jacob Phineas Brient”).
and State of Tennessee by Thomas R. Bradshaw.\textsuperscript{6}
and that she knows of no record evidence of said marriage except the County Courts Clerk’s certificate which is here unto emended

\textbf{She further declares} that said Henry M. Misemer her husband, died in the service of the United States as aforesaid at or near Memphis in the State of Tennessee on or about the 27th day of April 1865, by Reason of the explosion of the Steamer Sultana.\textsuperscript{7}

She also declares that she has remained a widow ever since the death of said Henry M. Misemer and that she has not in any manner been engaged in, or aided and abetted, the rebellion in the United States;\textsuperscript{8} and she hereby appoints A. M. Hughes of Washington, D. C. the Tennessee State Agent\textsuperscript{9} as her lawful attorney, and authorizes him to present and prosecute this claim, and to receive and receipt for any orders or certificates that may be issued in satisfaction thereof. That the Post Office address of applicant is Athens, McMinn County, Tennessee

(Signature of Claimant:) Martha J. Misemer

\textbf{ALSO PERSONALLY APPEARED} before me, James Hamilton\textsuperscript{10} and Jacob P. Brient residents of McMinn County, and State of Tennessee, to me well known as credible persons, who being duly sworn, declare, that they were present and saw said Martha J. Misemer sign her name to the foregoing declaration, and that they have every reason to believe, from the appearance of said applicant, and their acquaintance with her, that she is the

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{6} Thomas R. Bradshaw was born in 1813 and died in 1899 (Evans).}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{7} For further information on the Sultana Disaster, see the introduction and the official website of The Sultana Disaster Museum: https://www.sultanadisastermuseum.com/.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{8} “The rebellion in the United States” refers to the Confederacy’s attempts to secede from the Union, resulting in the Civil War. Henry and Martha supported the Union.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{9} Unknown.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{10} Unknown.}
identical person she represents herself to be, and know that said deceased recognized said applicant as his lawful wife, and that she was so recognized by the community in which they resided; and that they have no interest, direct or indirect, in the prosecution of this claim.

James Hamilton Witness.

Jacob P. Br-ient Witness.

\[n^{11}\]

\[11\] This “n” represents a similarly shaped mark at the bottom of the page, which has been cut off in the copy. It may be part of an explanatory note regarding the hyphen in Jacob P. Brient’s surname on the line above, which appears to have been caused by a slip of the pen or other handwriting error.
CLAIM FOR WIDOW’S PENSION, WITH MINOR CHILDREN

BRIEF in the case of Martha J. Misemer, widow of
Henry M. Misemer, Corpl. Co. F. 3rd Tenn. Cav. Vols. 15
Resident of Monroe County, and State of Tenn.
Post Office address: Athens, Tenn.

DECLARATION AND IDENTIFICATION IN DUE FORM.
PROOF EXHIBITED.

Service. Adjutant General 16 reports him enrolled, April
26th, 1863, & “Died April 27th 1865 near Memphis
Tenn. by Explosion of Steamer “Sultana.”

Death. Surgeon General 17 has no report.

---

12 This is the identification number for Martha Misemer’s pension application file, listed as application and certification number on varying documents related to her file.

13 The War of 1861 is one of many monikers by which the Civil War is known.

14 See footnote 3 for information on the Act of July 14, 1862. The Act of July 25, 1866 increased the amount of pension to be awarded to widows and children by $2 per month per minor child, until the time that child turned 16 (United States Pension Bureau).

15 For more information on the 3rd Regiment’s wartime activities, see Dyer.

16 The Oxford English Dictionary defines an adjutant general as “a senior administrative officer” in the Army. At the time of this application, the position was held by Brigadier General Lorenzo Thomas, who served in the role from 1861 to 1869 (Heitman 38).

17 The Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army notes that “the act of April 14, 1818, gave to the Medical Department, for the first time in its history, a permanent chief under the title of Surgeon-General.” At the time of this application, the position was held by Brigadier General J. K. Barnes, who served in the role from 1864 to 1882 (Heitman 42).
Adjutant General of Tenn. reports him Prisoner of War since Sept. 24th 1864. Supposed to have died April 27th 1865 by Explosion of Steamer Sultana.

Marriage. Henry M. Misemer & Martha J. Bogart were Married Feb. 9th 1859 by Rev. Thomas R. Bradshaw. Certified copy of public record by the county clerk.

[MS page 2]

Names Mary E. Misemer born Dec. 3d 1855 who will be 16 years old, 18__
of birth of Margaret E. “ July 24” 1861 “ “ July 23d , 1877
children. Laura C. “ July 6” 1863 “ “ July 5 , 1879
“ “ “ “ , 18__
The first named chi’il’d by a former marriage “ “ , 18__
“ “ “ “ , 18__
“ “ “ “ , 18__
Proof of Established by the affidavits of attending physicians

18 Mary Elizabeth Misemer was born in 1855 to Henry M. Misemer and Margaret Misemer (nee Brown). She married John C. Bradshaw and had four children (Grace, Flora, Delia, and Henry). She died in 1942 (“Mary Elizabeth Bradshaw”).

19 The date of each child’s 16th birthday is significant because at that time, the additional $2 per month in pension funds will cease; see United States Pension Bureau.

20 Charles F. Misemer was born in 1860 to Henry M. Misemer and Martha J. Misemer (nee Bogart). He married Frances J. Cloninger (possibly spelled Colinger) in 1882 and had four children (Edgar, Anna, Martin, and Ada). He worked as a locomotive engineer. He died in 1919, and both his and his wife’s tombstones list Mismer as their surname (“Charles F Mesmer in the 1910 United States Federal Census”; Hotchkiss).

21 Further information about Margaret Misemer is unknown.

22 Laura Caroline Misemer was born in 1863 to Henry M. Misemer and Martha J. Misemer (nee Bogart). She married William Thomas MacFee and had at least one son, William Frank MacFee (Lee; “William Frank MacFee in the Tennessee, U.S., Delayed Birth Records, 1869-1909”).
and credible eye-witness.

Loyalty. In due form.

Agent. A. M. Hughes
1867, personally appeared before me a Justice of the Peace in and for the county and state aforesaid Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton and Mrs Sarah McCaslin both of the county and state above named, whom I certify are well known as Respectable and credible persons, who being first duly sworn according to law on their oaths declare, each for herself, that they were well acquainted with Henry M. Misemer deceased, who was a corporal in Capt. Jacob P. Brient’s Co. F. 3 Reg’t Tenn. Vol. Cav., and that they were well acquainted with Margaret J. Misemer, his first wife whose maiden name was Margaret J. Brown, and that they were present and know that the said Henry M. Misemer and Margaret J. Brown were married on the 25th day of January 1855 at the Residence of Joseph Brown in the county of Monroe and State of Tennessee by Rev. T. J. Russell a minister of the gospel and know that after said date they lived together as husband and wife and were universally Reputed as such by the community where they lived, until the said Margaret J. Misemer died on or about August 31, 1857 leaving one child which is still living.
They further declare that they are also well acquainted with Martha J. Misemer who was the second wife and who is now the widow of the said Henry M. Misemer deceased, and that her maiden name was Martha J. (over)
Bogart, and that the said Martha J. Misemer has three children now living and that they are all the children now living of the said Martha J. Misemer and her deceased husband, and the said Martha J. Misemer has the care of and provides for Mary E. Misemer, the said Henry M. Misemer’s child by his first wife, and they know that the above-mentioned four children are all the legitimate children now living of the said Henry M. Misemer deceased, and they know that the said Martha J. Misemer has not abandoned the support of any one of the above-mentioned four children, but has the care of all of them at her Residence in Monroe County and state of Tennessee.

They further declare that they know that the said Martha J. Misemer has applied for army Pension but that they nor neither of them ^have^ any interest in the prosecution of the claim.

her

Jacob P. Brient          Elizabeth x Hamilton
mark²⁷

her

Martha J. Maxwell²⁸    Sarah x McCaslin
mark

---

²⁷ Using an X or other mark “became the signature of choice in the Middle Ages, a time when few people could write” (Epstein). The practice of using a mark as a signature when the signer is unable to write due to illiteracy or a physical disability is still in practice, according to the American Society of Notaries (ASN Hot Tip).

²⁸ Unknown.
Also Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton who has subscribed to the foregoing affidavit, on her oath declares for herself, that she knows that Martha J. Misemer widow of Henry M. Misemer dead, who was a corporal in Capt Jacob P. Brient’s Co. F. 3d Reg’t Tenn. Vol. Cav., was is the mother of Laura C. Misemer and that the said Laura C. Misemer was born on or about the 6th day of

[MS page 4]

(over)\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{29} This indicates that there was more to the letter on the back side of the page. Unfortunately, no copy of that page is included within the manuscript, leaving this letter incomplete.
| Misemer Henry M                                |                        |
| C. Co. F, 3 Reg’t Tenn. Cav                   |                        |

___/___ Enclosures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bed Cards</th>
<th>Final Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burial Records</td>
<td>Furloughs or L. of A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certs. Of Dis. for Discharge</td>
<td>Med. Certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. M. Charges</td>
<td>Med. Des. Lists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Lists</td>
<td>Orders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discharge Certificates</td>
<td>Pris. of War Record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlistment Papers</td>
<td>Resignations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other papers relating to —

| Admission to Hosp’l         | Furlough or L. of A |
| Casualty Sheet              | Med. Examination    |
| Confinement                 | Misc. Information   |
| Contracts                   | Pay or Clothing     |
| Death or Effects            | Personal Reports    |
| Desertion                   | Rank                |
| Discharge from Hosp’l       | Transfer to Hosp’l  |
| Discharge from Service      | Transfer to V. R. C.|
| Duty                        | Transportation      |
|                             |                      |
M | 3 Cav. | Tenn.

Henry M. + Mesmer

Corp, Co. F, 3 Reg’t Tennessee Cavalry.

Appears on

**Company Muster Roll**\(^{30}\)

for May & June, 1865:

Present or absent _______________

___

Stoppage\(^{31}\), $___100 for _____________

________________________________

___

Due Gov’t, $___100 for _____________

________________________________

___

Valuation of horse, $____100

___

Valuation of horse equipments, $___100


Remarks: **Killed or drowned**

by Explosion of the

steamer Sultana apl.

27/65 - near Memphis

Tenn ___________________

_____________________

\(^{30}\) According to OED, “muster” in a military context refers to “a n act of calling together soldiers, sailors, prisoners, etc.; an assembling of people for inspection, exercises, etc., or an act of counting or enlisting people into (esp. armed) service; a roll-call.”

\(^{31}\) Per OED, “stoppage” here refers to a “deduction from payments; a sum ‘stopped’ or deducted from the pay of a soldier, workman, or servant.”
A “book mark” is a note on a soldier’s file that “leads to additional records and information about the soldier or his unit’s history” (Prechtel-Kluskens).
Henry M. Miesmer
Corpr’l, Co. F, 3 Reg’t Tennessee Cavalry.

Appears on

**Company Muster Roll**

for Jan & Feb, 1865.

Present or absent ______ absent

___

Stoppage, $___100 for _____________

__________________________

___

Due Gov’t, $___100 for _____________

__________________________

___

Valuation of horse, $___100

___

Valuation of horse equipments, $___100

Remarks: absent – captured

by the enemy Sept.

24, 1864. 33

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

__________________________

33 Based on the stated capture date of September 24, 1864, it is likely that Henry Misemier was captured during a battle near Athens, AL on September 24 or the following day near Sulphur Branch Trestle (Dyer).
Book mark: ______________
_______________________

(358) Sitler, Copyist
Henry M Misemer

Co. F, 3 Reg’t Tennessee Cav.

Appears on

**Company Descriptive Book**

of the organization named above.

**DESCRIPTION.**

Age 31 years; height 5 feet 9 inches.
Complexion dark
Eyes dark; hair dark
Where born Monroe Co Tenn
Occupation Farmer

**ENLISTMENT.**

When Apl. 26, 1863.
Where Madisonville Tenn
By whom A.F. Carson; term 3 y’rs.
Remarks: ___________________
___________________________
___________________________
___________________________
___________________________
___________________________
___________________________

(353g) NL Houston Copyist
M
Hen
Corpl

Appears

For _____

Present

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Book

34 See the introduction for further information on the incomplete nature of this page.
**Annotated Bibliography**

ASN Hot Tip. “Signature by Mark or Physically Unable to Sign.” *American Society of Notaries*, Feb. 2008, https://www.asnnotary.org/?form=signaturebymark#:~:text=%28His%2FHer%20Mark%29%20Draw%20a%20signature%20line%2C%20putting%20the,space%20provided%20as%20he%20or%20she%20is%20able.

This American Society of Notaries resource provides information on how notaries should handle situations where signers are unable to sign their names due to illiteracy or disability and must use a mark instead.


This provides birth, death, and family data for Mary Elizabeth Bradshaw (nee Misemer).


This is a digitized copy of a newspaper that I used to verify the significance of William H. Moore and his address.


This census provided information about Charles F. Misemer (spelled “Mesmer” here) as an adult, including his family and career.

This is the digitized copy of the form verifying that Martha Misemer’s application for pension was approved, and detailing the amounts she was awarded for herself and for each of her children.


This book and archive provide information about the wartime activities of the 3rd Regiment of the Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry, of which Henry Misemer was a part.


This article provided information on the history of using a “mark” as a signature.


This is a genealogy listing for Thomas R. Bradshaw, verifying his dates of birth and death, as well as his familial relations.


This is a record of the marriage between Martha J. Misemer and Ezekiel Daniel.


This archived book contains the records of key military leaders and important terminology and was used to identify the Adjutant and Surgeon Generals in 1865-7.

This provides an image of Charles Misemer (spelled “Mismer” here)’s gravestone, as well as some brief biographical information.


This Ancestry record of Jacob P. Brient, verifies his full name and dates of birth and death.


This provides images of Laura Caroline McFee (nee Misemer)’s gravestone, as well as confirmation of her birth and death dates.


This is the Ancestry record for a Martha Misemer who is listed as the child of Martha Jane Bogart and Henry Marshall Misemer, confirming both of their birth and death years. All other sources indicate that Martha and Henry did not have a daughter named Martha.


The *Oxford English Dictionary* was used to define in proper context the terms “Adjutant General,” “muster,” and “stoppage.”


This article provided information about the definition and significance of the term “book mark” as it appears on the company muster rolls.

This is the National Park Service/National Archives record of Henry M. Misemer’s enlistment and service details, which I used to verify the information stated in the manuscript.


This article was used to verify information about the Sultana Disaster.


This document contains details on the Acts of Congress that affected Martha Misemer’s pension payouts for both herself and her children.


This website uses Department of Labor data and was used to show the approximate monetary value in 2022 dollars of the pension funds that Martha Misemer received for herself and for each of her children.

“Widow’s Claim for Pension. Martha Misemer, January 27, 1866.” Box 2, Folder 61. MSS21-07. McFee-Misemer Civil War Letters Collection, Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC.


This provided information confirmation about Laura Caroline Misemer’s marriage and motherhood to at least one son.
Appendix

Above: Image of page 6 of the manuscript, showing each of 4 complete or partial columns representing separate U.S. Army documents related to Henry M. Misemer’s service.