

CHAPTER XII

A MILITARY PENSION?

Alice Walsler died on July 14, 1902. On October 12, 1902, Mr. Walsler married Esther J. Jamieson at Galena, Kansas. This was his fourth wife. She was twenty-nine years younger than he was. J.P. Moore described her as "corpulent, matronly and steady - well suited, one might say, as a wife for an elderly man."

Walsler was apparently running out of money. On April 5, 1905, he made application for a Veteran's Pension. The pension could not have been much, and his application for it is at least one indication of his financial need. The form indicates that he had never applied for a pension before, and that he was partially unable to earn a living because of his age.

Walsler, you will recall, served in the Union Army two different times. The first time he had an honorable discharge, the second he did not. The person filling out one page of his application form wrote: "He has had no service either in the army or navy, other than in 20 Ill. Inf."

Walsler, with trembling hand, wrote: "Except - I served as Captain of Co. I, 43 Mo. In., but in no other service than those mentioned above."

When I read this I said to myself: "Atta boy George!" He told the truth, even though it kept him from receiving a pension. His application was rejected May 8, 1905, "because claimant was not honorably discharged from his last contract of service."

I am assuming that the application for this pension was made without the knowledge of his wife. Two things lead me to this conclusion. First, if Esther had been aware of this, she would have known George was not a Lieutenant Colonel. Apparently she did not know this, for when he died she had the inappropriate rank inscribed upon his mausoleum. Second, Esther applied for a military widow's pension on July 30, 1926. In her application she stated: "That she has not heretofore applied for a pension; that said soldier was not a pensioner, never having applied for same."

GEORGE H. WALSER

I am left with the assumption that George didn't tell his own wife the truth about his military service. If he had done so, he would have saved her a lot of trouble.

Esther was married twice after George died, first to Robert W. Bock on February 14, 1912, and then to James Edsall on February 24, 1919. Both marriages ended in divorce.

On January 10, 1924, the Circuit Court of Jasper County, Missouri granted the name of Walser back to Esther. Since she had been married at least four times, I am assuming she took back the name of Walser so she could collect his pension.

Esther went to considerable effort to prove her case. It involved documenting the marriages, divorces, and death of her former husband, etc. She got the bad news in a letter from Winfield Scott, dated November 17, 1926: "Your above-entitled claim under the Act of May 1, 1920 filed August 3, 1926 is rejected on the ground that as shown by a report from the records of the War Department your husband, the soldier, was not honorably discharged from his final contract for service in Company I, 43rd. Missouri Infantry, during the Civil War."

Apparently thinking there must have been some mistake, she went to her congressman, the Hon. Joe J. Manlove, for help. He received the same sad news in a letter dated December 14, 1926.

Esther passed away July 4, 1929. How sad! Some wise man once said: "Be careful when you stretch the truth, for invariably somebody gets hurt when it snaps back."

Liberal, Missouri
