

Min. Orig. 647098

Dora Blackburn et al, Minors John W. Hopper Co. B. 79th Ind. Vol. Inf.

P.O. Dora Blackburn, Cincinnati, Ohio #1331 Main Street.

P.O. Bessie Hopper, Madison, Jefferson Co., Ino.

P.O. Lula Blackburn, Versailles, Woodford Co., Ky.

Office of Special Examiner of Pensions,
Lexington, Ky. June 12th 1909.

I have the honor to return the papers in the above cited claim and to submit my report thereon.

Soldier died at Monterey, Owen Co., Ky., Sept. 11. 1896.

He was four times married, and left at death the fourth wife, Armilda, who had pending a suit for divorce, but after death of Hopper, the suit was dismissed, and Armilda married on Dec. 4, 1896, one Jos. Hiles.

There were four Children under 16 when the Soldier died, by the third wife, but none by the then wife.

There seems to be every reason to believe the dates of births of four children as shown by record, B.J. 20, George Hopper, Sept. 29, 1880 lacked 18 days of being 16 years old when father died, Sept 11, 1896 and was not included in claim, which was not filed till January 22, 1897, when he was passed 16 years.

Dora Hopper Blackburn was born, January 25. 1882, Bessie Hopper, Dec. 26, 1884 and Lula P. Hopper Blackburn, Feb 27. 1886 only a few months before her mother died.

Claim was referred to S.E. Division to determine whether minors claimed for are the legitimate children of Soldier, dates of their births and full and correct names and whether there were any others of Soldiers children under 16 years at date of Soldiers death. See Slips.

Came to me for Initial examination of Lula P. Hopper Blackburn, the youngest of Minors claimed for. She was fully Informed of her rights and privileges, and notice of further examination is waived. Owen County Is one of the Counties of KY, where the Co. Clerk appoints Deputies as Political Reward in about all

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[REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES]

Towns of his County, and very often the Deputy Clerk made no report of his having issued a license for a Marriage, probably pocketing the fee.

It is well known that Ministers in this state were careless about their returns of marriages solemnized and if return were made and no record of the license was there, no record of return would be made.

There is no record of License or Return for the Marriage of J. W. Hopper to Sarah J. Taylor, but evidence herewith clearly shows a ceremony and makes it conclusive that Hopper obtained License from the then Deputy Clerk at Monterey and the License issued was not reported, nor return of solemnization of this marriage made. It is shown that Hopper was a pretty decent man, had all his wives in same general locality and evidence clearly shows death of each wife before his marriage to his next one, and Ann Taylor and John W. Hopper were married in Franklin Co., KY, June 12, 1875, **see Deposition N. B. Smith.** Their child Margret Hopper McDonald was born June 13, 1876 and was 14 months old at the time her mother died, Aug. 1877. In 1879 Hopper married Sarah J. Taylor and their four children came along after this about as rapidly as possible.

Dr. Pryor was away, but he has no records. Undertakers were few and no record kept of mechanic who made coffins, but the facts are clear and the children claimed for are beyond question the legitimate children of Soldier J. W. Hopper and the only ones under 16 years of age.

Armilda Hiles, last wife of Soldier did not have case dismissed till after Hopper died, and she had already remarried I am told she is almost if not actually weak minded, that her last husband

is pretty much same stripe and that their one child is well. marked. She lives away in an almost inaccessible locality and I did not deem it necessary to hunt her up.

Marticia Hopper widow Frank Hopper, older son of Soldier is at Muncie Ind., and I think the full brother of these Minors, Geo. W. Hopper is at Muncie, Ind.

Near relatives of the different wives have testified and while there is not record evidence on all points, the fact of legitimacy is shown as well as can

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be, and ages cannot be much different from what they are alleged and shown to be by evidence herewith and laws of nature.

While all those who have testified before me are not equally high in their standing in community, they have beyond question endeavored to aid at just and honest adjudication of this claim, and I rate them all good for truth.

I do not think status of claim can be changed by further examination.

Recommended consideration of Chief of Board of Review.

Respectfully submitted,
//s// Percy S. Ceowe
Special Examiner

Hon. V. Warner,
Commissioner of Pensions,
Washington, D.C.

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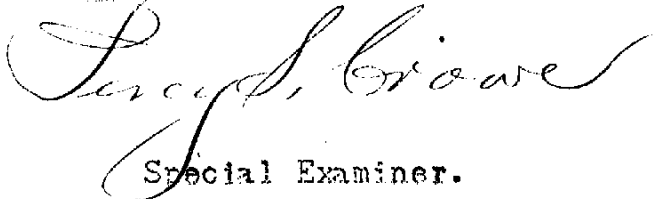
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