

3-1876

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Boston, Mass.,

June 17, 1915.

Hon. Commissioner of Pensions,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to return herewith all papers in the case, Inv. Ctf. 271,019, of Walter O. Holden, late of Co. E, 6th Mass. Inf., together with my report therein. Pensioner's post-office address is West Acton, Middlesex county, Mass.

This case was referred by the Medical Referee to the Special Examination to secure testimony showing the present physical condition of the pensioner, and if an investigation showed that the rate of \$50 per month which the pensioner was receiving was excessive, he was to be taken before a convenient board of surgeons for medical examination. The letter of the Medical Referee dated February 11, 1915, is made an exhibit in this report, as well as the letter of Dr. Staples dated February 1, 1915, on which the reference was made.

I went to West Acton without notice to anybody and on calling at the residence of the pensioner was told he was out in the yard; in going through his place, I saw him just getting up off of the toilet, observed that he reached down and pulled up his trousers, buttoned them up and put on his vest, all with very little difficulty. Just after putting on his vest, I told him who I was. He started to put on his coat and had gotten one arm into his sleeve, as I mentioned Pension Bureau, and turning to me said, it is too much for me to get it on. To get to the toilet he had to walk down two steps and take about fifty steps; noticed that he had no cane and used none in walking into the house and around the house. On my second trip to his home, however, he had the stick with him all the time. Prior to my first call was told that he could be seen about the village at almost anytime, but between my first and second visits, he was not out of the house. At time of taking his initial statement, it was noticeable that something was wrong with his respiratory organs, there being a peculiar wheezing sound as he breathed, but when seen the last time, his breathing was decidedly improved and there was nothing outwardly to indicate that the said organs were not perfectly normal.

Inquiring at the post-office and interviewing many people in West Acton, I was told by everyone who would say anything that the pensioner was wholly unreliable. The postmaster did not want to be quoted, nor did George Parker (who served in soldier's company), but they told me privately just what the others had stated. I was unable to wholly ~~make~~ account for his reputation being so bad, for his statements to me were made in a frank and straight-forward manner. The trouble seems to be that he has refused to pay any debts contracted by him for a number of years which he could avoid paying. It was also reported to me that it was believed that he had stolen a large amount of goods from a resident there many years ago but the theft could not be proven. Many seemed to be "dead set

(5)

against him" because they thought the pension he was getting entirely disproportionate to the degree of his disability as compared with that of other pensioners in the village. The sentiment that he was getting entirely too large a pension and for sometime appeared to be universal in West Acton, still, none possessed the courage to make known the facts to the Bureau except Dr. Staples. He bears a splendid reputation for truth and veracity and also as a physician. While he told me frankly that he had sued the soldier for professional services rendered amounting to nearly to two hundred dollars, he said that he had no prejudice against the soldier.

I interviewed at least twenty people and they one and all said that in their opinion the soldier was unable to do hard manual labor but he was able to according to report and did do the chores about his house. Most of the information as to what soldier did was obtained from statements made to neighbors by the soldier's wife. As far as I could learn the soldier has few if any friends and very few people ever go to his house, and because of this, the statements made to me could not be made stronger, as it was hearsay and not personal observation that led them to state what they did.

Mrs. Brown, who works at the Holden home was there when I called both times and after completing his and his wife's statement, I asked for Mrs. Brown but she had gone out. I searched for over one and one half hours at both visits, but could not find her. I concluded that she did not want to testify in the case and was hiding from me.

Dr. Christie's reputation in West Acton is only fair, as a physician. His manner in testifying did not impress me favorably. I got the impression that he would stretch a point pretty far to do the pensioner a good turn.

I made all arrangements for the pensioner to be examined by a board of surgeons in Boston on June 16th; told him that I would meet him at the depot and would see that he got back safely on the train. The total distance in West Acton and Boston that he would have had to walk was not more than 200 yards if he had appeared for examination as directed. He promised me faithfully that he would appear. On June 14, an attorney called on me and stated that Dr. Christie had told him that the pensioner would not be able to come to Boston for examination. I told him to have the doctor make a statement in writing relative to the pensioner's condition and if the same would not permit of his coming to Boston for examination to so state, together with the reason for such inability. From Mr. McCleary's letter (Exhibit) it will be seen that I had every reason to expect the pensioner to carry out his promise. Notwithstanding this promise, he told Mr. George Parker who visited him on June 11th, that I had directed him to appear for examination, but he would not come. Note the flimsy excuse he gave for his non-appearance. In my opinion, this man will resort to every subterfuge to avoid being examined by a board of surgeons. The only way for him to be examined is to have someone go to his home for that purpose. I am satisfied that his condition would permit him to appear if he wanted to.

His main disability at present and for some time past, seems to be a suppurating ulcer on his left ankle. I was shown his left leg from the knee down, and beginning half way between the knee and foot and down to the ankle I observed quite a discoloration and I

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

got the impression that it was due to varicose veins and the ulcers were varicose ones.

Dr. Staples was at first inclined to give \$17 per month as the rate which he thought the pensioner was entitled, but thinking that rate possibly too low, he gave as his opinion that the pensioner was entitled to but \$24 per month by reason of rheumatism and disease of heart.

It was quite difficult to set a particular date from which it could be stated that the pensioner's improved condition had continued, but one and all stated that the date could be safely set as from one year since he was last medically examined, namely, June 13, 1914.

again

I feel that it would be useless to attempt to have the pensioner appear for medical examination, and I therefore recommend that this report be referred to the Medical Referee for such action as may be considered necessary.

Very respectfully,

A. Smith

Special Examiner. with me

P. S. When I returned to West Acton, I failed to take the depositions of pensioner's wife and that of Guilford. In pensioner's supplemental deposition I incorporated therein the gist of what his wife had testified; but as he admitted all that Guilford has testified to, I did not mention Guilford's testimony.

A. Smith Spl. Exr.

DEPOSITION *"a"*Case of Walter O. Holden, No. 271019On this 9th day of June, 1915, at
West Acton, county of MiddlesexState of Massachusetts, before me, A. R. Smith
a Special Examiner of the Bureau of Pensions, personally appeared
Walter O. Holden, who, being by me first duly sworn to
answer truly all interrogatories propounded to him during this special
examination of aforesaid claim for pension, deposes and says:

1 I was born September 12, 1837, at Lunenburg, Mass. I have
2 no Bible record showing the date of my birth. I think there is
3 a town record there showing the date of my birth. I think it is
4 in Middlesex County. I have no memorandum showing the date of
5 my birth and never saw any record thereof. I have no occupation
6 at this time, I was formerly a farmer. I am the identical Walter
7 O. Holden, who enlisted at Acton, Mass., August 21, 1862, in Co.
8 E, 6th Mass. Inf., and was discharged at Lowell, Mass., on June
9 5, 1863. I never served in the army, navy or marine corps
10 of the United States before August 21, 1862 or after June 5, 1863.
11 I cannot recall just when I filed my first application for pension
12 but it was a great many years ago. It was quite a number of years
13 after I was discharged that I filed my first claim for pension,
14 but I cannot tell you how many years thereafter it was. While in
15 the service and stationed at Suffolk, Va., I contracted the rheu-
16 matism and the wheezing of the heart. This was in February or
17 March, 1863. Yes I had those ailments ever since I was discharged
18 from the service. I was treated at Suffolk and at the hospital
19 for those disabilities by Drs. Burnham and Hutchins. Both of them are
20 deceased. I have received treatment for those diseases from a number
21 of doctors since my discharge. I have forgotten the name of the last
22 doctor that treated me; it was here at the house and was about three
23 years ago. I don't recall any other disabilities that I incurred
24 while in the service. Yes I remember having malarial fever and the
25 chills. I have had the malaria ever since I was in the service.
26 Yes I have suffered from it within the last year, but I had no doc-
27 tor to treat me for it. At the present time I am not troubled with

any disability other than rheumatism and heart trouble. I am a pensioner at the rate of \$50 per month under the general law, which I receive by reason of rheumatism and disease of heart, which disabilities were incurred by me while in the U. S. service. I here show you my pension certificate (Soldier here produced his pension certificate, numbered 271019, which was issued July 30, 1913. ARS) I was first pensioned at the rate of \$6 per month and my pension has been gradually increased until I got the \$50 per month. I was last medically examined here at the house in June, 1913, by one doctor, whose name I can not recall. He had to come here, I could not get out.

Q. Since you were examined by him, you have greatly improved, have you not. A. No I have not improved to any extent, yes I have improved but it is not much. 1. At that time you were not able to do anything, were you? A. No. Q But since that time, you have been able to and have done various things, such as to wash windows, mow the lawn, shovel the snow off the walks, attend to your garden? Yes I have done those things. I was not able to do those things all the time, but at times I have been able to do them and have done them. Yes I am able to dress myself without assistance; also to undress myself; yes I am able to eat my food without it being cut for me and am able to bathe myself and attend to the calls of nature without the aid of anyone. This decided improvement in my condition took place in January, February or March of this year, 1915. Q Is it not a fact that you attended to your garden and mowed your lawn during the summer of 1914? A. Yes I did that a little, but could not do it always. Q. Is it not a fact that you were able to and did wait on yourself and in no manner required the aid and attendance of another person during last summer? A. Yes I was able to attend to my wants some of the time during the summer of 1914, but was unable to do this all of the time during the said summer. In bathing myself I have been able to do that all right with exception of getting

Walter B. Kolder

Deponent.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this _____ day of _____ 191____, and I certify that the contents were fully made known to deponent before signing.

DEPOSITION

Case of Walter O & Holden, No. 271019

On this _____ day of _____, 191____, at

_____, county of _____

State of _____, before me, _____

a Special Examiner of the Bureau of Pensions, personally appeared
 Clmts. statement continued. _____, who, being by me first duly sworn to
 answer truly all interrogatories propounded to h_____ during this special
 examination of aforesaid claim for pension, deposes and says:

1 to my back, I being unable to get my hand over to my back suffi-
 2 ficiently to do anything. I am married. My wife's maiden name
 3 was Helena C. Gray. We were married May 26, 1858 in West Acton,
 4 Mass., by Rev. W. H. Watson, who was pastor of the Baptist Church.
 5 There is a public record my marriage at Acton Centre, Mass. ~~xThere~~
 6 That was the first and only marriage of either of us. We have
 7 lived together ever since the date of my marriage and we were never
 8 separated or divorced, with the exception of the time that I was in
 9 the army. We never had any children. I do not desire to be
 10 present in person or represented by an attorney during the further
 11 examination of my claim either here or elsewhere. No I do not
 12 desire notice of further examination of same is found necessary.
 13 S. A. Gilford and George B. Parker, both residing here in West
 14 Acton have known me very well for a great many years. Parker
 15 served in the same company with me. "for me" in line 47 interlined
 16 before signing. Yes I know Dr. Hall Staples a physician here in
 17 town, he treated me for my ailments. I consider him reputable in
 18 everyway. I have no reason to believe that he would seek in anyway
 19 to misrepnent anything concerning me or my physical condition.

20 Have heard the foregoing read. Your questions have been
 21 understood and my answers are correctly recorded.

22 *Walter C Holden*

23 Deponent.

24 (Jurat over)

DEPOSITION *6"*Case of Walter O. Holden, No. 271019On this 9th day of June, 191⁵, atWest Acton, county of MiddlesexState of Massachusetts, before me, A. R. Smith

a Special Examiner of the Bureau of Pensions, personally appeared Samuel A. Gullford, who, being by me first duly sworn to answer truly all interrogatories propounded to him during this special examination of aforesaid claim for pension, deposes and says:

I am 73 years of age. My address is West Acton, Mass. Have had no occupation for the last seven or eight years. Yes I know Walter O. Holden who lives in this place and have known him for about 48 years. We have been close neighbors during the past three or four years. A little piece of church property is all that separates our places. During this time I have seen him very often. About two years ago he was laid up at home and he was an awful shape. I called to see him at that time and I thought he would never be able to walk around again, his feet and legs were in such terrible shape. I was told that he was examined while at home at that time. He improved, after awhile I saw him about, but cannot not state just how soon after he was examined. My recollection is that he did not get out to mow his lawn last summer, think he hired someone to do it. I have seen him shaking the mats in his yard, I have seen him splitting wood and have heard that he washed the windows of his house. I have seen him often walking to the post-office and my impression is that he always has a cane. I think it was last fall when I saw the soldier shaking mats and splitting wood. As far as I was able to observe the soldier has not at anytime during the past year or more been in such physical condition as to require the periodic aid and attendance of another person. No I dont think he is able to perform any manual labor whatever. As far as I know, and judging from my acquaintance with him, I can see no reason why the soldier is not able to attend to his daily wants without any assistance from anyone, and this has been true at all times as far as I know. It is likely that there has been days when he would require some assistance, but I have no

28 personal knowledge that he has required assistance at anytime.

29 I am not related to the soldier and am not concerned in the prose-
30 cution of his claim.

31 Have heard the foregoing read. Your questions have been
32 understood and my answers are correctly recorded.

33 *Samuel H. Guilford*

34 Deponent.

Deponent.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 9th day of June
1915, and I certify that the contents were fully made known to deponent
before signing.

W. J. [Signature]

Special Examiner.

MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING

WRITE PLAINLY, WITH UNFADING INK - THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD.

N. B. - Every item of information should be carefully supplied. AGE should be stated EXACTLY. PHYSICIANS should state CAUSE OF DEATH in plain terms, so that it may be properly classified. Exact statement of OCCUPATION is very important. See instructions on back of certificate.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts	
STANDARD CERTIFICATE OF DEATH	
1 PLACE OF DEATH <u>W. Acton</u> (No. <u>1</u> , Ward <u>2</u>)	
2 FULL NAME <u>Walter Agro Holden</u> [If married or divorced woman or widow give maiden name, also name of husband.]	
3 RESIDENCE <u>W. Acton</u> Registered No. <u>21</u>	
4 (City or town.) <u>Acton</u> [If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number.]	
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS	
5 SEX <u>M.</u>	6 COLOR OR RACE <u>W.</u>
7 SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED <u>Married</u> (Write the word)	
8 DATE OF BIRTH <u>Sept. 12 1837</u> (Month) (Day) (Year)	
9 AGE <u>77</u> yrs. <u>11</u> mos. <u>23</u> ds. If LESS than 1 day, ____ hrs. or ____ min. ?	
10 OCCUPATION (a) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work, _____ (b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer), _____	
11 BIRTHPLACE (State or country) <u>Lunenburg Mass.</u>	
PARENTS	
12 NAME OF FATHER <u>Reuben Holden</u>	
13 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or country) <u>U. S.</u>	
14 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <u>Mary Chute</u>	
15 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or country) <u>Shirley</u>	
16 THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE (Informant) <u>Helena I Holden</u> (Address) <u>W. Acton</u>	
17 Filed <u>Oct.</u> , 19 <u>15</u> <u>Horne F Tuttle</u> REGISTRAR	
MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH	
18 DATE OF DEATH <u>Sept 4</u> , 19 <u>15</u> (Month) (Day) (Year)	
19 I HEREBY CERTIFY that I attended deceased from <u>June 24</u> , 19 <u>15</u> , to <u>Sept 4</u> , 19 <u>15</u> that I last saw him alive on <u>Sept. 4</u> , 19 <u>15</u> and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at <u>10 10</u> a.m.	
The CAUSE OF DEATH* was as follows: <u>Dysentery</u>	
(Duration) ____ yrs. ____ mos. <u>9</u> ds.	
Contributory (SECONDARY) (Duration) ____ yrs. ____ mos. ____ ds.	
(Signed) <u>Samuel A Christie</u> M.D. <u>Sept 6</u> , 19 <u>15</u> (Address) <u>South Acton</u>	
* If death followed injury or violence the certificate of death must be made out by the Medical Examiner.	
20 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (FOR HOSPITALS, INSTITUTIONS, TRANSIENTS, OR RECENT RESIDENTS). At place of death ____ yrs. ____ mos. ____ ds. In the State ____ yrs. ____ mos. ____ ds.	
Where was disease contracted, if not at place of death? Former or usual residence _____	
21 PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL <u>Mt Hope W. Acton</u>	DATE OF BURIAL <u>Sept. 7</u> , 19 <u>15</u>
22 UNDERTAKER <u>O. S. Fowler</u>	ADDRESS <u>Maynard.</u>

nh



Board of Review.

I. C. 271019,
Walter O. Holden,
Co. E, 6th Mass. Inf.

September 2, 1915.

Mr. Walter O. Holden,
West Acton, Middlesex Co.,
Massachusetts.

Sir:

I have to advise you that it appears from medical evidence and from evidence adduced on special examination, on file in this Bureau, that you are not now disabled from the effects of rheumatism and resulting disease of heart, in such a degree as to entitle you to the rate of \$50 per month, the rate of pension provided for a condition of permanent helplessness, requiring frequent and periodical, though not regular and constant, personal aid and attendance of another person, and which you are now receiving by the above numbered certificate. Said rate will, therefore, be reduced to \$30 per month, the rate provided for incapacity for performing any manual labor unless satisfactory evidence shall be furnished to show that such action is not warranted.

Under the provisions of the act of Congress of December 21, 1893, you may, if you believe that said disability still entitles you to the rate of \$50 per month,

within thirty days from receipt hereof, file in this Bureau competent proof (medical, if practicable) that your disability from the pensioned cause continues in the first named degree, that is, that as a result thereof you are so permanently disabled as to require frequent and periodical though not regular and constant personal aid and attendance of another person. Your case will thereupon be reconsidered, and if the testimony filed warrants such action your present rate will be allowed to remain unchanged. If, however, such evidence shall not be satisfactory, or shall not have been furnished, the said reduction will be made without further notice at the expiration of said thirty days.

The evidence, which must be duly sworn to before some officer authorized to administer oaths, should be firmly attached to the inclosed evidence slip. It may be forwarded in the accompanying envelope which does not require a stamp.

Very respectfully,

C. TIEMAN

Acting Commissioner.

For Officer's or Comrade's Testimony.

Officer's, Surgeon's or Comrade's Post Office address.

I, Marshall Haggood a resident of Brattleboro in the County of Windham State of Vermont late Private of Company E of the Sixth Regiment of Mass Volunteers on oath, depose and say, that I was well acquainted with Walter O. Holding late a member in Company E of the Sixth Regiment of Vt. Inf. of the war of 1861; that at the time of his enlistment, said Walter O. Holding was considered a sound man and in good health

Here state condition of soldier's health at time of enlistment.

and while in the military service of the United States, in the line of his duty, and without fault or improper conduct of his own, on or about the First day of March 1863 at Suffolk in the State of Vt

State time and place of disability, and if by wound in battle, state name of battle; if by accident, state the circumstances; and if by sickness, state the cause and nature of the disease.

I know of this being on picket and caught a hard cold and was in hospital for some time I then saw him a spell after wards and I asked him how he was and he complained of Rheumatism was with a cane I called him a used up man and I also have seen him from time to time since always complained of Rheumatism I know said Holding before he entered the service was in good health I know since the time mentioned his health

State your source of information.

I know these facts from personal knowledge and I have no interest whatever in the prosecution of this claim for pension. M H

Two Witnesses when signed by mark: Robert H Baker Marshall Haggood
Jurclin Petlee

NOTE.

Execute this before a Clerk of the Court if possible. When executed before a Notary Public or Justice of the Peace, a certificate from the Clerk of the Court should be attached, certifying that the Notary or Justice had authority to act as such.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 13th day of November 1889, at Brattleboro in the County of Windham State of Vermont. I certify that I am disinterested, that the affiant is to me well known, and is respectable, and worthy of full credit as a witness, and that the contents of the affidavit were made known to him before execution

H. E. Payler
Notary Public



FOR REGIMENTAL OR ASSISTANT SURGEON OR

For Officer's or Comrade's Testimony.

Officer's, Surgeon's or
Comrade's Post Office
Address

I, Lewis J. Martin a resident of James Falls
in the County of Franklin State of Massachusetts late
Private of Company C of the 6th Regiment of M & M

on oath, depose and say, that I was well acquainted with Walter O. Holden
late a Private in Company C of the 6th Regiment of M & M
of the war of 1861; that at the time of his enlistment, said Walter O. Holden
was a strong healthy man

Here state condition
of soldier's health at
time of enlistment.

and while in the military service of the United States, in the line of his duty, and without fault or im-
proper conduct of his own, on or about the 1st day of March 1863
at Suffolk in the State of Virginia

State time and place
of disability, and if by
wound in battle, state
name of battle; if by
accident, state the cir-
cumstances; and if by
sickness, state the cause
and nature of the dis-
ease.

was taken sick and suffered much
pain from rheumatism caused by the
exposures common to a soldier

State your source of
information.

I know these facts from intimacy with him, seeing him from day to day
and I have no interest whatever in the prosecution of this claim for pension.

Two Witnesses
when signed
by mark:

John Mc Ilvene L. J. Martin
F. I. Webster

NOTE.

Execute this before a
Clerk of the Court if pos-
sible. When executed
before a Notary Public
or Justice of the Peace,
a certificate from the
Clerk of the Court should
be attached, certifying
that the Notary or Jus-
tice had authority to act
as such.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 27th day of August 1883
at Montague in the County of Franklin

State of Massachusetts I certify that I am disinterested, that the affiant is to me well
known, and is respectable, and worthy of full credit as a witness, and that the contents of the affidavit were
made known to him before execution

John Mc Ilvene
Justice of the Peace

West Acton Mass May 1 1913
 P. J. Lockwood & Co
 Gentlemen:-

In regard to the condition of Walter C. Holden I wish to again state that Mr. Holden is just able with much effort to walk across the room. His feet and legs are ordematous nearly to the body. It has been a long time since he has stayed in bed all night on account of the pain and difficulty in breathing. He cannot dress and undress nor attend to the calls of nature unaided. He can with great difficulty feed himself after his food is suitably prepared so he can use a spoon. He can't cut a piece of meat or spread bread with butter because of the stiffness of his hands. When he is in bed he has to have help to get out. Now gentlemen if this condition does not warrant a rating of fifty

dollars per month I fail to see how any man can ever get that rating. He is practically so much disabled as to require the constant aid and attendance of another person and when I used to examine for pensions that called for \$72.00 per month - It seems to me in this case an injustice is being done and I feel that if the Commissioner would order a home examination this claimant would be allowed at least fifty dollars per month.

Yours truly

Hall Staples M.D.

State of Massachusetts

County of Middlesex

SS

On this 5 day of May 1913 personally appeared

Hall Staples M.D. and made oath that the

Attached statements by him subscribed are

true and correct

Allan Brooks Barker

Notary Public

of the State of Massachusetts