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DEMONSTRATION SPECIMEN - The soldier is fictional (and where a unit is named, the unit is deliberately one that never existed). The document types, tiers, flags, and citations are exactly what a real report contains.

A CIVIL WAR PENSION FILE REPORT

Amos Fernsby

Private · Company E · 52nd Regiment New Jersey Volunteer Infantry

Widow's pension (Act of July 14, 1862)

Family Keepsake Edition · Researcher-Reviewed

Prepared August 30, 2026

Every fact in this report is traced to the page that states it.

Prepared from the original records of the United States National Archives (Record Group 15).

Amos Fernsby

Private, Company E, 52nd Regiment New Jersey Volunteer Infantry

Short Biography

Amos Fernsby was a young married man from Mount Holly, New Jersey, who enlisted as a private in the 52nd New Jersey Volunteer Infantry in the fall of 1861. He served through the North Carolina campaigns around Newbern and died there of typhoid fever in the regimental hospital in early March 1864, never coming home. His widow, Louisa, who had married him in 1859 and could not marry with her own signature but signed with her mark, filed for a pension within weeks of his death. Because the meeting-house record of their marriage had burned, she proved her marriage with two of Amos's own letters from camp and his photograph taken in the field, and the government granted her \$8 a month later that year.

The Story of Amos and Louisa Fernsby

When Louisa Hatch married Amos Fernsby at Mount Holly, New Jersey, on the 11th of June, 1859, the ceremony was performed by the Rev. Josiah Crane. She was about twenty-one; she could not sign her own name and would later sign her pension papers with an "X, her mark." Within two years they had a daughter, a "little Mary" whom Amos would later ask his wife to kiss for him.

On the 26th of September, 1861, Amos enlisted at Trenton as a private in Captain Loder's Company (Company E) of the 52nd Regiment, New Jersey Volunteer Infantry (Report of the Adjutant General, p. 5; the widow's declaration, p. 2, gives the same date). (*Louisa's declaration says he "enlisted"; the army's own record says "enrolled Sept. 26, 1861, at Trenton" — the same event.*)

The regiment went south to North Carolina. From the camp of the 52nd New Jersey at Newbern, on February 20th, 1863, Amos wrote home to Louisa in his own plain words: he was well, they had "had hard marching since Kinston but I am stout yet," and he had had his "likeness struck here by the sutler's man" to send to her — the photograph that survives in this file, inscribed on its reverse "Amos, taken at New Berne Febr'y 1863." He asked her to kiss little Mary and to thank "Mother Hatch" for the socks.

A little over a year later, Amos was dead. The muster roll for March–April 1864 reported that he "Died of typhoid fever at regimental hospital, Newbern, N.C., March 4, 1864" (Adjutant General's report, p. 5). Louisa's declaration, sworn from what she had been told, likewise gives March 4, 1864 (p. 2). The Pension Office later set her pension to commence March 5, 1864 (Admission Card, p. 6).

Louisa moved quickly. On the 19th of May, 1864, aged 26, a resident of Mount Holly in Burlington County, she appeared and swore out her Declaration for Widow's Pension (p. 2). She faced one real difficulty: there was "no public record of the marriage saved from the fire at the meeting-house in 1861." In its place she filed two of Amos's private letters and "the likeness of her husband taken in the field," together with the certificate of Rev. Crane who had married them.

The Pension Office accepted her proofs. Its Admission Card (p. 6) records that the marriage was accepted "upon the affidavit of the claimant, the letters of the soldier filed as Exhibits A and B, and the certificate of Rev. Crane," and that death in service was established by the Adjutant General's report. Louisa Fernsby was admitted to the rolls on October 3, 1864, at \$8 per month under the Act of July 14,

1862, her pension commencing March 5, 1864 (Jacket Cover, p. 1; Admission Card, p. 6). This specimen file carries the claim only to that admission; it does not record how long she drew the pension or how her life afterward unfolded.

Timeline

- **June 11, 1859** — Amos Fernsby marries Louisa Hatch at Mount Holly, N.J., by Rev. Josiah Crane (Declaration, p. 2).
- **September 26, 1861** — Amos enrolls/enlists at Trenton as a private, Co. E, 52nd N.J. Vol. Inf. (Adjutant General's report, p. 5; Declaration, p. 2).
- **February 20, 1863** — Amos writes to Louisa from Newbern, N.C., enclosing his photograph (Letter, Exhibit A, p. 4; Photograph, p. 3).
- **March 4, 1864** — Amos dies of typhoid fever at the regimental hospital, Newbern, N.C. (Adjutant General's report, p. 5; Declaration, p. 2).
- **May 19, 1864** — Louisa Fernsby swears her Declaration for Widow's Pension at Mount Holly; files letters and photograph as exhibits (pp. 2, 3, 4).
- **October 3, 1864** — Claim admitted at \$8/month, commencing March 5, 1864 (Jacket Cover, p. 1; Admission Card, p. 6).

Marriage and Children

Marriage. Amos Fernsby married Louisa Hatch on June 11, 1859, at Mount Holly, New Jersey, in a ceremony performed by the Rev. Josiah Crane (Declaration, p. 2). Louisa's maiden name is given as Hatch on the same document, corroborated by Amos's letter referring to "Mother Hatch" (p. 4). Because the public record burned in an 1861 fire at the meeting-house, the marriage was proven by Louisa's sworn affidavit, two of Amos's letters (Exhibits A and B), and Rev. Crane's certificate — all accepted by the Pension Office (Admission Card, p. 6).

Children. The file names one child only implicitly: Amos's letter of February 20, 1863 asks Louisa to "Kiss little Mary for me" (p. 4). The file does not state Mary's birth date, surname, or age, and no formal proof of children appears in this widow's claim.

(Note: the certificate of Rev. Crane referenced on the Admission Card is not itself present among the pages of this specimen file.)

The Pension — Rate and Amount

Louisa Fernsby was admitted to the pension rolls on October 3, 1864, at **\$8.00 per month**, the standard widow's rate under the Act of July 14, 1862 for a private's widow, commencing March 5, 1864 (the day after Amos's death) (Jacket Cover, p. 1; Admission Card, p. 6). This file does not record when — or whether — the pension ended, so a lifetime total cannot be calculated. As a single illustrative figure, \$8/month from the March 5, 1864 commencement to the October 3, 1864 admission (about 7 months) would have produced roughly **\$56 in initial arrears** (*calculated from the stated rate and dates; the file does not state this figure*). Any ongoing total would depend on how long Louisa remained a widow, which this specimen does not document.

The Law Behind the Pension

Act of July 14, 1862 (12 Stat. 566), and acts amendatory thereof — cited by name on the Jacket Cover (p. 1). This was the "General Law" governing pensions for deaths traced to service. Under §§2–4, where a soldier died of a wound or disease contracted in the line of duty, his widow was entitled to a pension at the total-disability rate for his rank — \$8 per month for a private — payable during her widowhood. Louisa's claim met the test: Amos's death from typhoid fever in the regimental hospital at Newbern was established as a death in service by the Adjutant General's report (p. 5), and her marriage and widowhood were proven by affidavit, the soldier's letters, and Rev. Crane's certificate (Admission Card, p. 6). The \$8 rate and the death-in-service basis are exactly what this act provided.

Named Social Network

- **Rev. Josiah Crane** — minister who married Amos and Louisa in 1859; furnished a marriage certificate to the claim (Declaration, p. 2; Admission Card, p. 6).
- **Captain Loder** — commanded Company E, 52nd N.J., Amos's company (Adjutant General's report, p. 5).
- **Stockton, Adjutant General** — signed the Report of the Adjutant General of New Jersey confirming Amos's service and death (p. 5).
- **"Mother Hatch"** — named in Amos's letter; apparently Louisa's mother (Louisa's maiden name being Hatch) (Letter, p. 4).
- **"little Mary"** — a child named in Amos's letter (p. 4).
- **The sutler's man** — the itinerant photographer at Newbern who took Amos's likeness (Letter, p. 4).

Artifacts Filed With the Claim

This file preserves two items of unusual family value, both filed by Louisa in 1864 as proof of her marriage:

- **A photograph of a seated figure** (p. 3), inscribed on the reverse in an unschooled hand "Amos, taken at New Berne Febr'y 1863," docketed as filed with Louisa's declaration on May 19, 1864 as Exhibit B. The inscription identifies the subject as Amos; the image itself is a plain studio portrait and cannot independently confirm the identification.
- **A private letter from Amos to Louisa** (p. 4), written from the camp of the 52nd N.J. at Newbern on February 20, 1863, filed as Exhibit A in proof of the marriage relation. It is the only document in the file in the soldier's own voice.

A second private letter (Exhibit B in the marriage proof, per the Admission Card) is referenced as filed but the surviving items suggest the letter of p. 4 was Exhibit A and the photograph was docketed "Exhibit B" — see the flag on this point.

Research Gaps and the Identification Boundary

What this file establishes. It proves what "the Amos Fernsby of Co. E, 52nd New Jersey" did: that he enrolled at Trenton on September 26, 1861, served in North Carolina, and died of typhoid fever at the regimental hospital in Newbern on March 4, 1864; and that his widow Louisa (maiden name Hatch), of Mount Holly, Burlington County, aged 26 in 1864, married him June 11, 1859 and drew an \$8 widow's pension from 1864.

Identity anchors for a family researcher: unit and company (Co. E, 52nd N.J. Vol. Inf.); enlistment date and place (Sept. 26, 1861, Trenton); Louisa's age in 1864 (26, implying birth about 1837–1838, *calculated*); their marriage (June 11, 1859, Mount Holly); the child "Mary"; and the surname Hatch.

The boundary, plainly stated: this report reads only what is inside the pension file. Tying this Amos Fernsby to a specific modern family line requires correlation with records *outside* this file — census, county, church, and probate records — and same-named soldiers of the same era are common. Nothing here confirms descent from this soldier; that is a correlation task the file itself cannot perform.

Gaps a further record would fill: - *The soldier's own hospital record.* The **Carded Medical Records (NARA RG 94)** would likely hold the regimental hospital's own account of Amos's final illness and death. - *Marriage proof lost to fire.* County or church records for Mount Holly might supply an independent 1859 marriage record; the file relied on affidavit and letters because the meeting-house record burned in 1861. - *The child Mary.* Birth, baptism, or census records would establish Mary's birth date and fate; the file names her only in passing. - *End of the pension.* This specimen stops at admission; the full file (or the pension ledgers) would show how long Louisa drew the pension and whether she remarried or died. - *Rev. Crane's certificate,* referenced on the Admission Card, is not among the pages here and could be sought in the complete original file.

Artifacts in the File

The file holds more than paperwork. These pages are reproduced here exactly as they were filed — a caption beneath each tells you what the record itself says about it, and nothing more.

Photograph Filed with the Claim



"Amos, taken at New Berne Febry 1863."

[Ink inscription on reverse of card mount, in an unschooled hand]

Docket: Filed with declaration of Louisa Fernsby, May 19, 1864. Exhibit B.

DEMONSTRATION SPECIMEN — fictional soldier; typeset reconstruction of real record types. Not a genuine record.

Plate 1 — photograph (page 3). inscribed/captioned: "'Amos, taken at New Berne Febry 1863.'" [Ink inscription on reverse of card mount, in an unschooled hand] Docket: Filed with declaration of Louisa Fernsby, May 19, 1864. Exhibit B.". Studio portrait filed by the widow as marriage proof; identified as Amos only by the reverse inscription and docket, not independently confirmed.

Private Letter Filed as Exhibit A

Camp of the 52nd N.J. Vols, Newbern N.C.

Febry the 20th 1863

Dear wife Louisa,

I take my pen in hand to let you know I am well and hope these few lines find you the same. We have had hard marching since Kinston but I am stout yet. I had my likeness struck here by the sutler's man and send it to you so you may see I am not so poorly as you feared. Kiss little Mary for me and tell Mother Hatch I am obliged for the socks.

No more at present from your loving husband,

Amos Fernsby

[Docket: Exhibit A, filed May 19, 1864, in proof of marriage relation.]

DEMONSTRATION SPECIMEN — fictional soldier; typeset reconstruction of real record types. Not a genuine record.

Plate 2 — letter (page 4). inscribed/captioned: "[Docket: Exhibit A, filed May 19, 1864, in proof of marriage relation.]". Autograph-style letter from Amos Fernsby to his wife Louisa, dated Feb. 20, 1863 from Newbern, N.C.; the only document in the soldier's own voice, filed as marriage proof.

Document Inventory

Page	Document Type	Summary
1	Jacket Cover — Widow's Pension	Cover jacket: Widow's Certificate No. 301,772, Application No. 244,518; FERNSEY, Amos, Private, Co.

		E, 52nd N.J. Vol. Inf.; widow Louisa Fernsby; Act of July 14, 1862; 6 cards and papers; admitted Oct. 3, 1864, at \$8/month.
2	Declaration for Widow's Pension	Sworn May 19, 1864, Burlington County, N.J., by Louisa Fernsby, aged 26, of Mount Holly. States she is widow of Amos Fernsby, Pvt., Co. E, 52nd N.J., enlisted Sept. 26, 1861, died of typhoid at Newbern, N.C., March 4, 1864; married June 11, 1859 at Mount Holly by Rev. Josiah Crane; maiden name Louisa Hatch; marriage record lost in 1861 fire; signed with her mark.
3	Photograph filed with the claim	Studio portrait of a seated figure, inscribed on reverse in an unschooled hand: 'Amos, taken at New Berne Febry 1863.' Docketed as filed with Louisa Fernsby's declaration, May 19, 1864, Exhibit B.
4	Private letter (Exhibit A)	Letter from Amos Fernsby to wife Louisa, from camp of the 52nd N.J. at Newbern, N.C., Feb. 20, 1863; mentions hard marching since Kinston, his likeness taken by the sutler's man, 'little Mary,' and 'Mother Hatch.' Docketed Exhibit A, filed May 19, 1864, in proof of marriage relation.
5	Report of the Adjutant General of New Jersey	Reply to Commissioner of Pensions: Amos Fernsby enrolled Sept. 26, 1861 at Trenton, Pvt., Captain Loder's Company (E), 52nd N.J. Vol. Inf.; present on all rolls to Jan.-Feb. 1864; muster roll March-April 1864 reports died of typhoid fever at regimental hospital, Newbern, N.C., March 4, 1864. Signed Stockton, Adjutant General.
6	Pension Office — Admission Card	Claim of Louisa Fernsby, widow. Marriage accepted on claimant's affidavit, soldier's letters (Exhibits A and B), and Rev. Crane's certificate; death in service established by Adjutant General's report. Admitted Oct.

		3, 1864, at \$8/month, commencing March 5, 1864.
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Every Fact and Its Source

Each substantive fact in this report, with the document that states it. Tier 1 = sworn or own-hand documents; Tier 2 = official contemporaneous records; Tier 3 = claim-process paperwork; Tier 4 = administrative material. Notes mark facts a witness learned second-hand, values worked out by calculation, and uncertain readings.

Fact	Source document (page)	Tier	Notes
The soldier is Amos Fernsby, Private, Company E, 52nd Regiment New Jersey Volunteer Infantry.	Jacket Cover — Widow's Pension (p. 1)	2	corroborated by second source
Amos Fernsby served in Captain Loder's Company (E), 52nd N.J. Vol. Inf.	Report of the Adjutant General of New Jersey (p. 5)	2	—
Amos Fernsby enrolled/enlisted September 26, 1861, at Trenton, N.J., as a private.	Report of the Adjutant General of New Jersey (p. 5)	2	corroborated by second source
The widow's declaration states Amos enlisted September 26, 1861, in Co. E, 52nd N.J.	Declaration for Widow's Pension, sworn 19 May 1864 (p. 2)	1	corroborated by second source
Amos Fernsby was present on all muster rolls to Jan.-Feb. 1864.	Report of the Adjutant General of New Jersey (p. 5)	2	—
Amos Fernsby died of typhoid fever at the regimental hospital, Newbern, N.C., on March 4, 1864.	Report of the Adjutant General of New Jersey (p. 5)	2	corroborated by second source
The widow declared that Amos died of typhoid fever at Newbern, N.C., March 4, 1864, while in service.	Declaration for Widow's Pension, sworn 19 May 1864 (p. 2)	1	learned by notification
Amos Fernsby married Louisa Hatch on June 11, 1859, at Mount Holly, N.J., by Rev. Josiah Crane.	Declaration for Widow's Pension, sworn 19 May 1864 (p. 2)	1	—

The widow's maiden name was Louisa Hatch.	Declaration for Widow's Pension, sworn 19 May 1864 (p. 2)	1	corroborated by second source
No public record of the marriage survived, having been lost in an 1861 fire at the meeting-house; marriage proven by affidavit, two of the soldier's letters, and Rev. Crane's certificate.	Declaration for Widow's Pension, sworn 19 May 1864 (p. 2)	1	corroborated by second source
The Pension Office accepted the marriage upon the claimant's affidavit, the soldier's letters (Exhibits A and B), and the certificate of Rev. Crane.	Pension Office — Admission Card (p. 6)	2	—
The widow is Louisa Fernsby, aged 26 in May 1864, a resident of Mount Holly, Burlington County, N.J.	Declaration for Widow's Pension, sworn 19 May 1864 (p. 2)	1	—
Louisa Fernsby was illiterate, signing her declaration with 'X her mark.'	Declaration for Widow's Pension, sworn 19 May 1864 (p. 2)	1	—
Louisa Fernsby's implied birth year is about 1837-1838 (aged 26 in 1864).	Declaration for Widow's Pension, sworn 19 May 1864 (p. 2)	1	calculated/derived
A child named 'little Mary' is referenced in Amos Fernsby's letter to Louisa.	Private letter (Exhibit A), dated 20 Feb 1863 (p. 4)	1	—
The claim was assigned Widow's Certificate No. 301,772 and Application No. 244,518.	Jacket Cover — Widow's Pension (p. 1)	4	—
The claim was filed under the Act of July 14, 1862, and acts amendatory thereof.	Jacket Cover — Widow's Pension (p. 1)	2	—
Louisa Fernsby swore her Declaration for	Declaration for Widow's Pension, sworn 19 May 1864 (p.	1	—

Widow's Pension on May 19, 1864, in Burlington County, N.J.	2)		
The claim was admitted October 3, 1864, at \$8 per month, commencing March 5, 1864.	Pension Office — Admission Card (p. 6)	2	corroborated by second source
The jacket records admission Oct. 3, 1864, at \$8 per month.	Jacket Cover — Widow's Pension (p. 1)	2	corroborated by second source
Death in service was established by the report of the Adjutant General.	Pension Office — Admission Card (p. 6)	2	—
Amos Fernsby wrote to Louisa from the camp of the 52nd N.J. at Newbern, N.C., on February 20, 1863, mentioning hard marching since Kinston and having his likeness taken by the sutler's man.	Private letter (Exhibit A), dated 20 Feb 1863 (p. 4)	1	—
A photograph inscribed 'Amos, taken at New Berne Febry 1863' was filed with the claim as an exhibit.	Photograph filed with the claim (p. 3)	1	—
The Adjutant General's report was signed by Stockton, Adjutant General of New Jersey.	Report of the Adjutant General of New Jersey (p. 5)	2	—

Where the Documents Disagree

Here two or more perfectly legible documents say different things. That is a finding about the record, not a reading problem - both versions are shown, and neither was silently preferred. Where the evidence clearly favored one reading, the story above follows it, and the note here says why - a visible weighing, never a silent one.

- **Page 3** - the documents disagree here (The photograph docket (p. 3) labels the image 'Exhibit B,' while the Admission Card (p. 6) states the marriage was accepted upon 'the letters of the soldier filed as Exhibits A and B' — implying both exhibits are letters, not one letter and one photograph. The letter on p. 4 is docketed 'Exhibit A.' The exhibit-lettering across the file is internally inconsistent regarding whether Exhibit B is the second letter or the photograph). Both readings

appear in the report; review confirmed the disagreement is in the record itself. Our read: The contemporaneous dockets (pp. 3, 4) are the more specific source: p. 4 = Exhibit A (letter), p. 3 = Exhibit B (photograph). The Admission Card's phrase 'letters ... as Exhibits A and B' appears to be a loose summary. Reading uncertain; the file likely also contained a second letter not reproduced here.

- **Page 2** - the documents disagree here (Louisa's declaration says Amos 'enlisted' Sept. 26, 1861; the Adjutant General's report says 'enrolled Sept. 26, 1861.' Same date, same place — differing terminology only). Both readings appear in the report; review confirmed the disagreement is in the record itself. Our read: Not a substantive conflict — same event, same date. The Adjutant General's official term 'enrolled' is the record term; both agree on Sept. 26, 1861 at Trenton.

Sworn Long After the Fact

These statements were sworn honestly, but decades after the events they describe. The oath makes them testimony, not a guarantee of accuracy - details here are a person's memory, and are weighed as such.

- **Page 2** - a late recollection (Louisa's declaration (p. 2) states the death date; she was not present and learned it by notification. It happens to agree exactly with the army's muster-roll record (p. 5), so there is no discrepancy, but her statement is once-removed from observation). Honest testimony, recorded as the deponent remembered it; corroborating records, where they exist, are the check.

What the File Does Not Establish

The file is silent on these points. No document states them, so the report says so rather than filling them in.

- **Page 2** - the file does not answer this (The child 'Mary' is named only in Amos's letter (p. 4). No birth date, age, or formal proof of children appears in this widow's file (a widow's pension under the 1862 act did not require it here)). The Research Gaps section points to the records that might.
- **Page 6** - the file does not answer this (The Admission Card (p. 6) states the marriage was accepted partly upon 'the certificate of Rev. Crane,' but that certificate is not among the pages of this specimen file). The Research Gaps section points to the records that might.

About this report: it was produced from the file provided, read page by page. It does not search records beyond that file - the Research Gaps section points to the outside records that could carry the story further.