



Black Pearls of Genealogy

Southern Claims Commission Initial Version of Questions for Claimants and Witnesses – 1871

Revised Questions to be Answered by Claimants Under Oath

1. Where did you reside for six months prior to the 1st of April, 1861?
 - Where were you in person during the said six months?
 - What was your business or occupation during that period?
2. Where did you reside from the 1st of April, 1861, to the 1st of June, 1865?
 - Where were you personally during that period?
 - What was your business or occupation during that time?
 - Did you change your residence during that time? If so, when, and where was your new residence?
3. Did you ever pass beyond the military or naval lines of the United States and enter the rebel lines?
 - If so, how often, when, where, and for what purpose, and how long did you stay within the Confederate lines on each occasion?
4. Did you ever take any oath or affirmation to bear allegiance to the so-called Confederate States, or to aid or support them in any way, or to “bear true faith”, or “yield obedience” to them?
 - If so, when and where? State fully in regard to the same.
5. Have you ever taken any amnesty oath?
 - If so, when, where, and under what condition?
 - Have you been pardoned by the President?
 - If so, when and where, and upon what conditions?
6. Were you ever directly or indirectly, or in any manner, connected with the civil service of the so-called Confederate States?
 - If so, how, when, and where, in what capacity and for what periods?
 - Was any oath required of you for such service; and if so, what?

7. Did you ever hold any office or place of trust, honor, or profit under the Confederate Government, or under any of the States or territories subordinate thereto?
 - If so, state the nature and character of the office, the place at which and the period for which you held it?

8. Did you hold any clerkship, or have any agency or employment of any kind, for, or under, or for the benefit of the so-called Confederate States?
 - If so, state fully in regard to the same.

9. Were you ever, in any capacity, in the military or naval service of the so-called Confederate States, or of any State or territory subordinate thereto?

10. Were you ever an officer or soldier, sailor or marine of the Confederate army or navy, or did you ever furnish a substitute for the Confederate army or navy, or were you, directly or indirectly, in any way connected with, or employed by or under, or for either the commissary department, quartermaster's department, the medical department, the engineer's department, the ordnance department, the impressment service, the provost marshal's department, or any other bureau, branch, or department of the Confederate service?
 - Did you at any time have charge of any stores or supplies for the use of the Confederate army, navy, or government, or the charge or care of trains, team or teams, wagon or wagons, vessels, boats, or other craft, or munitions of war for the use of the Confederate army or navy?
 - If so, state fully in regard to the same.

11. Were you ever in any service, employment or business of any kind whatsoever for the Confederate Government, or its army or navy?
 - Did you ever furnish any aid, or any supplies or stores, or property of any kind to or for the so-called Confederate States, or any State in rebellion, or to the army, navy, militia, home-guards, armed forces, or military organizations thereof, or for any officer, soldier, or sailor thereof?
 - If so, state fully in regard to the same. Did you ever give any information to any officer, soldier, or sailor of the Confederate army or navy, or to any person employed by, or for the so-called Confederate States, or acting on their behalf, or for their benefit, which might aid in any way any military or naval operations carried on against the United States?
 - State fully in regard to the same.

12. Were you in any manner employed in the manufacture of munitions of war, of clothing, of boots, shoes, saddles, harness, or leather, of equipment for soldiers, or of any stores or supplies for the use of the Confederate army or navy, or were you in any way employed by, or did you aid or assist others engaged in such manufacture?
 - If so, state when and where, and by or for whom you were so employed, and for what period of time.

13. Were you ever, directly or indirectly, employed in the collection, impressment, or purchase, or the sale of stores, supplies, or any property for the use or benefit of the Confederate Government, or any State in rebellion, or the army, navy, or other forces thereof?
 - Did you have any interest or share in contracts with, or purchases for, the Confederate Government, or its army or navy, or any State in rebellion, or its forces?
 - If so, state fully all particulars.

14. Were you ever engaged in blockade running or illicit traffic, or intercourse between the lines, or were you ever in any way interested therein?
 - Did you ever have any interest or share in any goods, wares, merchandise, stores, or supplies brought into or exported from the so-called Confederate States during the war?
 - If so, state fully all particulars.

15. Did you leave the so-called Confederate States between 19th of April, 1861, and 19th of April, 1865?
 - If so, when and how did you leave; where did you go; for what purpose; how long were you absent; in what business were you engaged while absent, and when and to what place did you return in the so called Confederate States?

16. Were you the owner, or part owner, or in any way interested in any vessel used in navigating the ocean to or from any port in the Confederacy, or upon any waters in the Confederacy; if so, what vessels, when and where employed, and in what business.

17. Were you ever arrested by the Confederate Government, or by any officer, soldier, or other person professing to act therefor, or for any State in rebellion; if so, when, where, by whom, and how long were you kept under arrest; how did you get released?
 - Did you, for the sake of being released, or upon release, take any oath of any kind to the Confederate Government; if so, what?
 - [Put the same questions as to arrest by the United States Government, etc.]

18. Was any of your property ever taken by the Confederate authorities, or by any officer, soldier, or other person acting or assuming to act on their behalf, or in behalf of any State in rebellion; if so, what property, when and for what use, and have you received pay therefor?

19. Were you ever threatened with damage, or injury to your person, family, or property on account of your Union sentiments; if so, state when, by whom, and what the threats were?

20. Were you ever molested or in any way injured on account of your Union sentiments?
 - If so, state fully all the particulars.

21. Did you ever contribute anything –any money or property- in aid of the United States Government, or in aid of the Union army or cause?
 - If so, state fully as to the same.

22. Did you ever do anything for the United States Government or its army, or for the Union cause during the war?
 - If so, state fully what you did?

23. Had you any near relatives in either the Union or Confederate armies; if so, state who and how related to you. Did you contribute anything to supply them with military equipments, or with money?
 - State fully as to the same.

24. Have you owned any Confederate bonds, or any interest or share therein; or had any share or interest in any loans to the Confederate Government; or did you in any way contribute to support the credit of the so-called Confederate States during the late rebellion?

25. Have you ever given aid and comfort to the rebellion?
 - If so, state fully all the circumstances.

26. Were you ever engaged in making raids into the United States from Canada, or engaged in destroying the commerce of the United States in the lakes and rivers adjoining Canada?
 - Were you ever engaged in holding in custody, directly or indirectly, any persons taken by the rebel Government as prisoners of war, or any persons imprisoned or confined by the Confederate Government, or the authorities of any State in rebellion, for political causes; if so, when, where, and under what circumstances; in what capacity were you engaged, and what was the name, rank, and command of your principal?

27. Were you ever a member of any society or association for the imprisonment, expulsion, execution, or other persecution of any persons on account of their loyalty to the United States, or did you ever assist in such acts?

28. Were you ever a paroled prisoner of the United States; if so, when and where, and by whom paroled?

29. Have you ever held any office in the Army or Navy of the United States?
 - Were you educated by the United States at the Military Academy at West Point, or at the United States Naval Academy?

30. Did you ever receive any pass from any officer of the Confederate Government, or from any person having or assuming to have authority to issue the same; if so, who gave you the pass; for what purpose; for what period of time; did you sign or swear to any promise or obligation in order to get it, or swear or promise to “bear true faith and yield obedience to the Confederate States;” did you use the pass, and for what purpose?

31. Are you or were you under the disabilities imposed by the Fourteenth Article of the Amendments to the Constitution of the United States?
 - Have you held any office under the United States Government since the war; if so, what office; and did you take the (so-called) “iron-clad” oath?

32. At the beginning of the rebellion did you sympathize with the Union cause, or with the rebellion? What were your feelings and what [was] your language on the subject?
- On which side did you exert your influence and cast your vote?
 - What did you do, and how did you vote?
 - How did you vote on ratifying the ordinance of secession?
 - After the “ordinance” of secession was adopted in your State did you adhere to the Union cause, or did you “ go with the State?”
33. In conclusion, do you solemnly declare that, from the beginning of hostilities against the United States to the end thereof, your sympathies were constantly with the cause of the United States; that you never, of your own free will and accord, did anything, or offered, or sought, or attempted to do anything, by word or deed, to injure said cause or retard its success, and that you were at all times ready and willing, when called upon, or if called upon, to aid and assist the cause of the Union, or its supporters, so far as your means and power, and the circumstances of the case permitted?

II. Questions as to the taking or furnishing of the property, to be answered by claimant and his witnesses under oath.

1. Were you present when any of the articles of property specified in the claimant’s petition were taken?
2. Did you see any of them taken?
 - If so, specify the articles you saw taken
3. Did you see any of the articles named in the petition taken, other than those you have specified?
4. When and where and by whom were the articles taken, which you say you saw taken?
5. Who were present when you saw them taken?
6. Was any United States officer, either commissioned or non-commissioned, present at the taking?
 - If so, state his name, rank, regiment, and the command to which he belonged.
 - Did he order the property to be taken?
 - Did he say anything about the taking?

7. Describe how the property was taken, and give a full account of all you saw done, or heard said, upon the occasion of the taking.
8. How was the property removed, by soldiers, or in wagons, or in what manner?
 - State fully as to each article taken and removed.
9. To what place was it removed?
 - Did you follow it to such place, or see it, or any portion of it, at any such place, or on its way to such place? How do you know the place to which it was removed?
10. Do you know the use for which the property was taken?
 - What was the use, and how do you know it?
 - Did you see the property so taken used by the United States army?
 - Did you see any part of the property so used?
 - State fully all you know as to the property or any of it having been used by the army; and distinguish between what you saw and know, and what you may have heard from others, or may think, or suppose, or infer to be true.
11. Was any complaint made to any officer on account of such taking?
 - If so, state the name, rank, and regiment of the officer. What did he say about it?
 - State fully all that he said.
12. Was any voucher or receipt for the property asked for; if so, of whom asked?
 - State name, rank, and regiment. Was any receipt or paper given?
 - If so, produce it, or state where it is and why it is not produced. If no voucher or receipt was given, state why none was given, and if refused, why it was refused; state all that was said about it. State fully all the conversation between any officer or other person taking the property, and the claimant or any one acting for him.
13. Was the property or any of it taken in the night-time?
 - At what hour of the day, (as near as you can tell,) was it taken?
 - Was any of the property taken secretly, or so that you did not know of it when taken?

14. When the property was taken was any part of the army encamped in that vicinity?
- If so, state how far from the place where the property was taken, and what was the company, regiment, or brigade there encamped. How long had it been encamped there?
 - How long did it stay there, and when did it leave? Had there been any battle or skirmish near there, just before the property was taken?
 - Did you know the quartermasters, or any of them, or any other officers of the army for whose use the property is supposed to have been taken?
15. Describe clearly the condition of the property when taken, and all that tends to show its value at the time and place of taking. Thus, if corn, was it green, or ripe?
- Had it been harvested? Was it in the shock or husked, or shelled?
 - Where was it? If grain, was it standing; had it been cut; was it in shocks; or in the barn or in stacks; had it been threshed?
 - If horses, mules, or cattle, state when they were taken, how taken, and fully their condition, age, and value.
 - Have you talked with claimant about their value?
16. What means have you of knowing quantity taken?
- How much did you see taken and removed?
 - What quantity was taken in your presence?
 - As to quantity distinguish carefully as to what you saw and know, and what you may think or believe from what you have heard from others.
17. If you have testified as to the taking of wood; how do you know it was taken?
- How do you know the quantity?
 - Was it measured? By whom?
 - What was the kind, quality, and value of the wood?
 - Was it taken in the tree, standing?
 - Or had it been cut?
 - Where was it taken?

18. If rails were taken; did you see them taken; how taken; in wagons, or by soldiers?
- To what place taken?
 - How do you know, and what do you know as to the quantity taken?
 - Were the rails new or old?
 - Did officers try to prevent their being taken?
 - Was any complaint made to officers on account of the taking?
19. Do you know, suppose, or believe that the property described in each item was taken for the actual use of the army, and not for the mere gratification of individual officers or soldiers already provided by the Government with such articles as were necessary or proper for them to have?
20. Do you know, suppose, or believe it was taken in consequence of the failure of the troops of the United States to receive from the Government in the customary manner, or to have in their possession at the time, the articles and supplies necessary for them, or which they were entitled to receive and have?
21. Do you know, suppose, or believe that it was taken in consequence of some necessity for the articles taken, or similar articles; which necessity justified the officers or soldiers taking them?
22. Do you know, suppose, or believe it was taken for some purpose so necessary, useful, beneficial, or justifiable as to warrant or require the Government to pay for it?
23. Do you know, suppose, or believe that it was taken by, or under the order or authority of some officer, or other person connected with the army, whose rank, situation, duties, or other circumstances at the time authorized, empowered, or justified him in taking it, or ordering it to be taken.

(The witness must be caused, in answering the five preceding questions, to state fully, clearly, and carefully, his or her various reasons for the knowledge, supposition, or belief entertained with respect to each question.)