

Baltimore, Md. Nov. 18, 1899.

Sir.

I have the honor to return herewith the credibility inquiries in the claim of John Armstrong, late Co A 39 U.S.C. Inf. # 761,637.

Three of the witnesses are dead and it is a difficult matter to ascertain their reputation for truth, or competency as witnesses. All these witnesses belong to the lower class of colored people, and almost any kind of testimony desired can be secured from such people - all are ignorant and even if truthful can hardly be called competent. The brightest one of three I examined is Wilson, and I am inclined to believe he tried to state the truth. I do not believe Richards knows anything about the soldier's disability than he has learned by association with him since the war.

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Prout's testimony is of no value. The soldier has been engaged since the war in loading and unloading steamboats; most of the time he has been shoveling coal, and doing the hardest kind of work. It would