

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of Lewis Spencer VAS1971

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Transcribed by Will Graves

5/8/15

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Where the meaning is not compromised by adhering to the spelling, punctuation or grammar, no change has been made. Corrections or additional notes have been inserted within brackets or footnotes. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. A bracketed question mark indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. The word 'illegible' or 'indecipherable' appearing in brackets indicates that at the time I made the transcription, I was unable to decipher the word or phrase in question. Only materials pertinent to the military service of the veteran and to contemporary events have been transcribed. Affidavits that provide additional information on these events are included and genealogical information is abstracted, while standard, 'boilerplate' affidavits and attestations related solely to the application, and later nineteenth and twentieth century research requests for information have been omitted. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading skills fail to catch all misinterpretations. Also, dates or numbers which the software treats as numerals rather than words are not corrected: for example, the software transcribes "the eighth of June one thousand eighty six" as "the 8th of June 1786." Please call material errors or omissions to my attention.]

[From [Digital Library of Virginia](#)] Henrico County Legislative Petitions

To the Honorable the Speaker and Gentlemen of the House of Delegates of
Virginia:

The humble petition of Lewis Spencer respectfully represents that being read and born in the County of King William in the State of Virginia, he was at an early period of the revolutionary war, and when he was at Eighteen years of age, called into the militia service of this Commonwealth, for a short time after the commencement of the war until its final close, at the surrender of Lord Cornwallis at York [October 19, 1781]: – that although he never enlisted in either the State or Continental lines, yet from the near contiguity King William County to the theater of war in Virginia, he was repeatedly, frequently, and from year-to-year, and sometimes several times a year, called out in the militia to defend the State from the actual or apprehended aggressions of the enemy: that he lastly serve his country at the siege of York, and was discharged from thence, not only for serving out his last militia term of duty, but likewise on account of a cold contracted from long and repeated exposure during that long and arduous war, which tried the souls of men, and during which, the patriotic defenders of their Country suffered all the wants and deprivations incurred in the strongly contested struggle, whether America should be slave, or free and independent.

Your petitioner returned home, not merely as a faithful and impoverished, and unremunerated defender of his Country's right; (of which he as a patriot would not complain;) but, alas! he returned with the loss of his health, occasioned by frequent and long exposure to inclement seasons, wants and distresses. He returned with a cold and other complaints contracted from sufferings, exposure and hardships which had settled upon his eyes; which gradually affected his eyes, until he became totally blind, 18 or 19 years ago. Your petitioner wore out his health; exhausted his strength; and lost his eyes, in the defense of his Country; whose happiness he is unable to behold; [in] whose prosperity he cannot participate; whose blessings he cannot share; but whose independence; glory and transcendent fame, he is left to admire in poverty and utter darkness; to be enjoyed by others more fortunate than himself, and by many who never contributed to achieve them. Your petitioner not having been on the state or Continental lines, cannot, of legal right claim the just and munificent provisions which the laws have made for those who held that station: but he has done much in his Country service; he has suffered much; he has lost all, but the pleasure of knowing that his services and sufferings have resulted in the highest exaltation of his country; whilst he, hapless and forlorn, is bereft of nearly

all which can ever make men brave in their country's cause. It is true, your petitioner may claim, and does receive, a small pittance from the overseers of the County of Henrico; which is not half adequate to his support; the rest of which, he has to obtain in the most precarious, and often, suffering manner, from the accidental and occasional benevolence of those whom from his entire blindness he is unable to seek.

Your Petitioner is old and has but few days or years to live. He prays that your honorable body will grant him a small pension for the few days of darkness which remain to him; in order that he may enjoy in his fast declining life a small share of that repose which he has sacrificed to the welfare of his Country. Under such circumstances, and in such a case, he humbly hopes that your honorable body will vouchsafe to take into your equitable consideration the prayer of an old soldier for the assistance of whose arm, his country is free, independent and happy. And your petitioner will ever pray &c

S/ Lewis Spencer

Richmond July 4th, 1822

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I do hereby certify that I was born and raised in King William County; was a drummer; was well acquainted with Lewis Spencer, the petitioner, during the revolutionary war; was often in the militia service with him; and for the last time, at the siege of York, where Cornwallis and his Army surrendered.

S/ Jack Ware

Sworn to before me an Alderman in the City of Richmond this __ day of December 1822

[Reverse]

Lewis Spencer's Petition

December 4th, 1823

Referred to Claims

1823 December 15th

Reasonable

Reported

19th Bill drawn