

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of James Fisher R3569

VA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. 6 Feb 2014.

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS: COUNTY OF ESSEX, SS.

On this first day of January A.D. 1832, personally appeared in open court, before the HONORABLE DANIEL APPLETON WHITE, Judge of the Court of Probate for the County of Essex aforesaid, now sitting, James Fisher, a resident of Salem, in the County of Essex and state of Massachusetts, aged 72 years, who being first duly sworn according to law doth, on his oath, make the following Declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June 7, 1832:

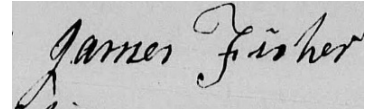
That he entered the service of the United States, under the following named officers, and served as herein stated:

That early in 1777 at York in Virginia he enlisted at a volunteer private in Capt Johnson's Company of light Infantry, his Colonel or other officers he cannot recollect, for the term of two years, and served in said Company one year and eight months at Yorktown and vicinity till said Company was ordered to the north, when he was left sick in the hospital at Yorktown and as soon as he recovered was turned over to the Fort there and did duty therein till he had served out his said term in full: and that he then as a substitute for a man whose name he cannot remember, enlisted as a private in Capt Edding's Company, he thinks that was the name of the Captain, and served at the fort at Yorktown three months, when he was honorably discharged:

That again in 1780, having little or nothing to do, he enlisted voluntarily as a private in Capt. Archer's [possibly Abraham Archer's] Company of Infantry in Col Gidding's Regiment of Virginia troops, for the term of Eighteen months, not to go out of that State, and was taken prisoner in 1781 there when Col. Tarlton [sic: Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton] took York, and car[ried] on his return to Williamsburg: the said Fisher there escaped from the British and returned to York and there remained till it was again taken by Lord Cornwallis [1 Aug 1781] and was then taken prisoner and so kept in Yorktown till the American Army got near the town [28 Sep]: Cornwallis then issued a Proclamation and ordered all who did not wish to take up arms in the King's Service to go out on parole [promise not to take up arms]: the said Fisher thereupon went out and went to the American Army and volunteered to be a waiter to an American officer, whose name he cannot recollect and served till the Seige was over

He was born at the Eastern Shore of Virginia in Accomack County April 15, 1760 and when about 18 [may be 19] years old removed over to the Western Shore in Gloucester County – and lived there till 1774 and the removed to Little York and resided there till 1786 and removed to Ipswich in Massachusetts then and after residing there one year removed to Salem aforesaid, which continually from that time to this has been his domicil: he knows of no one that can testify to his service: and by reason of old age and consequent loss of memory he cannot swear more positively and particularly to the precise length of his service than as above stated, or to the names of any others of his officers: he had a written discharge and has no record of his birth: he has lost his discharge:

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity, except the present, and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any State.



[31 Dec 1839] I James Fisher of Salem in the County of Essex & Commonwealth of Massachusetts, do on my oath testify & declare that I am in the eightieth year of my age: that I was born in the County of Accomack, in the State of Virginia, on the fifteenth day of April, A.D. 1760: that I performed various service in the Revolutionary War in the Land service in the said State of Virginia: that on the first day of January 1833 I made my legal declaration with the view of claiming the benefit of the law of June 7th

1832, for my said service: that the precise name of the Colonel of the Regiment to which I belonged which attached to Capt Archer's Company I then stated to be Giddings, but upon more mature reflection I am inclined to believe it was Gibbons.

With respect to the name of the Colonel of the Regiment to which Capt Johnson's Company is thought to have been attached – which name is demanded in a letter exhibited to me from the Commissioner of Pensions, dated September 16th 1833 – I do solemnly declare that I have no knowledge or recollection of any such Colonel. On the contrary said Johnson's Company in which I first served was engaged mostly in the Sea Boat[?] Service & was attached to no particular Regiment whatever that I have the least recollection of.

And I do further testify & declare, that at the time I made my declaration I omitted to state the fact that I was wounded while I belonged to said Capt Johnsons Company: that the circumstances of the said wound are as follows:

While we were stationed at said Yorktown an express came to Capt Johnson informing him that a British Man of War had gone up James River & landed a Foraging Party; upon the receipt of this intelligence our Company & about fifty volunteers started off in pursuit. Having ascertained that they had passed on into the interior inland of a Piece of Woods at which we first arrived we were ordered to halt in said woods & await their return. We accordingly tarried in said woods all the remainder of the day & the following night & discovered the enemy on his return on the following morning after our arrival. When the party came within musket range our Corps all discharged our guns at the enemy by which we killed a number of his men & put the whole to flight.

Out Capt now gave orders to fire no more, but for the whole Corps to commence pursuit, & for each man to single out some one of the fugitives. We accordingly all hands started off in chase. Now it so happened that between the fugitives & the River was a large field surrounded by a high Virginia Rail Fence – which greatly impeded their progress. The man that I had singled out in the chase reached the Rail but a moment before me, & in his haste to climb & pass it he stumbled & before he could rise again I had reach the fence myself & plunging my musket through one of the lower openings between the Rails I pierced his thigh entirely through with the bayonet, so that the squares of it came out on the opposite side of the poor fellow's thigh, & here it held so strongly into the limb that I had a momentary struggle to disengage it amid the groans & spasms of the sufferer. It was now at this moment that a British Officer who happened to be near the man at the time I wounded him glanced at his situation & turned & sprang to the fence, & made a pass at my head with his Broad sword. The Fence being high barely the point of it reached me cutting through my hat & fracturing my skull slightly – the point of the sword – the rounding part – not having quite penetrated through to the brain. It was this wound the scar of which I now still have & which caused me a vast deal of suffering in after life – that was the cause of my being left behind at the Hospital in Yorktown when Capt Johnson's Company was ordered "to the North" as stated in my former declaration.

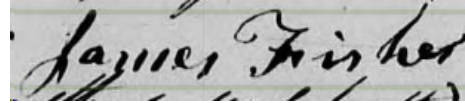
We succeeded in capturing every man of the above mentioned Foraging Party amounting to as near as I can recollect sixty or thereabouts. We carried all our prisoners back to Yorktown & after placing the wounded in the Hospital the rest were all marched off to Williamsburg twelve miles above the former place.

Since I made my declaration aforesaid I have reflected much upon the name of the American Officer whom I served under as a waiter at the Seige of Yorktown – alluded to in my said declaration, & I now feel verry confident it was Thompson.

I was well acquainted with all parts of Yorktown & with most of the Inhabitants, & in particular I well knew General Thomas Nelson – afterwards Governor of Virginia – also his brothers Hugh, William, Robert & Thomas [sic]: General Nelson had eight Sons part of whom bore the names of the aforementioned brothers of his. I served part of an apprenticeship at the weaving business with Thomas Ryland of Yorktown, & formerly of Gloucester County. General Nelson had a Plantation in Hanover County, & my master & myself went there in General Nelson's employ & staid there about a year engaged in weaving

clothing for his Negroes. The above statement, & the main facts of my former declaration are nothing but the exact truth – according to the best of my recollection.

Witnessed by/ Caroline Fisher

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Fisher". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid, typical of the 18th or 19th century.

[7 Dec 1839] I Ephraim Brown, of Ipswich in the County of Essex & State of Massachusetts, do on my oath testify & declare, that I am in the Seventy-fifth year of my age: that about the year 1786, or 1787, I performed a voyage in a Schooner from Ipswich to the State of Virginia & back again to said Ipswich – of which said Schooner my late brother, Elisha Brown, was Captain. And I do well recollect that Mr James Fisher, then of said State of Virginia, came on board of said Schooner from Yorktown while we were lying in East River, a few miles above said Port, & engaged a passage to said Ipswich, with the view of taking up his permanent residence in this quarter. Said James Fisher accordingly took passage with us – sometime in the month of April of one of said years – as near as I can recollect – to said Ipswich – went back to Virginia with us the then next December to make a final settlement of his business affairs & dispose of his property there, & returned to said Ipswich the April following. Said Fisher soon after his said return took up his permanent residence in the now City of Salem in said County of Essex, where he has ever since resided; and I well recollect that at the time he came on board said Schooner he was recognised & much respected by sundry citizens of said State & both they & himself stated the cause of his leaving the State was a great misfortune which occurred in his family. Ephraim Brown

NOTE: On 11 Jan 1853 Nancy Ellis and Mary Bowman, both of Salem, heirs of James Fisher, assigned power of attorney to obtain a pension.

[p4]

**Declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress, passed June 7, 1832.**

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS: COUNTY OF ESSEX, ss.

On this first day of January, A. D. 1833, personally appeared in open court, before the HONORABLE DANIEL APPLETON WHITE, Judge of the Court of Probate for the County of Essex aforesaid, now sitting, James Fisher, a resident of Salem, in the County of Essex and State of Massachusetts, aged 72 years, who being first duly sworn according to law doth, on his oath, make the following Declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June 7, 1832:

That he entered the service of the United States, under the following named officers, and served as herein stated: not stated  
That early in 1777 at York in Virginia he enlisted as a volunteer private in Captain Johnson's Company of light infantry, his colonel or other officers he cannot recollect for the term of two years and served in said company one year and eight months at Yorktown and vicinity till said company was ordered to the north, when he was left sick in the hospital at Yorktown and as soon as he recovered was turned over to the Fort there and did duty therein till he had served out his said term in full: and that he then as a substitute for a man whose name he cannot remember, enlisted as a private in Capt Edding's Company. He thinks that was the name of the captain, and served at the fort at Yorktown three months when he was honorably discharged.

That again in 1780, having little or nothing to do, he enlisted as a private in Capt Archer's company of infantry in Col Eddings's regiment of Virginia troops for the term of eighteen months, not to go our of that state, and was taken prisoner in 1781. There when Col Tarlton took York, and camped on his return to Williamsburg: the said Fisher there escaped from the British and returned to York and there remained till it was again taken by Lord Cornwallis then issued a proclamation and ordered all who did not wish to take up arms in the King's Service to go out on parole: The said Fisher thereupon went out and went to the American Army and volunteered to be a waiter to an American officer, whose name he cannot recollect and served till the Siege was over.

[p7]

He was born on the eastern shore of Virginia in Accomack County April 15, 1760 and when about 4 years old removed over to the Western Shore in Gloucester County and lived there til 1774 and then removed to Little York and resided there till 1786 and removed to Ipswich in Massachusetts then and after residing there one year removed to Salem aforesaid, which continually from that time to this has been his domicile: He knows of no one that can testify to his service and by reason of old age and consequent loss of memory he cannot swear more positively and particularly to the precise length of his service than as above stated or to the names of any others of his officers. He had a written discharge and has no record of his birth, He has lost his discharge.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity, except the present, and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any State.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid

James Fisher

D. White

JUDGE OF PROBATE.

We, Alex<sup>r</sup> V. Griswold D.D. a clergyman, residing in Salem, aforesaid, and John Burchard Esquire, a magistrate, residing in Salem aforesaid, do hereby certify that we are well acquainted with James Fisher who has subscribed and sworn to the above declaration; that we believe him to be 72 years of age; that he is reputed and believed in the neighborhood where he resides to have been a soldier of the Revolution, and that we concur in that opinion.

Alexander V. Griswold.

John Burchard.

Subscribed and sworn to before

J. J. Merrill Just. Peace

[p3]

And the said Court hereby declares its opinion, after the investigation of the matter, and after putting the interrogatories prescribed by the War Department, that the abovenamed applicant was a Revolutionary Soldier, and served as he states. And the Court further certifies that the R. Rev. Bishop Griswold who has signed the preceding Certificate, is a Clergyman resident in Salem and that the said John Burchard who has also signed the same is a Magistrate resident at Salem and is a credible person and that their statement is entitled to credit.

D. White Judge Probate

The file contains additional depositions and letters with attempts by congressmen of Mass and Va. to obtain proof of service. No satisfaction of War Department requirements was completed and the rejection of the pension claim was final.