

[Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters](#)

Pension Application of Amariah Read R8627

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 24 Nov 2014.

State of Virginia, County of Nansemond, SS

On this 13th day of January 1834, personally appeared in open Court, before Mills Riddick, Samuel Corbell, Burwell Riddick & Wm. H. Godwin the Court of Nansemond County now sitting, Amariah Read, a resident of the aforesaid County & State, aged Seventy-two 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 provision made by the Act of Congress passed June 7th 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States in the early part of the year 1778 as a volunteer under Captain Abram Coles in the militia service, and served three tours of six weeks each under Capt. Coles, making four months and six days. That this service was performed on Nansemond River and in Norfolk County. That in the year 1779 he was drafted into service under the Command of Capt. William Riddick, and served twelve weeks under this Captain in the Counties of Nansemond, Isle of Wight and Norfolk; that he was in a skirmish with the enemy, whilst under the Command of Capt. William Riddick, near Portsmouth in Norfolk County – That again in 1779 he entered the service as a substitute for John Harrill, under the Command of Captain Blount, and served twelve weeks in the Counties of Nansemond and Isle of Wight. That in 1781 he was again drafted into service under the Command of Captain Daniel Riddick and served eight weeks under this Captain in Nansemond & Isle of Wight Counties and in the neighbourhood of Williamsburg and little York; that whilst under the command of Capt. Daniel Riddick, he was stationed, with a large body of Militia, within a mile or two of little York when Cornwallace was taken [sic: Cornwallis, 19 Oct 1781]; that Colonel Book Wills and Col. Josiah Riddick were the field officers who Commanded during the several terms of my engagement. That he recollects to have seen General Charles Harrison [sic: Col. Charles Harris, 1st Regiment, Continental Army] and Gen'l. Mulenburg [sic: Peter Muhlenberg] at Portsmouth, Virginia, and Gen'l. Washington at little York, after the battle; that he recollects to have received discharges from officers under whom he served during the revolutionary war, particularly one given to him after the battle at little York, but does not know what has become of them now. that the whole of his service was performed in the field, and that he was not engaged in any civil pursuits during the performance of his service. That he has no documentary evidence, and knows of no person now living who can testify to his services. 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.

Amariah hisXmark Read

Questions propounded to the applicant by the Court.

- 1st Where, and in what year were you born? Ans: I was born in Nansemond County, Virginia, and was sixteen years old when I first entered the service, which was in the year 1778.
- 2nd Have you any record of your age, and if so where is it? Ans: I have no record of my age, but my mother told me I was Sixteen years old when I went into the service, which was in 1778, the year before Suffolk was burnt.
- 3rd Where were you living when called into service; where have you lived since the Revolutionary War, and where do you now live? Ans: I now live, and have always lived in Nansemond County, Virginia.
- 4th How were you called into service; were you drafted, did you volunteer or were you a substitute? and if a substitute, for whom? Ans: I volunteered the first term of my engagement, was a substitute for John Harrill one time, and was drafted the other two times.
- 5th State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops when you served, such Continental & Militia regiments as you can recollect, and the general circumstances of your service. Ans: I recollect to have seen Gen'l. Harrison and Gen'l. Mulenburgh at Portsmouth, Virginia, and to

have seen Gen'l. Washington at little York; and was stationed with a large body of militia forces near little York before the battle. I have detailed the general circumstances of my service so far as my memory enables me to recollect in the body of my declaration.

6th Did you ever receive a discharge from the service, and, if so, by whom was it given, and what has become of it? Ans: I did receive several discharges from different officers under whom I served; but they are lost or destroyed.

7th State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighbourhood, and who can testify to your character for veracity, and their belief of your services as a soldier of the revolution? Ans: Any of my neighbours who are present at court will testify to my character and to their belief of my revolutionary services – here are Jeremiah Peale and Frances D. Charlton

Virginia County of Nansemond Sc

On this 13th day of May 1833 personally appeared in open Court before Josiah Riddick, Hardy Cross, Edward R. Hunter, and Edwin B Sumner, the Court of Nansemond County, now sitting Ameriah of Read a free man of colour By birth, a resident of Nansemond of Nansemond County and State of Virginia aged 73 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 7th 1832 He says that he entered the service of the United States under the following named officer and served as herein stated. That he entered as a militia man (drafted) on his own account on the [blank] day of [blank] under Captain John Coles, Lieutenant Lemuel Riddick, and Ensign Zachariah McClenny, and served he thinks about 6 months at Portsmouth, Smithfield (in Isle of Wight County) and Surry County; and that he was discharged at Babbs old field in Isle of Wight County, then came home and stayed a few days only, when on John Harrell employed his as a substitute for about 3 months service, and that he served out the time under Captain [blank] that he served the tour (for Harrell) out, on the North side of James river, he was there discharged and then came home (Nansemond County) and when again called on, he volunteered his service to go to Portsmouth to dig down some embankments [British earthworks], William Riddick Captain David Campbell Lieutenant, [blank] Ensign, that he served there only about 6 week, [part of the image missing from fold3.com] seeing General Washing at or near Little York; that he has no recollection of any of the regular officers; that he has no documentary evidence, having lost his discharge, (that he can prove this by James Wright [pension application S30232] and Joseph Ross [S7390];) that he was born in the County of Nansemond, Virginia; that he has no record of his age, that he has always lived in Nansemond County Virginia; that he has stated all he knowes about the matter, further he cannot recollect. 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 (Signed) Ameriah of hisXmark Read and the said court do hereby declare their opinion, after the investigation of the matter and putting the interrogatories prescribed by the war department, that the above named appicant wa a revolutionary soldier, and served, as he states.

In the same Court Joseph Ross aged 77 years and James Wright aged 79 years, being sworn, saith that they well recollect to have seen the aforesaid Ameriah of Read in the service of the revolution several times, how long the said Ameriah served, they cannot tell, Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid (Signed) Joseph hisXmark Ross, James Wright

NOTES:

Although Read claimed to have served more than the minimum of six months as required under the pension act of 1832, his claim was rejected for serving less than that amount. The file does not contain further explanation.

The 1820 federal census for Nansemond County lists Amariah Read as a “Free Colored Person” over 45 with four males and one female under 14, and one male and one female 14 - 26.