

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of Christopher McVany S15533

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Virginia }

County of Lewis } S.S.

On this 7<sup>th</sup> day of August A.D. 1832 personally appeared in Open Court before the Justices of the Court of Lewis County now sitting, Christopher McVany a resident of Buckhannon settlement in said County of Lewis and State of Virginia aged Seventy Five years who being first duly Sworn according to Law doth on his Oath make the following declaration in order obtain the benefit of the act of Congress passed June 7<sup>th</sup> 1832. That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated that in the latter part of the year 1777 The Indians had been committing outrages and depredations on the whites residing along the Frontier Settlements in Virginia and Pennsylvania along Ohio River and for the wrongs sustained, he volunteered in that year in Frederick County Virginia, For three years as a private militia man. Was marched forthwith under Lieutenant James Doren, and Ensign Robert Mitchell to Morgantown, in Monongahalia [sic: Monongalia] County Virginia, from thence was marched to Fort Pitt on Ohio River [at present Pittsburgh PA] from thence was marched to Wheeling Fort on Ohio River Their affiant remained during Winter, and acted in the Capacity of an Indian Spie remained in that Country during the Summer and winter of 1778 and had Frequent Engagements with the Enemy. at one time affiant recollects distinctly, that the Indians took the wife of one Galaspie, and two of his Children, and the Company commanded by Lieutenant Doren was in part dispatched after them among whom affiant was one after Trailing some distance one of the Children was found Dead, with Its brains knocked out. pursued them further, and saved the wife and other Child, and killed Four Indians in the spring of 1779. affiant Company was marched to Muskingdom [sic: Muskingum] River in Ohio State in pursuit of the Enemy - and found it expediant to return to Wheeling Fort again there took quarters again the remainder of that year and acted as before mentioned in the capacity of and Indian spie — in the spring of 1780 affiant was marched under his Lietenant James Doren, and Ensign Robert Mitchell from Wheeling Fort to the mouth of the Great Kenhawa [sic: Great Kanawha] River, from thence marched up s'd. Kenhawa River and crossed through towards South Carolina near George Town [sic: see note below], from thence marched westward to the War — Ford on the French Broad River - from thence was marched Southward near the Great Swamps. from thence was marched to a place then called the little Coves, where they found twenty of the British Horseman at a tipling shop, and they killed two, Took Fifteen prisoners - and three escaped. the prisoners were taken and delivered to the army that he affiant understood was Commaned by General Gates, and he knows he seen Gen'l. Gates there, at a place called Charlotte in South Carolina. The the Company to which affiant belonged returned to the Great Swamps in South Carolina, and ranged about Hunting and Hanging of Tories and watching the movement of the British, until he affiant with his Company was brought into the engagement at Cowpens under the Command of General Daniel Morgan, (There he seen Col. [John Eager] Howard and other officers names not recollected) in January [17<sup>th</sup>] 1781. as he affiant now recollects the British Infantry were nearly all killed or taken, together with upwards of Five Hundred of their privates - and about thirty Baggage Waggons together with near a Hundred Dragoon Horses - also a great many muskets. affiant does not now recollect how many. After that battle affiants Company was discharged and he returned to his home in Frederick County Virginia after having been in Service for upwards of three years.

That he has no documentary evidence and that he knows of no person, whose testimony he can procure, who can testify to his service. 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 and subscribed to the day and year aforesaid. [signed] Christopher McVany  
the said Christopher McVany being interrogated by the Court in the manner prescribed by the war department answers the several interrogatories propounded by that department as follows.

1<sup>st</sup> That he affiant was born in Pennsylvania State name of the County not recollected, in the year 1757.

2<sup>nd</sup> affiant saith that he has a record of his age at his house in a Bible, which was Transcribed by himself from his fathers Bible

3<sup>rd</sup> Affiant saith, he was living Frederick County Virginia; Since he left the service lived first in Hardy County, Then moved to Frederick, then moved to Augusta, from thence to Rockingham, from thence to Pendleton, from thence to Bath, from thence to Harrison now Lewis County all in Virginia in the settlement he now lives

4<sup>th</sup> affiant saith that he volunteered under Lieutenant James Doren in Winchester, Frederick County Virginia

5<sup>th</sup> Affiant saith that he seen and knew the following named men when spieing &c along Ohio River Viz Cols [Isaac] Zane, and Swearengen, Gen'l [Lachlan] McIntosh, and Captain Mason, that when he went to the South he seen General's Gates, Howard and Morgan, and knew and seen other officers whose names he has forgotten, as he is growing old and Frail and as to what line, (if any) to which he belonged he has no recollection, neither does he recollect any of the regiments that were engaged in the South as he affiant, was attached in the west to no particular Troops, that is along the Ohio River, and after going to South Carolina, joined none, untill the battle at Cowpens - as he has stated in the above decleration.

6<sup>th</sup> Affiant saith that he Rec'd. a Discharge from his Lieutenant James Doren, and considered the same as of no further importance, than to permit him to return home, and Consequently lost or mislaid the same so that he cannot find it now.

7<sup>th</sup> Affiant saith that he is known to Jacob Cozad a Clergyman of his neighborhood and to James Brown, they can testify to his character for varacity, and their belief of his revolutionary services.

[signed] Christopher McVany

We Jacob Cozad a Clergyman Residing in the County of Lewis and State of Virginia and James Brown [pension application S6718] residing in the same County and State hereby certify that we are well acquainted with Christopher McVany who has subscribed and sworn to the above decleration, that we believe him to be Seventy Five years of age That he is reputed and believed in the neighborhood where he resides, to have been a soldier of the revolution as he has stated, and that we concur in that opinion

Sworn and Subscribed to the day and year aforesaid.

[signed] Jacob Cozad

James hisXmark Brown

[The following report is by W. S. Singleton, a district attorney who investigated a large number of fraudulent pension applications from Lewis and Harrison counties. Johnson F. Neulan mentioned here was implicated in some of the fraudulent cases. See the pension application of David W. Sleeth (S6111) for details.]

Christopher McVaney. Pen. Draws \$80—

I the undersigned christopher McVaney at the requisition of the Secretary of War give the folowing narative of my age and and services as a soldier in the war of the Revolution to Wit — I am in my seventy seventh year of age. was born in the State of Pensylvania. removed early into virginia (too early to recollect) and settled near Winchester in the County of Frederick. Some time in the year 1777 as well as I can now remember I enlisted under Capt. Daniel Morgan [sic: see note below] of Winchester for three years. that shortly thereafter he marched his company (about 60 men) including myself to Fort Pitt. got there in the fall of the year and remained in that vicinity until late in the succeeding summer. from thence Capt. Morgan marched his company to South Carolina where I served out my tour of duty of three years, got my discharge & returned home. I recollect the names of the following of my fellows soldiers who marched from Winchester with me. Thomas Jenkins, Amos Marney, Jacob Rhys, Alexander Jameson, Joseph Vance, John Rease, John Sergeant, Samuel Borrer, Thomas Ogan, & Reese Spencer. whilst in this service I was at the Battles of Gilford [sic: Guilford Courthouse NC, 15 Mar 1781]. in this contest the american army retained its ground [sic]. but at the loss of a good many men. I cant tell who commanded the american army in this engagement. Genl Burgoin [sic: Cornwallis] commanded the British Forces — I was also at the Battle of the Cowpens. Morgan was commander in chief at the Cowpens and had about a thousand men under him - two or three

hundred of which fled. with the Balance he killed about 100 of the enemy and took one thousand prissoners, after the Battle was over I was detached as one of the guard of the Prissoners taken. they were taken to Gilford court House [sic] and delivered over to Genl Washingtons army [sic!]. whilst on the way was hotley pursued by the British army, but fortunately escaped by the rapid rise of a River over which we crossed in the evening. the succeeding morning when the british army came up to the river it had so risen that they could not pass it.

Johnson F. Neulan wrote my Declaration I gave him the same statement I now give. I agreed with Philip Cox [pension application S18360]. he applied to me to get my Pension. by the agreement I was to give him the first years pay and did so. I swore to my Declaration in open court. In witness whereof I hereto subscribe my name. July 3, 1834

Christopher hisXmark McVany

Witness Nathan Goff.

A true copy

W. G Singleton

Jacob Brake a neighbour of McVaney and a man of substance and character says that McVaney is a man of bad character and not to be relied upon. Such is his general character among his neighbors. - Brake was present when McVaney made his application in court. he did not, nor could not after repeated application procure a neighbor of his to prove his credibility. James Brown is his witness. (he himself is an impostur) Brown lives 20 miles from McVaney. Cozad the Clergyman certifying McVaney's Declaration is not in communion with any denomination of christians, and is a man of Bad character. the forgoing facts are communicated by the undersigned to W. G Singleton. Jacob Brake July 4, 1834.

A true copy. W. G Singleton

Note I was unable to procure any further evidence touching this case - a comparison of the statement here given with his Declaration will enable you perhaps to decide upon his right to a Pension - I learned from several Individuals that McVaney was a man of Bad character & not to be relied upon.

W. G Singleton Nov. 8, 1834

Christopher McVaney, Pen Report—

upon this case I can come to no opinion and therefore have taken no proceedings Mr. Edwards [Commissioner of Pensions] will please direct what shall be done in the premises. W G S.

Lewis County to wit }

Virg'a }

Margaret Means appear'd before me the subscriber a Justice of the peace for said County and made oath on the holy evangelist of almighty God that in the year 1781 (as near as she can recollect) she then lived & resided on the South branch of Potomac, about a mile from the place where Moorefield now stands in the County of Hardy Va. In that year she became acquainted with Christopher McVany, who then resided with William Murphy, that said Christopher McVanny was then in a low state of health, and that the cause was attributed to and in consequence of the hardships he was exposed to in the army, having then lately returned from a tour of service- She further states that at the time said Christopher came to the Branch, that some people suspected said Christopher to be a deserter, but that it had been ascertained that he had a discharge from his captain; this she heard and understood at the time from the neighbours - the said Margaret Means states that she is now 78 years of age -

Sworn & subscribed to before me this 25 or Feby 1836

Margaret herXmark Means

Jacob Lorentz J.P

Depart. of War. Pension Office March 19, 1836

Sir: In reply to your letter of the 5th. inst. upon the subject of Christ'o. McVainey's claim and enclosing the affidavit of Margaret Meanes to be used in support of his alleged service during the Revolutionary war, and have filed it with his papers. The discrepancy between Mr. McVainey's two statements render it proper to require the fullest and most satisfying testimony.

In his original declaration Mr. McVainey stated that he volunteered in the year 1777 for three years as a private militia man - that he served in a company commanded by Lieut. Doran upon the western frontiers in the character of an Indian spy until the spring of 1780 when he was marched under the same officer down the Ohio River to the mouth of the Kanawha, thence across the county to Georgetown, S.C. upon the Atlantic; thence west over the blue ridge to the

French Broad; thence south and to Charlotte, N.C.; was in the battle of the Cowpens Jan'y. —81 and was discharged after that battle by Lieut. Doran.

In the statement subsequently made to Mr. Singleton, he says that in the year 1777 he enlisted under Capt. Daniel Morgan for three years and marched with his company from Winchester, Va. to Fort Pitt where he remained until the succeeding summer, when Capt. Morgan marched the company to So. Car. where he served out his 3 years; that he was in the battle of the Cowpens and Gilford and that his Capt. Morgan was Commander in Chief at the battle of Cowpen's. Two statements more incredible or more at variance with each other could hardly be made. Daniel Morgan at the time here spoken of as being a Capt. of a company at Fort Pitt was a Col. in the Continental army and not in that part of the country [see note below]; In the year 1777 for the defense of Western Virginia Fort Pitt was garrisoned by a company of 100 men enlisted for during the war and Col. George Morgan who was an Indian Agent at that time, was stationed there.

The conclusion thereof is that either Mr. McVainey's whole statement is a mere fabrication or that if he enlisted he also deserted, an opinion which was prevalent at his return home among his neighbors as the witness Margaret Means has stated. The payment of his pension can not be resumed.

I am [unsigned copy]

[To] Geo. D. Camden Clarksburg, Va.

Weston, Lewis Co. Va. Sep. 24, 1839

J. L. Edwards Esq. Comm'r. of Pensions

Sir Whilst holding my Court at this place I have been much importuned by an old man, Christopher McVany, to aid him in getting replaced upon the Revolutionary Pension list. I understand that for some cause his name has been stricken from the list of Pensioners. possibly this has proceeded from the misconduct of some individuals whose agency in procuring pensions in this country rendered them notorious and who in this as well as other cases by attempting too much have deprived meretorious men of the pittance which the Government provides for them. I have no doubt McVany served in the Revolution, such is the belief of all his acquaintances. feeling an interest in his behalf I have taken the liberty of enclosing to you the within papers & to request the favour of you to state the difficulties if any in the way of replacing him on the pension list

Very Respectfully Yrs. &c.

E. S. Duncan

P.S. My address is Clarksburg, Virginia

J. L. Edwards Esq'r. Comm'r. of Pensions

Sir The undersigned citizens of Lewis County Va. feeling an Interest in behalf of their Fellow Citizen, Christopher McVany, take the liberty of stating to you, that he is in very poor & dependant circumstances as well as aged & infirm, that long prior to the existance of the Pension Laws he was reputed and believed by his neighbours to have been a Soldier of the Revolution. that he was recognized as such by his contemporaries of that period

The undersigned have full faith in his representations, and believe him to have just claims upon the bounty of the Government

[signed] H Jackson

Abram Reger[?]

Jonathan Yeager

John Cutright [W6626]

Moses Bennett

Teter Kesling

Henry White

Harrison County, Va.

I have known Christopher McVany upwards of Twenty Years. from my first knowledge of him I understood he had served as a Soldier in the Revolutionary war. I know he is very poor & I have no reason to doubt his statement of the part he took in the war of the Revolution relying upon his statements & the general opinion of the neighbours. I think he is a fit person to obtain the bounty of the Government — E S Duncan, Judge of the Sup. Ct. of Law & Chancery &c.

Lewis County Va

I have been acquainted with Christopher McVany for about 21 years and from my earliest

acquaintance with him have heard him speak of his services in the revolutionary war. I have no doubt of the truth of his statements he is very poore and in my opinion deserves aid from the government  
Thomas Bland of the Va senate

I have known him for at Least 25 years & Fully concur with the above J M Camp

I have been acquainted with him for 21 or 22 years and fully concur in the above statement  
Philip Cox

I have been acquainted with Cristopher McVany for upwards of twenty year and from my knowledge of him believe he is in titled to benefit and further believe that he was a Soldier of the Revolutionary War  
Wm McKinley

[Margaret Means also made a statement similar to her previous statement above.]

NOTES:

It is unlikely that a Lieutenant would have led a solitary militia company from Wheeling in present West Virginia to Georgetown SC, especially in 1780, when that city was under British control. In addition, Charlotte is in North Carolina, not South Carolina. Gen. Horatio Gates was there for several days late in 1780 to turn over command of the Southern Army to Gen. Nathanael Greene.

Daniel Morgan made Colonel 12 Nov 1776 and served under Gates in the state of New York, during which time they captured Gen. John Burgoyne. Morgan went on furlough in July 1779, but after being made General he returned to service in Dec 1780 in South Carolina.

On 12 Sep 1854 in Upshur County VA Mary McVaney unsuccessfully applied for a pension stating that she married Christopher McVaney in Augusta County in Oct 1796, and he died in Upshur County on 30 June 1853. Her surname before marriage appears to have been Paul. On 16 Mar 1860 at age 80 she reapplied for a pension, as well as for her husband's pension from the time it was suspended up to the date of his death.