

[Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters](#)

Pension Application of Jesse Ford S31035 VA  
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris.

State of Kentucky } Ss:  
Livingston County }

On this 4<sup>th</sup> day of February 1833 personally appeared in open Court before John Barry, Isham Clemont, Wm. Stewart and Vinson B. Simpson Esq's. justices of the county court for said county, now sitting, Jesse Ford resident of said county, aged seventy six years, who being first duly sworn according to law, doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benifit 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 toWit: In the year 1776 at Alexandria, in the state of Virginia I enlisted in the regular service of the United states for the term of three years under captain John Ashby, whose company composed a part of the regiment under the Command of Colonel Thomas Marshall [3<sup>rd</sup> Virginia Regiment on Continental Establishment]. Whether I enlisted on Continental establishment, and belonged to the continental line, or to the Virginia State line, I do not now recollect; and the fact is, that at the time of my enlistment I knew no diference and do not yet know fairly understand the distinction but my recollection is, I belonged to the continental line. But one thing I do know, I did enlist at the time and in the manner I have mentioned, whether my name be found on the rolls or not. And another thing I do know, that I faithfully served out my term of enlistment. A brief has been shown me, stating, as I understand it, that my name is not on the rolls. I do not know how this has hapened, and knowing my right to a pension under late act of Congress, I respectfully present my claim once more to the department with the belief and hope that the officers in the department will again search the rolls faithfully, and that my name will be found. It is impossible for me to produce the evidence of two positive witnesses of my enlistment – it ought not to be expected – it ought not to be required; for I have lived here in the Western Country, along time, and if any are liveing with whom I served, it is impossible for me to know it, or procure their evidence if I did. But I will proceed to relate the circumstances of my service and again submit them to the department: After joining Col. Marshall's regiment at Alexandria, we marched Northward, to Long Island, and there joined Gen'l. Washington. In the month of July following (1776) a battle was fought there [sic: Battle of Long Island, 27 Aug 1776], in which the enemy were successful, and Washington was obliged to evacuate Long Island, which he did in the night time across the East river. In the battle we lost a good many killed and taken prisoners, and amongst the latter was Gen'l. Sterling [sic: William Alexander, Lord Stirling; died 15 Jan 1783] as I understood at the time. Our regiment, and the Maryland troops under Gen'l. [William] Smallwood were much exposed in this engagement. The Brittish were commanded by Gen'l. [William] Howe as well as I remember. After this battle, we marched to several places in succession, and was a while stationed near Philadelphia. Many had become discouraged, and General Washington found it impossible to recruit his army, so as to act vigourously for a time. However, towards the fall and beginning of Winter (of 1776) he began active movements again, and I might relate many circumstances that transpired about this time, but it is sufficient to mention, that in consequence of the weakness of Washingtons army, he retreated through Jersey which was in the beginning of the winter. In consequence of being pursued he had to cross the delaware, and the main body of the enemy took post at Trenton, where late in December, Gen'l. Washington attacked them [26 Dec 1776], and gained a victory, taking a great many prisoners, with the loss of but few men. My regiment and company was in this engagement, and done their duty. I remember, that this active and unexpected movement of Washington's raised the spirits of the soldiers and people. It was now dead winter, and the soldiers suffered severely, for they were badly clothed and the weather excessive cold. After the battle at Trenton, the movements of Washington's army was to various points, and in January (1777) attacked the enemy at Princeton and had the advantage [3 Jan 1777]. I continued in Washingtons army until the battle of Brandywine, sometime in 1777 [11 Sep], and which the Americans

were defeated. I did not fight in this engagement as in the others, having been appointed to guard the baggage waggons during the action. The other circumstances of my service, until I was discharged at the end of my enlistment are not worth relating. Within about a month of end of my enlistment my regiment became so much broke, the officers discharged those whose terms were about expiring, and filled up other regiments with the balance. I was given an honorable discharge from the service, and furlowed home.

Sometime afterwards and as well as I remember in the latter part of the year 1780 (I think in November or December) I was drafted in the militia of Virginia as a private for a tour of three months, from the same County, and served under Colonel Edmunds [William Edmonds], Major Welsh and Captain [William] Grigsby. We were ordered to join Gen'l Green [sic: Nathanael Greene], then at the head of the Southern Army (or was soon expected to be). We joined him sometime in December (I think) at Charlotte. During this term of three months, the troops immediately under Green were not engaged otherwise than moving from place to place. Early in 1781 Gen'l. [Daniel] Morgan was detached over the Catawba, and had a battle with Tarlton at the Cowpens [sic: Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton, 17 Jan 1781], and about the same time Green moved down the Pedee [sic: Pee Dee River], near the Cheraw hills. The terms of the Virginia militia being now about expiring, they were ordered under Brig. Gen'l. [Edward] Stevens, to take charge of the prisoners taken at the Cowpens and conduct them to Charlotte [probably Albemarle Barracks near Charlottesville] in Virginia for safe keeping. My regiment belonged to this Brigade, and after performing this service, we were discharged, in February 1781 as well as I remember. Immediately after the return of the militia to Virginia, owing to the situation of Gen'l. Green, orders were received for another draft to join his army, for three months. My brother Wm. Ford [William Ford, possibly S8506] was now drafted, for whom I substituted, and marched under the same officers except the Captain who was O'Bannon. We again joined Green near Williamsburg [see endnote], and continued under him until the end of the term, which was three months. In this Campaign, there was no engagement with the enemy, and we marched from place to place, as was thought most prudent, generally retreating however, as the general in chief was not yet able to come to a general engagement. The militia generally, who were now in service, were drafted for three months, and in consequence of the perilous situation of Gen'l. Green, and the importance of keeping up a considerable force, and as his design was to engage the enemy at a suitable time, orders were given for another draft of militia to supply the place of those whose terms of service were about expiring. Those now drafted arrived in camp, about the time our terms expired or a little after. My brother George Ford was amongst those newly drafted, and upon his arriving in camp, I substituted in his place; He being married, and I young & much used to the service, it was concluded by us both, that I should serve for him as I had my other brother as before stated, and I was received in his place, and he returned home to Faquir [sic: Fauquier] County where he was drafted. I now served under Captain Bayliss [sic: William Bayless], and was attached to the regiment commanded by Colonel [Armistead] Churchill. This Colonel Churchill did not continue long to command the regiment, as, on some account he was superceded by Colonel Elias Edmonds [probably William Edmonds]. A gentleman by the name of Welch was major of this regiment. At the time of entering the service Green lay at the Dripping Springs or Springfield, and was in the latter part of the year 1780 [sic] as well as now remember, but I do not remember the month. After continuing in this service, as a substitute for my brother George, two months, I became disgusted with the militia service, and determined to enlist again in the regular service; and accordingly about the beginning of 1781 (the precise time I will not pretend to state, but I think it was in February) I enlisted for during the war, under Captain Edins [sic: Samuel Eddins] in the Artillery service. I enlisted at Little York, in Virginia, and under the said captain was stationed to guard a fort at that place, where we remained until driven out by the enemy sometime in the first of the summer of 1781 as well as I remember. After defending the fort as long as practicable we were obliged to abandon it, though with the loss of several prisoners, and all our cannon which the enemy spiked. Our escape from this place was made with great difficulty & danger. We were fired on and I was slightly wounded, in the hand & knee and had my hair cut off behind ('twas the fashion then to were the hair long). We got into a small boat, and escaped over to Gloster [sic: Gloucester] and from thence we

proceeded and joined the main army under Lafayette, about fifteen miles above Williamsburg. About this time Gen'l. Wayne arrived from the north [Anthony Wayne, joined Lafayette 10 Jun 1781], and marched to Jamestown, and there attacked the enemy [Battle of Green Springs Plantation, 6 Jul 1781], but was repulsed, having only about 500 men, and greatly inferior to the enemy. After this he joined Lafayette, and about the same time General Washington arrived and formed a junction with Lafayette, after which we marched to Yorktown, and laid siege to that place [28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781], the British under Cornwallis being now at that place. This was in September 1781 as well as I remember. I was a soldier and fought during the siege which lasted between four and five weeks, when Cornwallis made a formal surrender. I was a Witness to the most of the scenes that took place, and particularly to the marching out of the British, and the surrender of Cornwallis, as our troops were drawn up in such a manner as to give a full view. After the surrender of Cornwallis, the War was considered as almost ended, but still the troops were not discharged, at any rate I was not discharged till February following, when Capt. Edins gave me an honorable discharge in writing. This is the amount of my revolutionary services, and if no record of my enlistment at either time is to be found, I can not imagine the reason – if my name is not on the rolls it is my misfortune, as it is now impossible for me to prove my service by two witnesses, or by one, for I do not know of any living with whom I served. I will mention a circumstance which may perhaps throw light on this subject: it may be possible that my name on the rolls of my first enlistment stands as Elisha Ford instead of Jesse, as my Captain always called me by that name, for distinction's sake, or from whim or caprice – at any rate in calling the rolls he called me by that name, and may have put down my name in that way, which I think is quite probable, though my true name is Jesse. My messmates in my first enlistment were Isaac Davis, Isaac Gibson, Burie Williams, Richard Billips, Sam'l Cox [Samuel Cox S39343; died 12 July 1828], all of whom died in the service, except Cox & myself – and Cox died since. I refer to these men, to enable the department to judge more certainly of my pretensions and to direct them more precisely where my name is to be found; for they enlisted about the same time. I was well known to my Colonel Marshall, having lived in the same neighbourhood, and am known now to Humphrey Marshall [S31234] of Frankfort Kentucky, but he does not personally know of my service. I declare that I have no documentary evidence in my possession which would prove my service having lost my discharges, nor do I know of any living witness by whom I can prove it. I hereby relinquish every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present, and declare that my name is not on the pension roll of the Agency of any state or Territory whatever.

And the said court propounded to the said applicant the following interrogatories as prescribed by the War Department, to which he made the subjoined answers:

Question 1. Where and in what year were you born?

Answer. I was born in Charles County, Maryland, about seventy six years ago, from the best information I have.

Question 2. Have you any record of your age, and if so where is it?

Answer. I have none, and only know my age from information of my relations, and now keep it by memory.

Question 3. Where were you living when called into service; where have you lived since the Revolution and where do you now live? Answer. I was living in the County of Faquir state of Virginia when I entered the service, whither my family had moved when I was about seven years of age. Since the War I lived awhile in the same county and then moved to this county where I have lived for the last twenty six years and where I now live.

Question 4. How were you called into service, were you drafted, did you volunteer, or were you a substitute, and if a substitute for whom. Answer. In my first & last service I enlisted as a regular soldier. I was drafted in my first tour in the militia and in my second tour I was a substitute for my brother William, and in the last tour In the militia I was a substitute for my brother George Ford.

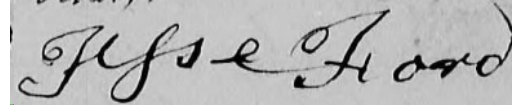
Question 5. State the names of some of the regular officers, who were with the troops where you served, such Continental and militia regiments as you can recollect and the general circumstances of your service. Answer. I knew many regular officers: Gen'l [John] Sullivan (at Brooklyn [sic: Brooklyn]) Gen'l [Charles] Lee, Gen'l [Israel] Putnam, Gen'l [John] Cadwallader (at Trenton)

Gen'l [Hugh] Mercer (killed at Princeton) Capt. [Charles] Fleming of the 7<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regt. Gen'l Wayne, Lafayette, Green and many others

Question 6. Did you ever receive a discharge from the service, & if so by whom was it given, and what has become of it? Answer. I received honorable discharges from all my service except the last tour in the militia. Capt. Ashby gave me my first discharge, and Capt. Edins the last. My discharges in the militia service were given me by my Captains as well as now remember. But all of them are long since worn out and lost.

Question 7. State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighbourhood, who can testify as to your character for veracity, and their belief of your services as a soldier of the Revolution.

Answer. I am known to William Thompson, John Bayliss, William Gordon, Rev. Jas. Johnson, Henry Wells, Christopher Haynes and many others.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jesse Ford". The ink is dark and the background is a light, textured surface.

NOTE:

The above deposition alludes to an earlier application, but none was found in the file.

Gen. Greene did not go to Williamsburg after taking command of the Southern Army at Charlotte NC on 3 Dec 1780. After the Battle of Guilford Courthouse on 15 Mar 1781 he went to South Carolina.

Bounty land was obtained from Virginia by persons claiming to be heirs of an Elisha or Elijah Ford from Fauquier County in Capt. John Ashby's company at the same time that Jesse Ford claimed to be in the company. See Virginia bounty-land application VAS1388. Elisha or Elijah Ford was said to have died in service about 1777, so he could not have been Jesse Ford. It does not seem possible that Jesse Ford could have been in the same company with Elisha or Elijah Ford without knowing him. The circumstances suggest fraud by either Jesse Ford or the supposed heirs of Elisha or Elijah Ford.