

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of John Morris (Morriss) S38235
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

[Capitalization partly corrected.]

Westmoreland County, State of Virginia May 24th 1818

John Morriss aged over sixty years declares on oath that he enlisted under Capt Lawrence Butler as a soldier in the Continental Army in the revolutionary war, on or about September 1776 and was marched by the said Lawrence Butler to Philadelphia where he was taken sick and was put into the hospittle where he staid for some time. he was examined by Doct'r Rush [Benjamin Rush, signer of the Declaration of Independence] & [William] Shippen and reported unfit for service. And was discharged, having served over nine months (his discharge tho lost or destroyed) being dated in July 1777. he further states that he enlisted for three yeares, and to this day is afflicted with sore legs. And that he stands in need of assistance from his Country, being old & infirm. and further this deponant saith not.

[signed] John Morris

Signed and Sworn before me Samuel Templeman [pension application S6204] a justice of the peace
[James Morris, about 51, deposed that John Morris had enlisted as stated.]

State of Virginia Westmoreland County Towit

On this 26th day of June 1820 personally appeared in open court, being a court of record agreeably to the law's of the State of Virginia John Morriss aged about sixty years, resident in the county of Westmoreland in said state who being first sworn according to Law, doth on his oath declare that he served in the Revolutionary War as follows. In the 15th Regiment of Virginia Trops commanded by Colo. Thomas Gaskins, and in a company commanded by Capt Lawrence Butler and marched to Philadelphia where he was left in the hospittle having got injured in his feet and legs by being exposed to intense coald, and after remaining there for a considerable time was discharged as unfit for duty, as will more fully appear by reference to the former declaration filed in the war office, dated the twenty fifth day of May 1818 on which a pension certificate was granted the thirty first day of July 1819, Number 13.397. And I do solemnly swear that I was a resident Citizen of the United States on the 18th day of March 1818 and that I have not since that time by gift sale or in any manner disposed of my property or any part thereof with intent thereby so to diminish it as to bring myself within the provisions of an act of Congress entitled "an act to provide for certain person engaged in the land and naval service of the United States in the Revolutionary War" passed on the 18th day of March 1818 and that I have not nor has any person in trust for me any property or securities contracts or debts due to me nor have I any income other than what is contained in the Schedule hereto annexed and by me subscribed.

Real Estate 55 acres of poor Land worth about \$20 anually.

Personal Estate. 1 Negro woman and 4 small children all chargeable.

3 old poor Horses not worth more than \$15. 12 head cattle young and old 14 hogs among which shoats & piggs. household furniture of all discriptions (Beds &c excepted) worth about \$25

Occupation. A Farmer about 60 years old, entirely unable to follow his calling for support, being afflicted with sore legs and otherways ever since he came out of the Army. No wife 7 children residing with him 7 Girls aged as follows 1 19 years old. 1 17 y's. 1 15 y's. 1 13 years. 1 10 years 1 4 years. 1 Boy 11 years old most of whome are unable to support themselves –

Signed by [signed] John Morriss

[Morris filed an additional declaration on 22 Mar 1819 adding details that will be found in later declarations transcribed below. Bennett McKey (pension application S38197) certified that he had served with Morris.]

[The following letter is in the file of James Chambers, pension application S37838. Punctuation and capitalization extensively corrected.]

Westmoreland County Templeman's X Roads 1st Novm'r. 1821
William Lee Ball Esq'r [Member of Congress]

Dear Sir At the request of the following old soldiers of the Revolution, namely James Chambers (alias Burgess), Edward Sanford [S41120], & John Morriss, I take the liberty to address you & state the following facts as may be seen by reference to papers filed in the office of the War Department, under the Law of Congress of the 1st May 1820 (for all the above persons had drawn their pensions). It required that these old soldiers should comply with the requisites of said Law, and return a schedule of their property to the Secretary of War. This was done. Among many who was thus presented, James Chambers, Edward Sanford, William Spurling [S41182] and John Morriss were rejected. In consequence of which and being personally acquainted with the entire circumstances of these old men, I again represented their situations to the Secretary, begging that he would reconsider their cases. (This letter to which I refer you and vouch for the truth thereof I refer you filed in the office). April 12th I received a letter from J. L. Edwards [Commissioner of Pensions] of that office stating that the above cases were filed for reconsideration. On June 1st I received a Letter addressed to John Morriss inclosing the Attorney General opinion dated 9th February 1821 informing Morriss that agreeably to the opinion of the attorney he could not be restored to the pension roll. In July 21st 1821 I received a letter informing William Spurling that his name was restored to the pension list roll. The others appear to have been passed over in silence.

I before stated to the Secretary of War that I was apprehensive their real circumstances were not well understood from the schedule reported. I will now repeat them to you, and which you may find in my letter on this subject filed in the War Office.

[Two paragraphs relating to James Chambers and Edward Sanford omitted here.]

John Morriss – He is an old cripple man, with a family of children and no wife. He has been one of the most indefatigable industrious men, notwithstanding his sore legs which he contracted by frost while in the army and which will follow him to his grave. It is true that he purchased a small tract of land on which he lives (but not paid for) and which he expected to do out of his pension under the Act of 1818. It is also true that he owns a Negro woman & several children, but which as certified adds to his poverty, being an entire expense. By his industry and care he had purchased two or three young Negro men, but in the late war the British took them all from him & renders him truly poor.

It is well that the Secretary allowed Wm Spurling his pension. His landlord had seized his all for rent, and but for this he would have been a beggar indeed with his wife and children.

The object of this is to get the favor of you to have the cases of James Chambers, Edward Sanford & John Morriss reconsidered & certified, or take such other steps as you may deem necessary in your wisdom.

There is another subject connects with this to which I beg leave to call your attention. You know that there was a number of soldiers of what was called the Virginia State Troops forced into the United States service and served both to the north and south and received Continental pay. And yet neither by the Law of [top of page missing] Law making provision for them and numbers besides. But the almighty Senate rejected them in Toto. Can no remedy be made in this case. What an ungrateful set of creatures we are – while we are dwelling in our cieled palaces, roling in all the luxeries of life & patronage, we forget the poor old war-worn Soldier & Officer that fought and bled and died to procure us this ease and affluence. Would it not be better to dispense with some of those silver knives, forks, and gold spoons, &c. &c. Excuse these remarks – they are the effusions of my heart. May you experience a pleasant and profetable session this season.

Yours respectfully
Samuel Templeman

Decleration In order to be restored to the pension list, under the Act of the first of March 1823.

County of Westmoreland State of Virginia Ste

On this twenty seventh day of October 1823 personally appeared in open court, being a court of record agreeably to the laws of the State of Virginia, John Morriss aged about seventy years dothe on his oath make the following declaration, in order to obtain the provision made by the acts of Congress of the 18th march 1818 and the 1st May 1820. That he the said John Morris enlisted about the year 1776 under Capt Lawrence Butler for three years and joined the 15th Virginia Regiment commanded by Col. Thomas Gaskins in the line of the State of Virginia on the Continental establishment. And that in the said company he was marched to Dumfries in Virginia where they were inoculated for the small pox. After they recovered, they were marched to Philadelphia by a Capt Gray, where he was thrown with other soldiers into the Hospital he being sick and lame, of which to this day he has not recovered he continued in the Hospital at Christeen and Philadelphia for several months, untill he was discharged as not fit for service by Doct'rs. Rush and Shippen, who attended the Hospitals as he was informed as Surgeons General of the Army and was left to get home as he could without pay or Rations. After this he was at the Siege of York and served his Tour thee under the command of a Capt Sesson & Samuel Fauntleroy [Richmond County Militia]. And that his name has been placed on the Pension list, and droped therefrom on account of his property

And in pursuance of the Act of the 1st May 1820... [oath identical to that in the 1820 declaration].

Schedule,

55 Acres of very poor forest Land valued at.	\$82.00
1 Bay mare valued at.....	10.00
10 head Cattle of all sorts.....	40.00
household furniture except Beds bedding &c. .	10.00
negro man James old & infirm (a charge). . .	<u>20.00</u>
John hisXmark Morriss	\$162.00

And that no change has taken place between this and the former schedule, except that in the former, there was a Negro woman & children in my possession which rightfully belonged to my Brother, and being in my possession did not know that they must be given in and which does not belong to him –

The declarant further states that at the age of seventy that altho he lives on a small, poor tract of land as stated in his schedule aforesaid, that from his old age, sickness and sore leggs he is entirely incapable of doing anything materially to support himself. That he has no wife. That he has residing with him seven children namely Christianna 20 years old, able to support herself. Elizabeth 18 able to support herself. Angelia 16 able to support herself. William 14 able to support himself. Catey 12 not able to support herself. Polley 10 & Sally 7 not able to support themselves. And if it was not for the labour of the grown children, it would be impossible for him and the youngest to subsist.