

## Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of James Nickens (Nickins) S38262

f23Va

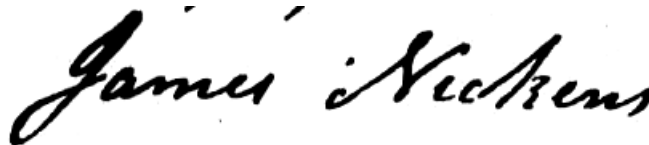
Transcribed by Will Graves

rev'd 1/18/13 & 12/11/13

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Where the meaning is not compromised by adhering to the spelling, punctuation or grammar, no change has been made. Corrections or additional notes have been inserted within brackets or footnotes. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. A bracketed question mark indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. Only materials pertinent to the military service of the veteran and to contemporary events have been transcribed. Affidavits that provide additional information on these events are included and genealogical information is abstracted, while standard, 'boilerplate' affidavits and attestations related solely to the application, and later nineteenth and twentieth century research requests for information have been omitted. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading fails to catch all misinterpretations. Also, dates or numbers which the software treats as numerals rather than words are not corrected: for example, the software transcribes "the eighth of June one thousand eighty six" as "the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1786." Please call errors or omissions to my attention.]

I James Nickens a Free Man of Color aged about Fifty Five Years do certify and declare that about the Commencement of the Revolutionary War I enlisted in the Naval Service of the United States for the Term of three years and served the said Term in succession on Board the Ships, *Tempest*,<sup>1</sup> *Revenge*<sup>2</sup> and *Hero*,<sup>3</sup> then in the Service of the said States as I understood; the Two latter were Commanded by Captains Muter [George Muter] and Westcott [Wright Westcott] but I have forgotten the name of the Captain of the *Tempest* that after having Served the Term of Three years and Received a discharge which I have lost, I enlisted in the Land Service for the War at Lancaster Court House in Virginia and was marched from thence by a Captain Nicholas Correll [[Nicholas Cabell R1577](#) ?] to Join the Division of the Army under the Command of the Baron Steuben then stationed as well as I recollect at Cumberland Court House where I was placed under the Command of Captain Drury Ragsdale subsequently thereto I was detached from the Command of the Baron Steuben to Join the Army of General Greene [Nathanael Greene] in South Carolina and accompanied Captains Ragsdale and Flemming Gains of Colonel Harrison's<sup>4</sup> Regiment of Artillery to that State and was present at the Battle of the Eutaw Springs that I continued with the Southern Army until the close of the War and Returned from thence after Peace was Proclaimed with the said Captain D. Ragsdale to Virginia where I have since Resided having served as well as I can Recollect with the Army Between two and three years. I am illiterate and cannot Recollect dates but well Recollect the Leading Circumstances attending the Service I was Engaged in I never Rely upon being able to produce Respectable and Satisfactory Evidence of having served my Country faithfully, from my advanced age, Infirmities and Reduced Circumstances I Require the assistance of my Country for Support. Given under my hand at Falmouth in Virginia this 27 April 1818.

S/ James Nickens



Virginia, Stafford County, to wit:

On this 16<sup>th</sup> day of August 1820, in open Court, being a Court of Record, made so by Law,

<sup>1</sup> *Tempest*. Coggins:102, VANavy:162, 173, DaviesXX:143, 145, ND11:620, 806, galley in VA Navy, 1777-79, 20 guns, Capt Celey Saunders and John Markham, captured in May 1781 and destroyed. Dandridge:186 shows a VA ship, not a galley. Silverstone:20, ship. Paullin:411, VA ship sent to Chesapeake Bay, May 1780. Coggins:102. <http://www.awiatsea.com/Other/Hough%20List%20T.html>

<sup>2</sup> Probably the *Norfolk Revenue*, the captain of which was Captain John Calvert. <http://www.scuttlebuttsmallchow.com/virgnavy.html>.

<sup>3</sup> *Hero*. ND4:1428, ND5:1249, ND6:1392, ND7:1148, ND8:222, ND9:339, Coggins:102, VANavy:157, ND11:327, 459, 1160, galley in VA Navy, 1776-79, Cpts George Muter, Philip Chamberlayne, Robert Tompkins, and John Barrett, dismantled and sold at auction 7 Jul 1779. <http://www.awiatsea.com/Other/Hough%20List%20H-I.html>

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps Colonel Charles Harrison of the Virginia artillery. [http://members.aol.com/jacob59/more/hrtg/rev\\_units.html](http://members.aol.com/jacob59/more/hrtg/rev_units.html).

personally appeared James Nickens aged about sixty two years, resident in said County, who being first duly sworn according to Law, on his oath declares that he served in the Revolutionary War as follows: that he enlisted for the war under Captain Nicholas Currell at Lancaster Court House in the State of Virginia but he cannot recollect the date, that he was marched from Lancaster Court house in the state of Virginia by the said Currell to the headquarters of the Baron Steuben, then at Cumberland Court house, as well as he now recollects, where he remained some time when he was placed under the command of Drury Ragsdale & Flemming Gains, commanding to the best of his recollection a company belonging to Colonel Harrison's Regiment of Artillery, with which Company he was marched, from the headquarters of the Baron Steuben to join the Southern Army under General Greene on the march Drury Ragsdale was taken sick and had to remain on the road. Flemming Gains continued to march with the men & joined the Army of General Greene previous to the battle of the Eutaw Springs, at which battle, he the said James Nickens was stationed in the rear in charge of baggage belonging to the said Flemming Gains & John T. Brookes, officers he thinks in Harrison's Regiment of Artillery – soon after the battle of the Eutaw Springs Drury Ragsdale resumed his command with whom, he the said Nickens continued until the close of the war – when he returned with him to Virginia, and that the number of his pension certificate, which commenced the 27<sup>th</sup> day of April 1818, being the date of his original declaration per Certificate of the Secretary at War, granted the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of July 1918 he is 12,553 --And I do solemnly swear that I was a resident Citizen of the United States on the 18<sup>th</sup> 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 persons engaged in the land and naval Service of the United States in the Revolutionary War,” passed on the 18<sup>th</sup> 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—Viz: 1 Horse, bought with proceeds of pension heretofore received—2 sheep, 1 Chair & old Table (exclusive of bedding & wearing cloathes) the whole valued by the Court at \$23. His occupation is a farmer, that he lives alone, and in the general, enjoys good health..

S/ James Nickens, X his mark

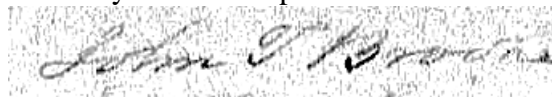
Sworn to and declared in open Court, the day & year first written

[p. 13]

Fredericksburg May 20<sup>th</sup> 1819 I do hereby Certify that the first Regiment of Artillery upon Continental establishment during the Revolutionary War belonged to the Virginia line,

S/ John T. Brooke

NB this fact would certainly be ascertained by the War Department



I do Certify that John T Brooke whose name appears on this paper was a Lieutenant of Regiment of Artillery commanded by Colonel C. Harrison on Continental Establishment and that he served to the end of the War

S/ Fontaine Maury

a clerk in Department of State July 23, 1819

[p. 18]

Virginia to wit

This day Charles West<sup>5</sup> came before me and made oath that he knows when James Nickens entered on

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<sup>5</sup> I did not find a pensioner by this name in any resources available to me. This leads me to believe that this affidavit may be the only record of the service of Charles West in the Revolution.

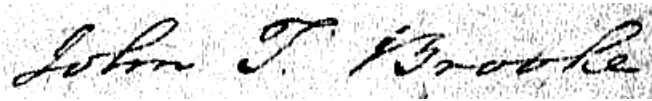
board the Galley "Norfolk Revenge" and he served on board that ship with him 2 years and 3 months.  
Given under my hand & seal this 27<sup>th</sup> April 1818  
S/ Wm A. Dade, JP

[p. 20]

April 14, 1818

I do hereby certify that James Nickens a man of colour was a Soldier in the first Regiment of Artillery upon Continental establishment and commanded by Colonel Charles Harrison and that he served until the end of the War.

S/ John T. Brooke



Stafford County

October 13 1818 this day JT Brooke made oath

before me a justice of the peace for the County aforesaid to the above certificate

S/ John G. Hedgman [?]

[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$8 per month commencing April 27, 1818, for service as a private for 3 years in the Virginia Continental line.]

C. Leon Harris points out:

A size roll of noncommissioned officers and privates taken at Chesterfield Courthouse lists the following: James Nickens, age 18, height 5' 1½", black hair, black eyes, yellow complexion, planter, born in Princess Anne County, residing in Lancaster County, enlisted in Essex County in March 1780 for the duration of the war, sized in April 1781. Formerly served in Col. Abraham Buford's Detachment for 18 months.

Leon's wonderful transcription of the entire Chesterfield size role is posted at [B69](#)

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[From [bounty land records in the Library of Virginia](#)] 3 page file indexed under the name James Nicking; only the 3 page of that file relates to the above veteran as follows:

State of Virginia County of Stafford

I James Nickins aged seventy-two years do upon oath testify and declare that in the year 1776 I entered the Continental service for the term of during the war, and served in Colonel Harrison's Regiment of Continental Artillery in the Virginia Line and belonged to the Company commanded by Captain Lieut. Gains at the battle of Eutaw Springs and that I continued in service aforesaid until the close of the war and was discharged a private in the said Regiment of Artillery. I further declare that I never received a warrant for the bounty land promised to me on the part of the United States & the State of Virginia nor have I ever assigned or transferred my claim in any manner whatsoever there for – Know all men by these presents that I James Nickins aforesaid do hereby constitute and appoint Jos. Watson of the City of Washington to be my true and lawful attorney for me and in my name to demand and receive from the Secretary of War of the United States a warrant for the quantity of land due to me as aforesaid and said Attorney is fully authorized and empowered to appoint one or more substitutes or attorneys under him for the special purpose above expressed.

[Several words indecipherably faint] of November 1831

S/ James Nickens, X his mark

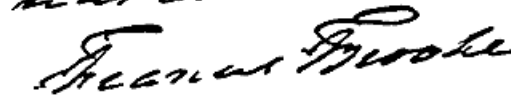
[another file containing 4 pages and indexed under the name James Nickins contains the following:]

July 13 1831

I hereby certify that James Nickens (who in person made application for the certificate) was a Soldier and Colonel Harrison's Regiment of Continental Artillery (Virginia Line) and belonged to a company commanded by Captain Lieutenant Gaines at the Battle of Eutaw Springs of which company I was a first Lieutenant that some short time afterwards he returned to Virginia as the servant of Captain Lieutenant Gaines and I have no doubt remained in Service to the end of the war for which he was enlisted.

Teste S/ John Metcalfe

S/ Francis Brooke



I certify that it does not appear by the records of the land office of Virginia that any military warrant ever issued to James Nickens = Such a warrant for 100 acres issued to James Nicking for his services for three years as a Sailor in the Virginia State Navy of the Revolution

S/ Wm Selden, R. L. Office

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[From [rejected pension records in the Library of Virginia](#)] 5-page file indexed under the name James Nickins

Manassas Gap, Warren County Feby 20, 1837

Sir [addressed to William H. Richardson, Secretary of the Commonwealth of Virginia]

About two years since, I deposited with you for examination, the claims of James Nickens & others, Heirs of James Nickens & Hezekiah Nickens<sup>6</sup> who were Seamen in the State Navy of Virginia in Revolutionary War, James Nickens and Hezekiah Nickens were credited on the rolls for three years Service in the State Navy, a Warrant was issued for the service of Hezekiah, the claim for the service of James was not allowed for reasons that a land Warrant had been issued in the name of James Nickings for land Service, and the presumption was that the 100 acres should have been charged to James Nickens who was a Seaman, instead of James Nickings for land Service,

Having ascertained that there was a man residing in Stafford County Virginia who was in the Receipt of a pension for Navy Services, induced me to make the inquiry about Service he rendered, to entitle him to a pension, an extract from his declaration shows that he was entitled to land bounty, for land Service, as well as Navy Service, if I am rightly informed the Rolls do not charge either of the names with land for services in the Navy, but for land Service 100 acres is charged to James Nickings, This James who is now living and rendered land service must be the man who drew the 100 acres, as charged on the Books, I think it is a fair conclusion . Please give the claim another investigation and compare the allegation set forth in the pension declaration with your documents perhaps by this Course you can the better ascertain to which of the Soldiers, the 100 acres issued in the name of James Nickings was properly chargeable; – and I am informed the James Nickens who I represent rendered no service except in the Navy, as aforesaid,

Very Respectfully

Your Ob Servt.

S/ Wilford G. Little

[Note: to further confuse matters, see [James Nickens VAS1121](#) and [Nathl. \(Nathaniel\) Nicken VAS420](#) and VAS1127 and VAS1128.]

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<sup>6</sup> [Hezekiah Nickens VAS1120](#)