

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Pension Application of John Sorrell S6138

VA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 26 Mar 2015.

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To the Legislature of Virginia

John Sorrell aged Sixty Eight years, respectfully represents that during the late revolutionary war he served a our of duty as a Militiaman in Capt Philip Buckners company on the Potomac River when the Roebuck came up the River [summer 1776] that he afterwards served in the lower parts of Virginia in Capt Robert Weirs [sic: Robert Ware's] company and was stationed at Williamsburg, that he was afterward detailed under Capt Leggs [John Legg's] company at Fredericks'g [Fredericksburg MD] to guard prisiners, that he went to the seige of york [Yorktown, 28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781] under Capt Coleman [possibly Francis Coleman] where he was very much exposed [undeciphered word] and on his recovery found that he had lost entirely the hearing in one ear and which has continued up to this time and he is now very deaf in the other, That he is poor unable to support himself & family, consisting of nine children; he thinks he deserves a pension and respectfully asks

Teste/ Hugh M Patton

John Sorrell

Friday June 28th 1828

At the instance of Mr Jno. Sorrel, an old gentleman who is about applying to the Virg'a Legislature for a pension for services rendered during the revolutionary war, as a militia man I am requested to certify as to the disability

Mr. Sorrel is at this time, and no doubt has been for years affected with chronic rheumatism producing by its violence and protracted nature effusion and enlargement about the joints so as in a measure to destroy the powers of locomotion and wholly incapacitates him from obtaining the means of support by any bodily effort of his own. Besides his age and Rheumatik affection his afflictions are heightened by a deafness, produced he says, at the seige of York, by the roar of Artillery which is not at all improbable; as violent commotions of that kind have produced similar effects. Given under my hand the day & year above.

J. H. Wallace M.D.

William Sorrell aged Sixty four years, personally appeared before me John S Wellford a Justice of the peace for the County of Spotsylvania, He being first duly sworn states as follows That he was born in the year 1764 in the County of Caroline & is brother to John Sorrell who is older than he is – That he well remembers that his brother John sorrel served tours in the Militia during the Revolutionary war, especially at the seige of york. That when he went down to the seige of York he had his hearing perfectly, & after that service he was brought home sick & his sense of hearing very much impaired, which has continued up to the present time & amounts to almost total deafness. That it was generally considered in the family & neighbourhood that his deafness was produced by his exposure at the seige & by the roar of artillery – His brother is very poor & stands in need of assistance

Sworn to before me this 8th August 1828 – Given under my hand

John S Wellford JP

Dec'r 4th 1828 ref'd to Claims.

Dec'r 10th 1828 Voted reasonable A. Taney

13th Bill drawn

[The following is from the federal pension file.]

State of Virginia. County of Spotsylvania to wit:

On this the 7th day of Jany 1833 personally appeared in open Court, before the Justices of Spotsylvania County now in open Court sitting, John Sorrell a resident of the County of Spotsylvania in the State of Virginia 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 Act of Congress passed the 7th of June 1832. That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated viz under Capt Philip Buckner, Capt. Robt. Ware, Capt John Legg and Capt Coleman, at one time he was attached to the Brigade under the command of Genl [Edward] Stevens of Culpeper, and also at one time under the command of General [George] Weedon. the names of the subaltern company officers not recollected, except the name of Reuben Samuel who was a Lt. in Capt Ware's company. He further Notes that whilst at York Town as hereinafter stated, he was under the command of Genl Geo. Washington, Marquiss LaFayette and Colo. Meriweather [sic: Meriwether]. He also states that about the 4th day of Septr in the year 1775 he first entered the service of the United States as a private and volunteer in the company of capt Philip Buckner, that at that time he was but fifteen years of age and resided in the County of Caroline in the State of Virginia, shortly after enrolling himself, about the 5th day of Septr in the same year, he marched from Caroline to the [undeciphered word] of the river Potomac where he remained until about the 10th day of Decr. of same year, a period of rather more than three months from the time of his enrollment as well as he now recollects; he was then ordered back to Caroline and there discharged. In the following year, to wit, on about the first day of April 1776, he again volunteered as a private under Capt Robt. Ware & Lieutenant Reuben Samuel and marched from the County of Caroline where he at that time resided, to Williamsburg where he remained until the latter part of September in that year, or early in the month of October of same year a period of about six months. On the first day of May in the year 1781 he was drafted as a private from the County of Spotsylvania whither he had removed, and marched as a guard with eleven others (all taken from the company of Capt. Legg whose subaltern officers he did not know or whose names he does not recollect to which he also belonged) over several prisoners taken somewhere at the South, and guarded them to Winchester and Staunton, where the prisoners were confined in jail; this service was performed immediately under Sergeant Benjamin Robertson. Having performed that duty he was ordered back to Fredericksburg in the County of Spotsylvania. on his return or shortly thereafter which was in the month of August in that year, he was employed by the orders of Genl. Weedon in rolling back into the Ware Houses the tobacco that had been previously rolled out and concealed from the British; immediately after this he was transfered from the Company of Capt Legg, to that under the command of Capt. Coleman and was marched to York Town where he remained until after the seige of York and the surrender of Lord Cornwallis [19 Oct 1781], very soon however after reaching York Town, he was taken sick and continued so for some time. He states that whilst sick the [British] redoubts were stormed, and on the following morning he asked permission of Dr [John] Tankard the Physician to report himself fit for duty. Dr. T. give him a small piece of paper upon which he was afterwards told (for he declares that he can neither read or write) were under these words "unfit for service" This paper he took to Colo. Meriweather who directed him to take it to his company officers, but Capt. Coleman and [three words erased and lined through] had returned home on account of sickness and consequent inability to do duty; he therefore handed the paper to his orderly Sergeant Reuben Plunkett. the next day Genl Washington directed that all able bodied men should be reported to him, and at his earnest entreaty he (this Petitioner) was reported fit for service. He remained in the works about five days and witnessed the surrender of Lord Cornwallis. he states that at the time of the surrender the British troops stacked their arms in front of the American Army and marched by them, (the Americans) into York Town. After the siege of York, Colo Meriweather left them having under his charge some of the prisoners, and he was told came toward Fredericksburg, but before Colo Meriweather left York Town he gave him your petitioner his discharge, which was about the 29th day of October 1781, as well as the memory of your petitioner serves him, making a period of service of service in the year 1781 of six months wanting a few days only. He further

states that he continued sick, and so much indisposed after his discharge as to prevent his return for some time. Having omitted giving the names of the company officers under whom he was placed after Capt. Coleman & his subalterns left York Town he states that the omission to do, is because of his inability to give them. He further states that he has no hesitation in saying that his military services as a private (and in that capacity only, he rendered service during the Revolutionary war, amounted to fifteen months. The following questions propounded by the Court viz. Where and in what year were you born? Ans. I was born in the County of Caroline State of Virginia in or about the year 1760. Ques. Have you any record of your age? if so, where is it? Ans. No I have [undeciphered word] I was registered in Caroline church, but it is now used as an academy, and I do not know what has become of the register. Ques. Where were you living when you were called into service? where have you lived since the Revolutionary war and where do you reside now? Ans. I was residing in the County of Caroline, State of Va. when I first entered the service, afterwards removed to this County (Spotsylvania) where I have resided ever since. Ques. How were you called into service? were you drafted, did you volunteer, or were you a substitute? and if a substitute for whom? Ans. In the year 1775 and afterwards in 1776 I volunteered my services and they were accepted; in the year 1775 under Capt. Philip Buckner and in 1776 under Capt Robt Ware. In 1781 I was drafted from Spotsylvania and was first under the command of Capt John Legg, and afterwards under Capt Coleman under whom I marched to York Town. State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops where you served; such continental & Militia regiments as you can recollect, and the general circumstances of your service. General Geo. Washington, Marquiss La Fayette, General Mulinburg [sic: Peter Muhlenberg] from Maryland, Genl [Anthony] Wayne, General Weedon. There were many French officers at York Town, but I do not recollect their names. Having already stated such circumstances touching my services as I recollect, I beg leave to refer to them in this place. I very well know that I was in Genl Stevens's Brigade. Ques. 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 was discharged at York Town, but do not know what has become of it. State the names of the persons to whom you are known in your present neighborhood and who can testify as to your character for veracity and their belief of your services as a soldier of the Revolution. ans. I know of no Clergyman, (there being none in my neighbourhood) who can testify either as to my services or my character, nor do I know of any one person in my neighborhood who is acquainted with my services during the war. I am very infirm, and have been confined to my house and yard for the last eleven years, and in consequence of my very great deafness have been cut off almost entirely from society, so much so that I do not know whether any of my old comrades are now living. I can neither read nor write. As to my character for veracity, I would refer to any one who knows me – say Maj'r. Sanford Chancellor – Mr. George Chancellor Mr Thomas Penn & J. Hayden. Sworn to and subscribed the day & year afsd. John hisXmark Sorrell

State of Virginia County of Spotsylvania to wit [7 Jan 1833]

Personally appeared before me the undersigned a Justice of the Peace in and for the County of Spotsylvania in the State of Virginia, John Sorrell, who being duly sworn, deposeth and saith, that by reason of old age, great infirmity and the consequent loss of memory, he cannot swear positively to the precise length of time of his service, but according to the best of his recollection he served not less than the periods mentioned below & in the following grades: For one year and three months I served as a private in the Virginia Militia in the Service of the United States, and for such service I claim a pension.

NOTE: A Treasury Department document indicates that the administrators of John Sorrell received his final pension payment up to the date of his death, 26 Dec 1843.