

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of Hezekiah Hess S8707

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Virginia } SS

County of Lewis }

On this 19<sup>th</sup> day of September in the year 1833 personally appeared before me Thomas C. Hinzman a Justice of the peace in and for the said County, Hezekiah Hess a resident of Lewis County and State of Virginia, aged seventy seven 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 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. In that part of Hampshire County in the State of Virginia which is now Hardy County, in the month of June in the year 1776 he volunteered as a private Indian Spy, together with 11 other men from the same County under Capt. Pogue of the 2<sup>d</sup>. Bat. of August Militia, who had come to Hampshire to obtain recruits to act as spies. In this said month of June marched under the said Capt. Pogue to the Fort in the little levels of Greenbrier, now in Greenbrier County Va. and immediately entered on his duties of spying, and traversed the then Wilderness Country on head waters of Jackson's River, Back Creek, Greenbrier river, New River, Kanawha river, Gauley river and Elk river, on Stoney Creek, Locust Creek, Mill Creek &c &c and from time to time reported to the said Fort in the Little Levels until Nov. 1776 during which time the Indians done no other mischief, than merely to steal a few horses which happened in Sept. 1776 pursued the Indians immediately, overtook them decending tenmile Creek, a few guns were fired but no lives lost on either side, the Indians fled and the horses were recaptured and restored to their owners. In Nov. 1776 cold weather commencing gave to the frontier inhabitants a temperary security against savage aggression; was then dismissed and retired to the Fort at the Warm Springs where he remained during the Winter, served as a private Indian Spy under Capt Pogue Leut. Kenison, from June to Nov. 1776 making 5 months service.

In March 1777 at the said Fort at the warm springs again volunteered as a private Indian spy under the said Capt. Pogue & Lieut. Kenison, and from the Fort on the little Levels of Greenbrier resumed his duties of spying and spied during the spring, summer and fall of this year principally through the same country and in the same manner as in the preceding year. during this summer made one excursion down Gauley to the mouth of Birch River from thence back to mouth of Meadow river, decended it to Donelleys Fort in the Big Levels of Greenbrier [Fort Donnally at present Frankford], there seen Capt. Stewart and Capt. Donnelly and some of their spies. from Donnelleys Fort ascended the Greenbrier river to Pogue's Fort in the Little Levels. In the month of August in this year a large body of Indians supposed to be upwards of 100 wariers, made their appearance on Locust Creek near the lower end of the Droup [presumably Droop Mountain in Pocahontas and Greenbrier counties]. Capt. Pogue & Capt. Chain formed a junction of their men and marched out to attack the Indians found them concealed among the rocks and fallen timber, was routed and pursued them to the Gauley Mountains and on reviewing the battle ground eleven Indians were found dead. this was certainly a most fortunate event for the whites they obtained a complete victory without the loss of a single man and only 5 were wounded. This was the only occurrence of this years spying worthy of particular note. In Dec'r. cold weather set in and he retired to the fort and was engaged during this cold season in repairing and fortifying their Fort, and in Feb. 1778 assumed his duty of spying, and continued spying during the spring summer and fall of this year as in the preceeding years from the same Fort in the Little Levels and under the same officers - during which time but few circumstances transpired worthy of particular notice. The savage warfare was in this part of the country in the year 1778 confined to predatory excursions by small parties of Indians who in dispute of the vigilence of the spies could find their way to the frontier settlements, and steal horses &c but generally were detected and the horses &c returned.

In the month of July of this year a family on the head of Tigert Valey [sic: Tygart Valley] were massacred by some stragling Indians, hastened with Capt. Pogue & his spies to spot where

this bloody deed was perpetrated. the Indians had fled, and could not be overtaken. some men from Warwicks Fort [in present Randolph County] had buried the dead and went in pursuit of the savages. In December in the year 1778 was dismissed having served from March 1777 including the 2 months service in Fortifying the Fort, making 19 months additional service as a private Indian Spy.

In March 1779 in the Little Levels of Greenbrier in the said County of Augusta, again volunteered under the said Capt. Pogue as a private Indian Spy and served principally under the immediate command of his Leut. Kennison untill near the last of Nov. 1779 when he was again dismissed having served as a private Indian Spy 8 months making in all 32 months service.

The incidents of this last term of service, and the occurrences which transpired in this part of the frontier settlements are briefly as follows - viz. In May a small party of Indians made their appearance on Anthonies Creek [Anthony Creek] (which empties into the Greenbrier river from the south [sic: east]) and massacred a part of two families, burnt their dwellings and out buildings, killed their cattle, then bent their way across the Greenbrier river over the mountains to Gauley from thence to Peters Creek where they were overtaken by Lieut. Kennison Declarent and 7 other men, and by a well directed fire three of the Indians were brought to the ground. The others 12 or 15 in Number fled precipitately, leaving 3 children which they had taken prisoners and some stolen horses, which were brought back and restored to the proper persons. In July 1779 as declarent in company with 5 men under command of Lieut. Kennison was on a spying excursion on the Big Elk river near the Fork Lick and was making preparation to camp during the night a party of Indians surprised them by firing at them but fortunately done but little harm only wounding one man slightly in the shoulder. As the Indians were vastly superior in number it was vain to hasard a battle, therefore instantly took to flight and was closely pursued untill night put a stop in their pursuit. all luckily got back to the Fort. These were the only circumstances worthy of notice that he recollects, they had frequent alarms, the neighborhood horses were stolen but generally recaptured.

Declarent was born in Duchess County New York on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Oct. 1756 and was brought from thence to Hampshire County when seven months old lived in Hampshire except when engaged in spying untill the year 1822 when he moved to Lewis County where he now lives

He has no Documentary evidence, being merely dismissed by his Capt. and knows of no person whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his services. he was never regularly under any field officer. further than this, that his Capt. was under the directions and subject to the comand of Colo. [Thomas] Hugart commandant of the 2<sup>d</sup>. Bat. Augusta M[ilitia] and of Col. Sampson Mathews commandant of the whole County of Augusta.

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 the day and year aforesaid.

Hezekiah hisXmark Hess

To the seven several interogatories prescribed by the War Department, and propounded by the said Justices the said Declarent answers as follows viz.

- 1<sup>st</sup>. I was born in Duchess County in the State of New York on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Oct. 1756.
- 2<sup>d</sup>. I have no record of my age I remember the account given me thereof by my mother
- 3<sup>d</sup>. When called into service I was living in Hampshire County in the State of Virginia, continued to live there untill the year 1822 when I moved to Lewis Co. Va. where I now live.
- 4<sup>th</sup>. I volunteered.
- 5<sup>th</sup>. From the nature of my service, I had not an opportunity to see any Regular officers. I only seen a few militia officers at the different Forts which I visited. viz Capt. Donne[lley] at Donelleys Fort. Capt. Stewart at Stewarts Fort [possibly Fort Stuart at present Ft Spring in Greenbrier County] Capt. Chain & seen also Col. Hugart and Col. Mo[page torn]
- 6<sup>th</sup>. I never rec'd a Discharge, was merely dismissed by my Captain
- 7<sup>th</sup>. I am known to Abram Whetsel and Jacob Wymer [sic: Jacob Wimer], who reside in my neighborhood and [who can testify as to my] character for veracity, and their belief of my services as an Indian spy.

[The following report is by District Attorney Washington G. Singleton who investigated many pensioners from Lewis and other counties of present West Virginia. For details see pension

application S6111 of David W. Sleeth and the endnote.]

Hezekiah Hess. Ser'd. 2 yrs. draws \$80—

John Mitchel [pension application S5761] of Lewis county has known Hess for 27 yrs. Knows that he is too young to have been a soldier in the War of the Revolution - he cant exceed sixty years.

Samuel Bonnett, William Powers [S18164] concur in opinion with Jno. Mitchel.

on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1834 Hess himself made the following statement of his age and Revolutionary Services. is 72 yrs. old the 16<sup>th</sup> July Inst has no record of his age - some time during the Revolutionary war (as he thinks, cant say in what year. Capt. William Pogue enlisted ten men includeing himself at Morefield [sic: Moorefield] Hardy Cty Va. for eighteen months and marched then to the Warm Springs Bath County Virginia. Marched from Hardy County about the first of March. got to Bath the last of March. Remained there until the next Spring then went to Clover lick in same county. remained there until December following there were upwards of a hundred men at the warm springs this was all the service he done and all he gave into James Bennett who wrote his Declaration at his Hess house. Swore to his Declaration before Thomas Heneman [sic]. Bennett said he must have the first draw. he replied it was too much. Bennett got all but \$5— Since his Pension was granted has been to Weston the County Seat of Lewis several times distant eleven miles to see after his money. always walked —

Benjamin Copelan [sic: Benjamin Coplin S10464] aged 82 was in Weston Virga. all through the War of the Revo. never before heard of the Fort at the Warm Springs of which Hess gives an account in his narative of service. if one had have been there & the number of men mentioned by Hess statement at it must have heard of it.

Christopher Nutter [W5434] aged 74 has lived west of the Allegany [sic: Alleghany] Mountains since 1769. was a soldier all through the Revolutionary War. his services were done west of the allegany mountains - Knew every Fort and almost every man who was in service against the Indians or otherwise in Western Virginia from the commencement to the termination of the war. - that he never before heard of the Fort or service mentioned by Hess in his narative of Service. - there was no such service as 18 mo. enlistments draft or volunteering known in the Indian warfare - If there had been such a station & service as is mentioned by Hess, he must have heard of it - It could not have been & therefore he is bound to believe that Hess's statement is a fabrication. - Has known Hess for 25 years. in that time Hess has often laboured for him - Hess is a loquacious man always talking of himself & what he has done. Never heard Hess say until after the passage of the Pension Law that he was in service as a soldier nor does he believe he was. - he is too young Cant exceed 60 yrs. old. - Nutter further states that Hess is a man of bad character. - a notorious liar.

John Middleton [W7464] of Harrison County last fall had a conversation with Hess about their respective ages. in that conversation Hess stated himself to be sixty years old -

A true copy W. G Singleton.

Note. this man is evidently an impostor - his character is very bad - his reputation as a confirmed liar is not excelled in the western region - he is [illegible word].

W. G Singleton

#### NOTES:

James H. Bennett, Delegate-elect of the Virginia legislature, was one of what Singleton called the "Lewis Speculating Gentry," who tricked many illiterate men into putting their marks on false pension claims then collected most of the money.

On 22 Aug 1854 Abraham Hess of Upshur County assigned power of Attorney to examine the papers in the file of his father, Hezekiah Hess, to obtain whatever pension may have been due for his father's alleged services. On 27 April 1860 Abraham Hess, 62, again applied for the pension of his father, who died on 4 Oct 1848 leaving no widow but the following other children: Charity, wife of Thomas Hacher of Lewis County; Mary, wife of Thomas Parsons of Jackson County VA; Matilda Stanley of Jackson County; Melissa Hess of Jackson County; Nancy, wife of Isaac Williams who went West 20 years before.