

[Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters](#)

Pension Application of Elias Hughes S8747

VA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 16 Mar 2015.

The State of Ohio, Licking County SS.

At a Special Court of Common pleas held at Newark within and for the County of Licking and State of Ohio on the 23rd day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty two Personally appeared in open Court Ellis Hughes aged as near as he can recollect about seventy five years, was born on the south branch of Potomac in Hardy County [formed in 1786 from Hampshire County] Virginia now resides in Utica in the County of Licking State of Ohio; doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Provision made by the Act of Congress passed on the seventh day of June in the year 1832; States he entered the service of the United States at the first breaking out of the Revolutionary war was commissioned under Col. Benjamin Wilson as a Captain of the Spys at the commencement of the War; that he served in such capacity under Col Wilson for about two years when Colonel William Louthier (or Lowder) [sic: William Lowther, rejected claim VAS32] took the command; that he was under the same commission under Colonel Louthier. he states that he belonged to the Virginia State Troops that his services was altogether required & performed on the frontiers on the western part of Virginia – That he served under Col Louthier for something over one year – when Louthier left the service; is under the impression that he resigned (but cannot say positively) Deponent states that when Louthier left the service Col. George Jackson took the command, under whom he served until the close of the War – he states however that owing to some new arrangement (when Jackson took the command) in the disposition of the Indian spies he Deponent did not hold his commission, that according to the then regulation, the spies were separated (their services not being required in companies as previously) & were required to perform their duties two together & had their boundaries pointed out to march over & were to meet at certain points and report their observations and when necessary to carry information of any appearance of the enemy to the nearest stations. Has no documentary evidence. He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a Pension or annuity except the present and he declares that his name is not on the Pension Roll of any agency in any State. Ellis hisXmark Hughes

The State of Ohio Licking County SS.

Personally appeared before me the undersigned a Justice of the within and for the County aforesaid Elias Hughes who being duly sworn deposeth and saith that by reason of old age and consequent loss of memory he cannot minutely enter into a detail of his services in the Revolutionary War. Deponent states however without fear of contradiction that he served as a ranger and spy during the whole of the Revolutionary War from the year 1775 up to the year of 1783 and also prior and subsequently thereto – that his first employment against the Indians was at the Battle of Point pleasant on the Kenhawa in the year 1774 [sic: Kanawha River, 10 Oct 1774] that his last services were performed in the year of Wayne Treaty with the Indians in the year 1795 (as he thinks) [Gen. Anthony Wayne, Treaty of Greenville, 3 Aug 1795] in the neighborhood of Buchannon [sic: Buckhannon in present Upshur County WV] against a party of twenty two Indians by pursuing them and giving the alarm to the settlement – that said Indians succeeded in getting of with Mrs. Bozarth (wife of John Bozarth) & two of the children as prisoners who were delivered up to General Wayne after the Treaty [see endnote] —

Deponent states that after the declaration of war in 1776 he volunteered in the service of the Virginia State Troops (he thinks under one Captain James Booth [killed 16 Jun 1778] under whom to the best of his recollection he continued to serve up to the year (in the Spring [late Apr] of 1778 when his father Thomas Hughes was killed by the Indians on Hackers Creek Virginia Deponent states that about that time one Stephen Ratcliff (or Ratliff) [Stephen Ratliff] who held a commission as Captain (under Col. or Major Louthier) left the service and went back on to the South Branch of the Potomac Deponent

states that he was then Commissioned by Col Benjamin Wilson as a Captain to Supply the vacancy occasioned by reason of the said Ratcliff leaving the service Deponent states he well recollects that his Commission was printed but by whom it was signed he cannot say but is under the impression that it was signed by the Governor of Virginia. Deponent states as he has before stated in his original declaration that he served not less than three years as Captain of the Rangers or Spys that he may perhaps be mistaken (from the great length of time which has elapsed and from loss of memory which he is sensible has failed him very materially) in the order and disposition of arranging Col Benjamin Wilson & Col William Louthier as officers of the Revolution at the time he was so engaged and serving under them as aforesaid he is however satisfied that they were the two principal leaders in the commencement of the Revolution in West Augusta County Virginia – and whether they did or did not at that time hold commissions under the Government as Col or Majors he cannot say positively (they have at least subsequently acquired their titles) [see endnote] he is satisfied however that they either assumed or had in fact such authority delegated to them by the Government that they took upon themselves the organization and arrangement & disposition of the troops in that section of Country and of paying off the soldiers recommending the appointment of officers &c and that he did in fact hold a commission & served as a Captain in the revolution for not less than three years as before stated (Deponent states on having his memory refreshed that he is mistaken in saying (as stated in his original declaration) that he was Commissioned as Captain at the commencement of the war that it was not until the spring of 1778 (as he thinks)

Deponent states that from his youth upwards he had always a peculiar fondness for his gun and that his principal occupation was that of hunting from the time he was able to carry a gun up to the time of the revolution. that a number of years before the time of the Revolution (he does not recollect the year) he removed with his father in the neighborhood of Clarksburgh [sic: Clarksburg] Virginia together with several other families towit John Hacker [VAS1749] Wm. Hacker Sam'l. Pringle [Samuel Pringle] Wm. Ratcliff, John Cutright [W6626] & John Hacker [VAS1749] with their families that at the breaking out of the war, his services being required he of choice volunteered his services as he has before stated – that his name is mentioned in the Border Warfare a work published by Alex'r. Withers at Clarksburgh 1831 and in which a part of his services is detailed (though not generally or particularly) [see endnote] Deponent states that his services may be computed as follows Viz as a private from the year 1775 up to the year 1778 – as a Captain from 1778 up to the year 1781 – and from the year 1781 up to the year 1783 as a private. Deponent states he has sent on to Virginia in order to procure the Testimony of Witnesses who served with him and by whom he expected to be able to prove his services both as a private and as Captain in the services but in consequence of the death of Alexander West [W6450] and the absence of David Sleeth [David W. Sleeth, S6111] his most important witnesses he has not been able to establish his services as satisfactorily as he expected to be able to do. Deponent states positively from his own knowledge that he has actually served as above stated, that he did serve faithfully during the whole of the Revolutionary War without any intermission and that he also served after the peace of 1783 up to the year of 1795. Deponent states that he is unable to say whether he will be able to procure any further testimony in regard to his services than that which is attached to his original Declaration to wit the Testimony of Wm. Powers Esqr [William Powers S18164] and Jesse Louthier [Jesse Lowther] – that he does not know at this time of any person living within his knowledge (except David Sleeth) whose testimony will be material Deponent states that for three years past he has been entirely blind and from his limited means proposes to submit to the Department his original and amended declaration with the Testimony accompanying the same with a view that the same may be acted upon giving to the department a discretionary power to grant him a pension as Captain or Private as the evidence in the case may in their discretion seem to justify

Elias hisXmark Hughes

Sworn & subscribed this 5th day of December AD 1832 before me M M Caffee Justice of the Peace

State of Virginia to wit

Be it known that on this 8th day of September A.D. 1834 Before me John Mitchel one of the Justices of the Peace within and for Lewis County in the said state personally appeared William Powers Esquire a resident of said Lewis County who being duly sworn deposed and saith that he is 69 years of age – that he was first acquainted with Elias Hughes about 60 ago in West Augusta County in the year 1774 at the building of Nutters Fort near where the Town of Clarksburgh now is said Hughes was there assisting in the building of the Fort. Deponent thinks that Hughes was then seventeen years of age and resided with his father at a place now called westfield in Lewis County Virginia – that from that time forward up to the year 1796 Deponent was more or less acquainted with Hughes – and for a great portion of that period particularly acquainted with him and participated with him in the scenes of warfare then going forward between the whites & Indians on the western frontier of Virginia Deponent states that with regard to the services of Hughes rendered from the commencement of the revolution in 1776 up to the year 1783 he cannot state from his own personal knowledge Deponent states that he & Hughes did not act against the Indians in the same Companies that Hughes duties were performed over the section of Country now comprising the Counties of Harrison, Lewis, Wood and Tyler and that Deponents services were performed over the section of Country now comprising the lower part of Harrison & upper part of Tyler Counties adjoining to Monongalia County deponent states that while they were so engaged as Rangers and Spies that he frequently saw Hughes when not on duty that from conversation with Hughes on those occasions & from general report during the times of those scenes of warfare and from the conversation with numerous per[page torn] the more immediate companions of Hugh[es] (who are now nearly or quite all deceased) he is induced to believe that Hughes was (if not all the time) engaged in the service as a Ranger and Spy from some time in the year 1778 up to the year 1783. Deponent states that he was present at one time in the spring [April] of 1781 when Col Louther with 16 others of whom Elias Hughes was of the number returned into Clarksburgh with five indian scalps a great quantity of plunder and two prisners which they had taken and resqued from the Indians. Depon[ent] states that he has examined the original Declaration made by Hughes in Licking County State of Ohio on the 23rd of August AD 1832 No. 4776 and that he is satisfied from the facts there detailed that he is the Identical Elias Hughes named therein that from information he believes said Hughes has been a resident of said Licking County for about thirty years. Deponent further states that after the peace between great Britain and the United States in 1783 the war with the Indians on the western frontier did not subside for a number of years that consequently a force was necessary to be kept up for their mutual defence against the depredations of the Indians. Deponent states that by this means him Deponent & said Hughes were thrown together on numerous occasions (from the year 1783 up to the year 1795) where he had an opportunity of forming a prety good estimation of the Character of Hughes as an Indian warrior that he believes that the Country in those days did not contain a more vigilant brave and efficient soldier that from all he has seen or heard of Elias Hughes he was when his services were needed to go on an expedition at all times ready at a moments warning. Deponent states that he has no knowledge whether Hughes did or did not hold a Commission as a Captain that their services were not performed any part together until after 1783



State of Virginia towit

Be it known that on this 10th day of September AD 1834 before me John Davis one of the Justices of the peace within and for the County of Harrison in said state personally came Jesse Louther of the County and State aforesaid who being duly sworn deposed and saith that he was sixty one years of age on the 21st July last agreeably to the Record of his age kept by his father, was born in Harrison County Virginia where he has ever since continued to reside (except about two year & a half, about the year 1792) Deponent states that he was acquainted with Elias Hughes from the time that he was capable of knowing any person that the most that he can relate respecting said Hughes as an Indian warrior is from

information derived from his father William Louther, and others, that during the time of the Revolution he was too young to participate in the scenes of warfare then going forward on the western frontiers of Virginia. Deponent states that he well recollects at one time that Elias Hughes was engaged with his father [one or two illegible words] Lowther (then a Major) in March 1781 with fifteen others pursuing a party of fourteen Indians who were then returning from Randolph County where they had been murdering and plundering a number of the inhabitants of said Randolph County – that his father and the men with him pursued said party of Indians from Arnolds Fort sometimes called Lowthers fort on to Indian Creek a branch of Hughes' river where they overtook and killed five of said Indians and returned with their scalps to said Fort having rescued two of the white prisiners one by the name of Daugherty [Daniel Dougherty] & a Mrs. [Alexander] Roney from the Indians (her son another of the prisoners) being killed accidentally in the attack on the Indians. Deponent recollects that the amount of plunder taken from the Indians at that time when shared to each man amounted to £14 - 17S - 5d that amongst the plunder taken were nine guns six silver half moons one whole moon one war club and spear a number of Tom Hawks & scalping knives silver arm bands ear rings & nose Jewells one cap containing 44 silver broaches – a number of (as he thinks) konaknick[?] pouches (of otter skins) – and paint bags – Deponent states that as far back as his recollection extends and from inform[page torn] derived from his father and others said Hughes was from the first amongst the foremost to go forth against the Indians when his services were required, has understood that he was a Captain of the spies but at what period he cannot state. Deponent states that from his personal knowledge of Hughes' services as an Indian warrior and from his general reputation as such he ranked amongst the foremost defenders of his Country. Deponent states that he has been at Hughes House in Ohio since he left Virginia and he is satisfied that he is the same identical Elias Hughes mentioned in his original declaration made in Licking County Ohio August 23, 1832 now here exhibited No. 4776 & further saith not. given under my hand this 10th day of September 1834
[signed] Jesse Lowther

The State of Ohio Licking County SS.

Before the subscriber a Justice of the peace of said County personally appeared Thomas W Wilson (one of the son's of the late Col. Benjamin Wilson of Harrison County Virginia) a resident of said Licking County who being duly sworn deposeth and saith that he hath been acquainted with Elias Hughes for about five years and is satisfied that he is the same Elias Hughes mentioned in his original Declaration made August 23rd 1832 No. 4776 and in his amended declaration made December 5th 1834 in order to procure a Pension under the act of the 7th June 1832. Deponent states that from his youth up he has frequently heard his father mention the name of Elias Hughes in the highest terms as an Indian Warrior – and that he distinctly recollects of his father telling him that he had given to said Hughes a Commission as Captain of the Spys to fill the place of a certain captain (name not recollectd) who had been discharged by his father from the service on account of his cowardice. Deponent states that the name of Elias (or more commonlly called Ellis Hughes) has been familier to him from the time he has been capable of recollecting any thing though he has never seen Hughes until since he deponent came to reside in Licking County that from the character uniformly given of him he has allways looked upon him as one of the bravest and most efficient Indian warriors in the time of the Revolution. Deponent further states that in hearing his father mention Hughes he has frequently heard him give him the title of Captain Hughes & further saith not.
[signed] T. W. Wilson

Sworn & subscribed this 5th day of February AD 1835

Newark, Ohio Feby 21, 1835

J L Edwards Esq Com[missione]r of Pensions

Dr Sir, From the numerous frauds recently practiced on the Government by Agents & others in regard to Pensions [see my appendix in the pension application of David W. Sleeth S6111] And inasmuch as I have been called upon to officiate as the Agent of Elias Hughes (whose papers are herewith sent) I have thought proper to refer you to the Hon Mr. Mitchel of the House from this District

and the Hon Mr. Ewing of the senate whose statements so far as my agency is concerned in this matter will I presume be satisfactory – And who can I presume also give a satisfactory statement in regard to the character & veracity of the witnesses (residing in this County) whose depositions accompany the papers. I have since the passage of the Pension law in 1818 been more or less engaged (with my Brother A D Caffee as a kind of Sub. Agent and Clerk) attending to the business of Pensioners within this County, and in my estimation I have seen none whose services better entitle them to a pension than does Mr. Hughes' nor have I seen any who stands in greater need of assistance from his Country he has been for some years entirely blind & solely dependant on his son for support who with a large family in addition to provide for has recently been reduced to the necessity of seeking for relief under the provisions of the Insolvent law – I have been acquainted with Elias Hughes for about eighteen years his character for truth stands as fair as any person's in the County I have frequently heard him recount over his services & I do not think I depart from the truth when I say that have heard hundreds speaking of his services & corroborating his statements from common report I have also heard numerous persons who have been more or less his companions during the scenes of warfare on the western frontiers of Virginia. Most of whom in speaking of him extall his services in the warmest and most feeling manner marking him for his peculiar sagacity vigilance prudence bravery and activity and ranking him amongst the foremost of his companions unfortunately for him his services have been performed over a section of Country where but little attention has been paid to the organization and arrangements of the forces necessary to be kept further than immergencies seemed to require in order the repel the depredations of the savages and to prevent them from making inroads upon the settlement &c. And where but few of the many encounters and hardships those old Poioneers have been compelled to undergo have been or ever will be correctly transmitted to posterity.

I arrived in Clarksburgh on Saturday evening last fall on the day the U. S. District Court closed its session had went into that section of the Country for the purpose of procuring the Testimony of some of Hughes Companions (if living) by whom I could be able to establish his services but unfortunately I was unable to procure the Testimony of his most material witnesses and to whom I was specially refered viz Alexander West & David Sleith, Mr West having deceased some weeks before I arrived there and Mr. Sleith not to be found [see endnote] – And I in fact (from the great excitement produced in the County from the numerous prosecutions which had been instituted in the District Court against agents &c on behalf of Pensioners) was almost detered from making exertions and did not consequently extend my Enquiries so far as I should otherwise have done. I have been delaying the papers much longer than I should have done in hopes of being able to obtain the Testimony of David Sleith to send on with the papers Sleith does know that Hughes served as a Captain but whether his testimony can be procured or not I am in doubt, I have heard that in consequence of the part he has taken in his official capacity as magistrate in relation to the pension bussiness he had left the Country which I presume is the case in consequence of his not having forwarded to me his Deposition

Please advise me on examination of the papers what will be the prospect. if further Testimony is required in order to Establish the Claim as Captain I will endeavour to procure it. I am myself fully convinced that he served faithfully as he states in his declaration & from his needy circumstances I do hope, that the evidence may be deemed sufficient. [One or two illegible words] the papers as speedy investigation as possible. Mr. Hughes is anxious to know the result. I am Sir, Respectfully your obt. Sr.

M. M. Caffee

[The file contains Hughes's pension certificate issued 3 Mar 1835 for \$80 per year for service as a private for at least two years. The 1840 federal census of Licking County also lists Elias Hughes, 86, as a pensioner. The following deposition was sent to the Commissioner of Pensions with a letter from a congressman (signature illegible) "in relation to the application of Capt Ellis Hughes for a pension." This may have been an effort to get the pension increased to an amount appropriate for a Captain.]
The State of Ohio Licking County SS.

Be it known that on the 5th day of February A.D. 1842 before me John Moore one of the Justices

of the Peace in and for the County aforesaid personally appeared Gen'l. Thomas W Wilson one of the sons of Col. Benjamin Wilson Senior Deceased late of Harrison County Virginia who being duly sworn states that he is now Thirty eight years of age, that up to the time he was about twenty two years of age he continued to reside with his father in said Harrison County Virginia Since which time he has resided in the County of Licking and State of Ohio. That during his residence with his said father he has heard him frequently relate over many incidents in relation to the border warfare on the Western part of Virginia from the commencement of the Revolutionary War up to the time of its close That he has often heard his father speak of Elias Hughes formerly of said Harrison County in the State of Virginia but now a resident of the County of Licking in the State of Ohio, That his father in representing said Hughes Character always spoke of him in the highest Terms as a brave and efficient Soldier and Spy and in whom he had the most implicit confidence and that from his peculiar sagacity and knowledge of the Indian Character, combined with his personal activity persavereance and bravery, he ranked him amongst the foremost of the Rangers and Spies of his day. Affiant states that he has often heard his father say that said Elias Hughes was appointed as Captain of the Rangers and Spies, that he was appointed in the place of one Ratcliff who was discharged as affiant understood on account of his cowardice. That it was necessary for the safety of the Country that said Ratcliff should be removed and that said Hughes should be appointed in his place. that said Ratcliff was a careless trifling cowardly dog and not to be depended upon. Affiant states that said Hughes received his appointment on Sunday morning thinks befoe daylight and started out immediately upon the Scout in pursuit of the Indians and thinks that it was upon the same trip that he returned with the Scalps of seven Indians.

Affiant states that his father in speaking of said Hughes usually gave him the title of Captain. But that within this affiants recollection in hearing said Hughes spoken of it has been in the name of Ellis Hughes or more commonly old Ellis Hughes except by his father Affiant states that he has heard many circumstances and anecdotes related of said Hughes by those of his acquaintance in relation to his encounters and exploits amongst the Indians in the time of the Revolution. And that from the Character given to him by all he was highly distinguished for his bravery and must have contributed much in the defence of the Country during the war of the Revolution and further affiant saith not

T. W. Wilson

[From [digitalcollections of the Library of Virginia](#). One document in the file is illegible.]

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia
Elias Hughes formerly a resident of Harrison County in the State of Virginia But now of the
County of Licking in the State of Ohio.

Having understood that your Honorable body have heretofore (by special act or on Petition) granted some compensation to individuals for services rendered by them as Soldiers in the Comp'y Commanded by Capt. James Booth about the Commencement of the Revolutionary War. Begs leave to represent that he entered the service in the Virginia State Troops as a Volunteer in this Company Commanded by Capt. James Booth about the commencement of the Revolution, under, whom he served until the time of Capt. Booths death in the spring [16 June] of 1778 for which services he has never received any compensation. Your Petitioner represents that he is now upwards of eighty years of age & from loss of memory is unable to state the particulars of his services. That when quite a youth he removed with his father & family into Harrison County (then west Augusta County) where he continued to reside until the commencement of the Revolution and was amongst the first to take up arms in defence of the rights of the state and of the United States – was in the Battle at Point Pleasant (prior to the Revolution) and subsequently served during the whole of the Revolutionary War. Your Petitioner states that he is poor and has been for a number of years entirely blind and that any assistance your Honorable Body may think proper to grant, will be gratefully accepted. He further represents that he is unadvised in regard to the manner his application should be presented in this behalf. But prays your Honorable body to take his case under consideration and upon satisfactory proof being produced that your Honorable body

will grant to your Petitioner such assistance as may seem just and right. and your Petitioner as in duty bound &c.
Elias hisXmark Hughes

The State of Ohio Licking County Ss

Before me Edward Connally a Justice of the peace of said County personally came Jonathan Hughes who being duly sworn deposeth and saith that he is forty two years of age and that he knows the said Elias Hughes whose name is subscribed to the foregoing document to be the Identical person he there represents himself to be & further saith not Jonathan Hughes
Sworn & subscribed this 5th day of November AD 1838 before me.

Virginia Lewis County toWit

This day David W Sleeth personally appeared before the subscriber a Justice of the Peace in aforesaid county & made that Elias Hughs sereved as a ranger in the Company of Rangers commanded by Capt James Booth thirteen months in the year 1777 or 1778 and that this affiant verily believes that the said Elias Hughs never did receive any pay for his said service this affiant is now upwards of seventy seven years old & served in the same company at the same the said Elias Hughs given under my hand this 19th day of December 1838
N B Barns J.P.

Virginia } toWit
Lewis County }

this day John Cutright personally appeared before Philip Reger a Justice of the Peace for Lewis county & made oath that he well recollects that Elias Hughs served as a spy or ranger under Capt. Boothe in the 1777 and 78 untill the death of Capt Booth in Spring or summer in the year 1778 & this affiant believes the term he served was 13 months – this affiant has some recollection that John Hacker decesed was a ranger under Booth at the same time & for the same period. but is not so clear in his recollections of the serve of John Hacker as part of Capt Booths men were stationed at nutters fort & part at Wests fort – but this affiants present impressions are that Hacker did serve although his recollections is not as clear & distinct as to him John hisXmark Cutright
Sworn to before the subscriber & signed this 2 day of March 1839

Jan'y 10th 1839 ref'd to Claims

NOTES:

For an account of the attack on the Bozarth family, as well as references to Hughes and others mentioned here, see A. S. Withers's *Chronicles of Border Warfare* first published in 1831.

The only evidence of a commission I could find for William Lowther was a recommendation as Captain in the Augusta County militia on 17 Sep 1777 and his taking the oath as Captain (again?) on 18 Aug 1778 (McAllister, J. T. *Virginia Militia in the Revolutionary War*). There are several references to Col. Benjamin Wilson, including a letter dated 23 Jan 1776 to Col. Peter Muhlenberg declining a lieutenantancy in the Continental Line, because it would be a reduction in rank. A Benjamin Wilson was also sworn as Captain in the Augusta County militia on 17 Mar 1778.

As noted in the 1835 letter by Caffee, David W. Sleeth may have been absent from Clarksburg because he was one of those indicted for fraud. Documents in Sleeth's pension application (S6111) state that he was fraudulently certifying that soldiers had served with him.