

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Pension Application of Joseph Parsons S8942

VA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 29 May 2015.

State of Virginia } SS

Lewis County }

On this first day of October 1833 Personally appeared in open Court, before James M Camp, David W Sleeth [pension application S6111], William McKinly and Samuel Z Jones [S18474], this court of Lewis County now siting, Joseph Parsons aged seventy eight years – a resident of Jackson County in the State of Virginia – who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benifit of the act of Congress passed June the 7th 1832

That he entered the service of the United States as an Indian spy, about the first of May 1777 under the command of Capt James Booth, Lieut Edward Freeman [elsewhere spelled Edmond Freeman] and Ensign Stephen Radcliff in the district of Country known then by the name of West Augusta in the State of Virginia now comprising the Counties of Harrison, Lewis, Randolph and Wood – that he remained under said Booths command untill he was killed by the Indians on Booths Creek, now in Harrison County, which event occured in the month of June 1778 [sic: 16 Jun 1777] – and in consequence of his Captains death he did not receive a written discharge although he remained in the service under the command of Lieut. Freeman some five or six months afterward, making out his term of eighteen months the time for which he had enlisted the company being somewhat informally disbanded — Affiant further states that during the above mentioned period he was occasionally stationed at Buckhannon [near present Buckhannon, in Upshur County WV], Wests [on Hackers Creek in Lewis County], Arnolds, and Nutters [on east bank of Elk Creek in present Clarksburg, Harrison County WV]. forts, to guard the families that were collected at those places, from the attacks of the savages – and occasionally employed in spying through the surrounding Country – watching the passes – and looking out for the skulking of the enemy — Affiant further states, that within a few days from the disbanding of Lieut. Freeman Company – which was in the fall of 1778 – the Indians being exceedingly troublesome he again entered the service as a Spy – by Volunteering – under the command of Capt Alexander Maxwell – other officers not recollected, for a term of three months – and was employed as before – principally in spying on the waters of Buckhannon – the Little Kenawa [sic: Little Kanawha] and West Fork rivers – that he [page torn] from Capt Maxwell a written discharge and returned home – Affiant further states sometime in the year 1789 [sic] if his memory serves him right he served a term of three months as a substitute in the room of a soldier – whose name is not recollected under the command of Capt Tremble [probably James Trimble] – who had been sent from near Staunton in Augusta County to defend the settlers on Buckhannon and the West Fork rivers – that he obtained from Capt Tremble a written discharge and again returned home – but the scattered settlements being so much anoyed by the Indians at this time he affiant again volunteered as a spy or Minute man under the Command of Capt George Jackson Jacob Brake Lieutenant and Timothy Dorman Ensign – this stipulation was, that the company were to be constantly in readiness and subject to the call of the Officers at a moments warning – affiant further states that he continued in said Jacksons Company for near two years occasionally stationed in some one of the above mentioned forts sometimes permitted to spend a short time at home – and frequently called out in pursuit of the marauding companies of Indians who were then making trouble inroads among the scattered inhabitants — affiant further states that while under the command of Capt Jackson he was in several skirmishes with the Indians in one of which two of the company – Jeremiah Curl and a Schoolcraft were both slightly wounded by Indian balls. at another time a fellow soldier and messmate by the name of John Cutright [pension application W6626] was severely wounded close by affiants side — and that he remained in the service untill after the destruction of the Buckhannon fort which happened he thinks some time in the year 1782 about which time the Indians stole affiants horse — affiant states that at this time the Country was overrun with savages and the settlers nearly all

removed with their effects to places thought to be more secure that he affiant lived nearly three years in the Valley now Randolph County and was in several scouts after the Indians during the remainder of the Indian War That when peace was made with the Indians, he removed with his family near to the Ohio River at which place affiant states he had the misfortune to get his house burned and all the effects that were in it – and amongst the rest all the discharges he had ever received. affiant further states that he was induced to travail to the place of his toil aided by his aged wife – being herself verry feeble and allmost blind – in order to procure if possible, some evidence of his services – which may account for his application to the Court of Lewis County, and refers to David W Sleeth Esq. [pension application S6111] – Mr Adam Flesher [S18403] and Mr Alexander West [W6450]

In Answer to the several interogatories propounded by the war department, affiant further states – that he was born in Queen Ann County State of Mariland [sic: Queen Annes County MD] in the year 1755 and removed to Virginia when he was seven or eight years old – either in Rockingham [formed from Augusta in 1778] or Augusta Counties – and that he removed to Buckhan [sic] now in Lewis County in the year 1776 – and was living there when he entered the service — that he never saw any record of his age – but recollected that his parents told him when he was born – that since the revolutionary war he had lived on the Ohio River in Wood County – he now lived in Jackson County — that he entered the service first by enlistment and afterward served both as a volunteer and substitute but did not recollect for whom he substituted – the soldier was a stranger from Augusta under the command of Capt Tremble — that he knew none of the regular officers, there being no continental or malitia regiments where he served – that he had received at least two discharges, one from Capt Maxwell the other from Capt Tremble – but they were destroyed, with the rest of his effects, by fire and that he could refer to many more persons, who he is informed is still living within the counties of Lewis and Harrison that could testify to his services as a soldier of the revolution but that neither his circumstances nor his bodily strength would permit — 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 to and subscribed the day and year afforesaid Joseph hisXmark Parsons
[David W. Sleeth certified that he and Parsons enlisted in Capt. Booth's company together for 18 months in the spring of 1777, and also served together the three-months tour in Tremble's company and several months in Jackson's company. Parts of Parsons service were also certified by Adam Flesher and Alexander West.]

[The following report is by US District Attorney Washington G. Singleton who investigated hundreds of pension applications in present West Virginia. For details see my appendix to the pension application of David W. Sleeth S6111. Singleton wrote on this report "Fraudulent."]

Joseph Parsons, Pensioner, receives \$80. p annum

Elias Parsons, Nephew of Joseph & son of Charles who was a brother of Joseph stated to the undersigned on the 27th December 1834, that his Father Charles was ten years older than his uncle Joseph – has often heard his Father in his life time say – his uncle was in Service as a soldier in the War of the Revolution for rather less than three months only – and then as a substitute in the place of one of Capt Trembles men – Capt Trimble had been sent to Buckhannon Fort in now Lewis County from Augusty County with a company of Militia for 3 mos. one of his men becoming dissatisfied with the Service gave his rifle gun to Joseph Parsons to serve the Balance of the tour. And that this was all the Service he ever done.

Capt. William Parson's aged 65 yrs. of Jackson County stated to the undersigned on the 28th Dec'r. 1834 that he was a nephew of Joseph Parsons, and that the only Service his uncle Joseph ever done was a Soldier in the War of the Revolution was a substitute for less than 3 mos. in the place of one of Capt Trimbles Soldiers – Trimble had been sent from augusty with a company of Militia drafted for 3 mos. to the relief of Buckhannon Fort in now Lewis County – that whilst Trimbles company was there his uncle Joseph substituted in the place of one of Trimbles Soldiers for the balance of the tour &

received a rifle gun – and that this all the Service he ever done — that they resided together at the same Fort Buckhannon for several years of the War of the Revolution. after the Fort Broke up (in 1782) they with others went to Beverley Randolph County & were forted there during the Balance of the War.

W. G. Singleton

Note. I have in my note Book for Lewis County – further evidence showing that this man Parsons is an imposter – but the evidence here is conclusive – I shall hereafter (on my return to Clarksburg where my Lewis notes are) report the additional evidence — Parsons is a man of Bad character and no one with whom I have met believes that he is entitled to a Pension – he is now in the State of Ohio —

W. G Singleton Jan'y 2, 1835 [see note below]

[From [Library of Virginia Legislative Petitions Digital Collection](#)/ Jackson County]

The Honorable the General Assembly of Virginia

Your petitioner begs leave to represent to your honorable body – that he was one of the soldiers belonging to Capt James Booths company of Indian spies – that he served from the time of his enlistment in May 1777 untill his Capt was killed by the Indians (in June 1778) near your petitioners side – that in consequence of his Capts death, you petitioner (nor any of the company never received one cent of pay, for all the perilous services – rendered in that eventful period

Your petitioner could enumerate many appalling scenes of Indian Massacres that he has witnessed and hair breadth escapes that he has made from their ruthless hands – but he wishes not to appeal to the sympathy of his Countrymen, but to the justice of his country – nor would he even now make that appeal – did not poverty and old age make it imperious – he had long since abandoned the idea of pay – he had, as he once fondly hoped, provided a competency for his declining years – but a series of accidents over which he had no control – had at the age of 78 years left him almost penniless – Understanding that provision had been made by law for some of his fellow soldiers to receive their pay, he asks that the same justice may be extended to him, and as in duty bound will ever pray

Joseph hisXmark Parsons

[The following is extremely faint.]

Personally appeared before me the subscriber an acting Justice of the peace for the County of Lewis, David W Sleeth of said county and made oath, that Joseph Parsons the Petitioner was a Soldier in Capt. Booth's company of Indian Spyes. that he [one or two undeciphered words] with said Parsons from the time of that enlistment untill Capt Booth was killed by the Indians which was thirteen months later in consequence of their capts death none of the Company drew any pay [Date and signature undeciphered.]

Dec'r. 17th 1833 ref'd to C[lai]ms/ 1834 Feb'y 5th Reasonable/ 6th Reported/ march 3rd Bill drawn

NOTES:

The pension application (W4166) of Phebe Cunningham, widow of Thomas Cunningham, includes the following transcription of a law passed by the Virginia Legislature on 13 Mar 1834: “Be it enacted by the General Assembly, That David W. Sleeth, sole surviving heir of John Sleeth deceased, who was a Sergeant in the company commanded by Captain James Booth, in an expedition against the Indians during the Revolutionary War, be allowed the sum of One hundred and thirty dollars, for thirteen months servises of his said father as Sergeant as aforesaid, and Joseph Parsons, John Tucker [S6274], James Brown [S6718], and Phebe Cunningham, widow of Thomas Cunningham deceased, shall be allowed the sum of One hundred and four dollars each, for their services as privates for the same time in said company; and the Auditor of Public Accounts is hereby authorized and required to issue a warrant on the treasury, in favor of the said Sleeth, Parsons, Tucker, Brown, and Cunningham, respectively, for the same to be paid to them or their representatives out of money therein not otherwise appropriatedThis act shall be in force from its passage”