

## Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of William Merithew W20251 Sarah Merithew f42Mass[Navy & RI]  
Transcribed and annotated by Will Graves 9/29/23

[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. The word 'illegible' or 'indecipherable' or 'undeciphered' appearing in brackets indicates that at the time I made the transcription, I was unable to decipher the word or phrase in question. 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 skills fail 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 material errors or omissions to my attention. Researchers should not rely solely on the transcripts but should review the originals for themselves. These transcripts are intended as an aid to research, not to be used in lieu thereof.]

[p 5]

I William Merithew of Foster in the County of Providence in the District of Rhode Island being now Sixty Two years old on solemn oath do declare and say that in the year 1779 as early as the month of October I enlisted as a sailor on board the Frigate *Providence*<sup>1</sup> a vessel of War then in the service of the United States commanded by Abraham Whipple<sup>2</sup> Esquire – then lying in Boston Harbor – soon after my enlistment – we sailed from Boston on a cruise off the West Indies, we cruise sometime in the West Indies took several prizes & arrived in Charleston, in South Carolina, in the Spring following according to the best of my recollection – Whilst lying in Charleston we were taken prisoners when the City surrendered to the British<sup>3</sup> – I made my escape & came home to Rhode Island sometime in July or August 1780 as near as I can remember it was ten months after my enlistment before I arrived home, I also served in the land Service in 1775 in Capt. Sloan's [Samuel Sloan's] Company & Col. Patterson's [John Patterson's] regiment in the Massachusetts line – and was in the Battle of Bunker Hill, – I also served in Col. Green's regiment of the Rhode Island about six months being the time for which I enlisted – but my discharge is now lost – I was in the land & naval Service more than 2 years – I declare that I am now in reduced circumstances & stand in need of the assistance of my Country for support according to the provisions of the late Act of Congress



[Certified on May 13, 1818 by David Howell District Judge of the Rhode Island District]

[p 8]

United States of America  
Rhode Island District

Providence, SC. District Court, Special Term, June 6<sup>th</sup> A.D. 1820

On this 6<sup>th</sup> day of June 1820, personally appeared in open Court, being a Court of Record, within and for said District William Merithew age 65 years, resident in the town of Foster in said District County who being 1<sup>st</sup> duly sworn according to law, doth on his oath declare, that he

<sup>1</sup> [https://threedecks.org/index.php?display\\_type=show\\_ship&id=2421](https://threedecks.org/index.php?display_type=show_ship&id=2421)

<sup>2</sup> <http://gaspee.org/AbrahamWhipple.html>

<sup>3</sup> May 12, 1780 Battle of Charleston <http://www.myrevolutionarywar.com/battles/800401-charleston/>  
& <https://allthingsliberty.com/2020/10/britains-last-throw-of-the-dice-begins-the-charlestown-campaign-of-1780/>

served in the Revolutionary War as follows:

That he served on board the Frigate Providence Commanded by Commodore Abraham Whipple more than 10 months

and that he made a previous declaration on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of May 1818, and that he has received a certificate for a pension, being No. 8705. And I do solemnly swear that I was a resident Citizen of the United States on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of March 1818 and that I have not since that time by gift, sale or in any manner whatever disposed of my property or any part thereof with intent thereby so to diminish it as to bring myself within the provision 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.

William Merithew, X his mark

A Schedule of Property and Income (necessary clothing and bedding excepted) of William Merithew

Viz. 1 hoe, 1 Scyth, 1 Rake, 5 old chairs, 1 Loom, 1 Chest of drawers, 1 kettle Shovel and tongs some knives & forks & Spoons, 1 Table, 1 Tin Kettle 1 Coffee Pott, 6 fowls, 6 plates, 1 axe

And this declarant saith that he is a basket Maker but is unable to do much labour in Consequence of the Rheumatism that he is involved in debt that he now justly owes more than forty dollars that he has a wife who can do but little work that he relies altogether on his pension, having lost the use of his right hand

William Merithew, X his mark

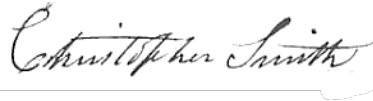
[p 27]

The Deposition of Christopher Smith<sup>4</sup> of Scituate in the District of Rhode Island who being engaged according to law says, that in the month of September 1779 he entered on board the Frigate *Providence* then lying in Boston Harbor & bound on a voyage; said Frigate was in the service of the United States & Commanded by Abraham Whipple Esquire. In the month of October following this deponent well recollects, that William Merithew now of Foster entered on board said Frigate in the capacity of Mariner = in the month of November said Frigate sailed on a cruise. After cruising several weeks she arrived at Charleston South Carolina where she lay during all the winter following – until 12 May 1780 when the City of Charleston was taken & the Frigate Providence together with all shipping in the harbor was surrendered to the British & there Crews made prisoners of War – The prisoners were put on board different prison ships – but this deponent does not know what became of said William. The prisoners in general were detained until June when they were sent to Philadelphia & it was not until August that this deponent arrived home. This deponent knows that said William was on board said Frigate during all her aforesaid voyage & at the time the Vessel was captured as aforesaid but does not know what became of him afterwards but has no doubt that he served on board said Frigate & was a prisoner of War more than Nine Months – said Merithew was a good sailor & always performed his duty = This deponent further testifies that he has known said William ever since, & verily believes now to be in indigent circumstances, Said William is a hard working man & has hitherto earned a scanty living by making baskets & by daily labour for others & he verily believes him deserving the provisions of the late Act of Congress

Christopher Smith

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<sup>4</sup> [Christopher Smith S39845](#)



[p 30]

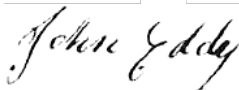
I John Eddy<sup>5</sup> of Foster in the County of Providence Now in the Sixty Second year of my age testify and Say that I Belonged to the Ship *Providence* Nine months or upwards part of the time in the year 1779 & eighty in the [undeciphered word] United States Service and William Merithew Now Residing in Foster in the County of Providence Was on board Said Ship and Did his Duty as a sailor on Board said Ship then under the Command of Commodore Abraham Whipple

Question Asked by William Merithew

do you Consider me to be poor and needy

Answer I consider you to be Poor and Needy and Never Heard any Person Say Nothing to the Contrary the Deponent further Saith not

John Eddy



Providence at Foster Made the 11<sup>th</sup> 1818

[p 32]

I Elijah Aldrich<sup>6</sup> of Foster, in the County of Providence in the State of Rhode Island and Rhode Island Plantation, Yeoman, being duly Sworn and engaged according to Law, on Solemn Oath Do depose and Testify That on or about the First of October, in the year 1779, I entered on Board the American Ship of War *Providence* then under the Command of Commodore Abraham Whipple in Boston Harbor and Served myself in the Marine Department then under the Command of Captain William Jones, William Waterman then Serving as Lieutenant of Marines in the same Company. – And at that Time I perfectly remember that William Merithew now residing in said Foster Served as a Mariner on Board of the Same Ship, and Sailed with us in the Last Voyage of Said Ship from Boston for Charleston about the twenty third Day of November in that year and arrived at Charleston a few days before Christmas in the next Month. – The Ship was taken by the British in Charleston Harbor May 12, 1780 the Day on which the American Army and Navy under the command of General Lincoln [Benjamin Lincoln], Surrendered to the British General Clinton [Henry Clinton]. I arrived home myself about the Middle of July next following. I have ever since been acquainted with said Merithew and know his circumstances to be poor.



[Certified March 5, 1819]

[p 9: On September 17, 1838 in Providence County, Sarah Merithew of Scituate in said County, aged 84, made application for a widow's pension under the 1838 act stating that she is the widow

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<sup>5</sup> [John Eddy W14105](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Elisha Aldrich \(Aldrick\) W20811](#)

of William Merithew, late a pensioner of the United States for his service in the Navy during the revolution on the Frigate *Providence* commanded by Commodore Abraham Whipple; that she married William Merithew on or about October 15, 1787 but she cannot remember the exact date; that her husband died on or about May 1, 1825 and that she remains a widow.

*Sarah Merithew* ]

[p 11: On September 17, 1838 in Scituate, Providence County, Esther Thornton, 47 gave testimony that Sarah Merithew is her mother; that affiant's father died in May 1825; that her mother remains a widow; that she is the second child of her parents; that her oldest sister would have been 49 last March had she lived; and that her mother now lives with her family and has since the death of her father.

*Esther Thornton* ]

[p 24: Certificate that Sarah Merethew [sic] is one of the daughters and heirs at law of William Wood, late of Gloucester County.]

[Veteran was pension at the rate of \$8 per month commencing May 13, 1818, for service for one year as a mariner on board the *Providence* in the U.S. Navy. His widow was pensioned in a like amount.]