

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of John Griffin W23142 Susannah Griffin VA
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris.

[Punctuation partly corrected.]

State of Illinois }
Clark county }

On the seventh day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty personally appeared before the county commissioners court in and for the county of Clark and state of Illinois (and court being a court of Record) Susannah Griffin a Resident of the county of Clark and state of Illinois, aged ninety one years, who, being first duly sworn according to law, doth on her oath, make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the act of Congress, passed July 4th 1836.

That she is the widow of John Griffin who was a private, (and as well as she now recollects served in the capacity of first sergeant) in the war of the Revolution in the company commanded by Captain Thomas Holt, (at the time of his being mustered into service) of the fourteenth (14th) Regiment of the state [sic: Continental] troops of Virginia, commanded by Colonel Howel Lewis [sic: Charles Lewis] (at that time, as well as she now recollects.) That she cannot state with certainty whether the said John Griffin, her husband, was enlisted draughted or volunteered, but she recollects distinctly, that he entered the service of the United States, under the officers aforesaid, on or about the month of September in the year 1775 [see endnote], in the county of Bedford and state of Virginia, where he then resided.

That after the said John Griffin entered the service as aforesaid, the troops were marched from Albemarle court-House, in the state of Virginia some where Northward, (but the name of the place she does not now recollect) to a place of General Rendezvous, where the troops were innoculated with the small-pox.

That she cannot now recollect nor give a minute history of the country through which the troops were marched. That she recollects distinctly that the said John Griffin, was in the battles at Brandywine [11 Sep 1777], in the battle at Monmouth [28 Jun 1778], in the battle at Germantown [4 Oct 1777] and at the siege of Charleston [spring 1780], by the British, And that the said John Griffin was taken a prisoner at the siege of Charleston by the British [12 May 1780], and put on board of a British prison Ship, where he laid chained in Dungeon for about nine months, and was then released from the Dungeon and kept as prisoner with the British a long time afterwards, and finally deserted the British at or near some American port (not now recollected) and returned home to Bedford county Virginia, about the month of September in the year 1782.

That from the fact of the said John Griffin having been taken prisoner and deserted as aforesaid, he never received any regular discharge from the service of the United States.

That the said John Griffin never received any compensation from the Untied States, or State of Virginia, for his services, as aforesaid, nor has he ever drawn a pension, under any of the acts of Congress for that purpose, nor was he ever placed on the pension roll, or list of the United States, or any of the states.

She further declares, that she was married to the said John Griffin on the twenty fifth day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy one (1771.) [see endnote] That her husband, the aforesaid John Griffin, died on or about the tenth day of June in the year 1810. And that she has remained a widow ever since that period as will more fully appear by reference to the proof hereto annexed.

Susannah herXmark Griffin

The court then propounded the following interrogatories to the said Susannah Griffin to which she answered as follows, to wit,
Interrogatory first by the court.

Where, and in what year were you born?" Answer

I was born in the year 1749 in the state of Virginia, & then in the county of Gouchland [sic: Goochland], now Fluvanna county.

2nd Interrogatory. Have you any record of your age? if so where is it?

Answer. I am not in possession of any record of my age, but I think, there was a record kept by my brother Abraham Sea, in the state of Virginia, and it is perhaps now in the possession of Abraham Sea junior, his son, in Amherst county Virginia.

3rd. Where were you living when your husband John Griffin was called into service; where have you Lived since the Revolutionary war; and where do you now live?

Answer. We lived in Bedford county, Virginia, at the time he was called into service; and have lived since the Revolutionary war in Albemarle county Virginia, next in Mercer county Kentucky, next in Franklin county Kentucky, then I removed from Kentucky, to the county of Clark and state of Illinois, where I now reside?

Interrogatory 4th.

How was your husband John Griffin called into service, was he draughted, or did he volunteer, or was he a substitute; and if a substitute, for whom?

Answer, I think upon mature reflection, that he enlisted under Capt. Thomas Holt, of the 14th Virginia Regiment.

Interrogatory 5th.

State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops where your husband served, such continental and militia regiments as you can recollect; and the general circumstances of the service?

Answer. I can recollect nothing more about the names of the officers, of the troops, than what I heard him say, which was Capt. Thomas Holt and Col. Howel Lewis of the 14th Virginia Regiment and that the troops rendezvoused at Albemarle court-House, in Virginia, and then marched Northward, some where, where the troops were inoculated with the small-pox and that he served and was gone from home near seven years, lacking three days, and that he was in the battle of Brandywine, Monmouth, Germantown & at the siege of Charleston where he was taken prisoner by the British.

Interrogatory 6th

Did your husband John Griffin ever receive a discharge from the service, and if so, by whom was it given; and what has become of it?

He never received any discharge, from the fact I suppose, that he was taken prisoner at Charleston By the British, from whom he deserted & came home in the year 1782.

State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighbourhood and who can testify as to your character for veracity, and their belief of the services of your husband as a soldier of the Revolution.

I will state the names of Willis Dougherty, Green B. Redman, Austin Griffin & George Hanson.

State of Illinois } Sct

Clark county } Be it remembered that on this third day of March in the year 1841 personally appeared before me James McKay the undersigned a Justice of the Peace in and for the county of Clark and state of Illinois, Austin Griffin a resident of the said county of Clark, who being by me duly sworn upon his solemn oath, says That he is personally and well acquainted with Susannah Griffin who is named in and made the hereto attached declaration as the wife and widow of the the said John Griffin named therein, and that he knows the said Susannah Griffin to be the widow of the said John Griffin, who served in the Revolutionary war, in the state troops from Virginia. That the said John Griffin and Susannah Griffin were married in the state of Virginia Albemarle county, some time about the year 1771 as well as this Deponant, can now recollect, and is informed from the recollection of time. That the said John Griffin died some time in the month of September in the year 1810 as well as I am now informed. And that the said John Griffin and Susannah Griffin lived together as husband & wife,

from the time of their marriage up to the time of his death as aforesaid, that they had born in wedlock John Griffin, Nancy Griffin who intermarried with Winston Ryan in Anderson county Kentucky, Lucy Griffin, who is intermarried with Alexander Wright now in the state of Missouri Case-Lerido county [sic: probably Cape Girardeau County]; Robert Griffin, now of this county, James Griffin of the state of Missouri, & Polly Griffin now Polly Driskill now of Anderson county, Kentucky, all children of their body who were all born in the state of Virginia. That the said Susannah Griffin now resides in the county of Clark Illinois, and formerly in Mercer county, Kentucky, and previous thereto in Albemarle county, Virginia

This Deponent further says, that he is a connexion of the said John Griffin and Susannah Griffin, and from the best of his knowledge and beleif, there never was kept any family record of their marriage of the births of their children, and have frequently heard the said Susannah Griffin say so, where she resided. And from the best information by enquiry made there is no record evidence that can be found of the marriage of the said John and Susannah Griffin in the county of Albemarle in the state of Virginia the marriage having taken place previous the the Revolutionary war.

This deponent further says, that the said Susannah Griffin has remained the widow of the said John Griffin ever since his death as aforesaid, and now is living as his widow unmarried to any other person in the said county of Clark, and that this deponent does not know or beleive, that the said John Griffin ever drew a Pension on account of his services in the Revolutionary war, nor was he placed on any Pension Roll or agency, as far as he is informed and beleives. This Deponent beleives that the said Susannah Griffin is of the age of ninety one years, as she states in her Declaration above hereto.

Subscribed & sworn to before me this 3rd day of March 1841 [signed] Austin Griffin

State of Illinois } Sect.

Clark county “ The Deposition of Robert Griffin, of the county of Clark aforesaid, taken before me Willis Dougherty, one of the justices of the Peace in and for said county, on this 12th day of May in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and forty one. The said Robert Griffin being by me duly sworn according to law, doth depose and say as follows, to wit.

That he is fifty one years of age on the 22nd day of February last past, That he is a son of John Griffin and Susannah Griffin, & was born in Franklin county in the state of Virginia [formed from Bedford and Henry counties in 1786], that he has frequently and repeatedly heard his father, the said John Griffin, relate his service in the revolutionary war, and that he first enlisted as well as now recollected, in Albemarle county Virginia in the year 1775 or 1776 and that his enlistment was under Capt. Thos. Holt of one of the Virginia Regiments (The number of the Regiment he disremembers, as also the commander of the Regiment) and that this deponent frequently heard his father the said John Griffin relate the Battles that he had been in, some of which he distinctly yet recollects, to wit, the Battle at Brandywine, the Battle at Monmouth, Germantown, Long Island [27 Aug 1776] (which he said was the hardest and toughest of any) and was lastly in the siege of Charleston in South Carolina, where he was taken prisoner by the British, and put on board of a British prison Ship, and was there confined in Dungeon about nine months, that he never seen land. That he was confined in Irons while prisoner, and that his legs and ankles were made extremely sore by the Irons, which never finally healed up while he lived. That this deponent seen the marks and sores caused by the Irons on his father legs while a prisoner. That one William Westbrooks was taken a prisoner by the British at the same time and was confined in the Dungeon in Irons upon the same vessel with the said John Griffin, and that this Deponent has frequently heard the said Westbrooks and his father, John Griffin, relate over together the same story about their being taken prisoners at the Siege of Charleston, and of their sufferings while such prisoners, and that they the said John Griffin and Westbrooks both made their escape from the British some where at or near Quebec, in Canada, while the vessel lay near the shore one night, and while they had the Irons taken off their legs, on account of the extreme soreness and danger of becoming mortal. And that they returned home together in Albemarle county Virginia about the year 1782. That he has repeatedly heard the said John Griffin & Westbrooks when speaking of their services and sufferings in the war say that they had

been messmates together while in the service. That the said Westbrooks has been dead a number of years, and that he died in Virginia. That this deponent heard the said John Griffin say at often times, that he seen two horses shot dead from under General Washington during battles.

This deponent further states, that the said John Griffin died in Virginia about thirty years ago, and that he never drew a pension, nor was place on any Pension list in the United States.

This Deponent further states, that the said Susannah Griffin is the real identical widow of the said John Griffin, and that she has never intermarried with any other person since the death of the said John Griffin, and that she is now living unmarried (to any other person) as such widow, in the county of Clark and state of Illinois, and that she never has received any Pension or compensation on account of the Revolutionary services of her husband the said John Griffin from the United States.

The Deponent further states, that the said John Griffin and Susannah Griffin lived together as man and wife from the time of their marriage up to the time of the death of the said John Griffin, as above herein stated excepting the time he served in the war which was about seven years. that they the said John & Susannah had born in wedlock eight children, and that John Griffin Jr. was the oldest child, who was born in the year 1783 in Albemarle County, Virginia, as Deponent has heard his father and mother & the said John Griffin Jr. say, and that said John Griffin Jr. died in the state of Kentucky two years ago last fall, and was of the age of about fifty five years at the time of his death. And that said John Griffin and Susannah Griffin had been married as he always were informed several years before the birth of the said John Griffin Jr. their oldest child. That there is six other children now living besides this Deponent and the said John Griffin Jr. Deceased, who were born in Wedlock with the said John Griffin and Susannah Griffin, the youngest of which is about thirty six or seven years of age, some of which children are now living in Kentucky, Missouri, and Illinois.

This Deponent further states, that he has no knowledge of any family record of the marriage of the said John & Susannah Griffin ever being kept nor of any family record of the births of their children as aforesaid. That the following are the names and ages of the said other six children of the said John & Susannah Griffin, to wit, Nancy, now Nancy Ryan, aged about 56 years, now of Anderson Co. Kentucky. Lucy, now Lucy Wright, aged about 54 years, now of Missouri. Polly, now Polly Driskill aged about 50 years now of Kentucky. James Griffin, aged about 48 years, now of Missouri. Austin Griffin, aged about thirty six or thirty seven years now of the county of Clark and state of Illinois. This Deponent further states, that the said Susannah Griffin is the same identical person and widow of the said John Griffin, Deceased, whose Declaration for a Pension as such widow is now on file with suspended cases in the War Department at Washington city, as per Letter of the Hon. J. L. Edwards Com'r. of Pensions of date April 24th 1841 and which Declaration was made by the said Susannah Griffin before the county commissioners court, in and for the county of Clark and state of Illinois, on or about the 7th day of September 1840.

[signed] Rob't. Griffin

NOTES:

The 14th Virginia Continental Regiment was not authorized until October 1776.

The service described above by the widow of John Griffin is virtually identical to that claimed in 1821 by John Griffin in his pension application W3677.

The file contains a copy of a bond signed in Fluvanna County on 23 April 1777 by John Griffin and Austin Seay (pension application W19341) for the marriage of Griffin to Suckey Seay.

On 18 Aug 1841 Leonard Sea (as he signed), about 65, of Anderson County KY, stated that he lived with Susannah Griffin in 1782 when John Griffin returned from the Revolutionary War with William Westbrook, and that they then had one child about two or three years old. He further stated that afterward they lived in Fluvanna County for six or seven years during which time they had at least two other children, Nancy P. and Lucy Griffin, then moved to Bedford County where they had Robert, Polly, James, and Austin Griffin. He also stated that Col. George Thompson (pension application S31418), who died in Mercer County several years before, had told him that he had been at the wedding of John and Susannah Griffin. He further stated, "that he has frequently heard the said John Griffin state, that him and

the said Westbrook were taken prisoners at the siege of Charleston and put on board of a British prison Ship, and were confined on the Ship until they deserted & returned home in the year 1782, and that they had been prisoners some nine or eighteen months, as well as he now recollects, that they spoke of of their immense sufferings while prisoners and of their hardships during the war, of their being in the Battles at Brandywine, with Washington at taking the Hessians [Battle of Trenton, 26 Dec 1776] at the Battles at Guilford court-House [sic: 15 Mar 1781] & at Monmouth and finally at the siege of Charleston. This affiant further says that the said John Griffin returned home to see his wife the said Susannah Griffin once or twice at least, on a furlough, during his service in the Revolutionary war, from what he seen and heard at the time.”