

[Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters](#)

Pension Application of William Smith W6094

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

[Punctuation partly corrected.]

The following declaration made by William Smith claiming the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June the 7<sup>th</sup> 1832 providing for the relief of certain Officers and Soldiers, including Indian Spies, who were employed on our Frontiers in the Revolutionary Service; I have endeavoured to detail conformably to the liberal spirit of said Act, though not perhaps according to any prescriptive regulation, as the business made of exhibiting such claims before the Department for this particular class of cases — State of Virginia and Alleghany County. Towit.

On this 17th Day of December 1832, I attended at the House of the above named Claimant William Smith, who no doubt from his apparent bodily decrepitude is unable to attend at the Court House of said County, without much difficulty and hazard, such as would cause him to relinquish his claim to a Pension, rather than incur the danger of attending; in order to comply with the requisition of said Law, providing for the relief of Soldiers, including Indian Spies of the Revolution. The said Smith is now Resident in the said County of Alleghany (V.A.) and he states, that he was born in Richmond County (VA) in the year 1740, in the month of March, making his age, the ensuing March, to be Eighty nine years [sic].

The said William Smith being first duly sworn according to Law, before, and by me one of the Commonwealths Justices of the peace for the County of Alleghany, in the State aforesaid, doth on his Oath make the following Declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress, passed June 7th 1832, that he was employed as an Indian Spy in the western part of Virginia preferring this employment to Militia service during the time of the Revolutionary War, Commencing his service in the year 1774. that he had moved from his native County, into that part of Virginia, now called Greenbrier County, when he engaged in the arduous duties, and submitted to the many privations incident to, and necessarily attendant on the life of a Spy. That he had frequently to explore the Trackless Wilderness – the Alleghany Mountains [Allegheny Mountains] and the waters issuing therefrom westward, as far as the Ohio in order to bring intelligence to the frontier Settlements, and to a fortified place on the Ohio, of Indian signs, as the dreadful approach of the Savage face. That at a place called Point Pleasant, (the Junction of the Kanahaway [sic: Kanawha] and Ohio Rivers) [sic: Point Pleasant at the junction of Kanawha and Ohio rivers] he acted under the orders of Col. Andrew Lewis in the year 1774 in the Character of a spy, at the time a Battle with the Indians was fought at the Point before named [10 Oct 1774], but from circumstances growing out of the duties of his employment, he never was in a Battle; The said applicant further states, that he was first employed by Col. [William] Fleming and served many Towers of Duty in regular succession during the Revolution. He obtained Certificates of Capt. John Anderson, then residing in Greenbrier County (once Botetourt County) for many towers in the service as a spy, which exonerated him from Militia Drafts, or serving in the Militia. Sampson Mathews (in after time Col. Mathews), living then in Augusta County (Staunton), was his paymaster, acting as such, he presumes by appointment for the back Country. In his Book the applicant judges his name is Registered, and the nature and time of his various Towers noted, to Justify the wages he received from his Country. The said Applicant states, that he has not retained any certificate of service. The said applicant states that he was employed as a Spy, from the Commencement to the end of the Revolutionary War.

We know not, that Indian Spies was ever embraced in any former Law, providing for Officers and Soldiers &c &c of the Revolutionary War: the above Applicant states however, that his name is not on the Pension roll of the agency of any state, and that he relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present.

Sworn to and subscribed the day & year aforesaid

William hisXmark Smith

Having taken the within Declaration from the mouth of William Smith, acting as one of the Commonwealth Justices of the peace for the County of Alleghany (V.A); It cannot be improper for me to add the following certificate: That I have known the within applicant, for more than forty years, and have often heard him relate the Daingers he has escaped, in his various excursions through the wilderness in the haunts of the Indians. I have heard him speak of various adventures corresponding with his statements within, and the character for veracity, independant of circumstances in his favour, entitle to credit in his Declaration. I have heard him spoken of as a remarkable man amongst his comrades in early life, as being strong and active, and of unexcelled Courage; That the said Smith was an Inhabitant of the Daingerous Frontier, in the time of our Revolutionary Struggle can not be questions, where he could not probably be Idle or unimployed, possessing his ardent Sperit. I have observed him my self as a man of a peculiar texture of mind, of great firmness and independancy in his Sentiments, who would not swerve from the truth to avoid an Injury, or to receive a benefit, he is a Man destitute of Learning, or I should have Judged him capable of Military advancement. hence the probable cause of his prefering the life of a spy to that of being commanded by inferior officers, many of whom fell short of him in native good sense, boldness in action, or of his Commanding Sperit. His mind appears to be good, and traces his old stories with his former accuracy.

If his case therefore is embraced in the Law of Congress providing for Soldiers &c. of the Revolution, there is five applicants perhaps, to whom the favour would be more salutary, if spedily obtained. He has lived to rais a numerous family, and parted with all, except a single daughter, who has now become his only constant assistant and inmate. Allthough some of my remarks can not influence the Department, when the Law is the teste for the claim of the applicant, yet while this manifests some solicitude, on my part, for the success of the claimant, and shew my imperfect knowledge of the approved mode of procedure, in this particular class of cases. I would claim for my self the apology of long acquaintance for the apparent solicitude in behalf of a worthy and one useful man, hoping thereby the favour might be hastened, his enjoyment must be short.

Given under my hand this 17th Day of November 1832.

Jesse Davis

State of Virginia

Alleghany County to wit.

This day personally appeared before me the undersigned a Justice of the Peace for s'd county, William Smith, who being duly sworn doth on his oath make the following amendment to his declaration made 17th Nov'r. 1832 in order to obtain a pension.

That by reason of old age and consequent loss of memory he is unable to give an account of the particulars of his service with any degree of precision. He will state them however according to the best of his recollection. He had served for some time previous to the war of the revolution in the character of an Indian Spy, the particulars of which service it is now unnecessary to state. That he entered the service as a volunteer in the year 1775 under the command of Capt [Mathew] Arbuckle who was at that time stationed at Keeny Fort [Keeney Fort, also called Fort Arbuckle] on Muddy Creek now in Greenbrier Count. Early in the month of April 1775 he was sent out with two other persons in the character of Indian Spies – his two companions were stationed near the road leading across Gauley Mountain [in present Fayette County WV], and he was directed to range the country lying between the waters of Gauley & New Rivers. He was out on this employment untill November in the same year embracing a period of not less than seven months. That Col Flemming was commander. That in 1776 he was engaged in the same employment in the same tract of country and the said declarant states that he was employed particularly in carrying lead from Chissels Mines on New River [sic: mines at Fort Chiswell in present Wythe County VA] to Capt Stewarts [probably John Stuart's fort at present Ft Spring], in Greenbrier to be distributed to diferent companies. This was an article in great demand & obtained with much hazard and difficulty. Time taken in this employ cannot be stated with precision. In 1777 Col [George] Skillern arrived at the fort with 300

[first digit unclear] men from Augusta and he was ordered to accompany him in the character of an Indian Spy to Point Pleasant. They arrived at the point only a day or two before the death of Cornstalk and Elinipsico two Indians who were murdered in the Fort [early Nov 1777]. That he was out with Col Skillern three months. These are all the services he can state with any precision as to the time he was employed. he recollects of being employed in carrying expresses from Point Pleasant to Keenys Fort but cannot say for what length of time nor at what period of the war. That he never was drafted being always considered during the war as subject to orders as a spy.

William hisXmark Smith

Sworn to and subscribed by the declarant on this 24<sup>th</sup> day of August 1833 before me one of the Commonwealths Justices of the Peace for the County of Alleghany (VA) [signed] Jesse Davis

I do hereby certify that I was present at the time the above statement was made by William Smith an applicant for a pension and that it appeared to me that his memory was greatly impaired that although he seemed to have a clear recollection of some events, yet he spoke of others with a great deal of incoherency – that he seemed to have great difficulty in relating events in the order in which they occurred. I was under the impression that he did not relate all his services in the above statement. That he manifested, moreover, a degree of petulance when requested to make any explanation that was thought necessary – which I attributed partly to weakness occasioned by his old age & partly to a native obstinacy of disposition. The above statement was collected with great difficulty.

[signed] Robt. M. Hudson

Sworn to and subscribed this 20<sup>th</sup> day of August 1833— before me one of the Commonwealths Justices of the peace for the County of Alleghany (V.A)

[signed] Jesse Davis

NOTE: On 6 June 1842 Mary Smith, over 82, applied for a pension stating that she married William Smith in Botetourt County on 10 Aug 1780, and he died 4 Feb 1836. As proof of marriage she submitted one sheet of a family record taken from a Bible and transcribed below. On 20 Mar 1849 at age 88 she applied under a later pension law.

[At the places marked with an asterisk below there is an illegible interlineation that appears to read "Marin &c"]

William Smith and Mary his wife was Married the tenth Day [\*] of August one thousand Seven hundred & Eighty

Peter Smith was Born the 27<sup>th</sup> Day of July 1781

[\*]

Rebecca Smith was Born the 8<sup>th</sup> Day of September 1782

David Smith was Born the 9<sup>th</sup> Day of [\*] January 1784