

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of Humphrey May W8408

Susannah May

f39VA

Transcribed by Will Graves

3/28/13: rev'd 7/27/21

[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 8th 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.]

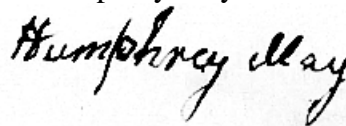
State of Kentucky Mercer County Sct.

On this 27th day of August 1833 before O. Garnett a Justice of the peace in and for said County personally came home free May a resident Citizen of Mercer County State aforesaid aged seventy-five years who upon his oath doth make the following declaration in order to obtain the Benefits of the act of Congress passed June the 7th 1833 [sic 1832].

That on the 5th day of February 1776 he enlisted as a Sergeant for two years in Captain John Brunt's Company of the 4th Virginia Regiment, commanded by Colonel Isaac Reed, that at the time of his enlistment he resided in Charloott [Charlotte] County State of Virginia – that shortly after he enlisted as Sergeant as aforesaid, he was promoted to orderly Sergeant and continued to act in that capacity until the 4th day of February 1778 at which time he was discharged from service by a writing under the hand of Brigadier General Charles Scott having served out the time for which he had enlisted, that said discharge he kept for many years and has lost the same to prove and establish the foregoing service he knows of George Hankins of Shelby County and has been informed that Bernard Clements of Franklin County Kentucky ~~can~~ will likewise prove his service.

That in the year 1780 he emigrated to Kentucky and entered the Service in various forts and Stations, and was in the Blue Licks defeat in August 1782, under Colonel Todd where said Todd fell, that in the fall of 1782 he was on a campaign against the Indians on the Miami River in Ohio, under General Cloke [George Rogers Clark] that in 1783 he was in another Campaign on the Waubash [Wabash] River under said General Clark, that he was in continual service from 1780 until 1782 either in in Forts spying or in the aforesaid Tours under General Clark that of the Tours of duty done in the West he knows of no witness who he can reasonably procure to prove the aforesaid services nor has he any documentary evidence, he states this is his second declaration made on this occasion because the former one has been lost or miscarried , as its return to the City the second time he further states that he is unable to go to the Court house because of infirmity and age and therefore he makes his declaration before a Justice of the Peace. He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension but the present and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of any State in the Union or any agency thereof. Sworn to & subscribed the day & year aforesaid.

S/ Humphrey May



[p 8: On October 18, 1838 in Mercer County Kentucky, Susannah May, aged about 64, made

application for a widow's pension under the 1838 act stating that she is the widow of Humphrey May, a revolutionary war pensioner; that she married him in Mercer County Kentucky December 19, 1791; that they were married by the Reverend John Bailey; that her husband died February 14, 1838. She signed her application with her mark.]

[p 9: On October 18, 1838 in Mercer County Kentucky, William W May, 38, gave testimony that he is the son of Humphrey and Susanna May. He gives testimony in support of the testimony given by his mother in her application.



[p 24: This file contains a printed form letter from the Commissioner of Pensions giving further explanations for rejecting or returning applications for further proof. I've not seen this form letter in any other file. (I've now done well over 10,000 applications)—it is interesting enough for me to include it in this file for future reference as follows:

WAR DEPARTMENT,

Pension Office,

May 31 1838

SIR,

The great and extraordinary exertions which have been made to answer with promptitude all the very numerous letters received here, have been found ineffectual. To reply particularly to every enquiry made to this office in relation to the act of 7th June, 1832, would consume the time of more clerks than are now employed in the business; and then the examination of claims would be entirely suspended. No good could possibly result to any of the claimants. Claims under the above law are taken up according to the order in which they are received at this Department; and all claimants may rest assured that their papers will be acted on at as early a day as the great and increasing press of business will permit. This circular has been drawn up with a view of quieting the minds of applicants, and in order to satisfy them that we are making every effort in our power to adjust their claims. Our great object has ever been to dispatch their business, and to discharge a great debt of gratitude which the present generation owes to the founders of our free and happy nation.

If in any instance enquiry be made concerning a claim, and it does not appear that the papers have been received here, the claimant is apprised of the fact by having a copy of this letter sent to him, or his agent, with the claimant's name written in the margin.

When an applicant is not satisfied with the decision in his case, and no answer is sent to his request for a re-consideration, he is to understand that the Department adheres to its decision.

Amendments to declarations, or any additional proof which may be required, may be taken before any officer duly authorized to administer oaths.

No information in regard to military service can in any case be given until the claimant has proceeded according to the mode pointed out by the regulations, which are always sent whenever a wish to that effect is expressed by an applicant.

Frequent enquiries are made respecting the form of a declaration in a case where the applicant is not positive as to the precise length of his service. The notes accompanying the brief were believed to have been so explicit as to render any explanation unnecessary; but it has been found by experience that they are not so well understood by every applicant, or agent, as to supersede the necessity of a clearer interpretation of the rules. The oath prescribed in a case where the applicant's memory is

now in use.

impaired, was not designed to supply the place of such a particular statement as the regulations of June 27, 1832, direct. It is only intended to obviate difficulties which exist in cases where the applicant is not positive as to the precise length of each term of his engagement.

A claim under the act of 7th June, 1832, is not always rejected for want of direct proof of service by living witnesses; but in a case where an applicant alleges to have served in the continental army, and his name cannot be found on the rolls of service, such proof is deemed indispensable in order to a favorable decision.

In any case where a paper has been misssent from this office, or any other error has been committed, proper steps are always taken immediately on discovering the mistake to have the same corrected, without notifying the parties concerned.

In cases where applications are made for new certificates of pensions, for an augmentation of pension, or for a transfer from one State to another, no other answer is deemed necessary than merely to transmit to the applicant, or his agent, the printed instructions necessary in such cases.

Whenever information in relation to fraudulent claims is transmitted, the informant is requested to be as particular as possible respecting the matter.

In a case where a pensioner has died and left several children, and no widow, the children are entitled to the amount of pension due up to the time of the pensioner's death. If any of the children or heirs cannot be found by those who are known to be the legitimate children or heirs, on proof being adduced of the fact, the amount will be paid to those who are to be found. And in case the widow or children of a revolutionary officer who may have died without applying for a pension, and since the passage of the act of June 7, 1832, the widow or children should produce the best proof in their power as to the service: and, in such cases, direct proof is always required. The same rule applies to cases where the application is made by the wife or children of a non compos mentis.

A pensioner cannot legally devise, mortgage, or otherwise transfer his right to his stipend.

In every case where the claim has been rejected, the papers will remain on our files, and cannot be withdrawn. If the applicant wishes to renew his claim, he must have new papers prepared.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. L. EDWARDS,
Commissioner of Pensions.

Wm. H. Todd Esq
Franklin

War Department
Pension Office
May 31, 1833

Sir,

The great and extraordinary exertions which have been made to answer with promptitude all the various numerous letters received here, have been found ineffectual. To reply particularly to every inquiry made to this office in relation to the act of the 7th of June, 1832, would consume the time of more clerks than are now employed in the business; and then the examination of claims would be entirely suspended. No good could possibly result to any of the claimants. Claims under the above law are taken up according to the order in which they are received at this Department; and all applicants may rest assured that their papers will be acted on at as early a date as the great and increasing press of business will permit. This circular has been drawn up with a view of quieting the minds of applicants, and in order to satisfy them that we are making every effort in our power to adjust their claims. Our great object has ever been to dispatch their business, and to discharge a great debt of gratitude which the present generation owes to the founders of free and happy nation.

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claimant had proceeded according to the mode pointed out the regulations, which are always sent whenever a wish to that effect is expressed by an applicant.

Frequent enquiries are made respecting the form of a declaration in a case where the applicant is not positive as to the precise length of his service. The notes accompanying the brief were believed to have been so explicit as to render any explanation unnecessary; but it has been found by experience that they are not so well understood by every applicant, or agent, as to supersede the necessity of a clear interpretation of the rules. The oaths prescribed in a case where the applicant's memory is impaired, was not designed to supply the place of such a particular statement as the regulations of June 27, 1832, direct. It is only intended to obviate difficulties which exist in cases where the applicant is not positive as to the precise length of each term of his engagement.

A claim under the act of 7th of June, 1832, is not always rejected for want of direct proof of the service by living witnesses; but in a case where an applicant alleges to have served in the Continental Army, and his name cannot be found on the rolls of the service, such proof is deemed indispensable in order to a favorable decision.

In any case where a paper has been missent from this office, or any other error has been committed, proper steps are always taken immediately on discovering the mistake to have the same corrected, without notifying the parties concerned.

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Whenever information in relation to fraudulent claims is transmitted, the informant is requested to be as particular as possible respecting the matter.

In a case where a pensioner has died and left several children, and no widow, the children are entitled to the amount of pension view up to the time of the pensioner's death. If any of the children or heirs cannot be found by those who are known to be the legitimate children or heirs, on proof being adduced of the fact, the amount will be paid to those who are to be found. And in case the widow or children of a revolutionary officer who may have died without applying for a pension, and since the passage of the act of June 7, 1832, the widow or children shall produce the best proof in their power as to the service: and, in such cases, direct proof is always required. The same rules apply to cases where the application is made by the wife or children of a man compos mentis.

A pensioner cannot legally devise, mortgage, or otherwise transfer his right to his stipend.

In every case where the claim has been rejected, the papers will remain on our files, and cannot be withdrawn. If the applicant wishes to renew his claim, he must have new papers prepared.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant
J. L. Edwards,
Commissioner of Pensions

[p 30]

The affidavit of Bernard Clements¹ taken at the house of Bernard Clements on the 12 day of April 1833, to be used on the half of Humphrey May, an applicant to be placed on the pension roll of the United States

Deponent being of lawful age, and first duly sworn, deposeth and saith that in the year 1776, the month not recollected, he enlisted in the war of the Revolution for three years, and

¹ [Bernard Clemons \(Clements\) W9792](#)

served in Captain Reed's company and Colonel W., that whilst he was in the service as aforesaid he became acquainted with Humphrey May, who now lives in Mercer County Kentucky as this affiant believes, that said May was a Sergeant in said company, and acted as such for two years, and this affiant thinks he may have served longer; this affiant and said May served together for nearly the whole time; this affiant did not enlist at the same time that he, the said May did; He states that the said May was discharged honorably sometime before this affiant was; this affiant states it was sometime in 1778 that said May was discharged; this affiant states that he served out his full term of 3 years for which he enlisted and is now on the Pension roll and has been for 13 years; and also has got his land from Virginia; that he is now 73 years old.
Further saith not.

S/ Bernard Clements, X his mark

[p 34]

The affidavit of George Hankins² taken at his house on the 21st day of March 1833 to be laid before the Secretary of War on the behalf of Humphrey May

This affiant being of lawful age and first duly sworn deposeth and saith that in the month of February 1776 or thereabouts, this affiant became acquainted with Humphrey May – that this affiant was at that time and enlisted regular Soldier in the war of the revolution and that said May was also a regular in the Service about the same time, and that this affiant and said May continued in the service from February 1776 until February 1778 the full term of 2 years for which this affiant and said May enlisted, and that said May acted and was an orderly Sergeant in the company during the whole 2 years and that said May and affiant belonged to Captain Brant's or Brent's Company and a portion of the 4th Virginia Regiment – that said May & this affiant were honorably discharged, that said May now lives in Mercer County Kentucky as this affiant has been informed and believes. This affiant is now on the pension roll of the United States that said affiant is now in the 83 year of his age

further saith not

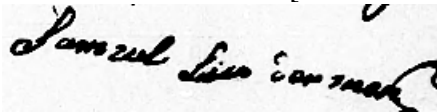
S/ George Hankins, X his mark

[p 39]

Commonwealth of Kentucky Spencer County

Personally appeared before me the undersigned and made oath that he was one of the company commanded by Captain John Brent of the Continental establishment of the 4 Regiment commanded by Colonel Isaac Reed and that he knew Humphrey May and that he the said Humphrey May was of the said company and that he the said May served in Brent's Company as a Sergeant in the Revolutionary War for the period of two years

S/ Samuel Linderman [?or Lunderman?]³



[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$120 per annum commencing March 4th, 1831, for service as a Sergeant for 2 years in the Virginia service. His widow was pensioned in a like amount.]

[From [bounty land records in the Library of Virginia](#)]

6-page file

[Note: this file contains what appears to be an affidavit given by the veteran in which he

² [George Hankins \(Hawkins\) S31102](#)

³ The acknowledgment looks more like "Samuel Lunderman" but I found no such veteran in the federal records but there is a Samuel Linderman in the rejected claims of the Virginia State Library collection.

substantially restates his services as set forth in his pension application. I did not attempt to transcribe it because the digital image posted online is a very poor quality and so faded that it was not possible to accurately transcribe it.]

The affidavit of Bernard Clements, taken on the [too faint to discern] day of [too faint to discern] 1833

Deponent being now in the 75 year of his age deposeseth & saith, that on the ___ day of February 1776 he enlisted as a private soldier in Captain Brent's or brunt's Company for three years and served, in Colonel Isaac Reed's Regiment on Continental establishment, that Humphrey May enlisted at the same time, in the same company – & Regiment, and that he said May served out his time of three years as an orderly Sergeant in said Company – that this affiant himself served out his three years as a private in said company and that he & said May was honorably discharged, at the expiration of said three years, that this affiant has not for his services yet received any bounty land from Virginia, nor the United States, said May now lives in Mercer County as this affiant believes, that this affiant is now a pensioner of the United States, and has been for upwards of ten years, said May was appointed Sergeant as aforesaid immediately after his enlistment and served as such for the period of three years, that said may & himself were citizens of Virginia [the image of this document cuts off at the bottom at this point.]

Addendum to Humphrey May W8408

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. 23 July 2021.

[From [rejected claims in the Library of Virginia](#) in the first file indexed as Smith, John.]

State of Kentucky Mercer County to wit}

This day [23 Oct 1824] Humphrey May personally appeared before me Jeremiah Clemins A Justice of the Peace for the county aforesaid and made oath that he was Enlisted in Virginia by Capt John Brent [VAS2630] on the 5th day of February 1776 for three years in Capt John Brents company in the Fourth Virginia Regiment on the Continental line Commanded by Col. Isaac Read [VAS4183] and that he was appointed Sergeant when he first Enlisted and that when he was Discharged he belong to Capt. Thomas Spencers [Thomas Spencer W19388] company commanded by Col. Robert Lawson [VAS850] and that he served out his time for which he Enlisted and was honourably Discharged at the Valley Forge in Pennsylvania by Gen'l. Charles Scott [BLWt2055-850] and he was Discharged a sergeant and through the course of time he has lost his discharge and he never has received his land warrant for said service



State of Kentucky Spencer County to wit}

This day [27 Oct 1824] Samuel Linderman [VAS4557] personally appeared before me Jephthah Berkley a Justice of the Peace for the county aforesaid and made oath that he has long been acquainted with Humphrey May who has Subscribed to the foregoing decliration and he well knows that he is the Identical person he therein represents himself to be and further he knows that he did perform the millitary Service therein stated

