

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of James Potter Collins¹ R2173

f48SC

Transcribed by Will Graves

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[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' 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.]

In the Third District Court, Parish of East Feliciana } State of Louisiana.

On this 8th day of April, 1834, personally appeared in open Court before Charles Bushnell, presiding Judge of the State and District aforesaid, James P. Collins, a resident of the said Parish of East Feliciana, and State of Louisiana, aged 70 years, who being first duly sworn according to Law, doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress passed June 7, 1832:

"I entered the service of my country in the year 1780, not long after the fall of Charleston, South Carolina, in what is now called York District, under the command of Colonel John Moffitt, a militia Colonel, and was always under his command, while in service. We were nothing more than Militia Volunteers and a scouting party that scoured the Districts of York and Chester, sometimes crossing Broad River to the West, in Union, and the Districts above, and sometimes passing into Rutherford, Lincoln and Mecklenburg [Counties] in North Carolina. The first action I ever witnessed was with Lord Hook [sic, Christian Huck], as he was called, near Fishing Creek, after he had burnt Hill's Iron Works, where his party was defeated and himself killed [July 12, 1780 at the engagement at Williamson's Plantation also known as Huck's Defeat]. My Captain was then John Henderson. The next matter of note, we joined General Sumpter [sic, Thomas Sumter] at Fishing Creek, sometime in August, when we were defeated with considerable loss [August 18, 1780]. I was then under Captain John Chambers, and Lieutenant Bryant, the latter of whom was lost in the action. The next was at King's Mountain where Ferguson [Patrick Ferguson] was defeated [October 7, 1780]. The principal leaders there were Colonels Campbell [William Campbell], Sevier [John Sevier], Shelby [Isaac Shelby], Williams [James Williams] and Cleveland [Benjamin Cleveland]. I was that day under Major Chronicle [William Chronicle], who was killed in the action. My Captain's name was Watson [perhaps William Watson]², who was wounded, so that he died a few days after. We never were attached to any Troops but our own, or more than three or four days at a time that I remember, and that was always for our own safety (for the odds were against us) or to assist in checking the Progress of the enemy. Next we joined General Morgan [Daniel Morgan], near the Cowpens, where Tarleton [Banastre Tarleton] attacked us, and was defeated [January 17, 1781]. I do not remember what Captain I was under on that day – my Lieutenant was James Venable. We had several brushes with small parties like our own, in which we would get a man or two wounded, and sometimes a horse or two killed, which perhaps is not worth naming in detail. I remember a Colonel Howard [John Eager Howard] under General Morgan at the Battle of the Cowpens, and Colonel Washington [William Washington] of the Cavalry. I left the

¹ *Autobiography of a Revolutionary Soldier*. James Potter Collins (with John M. Roberts). Clinton, La.: Feliciana Democratic, 1859.

² Bobby Gilmer Moss in his *Patriots at Kings Mountain* says Watson was of the South Carolina militia under Lacey and Hawthorn at Kings Mountain. The apparent source he relied upon is the monument at Kings Mountain, but this veteran says the Watson who died at Kings Mountain was under Chronicle.

service in 1783, and received a written discharge from Colonel Moffitt, but not believing it would be of any service to me after the war, I took no care of it, and it has been lost for many years. I was discharged in York district, South Carolina. I do not now know of any person living who served with me by whom I can prove my service – But before my character for truth or veracity, I refer to the Honorable Thomas W. Scott, Parish Judge of the Parish of East Feliciana – the Rev. Egra Courtney, a Clergyman of the Baptist Church in said Parish, and to Lindsay Davis, James C. Chapman, Bartholomew Bennett and John Bennett, my neighbors. When I left the service I was young and careless, and having never been wounded in my country's cause, I never expected to call on her for a pension, which caused me to be careless in preserving the evidence of my service. In 1785 I left South Carolina for Georgia, where I was at the surveying and settling of most all of the upper part of the State, say on Broad River, Ogeechee, Oconee, Apalachee and Oalemulgee [sic, Ocmulgee], and was at the Shoulderbone Treaty, where the Apalachee and Ocmulgee Lands were purchased and in the time had to be in several Brushes with the Cherokees and Creeks, who were both hostile. To establish the Truth of what I now state, there are several men of good character in this parish who have known me more than thirty years – who also know that I associated with their fathers, who lived through the Revolution and while living considered me a soldier of the revolutionary war. In 1810 as well as I now remember, I removed from Georgia to the Tennessee Valley in the State of Tennessee and from Tennessee, I removed to Louisiana in 1820, and lived nearly a year in the Parish of St. Tammany; from whence I removed to the Parish of St. Helena and in January 1822 I removed to the Parish of East Feliciana, where I have lived ever since.

S/ James P. Collins



Interrogatories Propounded by the Court to James P. Collins the foregoing applicant:

1. Where, and in what year were you born? Answer: I was born in Lincoln County North Carolina, on the 22nd day of November 1764, and was carried as an infant to South Carolina, as I have been informed by my Parents.
2. Have you any record of your age; and if so, where is it? Answer: I have no record of my age, but I have seen the family record which I believe is destroyed.
3. Where were you living when called into service; where have you lived since the revolutionary war and where do you now live? Answer: I was living in York District, South Carolina, when called into service. From South Carolina I removed to Georgia, then to Tennessee, and last to Louisiana and now live in the Parish of East Feliciana in the last named State.
4. How were you called into service; were you drafted, did you volunteer, or were you a substitute; and if a substitute for whom? Answer: The way I came into the service was the Tories where I lived were too strong for us, and the Whigs had to associate for their own safety. In this way we were formed into a military command of volunteers – I was never drafted – nor was I never [sic] a substitute. We always held ourselves ready to serve our country and were generally under arms from the time we were first embodied until I was discharged. We went home sometime for a short time, but were always ready to march at a moment's warning. In this way I served from about the end of May, or early in June 1780, until I was discharged, in the spring of 1783, and I think early in April.
5. State the names of some of the Regular officers who were with the Troops where you served, such Continental and militia regiments as you can recollect, and the general circumstances of your service. Answer: I have given as accurate a detail of my service as I can at this time recollect in my foregoing declaration. I never was with the regular Troops but a few days, and think not more than four. I do not recollect any regular officers but General Morgan, Colonel

Washington and Colonel Howard of Morgan's riflemen. I remember General Sumter, and the regiments of Col. Campbell, Colonel Sevier, Colonel Shelby, Col. Williams and Colonel Cleveland, with which I served in the Battle of King's Mountain.

6. Did you ever receive a discharge from the service; if so, by whom was it given, and what has become of it. Answer: I did receive a written discharge from the service. It was signed by Colonel Moffitt, and it has been lost, as I have stated in my foregoing declaration.
7. State the names of some Persons to whom you are known in your present neighborhood and who can testify to your character for truth and veracity, and their belief of your services as a soldier of the revolution. Answer: In addition to the respectable names I have given in my forgoing declaration, I refer to Dr. H. Shipwith, to Thomas J. Robbins, Sheriff of the Parish of East Feliciana, to Lafayette Saunders, Senator, and Major Redden Brown and Thornton Lawson, members of the House of Representatives of the State Legislature and to Colonel John B. Herhon [?] late a representative, all residing in the Parish of East Feliciana aforesaid.

S/ James P. Collins

And after making the foregoing declaration, and answering the Interrogatories on oath, in open Court, the said James P. Collins did further declare that he hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension, except the present, and declares that his name is not on the Pension roll of any agency of any State.

Sworn to in open Court, and subscribed in three places, the day and year first before written.

S/ L. Hardesty, Clerk

S/ James P. Collins

[Ezra Courtney, a clergyman, and Thomas W. Scott gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

[p 10]

In the Third District Court Parish of East Feliciana } State of Louisiana.

On this 14th day of November 1834, personally appeared in open Court, James P Collins, a resident of the Parish and State aforesaid, who being sworn according to law, did make the following additional declaration, in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress passed June seventh, 1832:

"I never was called into the service of my country on any tour of duty. In the early part of the revolution there was a great enmity between the Whigs and Tories and they mutually armed against each other. My father was a Whig, and like the rest became very obnoxious to the Tories. Before it was thought that I was able to carry arms, I was often employed by the Whig leaders, and particularly by Colonel Moffet to carry and fetch news – Confidence was placed in me. I was a good rider, and knew the byways through the woods, by which I was able to elude the vigilance of the Tories, who were always on the watch. It became known to the Tories how I was employed, and a mark was set on me. If I had fallen into their hands I have no doubt I should have been killed. Young as I then was, my father thought it prudent that I should enter the service he was in. This service was what was called minute men. We harmed ourselves, and generally marched on horseback. We furnished our own equipment: We got swords, butcher knives, and war spurs made by the blacksmiths. I was first enrolled in the company of Captain John Chambers, but he was not along when we defeated Lord Hook [sic, Christian Huck], and I was placed in the company of Captain John Henderson. Sometimes we were permitted by our officers to disperse, when we knew of no enemy near. We have been at home sometimes four or five days at once. Sometimes we would not be at home a day before our officers went again called us out – and sometimes we did not get home before we were again ordered to rendezvous and go in pursuit of the enemy. This is the only kind of service I was in and it lasted from long before I entered it until nearly a year after Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown. I am confident I was discharged in 1783. I was never in garrison during that period – my services were all active. I say with great confidence that from the time I entered the service in 1780, until I was discharged, I never was at home in ten days at one time but was on active duty as I have before stated. On hearing the declaration which I made in this court on the 8th day of April last, read to me today, I find it might be

understood that I intended to say Colonel Moffett commanded in chief when we defeated Lord Hook. Colonel Moffett was in the action. It was fought in a Peach Orchard near Colonel Bratton's, who was the oldest Colonel and commanded. Colonel Bratton's Christian name was William. Colonel Thomas Neale of North Carolina was also in the action.

We were in several other skirmishes than those I have mentioned, which I could relate – Colonel Samuel Watson was engaged in the same kind of service, and I think he was with us at the defeat of Lord Hook, but I am not positive.

S/ James P. Collins

[p 15: on September 23, 1853 in the Parish of East Feliciana in Louisiana, Elizabeth Hausey [could be Hawsey] gave testimony that she was personally acquainted with James P Collins deceased and his wife Mary Anderson, deceased; that they were married on the 31st day of March 1803 in the state of Georgia; that she attended their marriage; that they lived together as man and wife for 35 years; that James P Collins had by his wife Mary Anderson five legitimate children, to it, Suzan Powers, James L Collins, Sophia Collins, Ann Summerville and Francis East [sic, Frances East].]

[p17: On January 24, 1853 in the Parish of East Feliciano in Louisiana, a power of attorney was executed but John East, husband of Francis East, surviving daughter of James P Collins, whereby his attorney was empowered to seek an increase in the pension due or arrears due James P Collins.]

[p 46: deposition dated April 24, 1854 given in the parish of East Feliciana, Louisiana by John East and Frances East his wife in which it is stated that Mary Collins the wife of James P Collins died in the State of Texas on January 10, 1840.]