

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

Pension Application of William Madison W9944

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

County Court of Madison [VA], August Term 1835

On this 27th day of August in the year 1835, appeared in open court, before the Justices of the court of Madison County now sitting, General William Madison, a resident now of said county and ever since said county had it's existence (& before) [formed from Culpeper County in 1792] aged seventy three years old in May last, who being first duly sworn according to Law, doth on his corporeal oath make the following declaration, in order that he may obtain the allowances and benefit of an Act of Congress passed the 15th May 1828, granting pensions of full pay to certain officers and soldiers therein named. That he was in service in the Militia occasionally and for a short time in 1778 & 1780,

Hampden Sidney and William & Mary Colleges when he was a student; That in the campaign of 1781, he was a volunteer in a Corps of Cavalry and during the early operations of the combined forces of France & America upon the enemy at York Town, he applied for a commission in the Regular service, and after the lapse of a short time, he received the appointment of Lieutenant in the Regiment of Artillery commanded by Colo [Charles] Harrison; that a very small part of this Regiment was at the siege of York the remainder being in the South: that Colo Edward Carrington was in command of what was at York Town after Colo Harrison was dispatched to other service. The company in which he held his appointment was commanded by Capt Whitehead Coleman. After remaining sometime in command and after the capture of the enemy [19 Oct 1781], he was taken with ill health, and remained in feeble health for a great length of time. That Captain Coleman procured for him (said Gen'l. Madison) a furlough to be absent from service until his health was recruited. Sometime in the year 1782, (the winter or spring of that year) Captain Coleman called on him at his Father's residence and brought him some articles of clothing furnished by the public to artillery officers, that Captain Coleman then said to him that these articles of Military dress were drawn by said Coleman for him (Madison) that he must get his health restored and be ready to join the artillery service again in his said capacity of Lieut. so soon as his health would permit and when he should receive orders to do so. That he held himself always ready as soon as his health would permit to return to duty: That he never did resign his appointment in any way whatever or by any act of his that could be construed into a resignation: That he was not only willing again to enter service, but waited with anxiety the expected call, though he never was so called and was not again in active service tho' constantly ready to be so until the close of the war. That his name is not on the pension roll of any agency of any State – and he relinquishes all claim whatever to any pension or annuity except the present. That some years passed he addressed a letter to his friend John S. Barbour whilst in Congress, asserting his claim and setting forth these facts, that Mr. Barbour informs him he laid the same before the Secretary of the Treasury Mr. McLane who thought his claim a valid one to the benefits of the act of May 15<sup>th</sup> 1828, that he found difficulty in finding proof of the material facts until lately, and now what he can prove is mainly made known to him by accident, through an individual residing in another county and who was in service with him, as he is informed and believes. Wm. Madison

And thereupon also came into open court George Corbin [pension application W1237] aged about seventy two years and on oath declares that he knew Gen'l. William Madison in the War of the Revolution, that he was sometimes at his Father's the late Colo James Madison of Orange, and knew also at that time his brother James Madison Esqr. who was in Congress in those times [and later US President]. The said Corbin says in 1781, he knew Gen'l. William Madison in Military service, and he knew also that he, said Madison, was a Lieutenant in regular service in the Regiment of Artillery at the siege of York in Va. in 1781, where he saw him in service: and he has no hesitation in expressing his belief that he the said Madison was a Lieutenant in Harrison's Regiment of Artillery in October 1781, and further saith not.

[The following was addressed to Mordecai Barbour, pension application S8043.]

Dear Sir        It is important that I should establish the fact that I was an officer in the artillery at the siege of York in 1781 Harrison's [Col. Charles Harrison's] Reg't 2<sup>d</sup> Lieut in Capt Coleman's company. I believe you was at the siege and, probably, in the Brigade commanded by Gen'l [Edward] Stevens & may have observe me as this company of Artillery was posted on the right of that Brig'de and did duty in the grand Battery. Death has deprived me of all the officers who recognized me as 2<sup>d</sup> Lieut and as from the lapse of time possitive testimony can scarcely be had, secondary will be accepted. I shall be very thankful if you will endeavour to carry y'r recollection back to the above period an state what you then knew, heard and believed respeting this matter, or even now think. I acted by appointment and if you have subsequently heard it be so good as to say so. Be precise to throw your answer somewhat into the shape of a certificate. I do not know that it will essential that you s'd be qualified, but if it is convenient for you to do so, it may obviate any difficulty that might otherwise occur. I shall be much obliged by your early attention, as the case does not admit of delay. Accept of my best wishes and sincere Regard.        Yrs &c

Wm Madison    18<sup>th</sup> Jan'y 1833

Address to O [Orange] Court House or to Locust Dale Madison County.

Fauquier County State of Virginia Sct

This day Robert Taylor Esquire of Orange County personally appeared before me a Justice of the peace for the County of Fauquier in the State of Virginia and made oath that he was at the Siege of York Town in the autumn of the year 1781. That he there saw the present General William Madison then a young man. He distinctly recollects that he was in service on a Battery and in command of a piece of Artillery and the men who served it and the said William Madison remained the whole of the siege.

Given under my hand & seal this 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 1835

Dear Sir [J. L. Edwards, Commissioner of Pensions].        Culpeper Octr 10<sup>th</sup> 1835

In the moment of my departure for Richmond I send you the supplemental declaration of Gen'l. Madison. He swears to the service of two years & more. I regard a man as much in service when lying in his bed on furlough with wounds acquired in the field as if still in the field & in sound health One misfortune I would not not necessarily bring upon him another; when each is the fruit of his patriotism & valour. And this would be the case if you refused a pension on account of absence from wounds – nor is the case a different one when long & lingering disease acquired in service confines him to his bed upon like furlough – the true question seems to me to be this – Was he though on furlough subject to military orders – to the law martial, – & to the power of the government? General Madison answers this question affirmatively upon his oath. Hard law should be dealt out ag't. suspicious applicants – But Equity & Justice should be extended to fair & upright claimants. Here is a man holding your commission, acting up to his duties; holding his leave of absence from the field whilst wretched on the bed of sickness by the tenure of your will, subject to your orders, his life even under the control of your military courts; receiving your orders & so far as clothing is concerned your rations too; – and yet notwithstanding all these, if you reject his claim, you in effect say that he was not in your service not under your orders, & substantially that your Commission is nothing from the Gov't to him, that your acts were those of despotism usurpation over a free citizen, – that you had a right to play the master & it was his duty to obey as a slave.

This very question (I am told in another case) was sent by the Governer of Va year before last to several officers of the army of the U. States; for their advice & Gen'l Scott among them & they unanimously decided that the invalid on furlough was in actual service; & Land bounty was given him accordingly.

I feel that General Madison has right & Justice & law upon his side & I respectfully solicit your kind & deliberate attention to the application. If I have written strongly it is because I feel strongly; and I

persuade myself that your know me too well to suppose that I am without the sphere of proper respect to you in what I have written. In very great haste I am very Resptfy yrs J. S. Barbour

On this 14th day of May 1836, appeared in open court, before the Honourable the Judge of the Circuit Superior Court aforesaid, now sitting Gen'l William Madison a resident now of the said County, and ever since said county was in existence by law, aged seventy four years in this present month, who being duly sworn according to law, doth on his corporeal oath declare that in compliance with the request of J. L. Edwards Esq commissioner of pensions for the United States, as shewn in his letter of the 9th of March 1836, wishing to know the precise time he was in actual service in the War of the Revolution, the following statement to be true, – That when in service as a common soldier, when he went out from College as formerly stated, he cannot say the precise time of service, and therefore supposes he can claim nothing from it. but he now makes a full statement of his other service in the Army. A law passed the Virginia Legislature, he supposes at the October Session of 1780, for creating and raising a Legion for service, in which Colo. [Charles] Dabney and Colo. [Francis] Taylor were to command, and Gen'l. [Alexander] Spotswood to command the whole.

Under this law he was appointed a Lieutenant early in 1781, and was sent out to recruit men as a Lieutenant, he will say first of April; that after being some time in the recruiting service with little success, the common enemy invaded the State, and expelled the Legislature from Charlottesville [sic: Charlottesville; 4 Jun 1781], that he immediately left the recruiting service in which he had been till then engaged and joined the militia in the Cavalry still retaining his Commission of Lieutenant in the Legion and continued in this capacity in actual service in Militia Cavalry until he received on or before the month of September 1781, his appointment in Harrison's Regiment of Artillery, at the Siege of York Town in Virginia, that he never left the Cavalry, tho' holding in it the Commission of Lieutenant of Infantry until he was appointed into the artillery in Capt Coleman's company thereof, a Lieutenant of said Artillery, that he remained in actual service, until after the close of the Siege & the surrender of Corn Wallis and for some little time afterwards. His health was emaciate and impaired by service and he received a furlough to go to Orange County Va & repair his health. In the spring of 1782, and he will name the middle of April to the nearest of his recollection, he received further orders from Captain Coleman of the said artillery and also some articles of military dress. That he was not afterwards under orders nor in actual service. But believed himself subject to any orders and bound to obey them until the end of the War and that he would have promptly obeyed them until the end of the War. and was told by Capt. Coleman, his officer in said Regiment, to be always ready to receive & obey orders till the close of the war. If he is to speak of his actual service whilst in commission as Lieutenant of Infantry in the cavalry aforesaid and recruiting also aforesaid, he must and does say five months, and under the appointment of Lieutenant of Artillery in Harrison's Regiment he says seven & a half months. But this includes his sickness and furlough up to the last time of receiving the clothing and orders of his Captain aforesaid which he regards as actual service. and this statement or additional declaration is made upon his best recollection and belief and he adds that this declaration is in some points more full than the first because that related to the necessary evidence to sustain the claim under the Act of 15<sup>th</sup> May 1828. Wm Madison

State of Virginia Madison County June 30<sup>th</sup> 1836.

This day Gen'l. William Madison of the said County & State aforesaid, appeared personally before me a justice of the peace for the County of Madison & a justice of the Court of the County Court of Madison which is a Court of Record, and on his corporeal oath doth declare as follows that in addition to his former declaration to obtain the benefit of the pension law passed the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1832; That he cannot say with greater precision than he has already done, at what time he joined the militia in 1781 except it be to say that it was in April 1781 & he will take the 15<sup>th</sup> of April as the time, although he thinks it ought to be for a longer time as he had been recruiting for the Apicuary[?] service and this [illegible word] the 15<sup>th</sup>

April to 1<sup>st</sup> September 1781. That as to the time he was in actual service, & meaning by actual service, obeying & acting under actual orders, in Harrison's regiment of Artillery he states from the first of September 1781 (seventeen hundred & eighty one) to the 15<sup>th</sup> April 1782 making seven & a half months as previously stated before Judge Field in the Court of Madison in May 1836 as to the substance of the order from Captain Whitehead Coleman in April 1782, he cannot distinctly recollect it, he believes it was to hold & keep himself in readiness for early service, to receive his clothing, and extending his furlough to a further time – he exercising in these respects & thinks otherwise the authority of an officer's superior power & command over another in actual service & he was obeyed accordingly.  
To which he hereto subscribes his hand & maketh oath. [signed] Wm Madison

State of Virginia. Rappahannock County. To wit:

This day [17 Jan 1838] George Corbin of the said County (now aged seventy four years reputed and believed to have been in the militia service of the State of Virginia from the County of Culpeper in the Revolutionary War,) made oath before me a justice of the peace for the County of Rappahannock, that he said Corbin was in the Militia Service from the county of Culpeper in the year 1781, and that he was at the siege of York, where he saw the present General William Madison, who in service, that he was a Lieutenant of Artillery in what was called and he believes to have been Harrison's Regiment of Artillery; that he particularly noticed and observed said Madison, not only because he (Corbin) had before and afterwards known said Madison and his family, but he remembers that the sword he wore at the siege of Yorktown, was so large and disproportioned to General Madison's size, (he being a small man) as to have excited the attention of him the said Corbin and which he spoke of. He does not know how long said Madison remained in service, but he left him in service when he said Corbin and the militia generally was discharged after the capture of the British in October 1781.

[In March 1838 William Madison relinquished his pension under the act of 1832 in order to be placed on the pension roll under the act of 1828.]

War office March 28<sup>th</sup> 1838

Sir I am with Colo A. Madison (who is the son of Gen'l. Madison, & who is the advocate of his father's claims for 200 acres of land from the United States, for his (Gen'l. M's.) revolutionary services in the war of the revolution as a lieutenant of artillery. The report of the Committee on revolutionary claims of the house set forth the material facts. Mr Ingham, Mr McLane, Mar James Barbour & Judge Anderson (late first Comptroller) in the cases of Harris, Roberts, & some others, all concurred in allowing claims on the decided report of a Committee of Congress favorable to the claimant. Here is a decided report.  
2<sup>ndly</sup> The State of Virginia in its highest authority had determined by its competent judgement, that he served to the close of the war & has allowed him lands for that service. See the certificate of the Register of her land office, setting forth that fact. Shoud her Judgement be questioned, on so trivial a matter, without some testimony to show it to have been erroneous? And the less so, when Virginia ceded the United States near Two hundred million of acres of land, charged with no other incumbrance than the payment of the promises of bounty land made by the State & the United States to her officers & soldiers in the Continental line of the army. The U. S. accepted the cession on that condition. Virginia admits the [illegible word] in this case, & in that admission devolves on the U. States the duty to pay. Gen'l Madison in open Court before the Judge of the district makes oath to the facts which constitute & establish the claim to the two hundred acres of land; & proves them by Mr Rob't. Taylor formerly Speaker of the Senate of Virg'a. & in 1825 to 27 a member of Congress & Mr Geo Corbin. Woud a man of Gen'l Madisons known character who has filled the high offices he has from Elector for Gen'l Washington to numerous state offices, make a false oath for so paltry a purpose?!

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Auditor informed Colo. Madison this day (in my presence) that the Muster rolls for that regiment

of Artillery were all lost or burnt in 1800. The Pension Comm'r has placed his name on the roll under the act of 1832 as a Lieutenant of artillery in the continental line. And in consequence it is only necessary to account, why the name of Gen'l Madison, as a Lieutenant of Artillery does not appear on the auditors roll of officers who received a sertificate for depreciation of pay. That is easily done. He entered this service in Septr or August 1781. (Tho' previously in other service) The act of November 1781 of the Virg'a Legislature, which authorised the issue of certificates for depreciation of pay; also directed that those who had fought at York Town & aided in Cornwallis's Capture, shoud be paid 3 months of back pay in specie & the paper money having depreciated to 1000, for one, that thereafter all shoud be paid in specie.

His name therefore could not appear on the only distinct record in the land office, for he rec'd specie & not paper money pay, by a depreciation certificate. Mr Gordon says, that this is a stronger case by far than that of Lieutenant Brooke of the same State, & the same Regiment in 1824, allowed by Mr Calhoun [John C. Calhoun, former Secretary of War] in that case & approved by his successor (Governor Barbour). Why give to Brooke & refuse to the stronger claim of Gen'l Madison?!

The material facts are in the report of the Committee & are beyond all question, true. I beg leave to add that Colo. Madison as his fathers agent is here & anxious to return to Orange as early as he can.

With best Respects Yr ob't. S't J. S. Barbour

Acting as the friend of Gen'l W. Madison & his son.

Honble J. R. Poinsett Secty of War.

NOTE: On 23 June 1853 Nancy Madison, 61, applied for a pension stating that she married William Madison on 28 June 1834, and he died 20 July 1843. The Madison County Clerk certified that William Madison and Nancy Jerald were married by James Garnett, a Baptist minister. On 13 June 1854 Nancy Madison applied to have her pension transferred to Fairfield County OH, where she had moved "because she was desirous to promote, as far as she could, her future interest and that of her family, to the greatest extent of her limited means."