Pension Application of John Sims S7518
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Virginia }
County of Lewis } SS.

On this 27t of September in the year 1833 personally appeared before me William Peterson a Justice of the Peace in & for Lewis County and State aforesaid John Sims a resident of Lewis County and State of Virginia aged 78 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. That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated. In Augusta County in the State of Virginia in the month of June (day not recollected but thinks that it was about the middle of the month) in the year 1777, he volunteered as a private in the company of volunteers under the command of Captain John Hopkins, subaltern's names forgotten rendezvoused at Staunton with a few companies of Virginia militia under command of Col. [John] Dickenson, lay at Staunton sometime, then marched by way of the warm Springs now in Bath Co. Va. to Greenbrier river lay at the Forts here some weeks, joined some companies of Virginia militia commanded by Col. Skillernall from Bottetourt [sic: George Skillern from Botetourt] and Rockbridge Counties, continued their march across the Sewell mountains to the Great Kanawha river, decended the Ken. river to Point Pleasant at its mouth, arrived here he believes some time in the beginning of September. remembers the leaves were turning yellow, joined the Fort commanded by Capt. Arbuckle [Fort Randolph commanded by Matthew Arbuckle], remained stationed here until some time in the beginning of Winter, in the mean time seen Genl. [Edward] Hand who he was informed had descended the river from Pittsburg (then called Fort Pitt) witnessed the death of some Indian Chiefs, he remembers that one was called Cornstalk [others were Cornstalk's son Ellinipsico, Red Hawk, and Petalla]. In the beginning of Winter he retraced his steps together with the whole army with which he had marched to the point. Arrived at the Forts on Greenbrier some time in the Winter, remembers that the ground was covered with snow 6 or 7 inches deep, and that the weather had become extremely cold. Separated at Greenbrier with the Bottetourt troops and was march back to Augusta and discharged, some time in the month of January (but the day he cannot recollect) in the year 1778, having served as a private militia man a tour of not less than seven months.

In the said County of Augusta in the month of July in the year 1778, he was drafted as a private militia man in a company of militia under command of Capt. Joseph Bell, and was marched to Williamsburg Virg'a. and was stationed there in a regt. commanded by Col. [Thomas] Hugart, was chiefly employed while here in keeping tories in check, seen none of the British forces – was discharged by his Capt. Bell some time in Oct'r. and returned home, having served as a private not less than three months. remembers he was drafted for three months and served out his time.

In Augusta County Virginia in the Summer of 1779 (the month he does not recollect, thinks it was the latter end August) was drafted as a private for a term of two months, and served in company of Augusta militia commanded by Capt. Thomas Rankin, was marched through Charlottesville to Richmond and was here stationed until time of service ended under Col. Stricker, was chiefly employed this year in watching tories and preventing them from furnishing the enemy with provisions, who he was informed were in great numbers in the country committing depredations, destroying lives and property. Was, after his term of two months expired discharged, but does not remember by whom, and returned to his residence. He was in no battle and seen none of the British.

In Augusta County Virginia in the month of September in the year 1780, he was again drafted as a private in a company of militia commanded by Patrick Buckhannon [Patrick Buchanan] Capt. was marched through Rockfish Gap to Lynch's Ferry on James River [near present Buchanan] crossed there. Crossed the Dan river at Dick's Ferry [sic: Dix's Ferry], thence to Hillsborough in North Carolina, here joined Genl Gates' Army and was placed in a Regiment

commanded by Col. Howard [see endnote]. was soon after marched down the Cataba river where a battle was fought and some British taken prisoners [sic], returned to Charlotte, and there seen Gen'l. Green [sic: Nathanael Greene] who took the chief command of the Army, thinks this was in the beginning of Dec'r. 1780. At this time declarant became sick of fever, and remained in the hospital at Charlotte during the greater part of the Winter in a very low condition, during which time he heard of the success of the American arms at the Cowpens [17 Jan 1781]. In February he was able to perform duty, and rejoined his company in Col. Howard's Regt. in a Brigade commanded by Gen'l. Morgan at Guilford Court House [sic: see endnote], remained in this neighborhood marching and countermarching, pursuing and being in turned pursued by the enemy under command of Lord Cornwallis. Some time in March declarent was detailed as one of the Baggage Guard and was sent to Haw River with the Baggage about 20 or 30 miles from Guilford C. H. was on Haw River when battle was fought, could hear distinctly the roaring of the canon. Battle fought he believes near the middle [15th] of March. Soon after which declarent was discharged by a man named Dearing but what his office or commission knows not. Got home in April 1781 having served as a private 7 months.

In Augusta County State of Virginia some time about the first of June 1781, declarent substituted for John Robertson and marched in a company of militia commanded by Capt. Given and in Rockfish Gap rendezvoused, was there attached to a Regt. commanded by Col. Hugart marched immediately to Richmond and joined Gen'l. [William] Campbells army. They marched to Williamsburg, was near this place in a severe battle at Hot water, this he believes was near the last of June [Battle of Hot Water Plantation 6 mi NW of Williamsburg, 26 June]. retreated to Muddy river, then marched to Richmond, thence to Good's Bridge on the Appomatox River [sic: Goode's Bridge on Appomattox River], thence to Petersburg, thence to Eastham, thence to New Kent Court House, here joined Gen'l. LaFayette's Army, from New Kent marched to YorkTown, remained here until after the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, which he believes was towards the last [19th] of October 1781. Was then discharged having served as a private 47 months. – In May in the year 1782, in the said County of Augusta he was drafted, or rather ordered out by Col. Sampson Mathews to repel an Indian invasion, was placed under command of Capt. McKitrick [sic: John McKittrick] and marched to Warwick's Fort on Greenbrier river [in present Randolph County WV], from thence to Tigert's [sic: Tygart] Valley was here stationed at John Warwick's Fort and was engaged as an Indian Spy in spying through the adjacent counties, until Sept'r. 1782, was then discharged, having served as a militia man and Indian Spy 4 months.

He was born in Culpepper [sic: Culpeper] County Virginia on the 12th day of February 1755, moved from thence to Augusta in 1769, lived there until 1819 then moved to Lewis where he now lives. He has no documentary evidence, and knows of no person whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his services. He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity excet the present, and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the Agency of any State. Sworn and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.

(signed) John Sims

To the seven several interrogatories prescribed by the War Department, and propounded by the said Justice, he (the declarant) made the following answers, viz.

1st. I was born in Culpepper County in the State of Virginia on the 12th Feb. 1755.

2nd. I have no record of my age, but remember to have seen it recorded in my father's Bible –

3rd. When called into service I was living in Augusta County in the State of Virginia, moved from there to Lewis County Va. in 1819 where I am now living.

4th. In the first tour of service I volunteered, in all the other tours I was drafted, except the tour in the Summer and Fall of the year 1781, when I substituted for John Robertson.

5th. At Point Pleasant seen Capt. Arbuckle who commanded the Fort, as a regular officer, seen also Gen'l. Hand, Col. Skillern, served under Col. Dickinson in South Carolina, and seen Genls. Gates Green, Morgan. Cols. Howard and [William] Washington. At Richmond seen Col. Stricker, Gen'l. Campbell. At York Town seen Gen'l. Washington, [Anthony] Wayne, Layette, [George] Weedon and many other officers whose names I have forgotten.

6th. I received a discharge from Capt. Jno. Hopkins, another from Dearing, and others signed by men whose names I have forgotten. they are all lost.

7th. I am known to Wm. Bennett and Job Houghton who reside in my neighborhood and can

testify to my character for veracity and their belief of my services as a revolutionary soldier.

[The following report is by District Attorney Washington G. Singleton who investigated many pensioners from Lewis and other counties of present West Virginia. For details see pension application S6111 of David W. Sleeth.]

John Sims aged 78. Served two years. a Pensioner of Lewis County

the evidence collected in reference to this Pensioner all went to prove that "Jno. Sims" had been dead for many years. it is thought unnecessary to report that [three or four illegible words] after it was taken. I fell in with the "John Sims" who is drawing a pension – I saw him at his home on the first day of July he is between fifty & sixty years old. his mind is exceedingly weak. almost an Ediot. his wife said that his mind had been impaired by a fall from a horse. I learned from this man's family that he had been deceived and imposed upon by James Bennett (member elect of the Virginia House of Delegates) who called at his house took him from home (from under the influence and advice of his family) and prevailed upon him to swear to a Declaration seting forth that he had been two years a soldier in the Revolutionary War. – that he Bennett had gotten him a pension and had retained one hundred and ninety five dollars of the money drawn [$240] on his certificate. We shall be able to prove by a number of Witnesses that Bennett knew all about this mans weak state of mind – as well as his age. Bennett has lived all his life in the same neighbourhood with Sims and has known him from his first recollection and must have known at the time he was engaged in procuring him a pension that he was not entitled.

Respectfully Reported. W. G Singleton Special Agent

NOTE: Col. John Eager Howard commanded the 2nd Maryland Regiment of the Maryland Continental Line, which did not include Virginia militiamen. There was no such battle near the Catawba River as described in Sims's declaration. The Southern Army under Gen. Horatio Gates proceeded to Camden SC where it were completely routed on 16 Aug 1780. Col. Dickenson was not present. Gen. Daniel Morgan did not command a regiment at Guilford Courthouse NC, having taken leave after his victory at Cowpens SC to recover his health.