

# **Revolutionary War Records in Virginia & Lineage Societies**

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Are you considering joining a lineage society pertaining to the Revolutionary War era? Here are some you may consider, along with some pointers:

- National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR/DAR), Washington, D.C.
  - Women over the age of 18 years, regardless of race, politics, religion, sexuality, etc.
  - Inquire by contacting a local chapter and expressing interest in membership – the NSDAR website has a chapter locator to find or locate your nearest chapter. The chapter will assist you with preparing your application and putting together the materials, collecting dues, etc. The prospective must be approved by at least 2 members in good standing before the application is submitted for verification.
  - Ancestor: must have served with unfailing loyalty (or by last known act) to the patriotic cause through military service, patriotic service, or civil service.
  - Website includes a database of patriots (only those through which members have joined).
- National Society Sons of the American Revolution (NSSAR/SAR), Louisville, KY
  - Men over the age of 18 years, regardless of race, politics, religion, sexuality, etc.
  - Inquire by contacting a state society and expressing interest in membership – the NSSAR website has a map of state societies with contact information for some officers and a request form for more information. The chapter will assist you with preparing your application and putting together the materials, collecting dues, etc. The prospective must be approved by at least 2 members in good standing before the application is submitted for verification.
  - Ancestor: must have served with unfailing loyalty (or by last known act) to the patriotic cause through military service, patriotic service, or civil service.
  - Website includes a database of patriots (only those through which members have joined).
- Children of the American Revolution (NSCAR/CAR), Washington, D.C.
  - All children under the age of 22 years, regardless of race, politics, religion, etc. Children between the ages of 18-22 years are eligible to transfer their membership to the SAR or DAR, following the respective guidelines for each society to apply.
  - The NSCAR website has a local society finder for prospective children to contact their nearest chapter/society for membership interest or assistance.
  - Ancestor: must have served with unfailing loyalty (or by last known act) to the patriotic cause through military service, patriotic service, or civil service.
- General Society Sons of the Revolution (GSSR/SR), Williamsburg, VA
  - All males “of good character” – senior and junior memberships available. Junior memberships are for males under the age of 18 years.
  - Unlike the SAR, applicants to the GSSR must prove an ancestor served as a military, naval, or marine officer in actual service (if militia service, must prove they were called into actual service, NOT through class rolls), or a descendant of a signer of the Declaration of Independence, or member of the Continental Congress or any officials appointed under such legislative bodies. Does not allow many forms of patriotic service and civil service that is recognized by the DAR and SAR.

- Contact the state society officers (contact information on their website) for interest in membership.
- Society of the Cincinnati
  - Invite-only membership (by a current member).
  - Can only be a descendant of a commissioned officer of the Continental or state lines who joined the original society – under their “Rule of 1854,” membership will be allowed to commissioned officers who were not original members of the society.
  - Only one direct male representative allowed per constituent society. Membership allowed through descendants of the eldest male posterity of each original member. Collateral branches are only allowed upon review of those “judged worthy of becoming its supporters and members.”
- Daughters of the Cincinnati, New York City, NY
  - Invite-only membership (by a current member).
  - Must be a descendant of a commissioned officer of the Continental or state line.
  - Unlike the Society of the Cincinnati, the Daughters will allow multiple representatives per constituent society to represent an eligible ancestor.
- National Society Daughters of the American Colonists (NSDAC/DAC), Washington, D.C.
  - Prospective members are to be recommended in writing by 2 chapter members and voted by the chapter. If accepted, the application process can begin. Their website contains a chapter locator for all the various state societies.
  - For women over the age of 18 years.
  - Must prove lineal descent of someone who was an actual resident of America when it was under a foreign government (as a colony) and served prior to 4 July 1776. This includes anyone in battle under colonial authority, all military and naval service of the colonies, members of legislative bodies, ministers, physicians, signers of the Declaration of Independence, took an oath to Great Britain, original land owners (not inherited), and certain immigrant groups (refer to their website: [Membership Eligibility \(nsdac.org\)](http://MembershipEligibility(nsdac.org))).
- Descendants of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence (DSDI), Philadelphia, PA
  - Must be a descendant of one of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence (their website includes a list of signers who have no descendants and reasons why certain claims of descent are erroneous).
  - All such descendants are eligible regardless of age – junior members must be under 18 years of age. Once reaching 18 years, junior members can upgrade to senior membership.
  - If eligible, fill out application form online at their website.

## **STARTING OUT THE PROCESS**

- Working up your lineage, prove as much of the life events for each person as much as possible (including birth and death dates and places (if possible for at least one place) and marriage(s)).
- For your perceived Revolutionary War-era ancestor:
  - Prove their birth date or at least a proof of age – you must be able to confirm your ancestor was of an eligible age to perform any kind of service during the years 1775-1783. When an exact date cannot be determined, a computed date can be estimated (i.e., “ante 1745”) through earliest known references (i.e., church records, deeds, tax lists, etc.).
  - Proof of death or a “last found” date/residence – you must be able to confirm your ancestor was alive when they performed any service!

- Prove marriage facts and establish familial relationships/associations, if possible. Not all marriages can be proven. If identity cannot be established, use “X X” as a placeholder. Familial associations are only necessary if tracking down ancestors with common names and general research is deemed difficult.
- Establish your ancestor’s place of residence (or places of residence) during the years 1770 to 1790, more specifically the years 1774-1784. This is required by DAR and SAR because service will almost always corroborate to the place of residence.
- Identify all conflicts ahead of submitting your research and application! Are there multiple persons of your ancestor’s name? Is there more than one person bearing your ancestor’s name where they resided during the war? If so, you need to address that conflicting evidence ahead of time!

#### EXAMPLE:

6. The said <u>Stephen Pugh</u>			at _____	was the biological child of
<u>Robert Pugh</u>	born <u>1 Apr 1795</u>		at <u>Grayson Co, VA</u>	
died at <u>Grayson Co, VA</u>	on <u>19 May 1865</u>		and his ( <u>1st</u> ) wife	
<u>Mary Thomas</u>	born <u>15 Apr 1802</u>		at <u>Grayson Co, VA</u>	
died at <u>bur Volney, Grayson Co, VA</u>	on <u>29 Feb 1876</u>		Married Date <u>23 Jan 1817</u>	
			at <u>Grayson Co, VA</u>	
7. The said <u>Mary Thomas</u>				was the biological child of
<u>Jonathan Thomas</u>	born <u>29 Nov 1762</u>		at <u>Orange Co, NC</u>	
died at <u>Grayson Co, VA</u>	on <u>13 Dec 1838</u>		and his ( <u>1st</u> ) wife	
<u>Patience Bourne</u>	born <u>18 Nov 1770</u>		at <u>St Martins Par, Louisa Co, VA</u>	
died at <u>Grayson Co, VA</u>	on <u>29 Sep 1854</u>		Married Date <u>6 Feb 1787</u>	
			at <u>Montgomery Co, VA</u>	
8. The said <u>Patience Bourne</u>				was the biological child of
<u>William Bourne</u>	born <u>23 Aug 1743</u>		at <u>Hanover Co, VA</u>	
died at <u>Grayson Co, VA</u>	on <u>8 Jun 1836</u>		and his ( <u>1st</u> ) wife	
<u>Rosamond Jones</u>	born <u>14 Feb 1750</u>		at <u>Hanover Co, VA</u>	
died at <u>Grayson Co, VA</u>	on <u>16 Mar 1821</u>		Married Date <u>1765</u>	
			at <u>Hanover Co, VA</u>	

**Above:** This sample lineage contains full dates and places. These dates are supported by Bible records, tombstones, a pension record, and marriage records. There is sufficient research establishing the life events for these persons to continue with the process of identifying any possible services for the 7<sup>th</sup> and/or 8<sup>th</sup> generations who were alive during the Rev War.

#### EXAMPLE:

<u>Robert M. Craighead</u>	born <u>c 1802</u>		at <u>VA</u>	
died at <u>Elk Fork, Pettis Co, MO</u>	on <u>p 1870</u>		and his ( <u>1st</u> ) wife	
<u>Nancy Hughes</u>	born <u>c 1811</u>		at <u>VA</u>	
died at <u>Elk Fork, Pettis Co, MO</u>	on <u>p 1860</u>		Married Date <u>27 Feb 1831</u>	
			at <u>Callaway Co, MO</u>	
7. The said <u>Robert M. Craighead</u>				was the biological child of
<u>Robert M. Craighead</u>	born <u>25 Sep 1772</u>		at <u>Bedford Co, VA</u>	
died at <u>Callaway Co, MO</u>	on <u>7 Dec 1857</u>		and his ( <u>1st</u> ) wife	
<u>Nancy Powell</u>	born <u>2 Feb 1776</u>		at <u>VA</u>	
died at <u>Callaway Co, MO</u>	on <u>7 Feb 1859</u>		Married Date <u>18 Nov 1792</u>	
			at _____	
8. The said <u>Robert M. Craighead</u>				was the biological child of
<u>John Craighead</u>	born <u>a 1746</u>		at _____	
died at <u>Franklin Co, VA</u>	on <u>a 4 Jul 1808</u>		and his ( <u>1st</u> ) wife	
<u>Jane Maxey</u>	born _____		at <u>VA</u>	
died at <u>Franklin Co, VA</u>	on <u>a 1791</u>		Married Date _____	
			at _____	

**Above:** This sample lineage contains fewer exact dates, with the exception of generation 7, which is established through tombstones. However, enough research has supplied estimated dates of events for both generations 6 and 8, as well as at least one place of an event for John and Jane (Gen 8). There is sufficient research to allow the research to continue for finding any possible services for John Craighead.

## **ESTABLISHING RESIDENCE (for 1774-1784)**

- Seek land records and land tax lists.
- If your ancestor did not own land, you may need to seek personal property tax lists (starting in 1782) or tithe lists for proof.
- Court orders and records, (available) vestry and parish registers and other church records, and will and probate records can also be used. For will and probate records, persons such as witnesses and appraisers can be inferred as residing in the same vicinity as the decedent or testator.
- Multiple documents may be necessary to establish residence and confirm identity (particularly if your ancestor bears a common name!)
- If your ancestor resided in more than one location during the war, you must document this migration as much as possible!

Remember, services will corroborate to where the individual resided during the war:

- Militia will always be local and on the county level. If your ancestor was eligible for muster and resided in Botetourt County, Virginia, during the war, they will only be found serving for that county's militia (and not another county). Larger counties will have multiple districts headed by captains of local militia companies – these can often correspond to tax lists in the final years of the war (1782-1783).
- Civil service appointments and patriotic services will always correspond to the county of residence. Civil service appointments such as sheriff, constable, tax collectors, etc., could only be performed by residents of that locality.
- State line service may be traced to a general locality, not always a specific county (sometimes may cull from multiple surrounding counties). Use E. M. Sanchez-Saavedra's *A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations in the American Revolution, 1774-1787* for assistance in determining any evidence on enlistment locations for the various regiments.
- Navy and marine service generally corresponds to localities within a short-distance to water or navigable bodies of water.

Also, note that if multiple men of the same name are found residing in a given county or locality during the war, the research should account for this conflicting evidence. You must resolve identity of the person performing the service in that time as well. Lineage societies do not grant or assign proof of service to a person on a "first come, first serve" basis. Keep in mind certain factors such as age and economic status when evaluating services. Elderly men would not be serving in the militia or militia if the company marched, and wealthier men were unlikely to enlist in a regular army as private soldiers (they would likely be commissioned officers or they would serve in a more patriotic-service fashion, being more likely to hire someone to serve in their place).

## WHERE TO START LOOKING FOR SERVICE?

### Federal Pensions

- Federal pensions are the easiest place to start, since declarations required stating age and residence at the time of the declaration, their residence during the war, and establishing their service by identifying officers, regimental information, and/or battles served.
- Widows' and heirs' pension declarations will give familial and genealogical details – both required proving their relationship to the deceased soldier or veteran through proof (i.e., certified copies of marriages, Bible records, etc.).
- Best place to start is on the Fold3 website (\$ - *subscription*), seeking the NARA, M804 collection (for U.S. Revolutionary War Pensions, 1800-1900). These can also be found on FamilySearch (*free website, requires setting up a profile*) and Ancestry (\$ - *subscription*).
- First federal pensions offered by acts of Congress in 1818. Widows and heirs eligible after acts of Congress in 1832.
- Many southern pension declarations have been transcribed on: revwarapps.org.
  - Their website also includes transcriptions of rosters and compiled rolls from various places. Scroll to the bottom of the home page to find these rosters, sorted by state.
- TIPS
  - Watch the pension numbers and what they mean (the letter corresponds to the last person to have been pensioned. The “100” in these examples is a sample number only):
    - S100 means the soldier (S) was pensioned. No widow or heirs applied thereafter.
    - W100 means the widow (W) was pensioned. It is possible her husband was also previously pensioned; other times, only the widow applied. Review the full file.
    - H100 means the heirs (H) were pensioned. It is possible the soldier was also pensioned, or the soldier and his widow were pensioned in addition to the heirs, or the widow and heirs were pensioned. Review the full file.
    - R100 means the pension was rejected. It could be the soldier's claim was rejected, or the soldier was pensioned but his widow or heirs were rejected. Review the full file. If a rejected pension is found, you must find out why the pension was rejected – not all rejected pensions can be used to prove service!
      - Those rejected due to failure to prove at least 6 months service (as was required) are still acceptable.
      - Those rejected due to fraud (many in what is now northern West Virginia were deemed fraudulent) are not acceptable. Service would need to be supplemented by a more contemporary record to the time of the war.
      - Those rejected due to failure to prove service cannot be accepted as proof – service would need to be supplemented by a more contemporary record to the time of the war.
      - Those rejected due to the type of service not being pensionable (i.e., militia, wagoners) may be accepted as proof.
  - Those who DID get pensioned will generally have a final pension payment voucher.
    - Seek the index on Fold3 – the “US, Final Payment Vouchers Index for Military Pensions, 1818-1864.” Those cards with an \* contain familial information.
    - Those vouchers for Delaware and Georgia have already been digitized.
    - Those vouchers for Virginia have been published by Alycon Trubey Pierce (2 volumes).
    - The other vouchers (outside DE and GA) are currently being digitized by the National Archives; no status can be provided at this time.

- Final payment vouchers will be signed off by the survivor of the pensioner. It can either be the widow, and if no widow, the surviving heirs (or heir(s) entitled). These can be of genealogical importance.

### **General Virginia Military Resources**

- John H. Gwathmey's *Historical Register of Virginia Men in the Revolution*
  - Do NOT use to verify any militia service from Augusta County, Virginia – the author used the Augusta County court martial minutes for this proof, which may actually prove your ancestor was fined for non-service. Please refer to Bevin J. Creel's *Selected Virginia Revolutionary War Records*, vol 2 (which is a transcription of the court martial minutes) to confirm why your Augusta County ancestor appeared in those records. The service may be used if he was acquitted; if he was fined (for non-service or failure to muster), service must be found *after* the date of the fine.
  - Gwathmey can be used for documenting proof of militia service. However, his book has noted examples of indexing multiple entries for state and Continental troops which actually belong to the same soldier (thereby creating the illusion that more than one person served in that capacity). Please use NARA, M246 or NARA, M881 to validate services in the state line or Continental service.
- Hamilton J. Eckenrode's *List of Revolutionary Soldiers of Virginia* (2 vols)
  - Eckenrode's books serve as an index to records of the Library of Virginia but, like Gwathmey above, his book falls short of that achievement and also makes some errors in identity. State and Continental service is best supplemented through NARA M246 or M881.
- NARA, M881, Compiled Military Service Records (for Rev War soldiers)
  - Index cards to the Revolutionary War rolls (NARA, M246) for each soldier.
  - Can be very helpful to scan the entire service regiment for a particular soldier.
  - Scan the whole record! Be wary of events such as the soldier dying in service, being reported AWOL, etc. Anyone who deserted the service cannot be issued that service!
  - Accessible through: Fold3 (\$), Ancestry (\$), FamilySearch (free)
- NARA, M246, Revolutionary War Rolls
  - Images of original documents and transcribed documents for each military organization (for those that survive)
  - Accessible through: Fold3 (\$), Ancestry (\$), FamilySearch (free)
- Virginia Revolutionary War Military Bounty Warrants and Preemption Warrants
  - Found on the Kentucky Secretary of State's website: [Revolutionary War Warrants Database - Secretary of State \(ky.gov\)](http://www.ky.gov/secretaryofstate/research/research.htm)
  - Warrants can be searched by veteran's name, warrant number, and immediate assignee. Images of the originals are scanned into the database.
- Louis A. Burgess, *Virginia Soldiers of 1776* (3 volumes)
  - Contains rosters of those entitled to bounty lands and also transcriptions of those receiving pensions.
- J. T. McAllister, *Virginia Militia in the Revolutionary War*
  - Contains some lists of militia soldiers, but will more often than not document the commissioned militia officers (ensign, lieutenant, captain, etc.).
- Margery H. Harding, *George Rogers Clark and His Men Military Records, 1778-1784*
  - Best resource for documenting militia service of anyone residing in the areas that are now Kentucky and Illinois. Contains many transcribed militia rolls.

- Bevin J. Creel, *Selected Virginia Revolutionary War Records*, 3 volumes (new copies available through Lulu, in print and eBook, at <https://www.lulu.com/spotlight/bjcnva>).
  - Volume 1 transcribes the Rev War “War Volumes” 1, 2, and 25, as well as including several petitions.
  - Volume 2 is a transcription of the Augusta County court martial minutes.
  - Volume 3 is a transcription of three volumes of the Audited Accounts volumes at the Library of Virginia.
- The Chesterfield Size Roll, September 1780
  - A compiled list of those men who were recruited into the State Line in September 1780 to rebuild the state’s army after the disastrous battle of Charleston in May 1780.
  - Transcription at: [B69 Chesterfield Size Roll \(revwarapps.org\)](http://revwarapps.org)
- Elizabeth Petty Bentley, *Virginia Military Records*
  - Culls from articles published in the *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy* periodical.
  - This book publishes those related to the Revolutionary War.
  - Other articles from the periodical, or those published since the release of this book, can be obtained through the website for the Virginia Genealogical Society (for members).
- Library of Virginia’s website: the Virginia Memory digital collections ([Virginia Memory - Digital Collections](http://www.liv.org/digitalcollections))
  - Revolutionary War Bounty Warrants
  - Revolutionary War Rejected Claims (claims for bounty land which were rejected for failure to serve a sufficient term of service)
  - Revolutionary War State Pensions
  - Governor’s Letters Received, Jun 1776 – Nov 1784
  - Digitized Military Resources
  - Revolutionary War Military Certificates
  - Revolutionary Public Service Claims (see section on patriotic service for more)
  - Petitions
- Bevin J. Creel’s website “Virginians in the Revolutionary War Era” ([varevwar.com](http://varevwar.com))
  - Contains a variety of indexes put together in various forms from his research reviewing the Audited Accounts and other Rev War-related resources at the Library of Virginia.
  - Lists of deserters from the following counties: Bedford, Buckingham, Halifax, Mecklenburg
  - Lists of deserters arranged by alphabetical order of surname (with sources indicated)
  - Lists of soldiers from State and Continental lines (with sources indicated)
  - Lists of soldiers from various county militias (with sources indicated)
  - Lists of African Americans listed in the Virginia Audited Accounts and other resources (with sources indicated – not a definitive list)
  - List of disaffected persons from various county resources (those accused of being Loyalists)
  - List of non-soldiers (those paid for patriotic services)
- Debbie Duay’s website “Researching Your Patriot Ancestor” ([www.learnwebskills.com](http://www.learnwebskills.com))
  - Includes many pages providing a step-by-step approach on documenting your lineage and tracing your Revolutionary War ancestors
  - Contains a page of links to many useful DAR links and databases, as well as general research repositories (<http://www.learnwebskills.com/patriot/links.htm>).
  - NOTE: as of late, in May 2024, some browsers have indicated security issues with this website. Firefox seems to have no issues with the website.
  - She has many helpful links for documenting service in all of the states for the Rev War (<http://www.learnwebskills.com/patriot/revservice.htm>).

- Noteworthy in the section for Virginia service is an every-name index to the personal property tax lists for 1783 (except for Chesterfield, Montgomery, and York counties). Can be a useful index if you are trying to locate your ancestor in Virginia in 1783.

## TIPS FOR PROVING MILITARY SERVICE

- All state line and Continental troops were entitled to bounty lands and pensions. Seek out such evidence if you have any questions trying to establish the identity of a person in any of these regiments. These include the Virginia half-pay pensions (on Fold3), state pensions (on Library of Virginia's website), and federal pensions. Bounty land claims are on Library of Virginia's website.
- If you cannot determine where a company of a state line regiment was recruited, seek other soldiers from that company who may have been pensioned.
  - Example (not historically accurate): if your ancestor John Richardson served under a Captain James Williams in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment and you cannot find proof of a pension or bounty land claim for Richardson, and cannot find where Richardson resided during the war – if you find that a Thomas Smith served in the same company at one point, under the said captain, and was pensioned and he declared that he resided in James City County, Virginia, when he enlisted, you can conclude that the recruitment for that company was around the vicinity of that county (whether within the county or in that particular region). There are exceptions to this rule, but you must track down the paper trail to prove such exceptions!
- Very few muster rolls of militia companies in Virginia survive from the war. Most evidence of militia service is through payment in the Audited Accounts.
- Seek proof of pay for militia service in the Audited Accounts (held by Library of Virginia – they are working to microfilm these now).
- NOTE: Some militia lists that do exist are actually class lists – these are rather a census of persons within a given district who were of the age to serve in the militia (may not necessarily be able-bodied). Class lists are *not* proof of actual service, but for the most part, these lists have still been accepted as proof of service for DAR, SAR, and CAR. Some known class lists include:
  - Charles T. Burton's *Botetourt County, Virginia: It's Men, 1780-1786* (note: this can only be used as service if the man's name appears under the column heading "M.D.," which stands for the military draft of 1782).
  - John Blankenbaker, *The Culpeper Classes*
  - "A List of Captain Edmund Baxter's Company and a True Return of There Classes," in *Pennsylvania Archives*, 5<sup>th</sup> Series, Vol 5, p 681 (note: this is entered erroneously among militia rolls for Chester Co, PA, but Baxter was a resident of Yohogania County, Virginia (later Washington Co, PA)).



## AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR MILITARY SERVICE

- Prior to 1777: all free males, hired servants, and apprentices between the ages of 16 and 50 years were required to enroll in the county militia, unless exempted.
- In 1777, all men aged 18 to 50 years were to enroll in their local militia. Those who were single and had no children were subject to draft into the Continental Line. These men were encouraged to volunteer or provide a substitute in order to avoid being drafted.
- By 1782, the Continental Line requirement was amended to apply to all able-bodied men at least 5' 4" in height and between the ages of 18 to 50 years.
- Refer to county court orders for local requirements on Quakers and Mennonites and their eligibility for service in the local militia or army.
- Source: *Backgrounds of the Selective Service*, vol. 11, part 14, pp. 273-274, 278-280, 321-322, 342-352, 373-375, 412-413

## PATRIOTIC SERVICE

Patriotic services regard to all services geared towards the patriotic cause or support of the American army or war efforts without serving in a military capacity. These include (but are not limited to):

- Serving as a delegate to the state legislatures (or any governing body, including the Continental Congress) or serving on local committees for war efforts, etc. (such as Committees of Safety, etc.)
- Furnishing supplies (generally claims for property provided, taken, or stolen by either side, American or British) –
  - These have been extensively published and/or microfilmed.
  - Janice Abercrombie & Richard Slatten, *Virginia Revolutionary Publick Claims* (3 vols)
    - These cover those which are found in the court order books for each county.
  - Public Service Claims on FamilySearch (in the FHL catalog: Virginia > Court Records > Public Service Claims Certificates, c 1780-1785) – these are arranged alphabetically, first by county, then by surname.
  - If your ancestor died between 1781-1783, you will need to find the original claim in the public service claims above on FamilySearch to determine the original date of the claim (and if it belongs to your ancestor or someone else).
- Paying taxes geared towards raising money for reimbursing war efforts or raising supplies (i.e., a “supply tax”)
  - The 1783 personal property tax in Virginia is the sole “supply tax” for most localities in Virginia. These are available through FamilySearch (use the FHL catalog and search for your county, then search for the personal property taxes under the “Taxation” category for each county).

- Index to the 1783 personal property tax (except for Chesterfield, Montgomery, and York counties) is available on Debbie Duay's website (<http://www.learnwebskills.com/patriot/revservice.htm>)
- Suffering depredation – generally furnishing a claim to a governing body for reimbursement for property destroyed or stolen by the armies (either side, American or British)
- Prisoners-of-war
- Taking an oath of allegiance (to the state government or to America, not the King!)
- Taking oaths of allegiance related to preemption and settlement warrants
  - In May and October 1779, Virginia's legislature passed laws allowing settlers to make legal claims on unpatented lands in the western counties of Virginia. It was the October 1779 law that required an oath of allegiance to the Commonwealth to be made before any warrants were issued for any such claims, therefore, any warrant issued after this date can be issued service under the implication an oath of allegiance was made (Source: *Hening's Statutes at Large*, X: 35-50, 177-180).
  - These preemption and settlement warrants were only issued in the counties in these four districts:
    - 1<sup>st</sup> District: Monongalia County, Yohogania County, Ohio County
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> District: Augusta County, Botetourt County, Greenbrier County
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> District: Washington County, Montgomery County
    - 4<sup>th</sup> District: Kentucky County (in November 1780, this county was dissolved and reformed as the "Kentucky District," essentially covering all the claims that later became the state of Kentucky in 1792. When the district was created, it consisted of three new counties: Lincoln, Fayette, and Jefferson).
  - The law allowed each settler who had settled on the land prior to 1 January 1778 and resided there for at least one year (or had raised a crop of corn) the maximum of 400 acres under the settlement right, and an additional 1,000 acres maximum adjoining their settlement under the preemption right.
  - Those who settled after 1 January 1778 were allowed to claim a maximum of 400 acres under the preemption right.
  - Although some of these preemption warrants were issued to women, the October 1779 legislation did NOT require women to take an oath of allegiance. **Therefore, any preemption warrants issued to women cannot be used as patriotic service.**
  - Although issued at the same time as Land Office Treasury Land Warrants, no legislation appears to show any requirement of taking an oath of allegiance for these Treasury Land Warrants. Therefore, land warrants cannot be used as patriotic service.
  - Seek out the "Settlement Preemptions" on the Kentucky Secretary of State's website: [Certificates of Settlement & Preemption Warrants - Secretary of State \(ky.gov\)](#)
    - Also: Kentucky Historical Society, *Certificate Book of the Virginia Land Commission 1779-1780*
    - Earl L. Core's *The Monongalia Story: A Bicentennial History, I: Prelude* (pp. 156-332, contains transcriptions of preemption warrants between 1779-1781, including areas now within Pennsylvania)

- Original preemption certificates from the Virginia Land Office are at the Library of Virginia (for certificate numbers 1-2738, years 1779-1785). Certificates 1-2132 are recorded in the Preemption Registers (these are on microfilm in the microfilm room at the Library of Virginia).

## CIVIL SERVICE

Civil service describes those positions on a local level (either city, township, borough, or county) which is an appointed position. Most of these appointments may require an oath (or multiple oaths) upon assuming the position. In Virginia, most civil service is found on the county level, mostly through court order minutes.

For Revolutionary War service, civil service is generally accepted in localities after the overthrowing of Lord Dunmore and his government in 1775; from this, local governments in the commonwealth adhered to the Continental Congress.

Such positions can include: Sheriff, Deputy Sheriff (or “Under Sheriff”), assessor, constable, jurors (both petit and grand), and road surveyors. Additionally, those persons who were hired to work and repair roads and bridges are also eligible for civil service (note: names of the general “hands,” as they were called, may often be omitted from county orders, but there are some localities who will list those persons who were reimbursed for their services within their court order books).

## **WHO IS LESS LIKELY TO HAVE SERVICE?**

### QUAKERS

- Quakers were active pacifists as they did not believe in taking up arms – they largely discouraged their members from participating in the war. Many monthly meetings even punished their own members for paying their fines for failing to appear at muster or even hiring a substitute to serve in their stead in the army!
- Quakers kept meticulous records (in both women’s and men’s monthly meeting records) – any questionable or punishable acts were often reported through a layered approach of appointing persons to meet with the subject, condemn their behavior, and report their findings. Anyone who did not repent their actions were subject to being brought before the monthly meeting to face further punishment; if no condemnation of their actions was taken by the subject, the meeting would disown that person from membership.
- Seek out the monthly meeting records if your ancestor was an active Quaker during the Revolutionary War. Typically, they will provide little in the way of any services favorable to the patriotic cause.
  - At most, many Quakers with any eligible service will have furnished supplies or paid a supply tax. Some may affirm (rather than swear) an oath of allegiance.

- Any Quakers who are found to have military service need to have documented proof they were punished by their monthly meeting for participation in such activities.

## ANABAPTISTS

- Dunkards and Mennonites (German/Swiss groups) were also pacifists against war efforts, much like the Quakers. Their populations in Virginia, however, were far fewer and in limited areas of the state (mostly Shenandoah Valley).
- They, too, would be limited in services to paying supply taxes or furnishing supplies.
- Seek court order books in the event anyone was punished for not attending muster or other actions related to supporting the patriotic cause. It is harder to seek church records in these groups to prove their allegiances.

## BAPTISTS

- Unlike Quakers, who were allowed by the commonwealth to “affirm” on legal records, Virginia did not recognize any other group from swearing an oath. Baptists fought multiple times in the 1770s for this yet were repeatedly rejected.
- Their numbers were largely in central, southside, and western Virginia – many in Bedford County, for instance.
- Due to their adherence in not swearing to oaths, many were questioned by local courts for being possibly inimical to the patriotic cause. Quite a few paid stiffer taxes as a result of their beliefs (not unlike Mennonites and other pacifists). Seek out the court order books for any court actions against such residents, particularly if they were called before court to have their allegiances questioned.
- There are those who were acquitted of charges in the courts and took an oath of allegiance – which does qualify as service.

## LOYALISTS

- Virginia had many strong Loyalist areas which ought to be recognized when doing research, in the event you may have a Loyalist-leaning ancestor.
- Norfolk’s shipbuilding and mercantile communities were known to be Loyalists (particularly the owner of the original ports which later became the Norfolk Naval Yard).
- Loyalist populations existed in large numbers on the Eastern Shore, central Virginia (particularly in Bedford County), and especially in southwestern Virginia, where government jurisdiction was much thinner.
- Seek the court order books for anyone deemed inimical to the patriotic cause and anyone who was imprisoned as a result.

## Special Research Groups

### WOMEN

- Women could not own property unless they were widows (who inherited property of any type, real or personal, from their spouses) or if they were legally declared *femme covert*s by court (or given specific jurisdiction of property through a male family member, generally their father).
- As a result, married women would not be reimbursed for furnishing supplies – any property of the wife by way of dower would automatically be her husband's property.
- General examples of women contributing to the war efforts:
  - Furnishing supplies – generally claims made by and paid to widows of estates (note: if the claim was paid to an estate, such as *Thomas Johnson's estate*, lineage societies will not recognize the claim to any one specific person. Service is assigned to a specific identity by name).
  - Paying supply taxes – in Virginia, this is generally the 1783 personal property tax (which also served as a supply tax). Very limited examples of earlier "supply" taxes exist in Virginia during the war otherwise (such as continental taxes in Henry and Westmoreland counties in 1780).
  - Seeking reimbursements ("suffered depredation") for estates destroyed or property taken/stolen by the army
- Wealthier women and women of status (regardless of marriage status) may have greater local influence in assisting in patriotic efforts. An example of this is the Ladies' Association, which was a national effort by wives of multiple leading men, to raise clothing and provisions for the army. In Virginia, Martha Washington and Martha Jefferson were examples of women who participated.
- Women on the frontier may be identified through interviews and depositions as having assisted in efforts protecting/guarding forts.
  - Hearsay evidence from descendants and persons who did *not* witness the event is not acceptable! The person must be directly named in the record and the source must be someone who was present at the event.
  - The Draper collections are a very useful resource of this information.
- Some more specific examples exist through various records found in daybooks and the audited accounts. Be careful when trying to link these to anyone by name as they often do not provide enough identifying information.
  - For example, there is a list of 54 women who were paid for making shirts for the army in 1779 in Virginia, as by a daybook at the Williamsburg Public Store in August 1779. This is held by the Library of Virginia (RG 2, Williamsburg Public Store, Commissary of Stores Daybooks 1775-1780, Book 7), and also on microfilm at the John D. Rockefeller Library, Williamsburg, VA.

## ELDERLY RESIDENTS

- Very unlikely to have taken arms in a militia or regiment which required marching (most places had restrictions for anyone over an eligible age or who were not able-bodied from marching)
- Most likely to have contributed in a patriotic fashion:
  - Seek court orders for specific examples, if any, whether patriotic or civil service.
  - Paying supply taxes
    - NOTE: pay attention to court orders! Persons who were very elderly were often exempted from paying local taxes because they could not labor on their farms. If anyone was exempted from paying taxes (whether for that year or for the rest of their lives, due to infirmity and/or age), they would not be paying a supply tax!
  - Furnishing supplies

## FREE BLACKS/ENSLAVED PERSONS

- Enslaved persons often did not partake in the American cause of the war – there was no guarantee of their freedom if they did. The British army did recruit in areas where there was enslaved labor and promised freedom to anyone who did serve.
- There are still examples of enslaved men who still served in the military – most of the time, they were hired out by their masters or served alongside them. Not all of them received their freedom after the war (only select cases).
- There were free Blacks who did serve in the war – there is a number of them who lived long enough to receive state and federal pensions. These can be the best resources for learning about their life stories and any genealogical information.
- Many state libraries and archives, and other historical repositories, are dedicating large amounts of resources and time (largely with the efforts of volunteers) to digitize and index all of their records which pertain to or contain information relating to free Blacks and enslaved persons. The Library of Virginia is the largest source for Virginia's records.
- Seek out the Virginia Untold: The African American Narrative on the Library of Virginia website for many helpful resources and links (<https://lva-virginia.libguides.com/virginia-untold>)
  - Refer to the “Related Resources” for an extensive collection of statewide resources (<https://lva-virginia.libguides.com/virginia-untold/additional-projects>)
- The DAR website includes a database called the “Patriots of Color” database, containing an index of identified persons of color, enslaved, free, and Native Americans who have service ([https://services.dar.org/Public/DAR\\_Research/search\\_poc/?Tab\\_ID=14&Tab\\_ID\\_Sub=8&Action=search](https://services.dar.org/Public/DAR_Research/search_poc/?Tab_ID=14&Tab_ID_Sub=8&Action=search)).
  - Contains searches by state/resource or by surname. Note: for persons without a surname, their first name will serve as their surname. Each entry will include sources, including links if available. Record copies can be ordered when the document is not available through a link.
- The DAR website also includes links to the “Forgotten Patriots” collection, which was an index published in 2008 (874 pages) outlining those minority patriots who had been

identified through that time. Since 2011, the published *Forgotten Patriots: African American and American Indian Patriots in the Revolutionary War* has been available as a free PDF download (<https://www.dar.org/library/research-guides/forgotten-patriots>).

- The DAR launched in 2020 the *E Pluribus Unum Educational Initiative* to increase awareness of underrepresented Revolutionary War patriots, including African Americans and Native Americans, as well as female patriots. This effort is ongoing.
- The DAR also has the “Patriot Records Project Index,” which is a collection of the microfilm rolls which have been digitized by the DAR library (from the collection they held in their Seimes collection). While many are available through the FamilySearch catalog, there are also some collections which are also copies of collections from state archives, such as the Library of Virginia

([https://services.dar.org/Public/DAR\\_Research/search/?Tab\\_ID=14&Tab\\_ID\\_Sub=3](https://services.dar.org/Public/DAR_Research/search/?Tab_ID=14&Tab_ID_Sub=3)).

- The Patriot Records Project Index is a volunteer-led effort by DAR members to index the digitize these microfilm rolls so that they can be searched by name.
- The search can be restricted by the microfilm collection.
- The efforts are still underway, but many collections are currently available. For Virginia, these include public claims collections, as well as Rev War rolls.
- The images are viewable to the public – they cannot be printed. Copies can be ordered through the DAR library.
- This index also includes women, Native Americans, free Blacks, and enslaved persons whose names have been indexed. Can be a helpful resource if trying to determine if someone may be found in a particular collection.