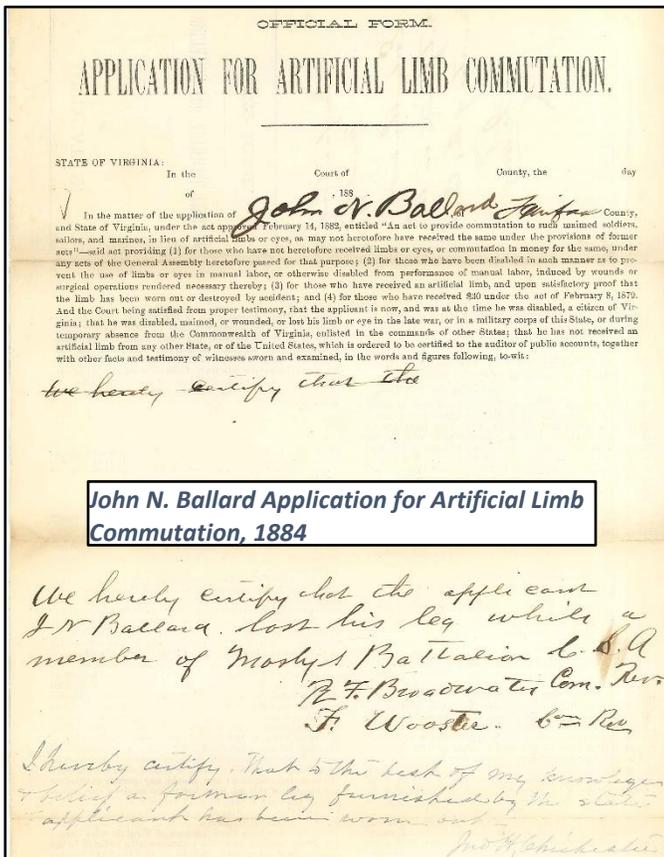




The year 2017 marks Fairfax County's 275<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – check out [www.fairfax275.com](http://www.fairfax275.com) for a calendar of upcoming events this spring, all celebrating the County's historic birthday!

As veterans' welfare continues to be in the public eye, this month's edition of *Found in the Archives* re-examines Virginia's first, true social-welfare program and public pension plan: Confederate Veterans' pensions. Fairfax Circuit Court maintains a large collection of "aid and pension applications" which highlight the breadth of need that veterans, their widows and other Confederate war-time workers faced after the War's end. Our documents also show how the pension system evolved, through various legislative acts, as The Commonwealth's finances improved during the Reconstruction and how pensioners' needs changed as they aged.

In 1867, the Commonwealth of Virginia began its first Confederate veteran aid program, offering artificial limbs to disabled veterans who had lost a limb as a result of war-time injuries. An Act in 1872 allowed for artificial legs to be provided to veterans, and an amendment to this Act also allowed African American veterans and 'employees' to receive legs. The very next year, in 1873, Virginia offered "commutations" (one- time payments) to veterans whose artificial limbs were badly-fitting or unusable. Veterans who had never received an artificial limb were also eligible for commutations. Officially called *Artificial Limb Commutations*, these payments were eventually offered to veterans whose wounds completely disabled or paralyzed their limbs but did not result in amputations. Further Acts in 1876 and 1882 provided aid for veterans who couldn't perform manual labor owing to wounds wholly--



or partly-- disabling their limbs or any part of their body. These “qualifying wounds” included loss of eyesight.



*John Newton Ballard, courtesy of Stonewall*

John Newton Ballard first applied for an Artificial Limb Commutation in 1882. Born in 1839 in Albemarle County, but raised in Fairfax County, Ballard served in several different Confederate units, and was wounded multiple times. Ballard re-entered service after each wound, and was finally assigned to Colonel John Mosby’s unit. Under Mosby’s command, Ballard was shot in the leg, in a skirmish at Ewell’s Chapel in Prince William County. His leg was so badly crushed that it had to be amputated. Nonetheless, he re-joined his unit and served on Mosby’s staff until the end of the War. His application states that ‘a former leg furnished by the State to applicant has been worn out.’ This application was not granted, and it appears that Ballard applied for a commutation once more in 1884. Witness

statements written in support of Ballard’s application give further detail: his leg was missing from 3 inches below the knee, he received his first prosthetic leg in 1871 and he had received no other form of governmental support at the time of his application. Ballard also wrote a detailed account of his wartime service, to add more weight to his claim.

We do not know if Ballard received the commutation he applied twice for, but we do know Ballard was busy after the War. Ballard became Commissioner of Revenue for South District, evidenced by our record of him submitting birth lists in the Register of Births for 1892 in his capacity as Commissioner. As Commissioner, Ballard would have earned a salary exceeding the maximum income allowed under the pension acts, which may explain why he is not on our Pension Rolls which cover 1901-1925. Commissioner Ballard died in October 1922 and is buried in the City of Fairfax Cemetery.

Another Act passed in 1884 superseded the *Artificial Limb Commutations with Aid to Citizens of Virginia Wounded and Maimed during the Late War*. This Act provided \$60 to veterans with generally disabling wounds, and \$60 to veterans for each limb or eye lost. However, realizing that a one-time payment would not provide permanent relief for the many disabled veterans

who couldn't support themselves or their dependents, the General Assembly passed the first Confederate Pension Act in 1888. This Act allowed a wounded veteran to apply for an annual pension, if his total annual income was less than \$300, and his personal and real property was valued at less than \$1,000. Widows whose husbands had died during the war, who remained unmarried and whose income and property values met the same eligibility thresholds, were also entitled to apply.

[OFFICIAL FORM.]  
**APPLICATION OF SOLDIER, SAILOR OR MARINE FOR A PENSION.**

I, Fenton Dove, a native of the State of Virginia, and now a citizen of Virginia, resident at Fairfax in the county (or city) of Fairfax in said State of Virginia, and who was a soldier from the State of Virginia in the war between the United States and the Confederate States, do hereby apply for aid under the act of the General Assembly entitled "An act to give aid to soldiers, sailors, and marines of Virginia, maimed or disabled in the war between the States, and to the widows of Virginia soldiers, sailors and marines who lost their lives in said war in the military service." And I do solemnly swear that, while in the discharge of my duty in the service of the Confederate States, as a member of Company A (Seaboard Troop) 4th Va Cav.

on or about the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of May, 1862, I was wounded in the battle of London Bridge Bridge Point on road Robinson's Command at 110 tons

and that from the effects of such wound I was disabled, as follows: The muscles of the left hand extending around palm to the first bone of the little finger were severed by a sabre cut which incapacitated him from using said hand - right hand & breast also being injured & a bullet wound in the right breast also a sabre wound through right arm. He is also suffering with loss of use of both hands in the line of duty in the army & has become very nervous & also injured on right hand & breast of his arm annually. I further swear that I do not hold any national, State, or county office which pays me in salary or fees over three hundred dollars per annum; nor have I an income from any other source which amounts to these hundred dollars; nor do I own in my own right, nor does my wife own, property of the assessed value of more than one thousand dollars; nor do I receive aid or a pension from any other State or from the United States; and that I am not an inmate of any soldiers' home.

I do further swear that the answers given to the following questions are true:

1st. What is the applicant's age? Ans. 43

2d. In what battle or combat, or under what circumstances was the applicant wounded? Ans. In a sabre charge against Federal infantry behind a stone fence.

3d. What was the precise nature of the wound received? Ans. These stated above.

4th. What limb, if any, did the applicant lose by reason of said wound? What eye, if any, did he lose? Ans. Loss of its use as above stated.

5th. If no limb or eye was so lost, what is the precise nature of the disability occasioned thereby? Ans. Disability as above stated.

6th. Is it total? Ans. Yes, taking all together.

(e) Is it partial? and, if so, to what extent does it disable him from manual labor? Ans.

Given under my hand this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of May, 1888 Fenton Dove  
Dove

In 1888, Fenton Dove applied for a pension under the new Act. Born in 1845, Dove was just 17 when he joined Company A of the 14<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry. An ardent Confederate, he signed the Secession Poll List for Fairfax Court House at just 16 (as a minor, Dove would not have been of legal voting age). Shortly after joining-up, Dove received several disabling wounds: 'The muscles and tendons near the wrist of the left hand extending around ... to the first bone of the little finger, was severed by a sabre cut,' he had a bullet wound to the right arm and right breast, and was injured in the right knee-joint.

**Fenton Dove Pension Application, 1888**

Dove claimed that his left hand was so severely damaged that it was completely incapacitated. Despite these wounds, he married twice and had a daughter, Mary. Fairfax Circuit Court has the marriage license for Dove's second marriage to Rebecca Hitchcock in 1886 and the license lists that he was a farmer. Without modern machinery, farming was difficult work, which means that Dove's other injuries didn't cause him total disability. We don't know if Dove was granted a pension, as our rolls only begin in 1901. Fenton Dove died of blood poisoning in 1897.

Revisions in 1900 to the Pension Act allowed veterans suffering from old age to apply. Widows whose husbands died after the war, and whose annual income was less than \$100, were also

eligible to apply for relief. This Act dramatically increased the number of Confederate pensioners and, therefore, added to the strain on Virginia’s recovering economy.

In 1902, the General Assembly had to respond by placing more severe restrictions on income eligibility. Reducing the asset cap by half, veterans and war-bereaved widows could now earn no more than \$150 per year, or have more than \$500 worth of real estate and chattels. In addition to this, widows whose husbands had died since the war had to have been married to their Confederate Soldier before May of 1866.

Nonetheless, in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, in several, subsequent Acts, the General Assembly did begin expanding groups of pension-eligible Virginians, who had participated in the War effort. For instance, in 1908, former Confederate nurses, known as “matrons,” were included. Unlike the widows, the matrons had to be married to receive their pension. A further addition was the introduction of one-time disbursements for veterans’ funeral expenses (\$25).

Inching closer to World War I, Virginia was still paying for the Civil War’s lasting effects. A 1912 Act allowed women who had been widowed, and then remarried to yet another Confederate veteran and widowed again, to apply for pension benefits. Furthermore, the required dates of marriage for widows eligible for a Confederate Pension also changed as time progressed.

General Assembly Legislative Action	Widow had to have been Married.....
The 1912 Act	Before May 1868
The 1918 Act	Before May 1870
The 1922 Act	Before May 1877
The 1924 Act	Before December 31, 1882
The 1926 Act	Before 1886
The 1927 Act	Before 1890

One example from the Clerk’s records America E. Ashford, whose husband served in Company D of the 17<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry, making her an eligible Confederate Widow. Ashford’s husband died in 1891, and Mrs. Ashford is on our Pensions Rolls from 1901. America Ashford received the minimum pension, as her husband died after the war. Widows who lost their husbands during the war received \$15 more per year until 1918, when both categories of widow were made equal.

Years	America E. Ashford	William H. Trammell
1901	\$5 – paid quarterly	\$6 – paid quarterly
1902	\$25	\$30
1904	\$23.75	\$28.50
1906	\$25	\$30

1912	\$25	\$36
1914	\$30	\$43.20
1916	\$33	\$50
1919	\$50	\$75
1920	\$60	\$100
1922	\$57	\$97.50
1923	\$76	\$130

A good contrast between Mrs. Ashford, and another veteran, William H. Trammell who had also served under Colonel John Mosby, gives some context to the Pension Program's impact.

Trammell served in Mosby's Company A of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Virginia

Cavalry. Born in 1846, he, like Fenton Dove, was 17 years old when he enlisted in 1863.

Trammell was wounded at Kabletown, West Virginia, in November 1864, during a fight against Captain Richard Blazer's Scouts (part of the Army of the Shenandoah). Though this application is from 1914, Trammell *is* on our Pensions Rolls from 1901.

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA.

### CONFEDERATE PENSION APPLICATION

I, the undersigned, respectfully apply to Fairfax County, Virginia, for a Pension as a  
 (.....) of a Confederate soldier, and submit the following facts:  
 (.....) If widow so state.

Name of Soldier (or husband)..... *William H. Trammell*  
 Command to which he belonged..... *Col. John P. Mosby*  
 Name of Captain and Colonel..... *Capt. Foster*  
 When enlisted..... *Feb. 11, 1863*  
 How long resided in Fairfax County..... *Call many years*  
 Present residence..... *Wade St. Alexandria*  
 Present occupation or employment..... *Daily Labor*  
 Property owned..... *Nothing*  
 Age of applicant and nature of disability..... *Born May 21, 1846 - Captured*  
 Refer to.....  
 State any other facts bearing upon record as a Soldier, or present condition of Applicant..... *Was wounded in the Blazer fight and just to cause rheumatism*

Name of Applicant..... *William H. Trammell*  
 P. O. Address..... *Hendrix, Va.*  
 Date..... *Jan 30th 1914*

**William H. Trammell Pension Application, 1914**

FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA.

### CONFEDERATE PENSION APPLICATION

I, the undersigned, respectfully apply to Fairfax County, Virginia, for a Pension as a  
 (.....) of a Confederate soldier, and submit the following facts:  
 (.....) If widow so state.

Name of Soldier (or husband)..... *John P. Ashford*  
 Command to which he belonged..... *Col. John P. Mosby*  
 Name of Captain and Colonel..... *Capt. Barber and Col. Mosby*  
 When enlisted..... *May 8th 1864*  
 How long resided in Fairfax County..... *Call many years*  
 Present residence..... *117th Ave. S. Alexandria near Washington*  
 Present occupation or employment..... *None*  
 Property owned..... *Nothing*  
 Age of applicant and nature of disability..... *Age 70 - near blindness & deaf tooth*  
 Refer to..... *Dr. F. W. Barber has told me about my disability*  
 State any other facts bearing upon record as a Soldier, or present condition of Applicant..... *I have no support other than my daughter and in my work & income*

Name of Applicant..... *Mar. Barber*  
 P. O. Address..... *Shelburne, Va.*  
 Date..... *January 21st 1914*

**America E. Ashford Pension Application, 1914**

William Trammell suffered from rheumatism, which put him in the total disability owing to old age category. This entitled him to twice the amount awarded to veterans with partial disability owing to old age. Veterans with partial to total blindness or loss of one or more limbs received a greater sum. In 1923, a pension based on total blindness and loss of two limbs was \$260 annually.



*William H. Trammell Gravestone*

America Elizabeth Ashford died in 1928. William H. Trammell died in 1929 and is buried in the Confederate Cemetery within the City of Fairfax Cemetery (n. b. the birthdate on his gravestone is wrong).

The Confederate commutation, aid and pension processes in Virginia relied on County Circuit Courts to collect applications, review them, and to accept or deny the applications. The Circuit Court Clerk collected applications, and certified the list of applicants, one of which was sent to the Judge, one sent to the local Pension Board and one posted on the courthouse door.

From 1888 to 1900, County Judges decided pension eligibility. In 1900, the pension act required counties to elect a five-person Pension Board to determine eligibility and send applications to the Virginia Pension Board for further examination. In 1902, Judges became the deciding authorities again, and the County Pension Board's purpose was relegated to assessing each applicant's eligibility and passing the Board's recommendations to the deciding Judge. Judges examined applications, determined eligibility and made an Order to Certify or Order to Disallow, any claim. The Clerk then sent a list of allowed and certified pension claims to the State Pension Board, and, later, to the Auditor of Public Accounts.

The local Pension Board's Commissioners' other duties were to report the deaths of pensioners and discover and report pensioners who no longer met eligibility criteria, so that their names were removed from the State Pension Rolls, so that no pension was overpaid.

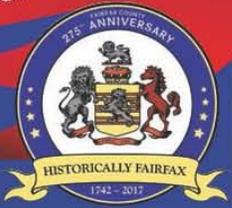
In 1958, the Federal Government also began issuing pensions to Confederate veterans and widows. The last Virginia Confederate veteran died in 1959; Virginia and the Federal Government continued to pay pensions to widows and unmarried children into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2009, Virginia Code §51.1 - 900 (governing Confederate pensions) was repealed and Virginia Confederate pensions ceased.

*For more information on these and other records held at the Fairfax Circuit Court Historic Records Center, please call 703-246-4168 or email [historicalrecords@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:historicalrecords@fairfaxcounty.gov).*

**Sign up** for *Found in the Archives*, the monthly newsletter of the HRC:

[http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/courts/circuit/historical\\_records.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/courts/circuit/historical_records.htm)

*Save the Date! June 17, 2017*  
HISTORIC FAIRFAX COUNTY COURTHOUSE



# Celebrate FAIRFAX COUNTY'S 275<sup>TH</sup> Birthday!

Saturday, June 17, 2017

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Historic Fairfax Courthouse

The day's events, which are free and open to the public, will include:

- Family-friendly activities
- Entertainment
- History Exhibits
- Living History
- Performances

...and more!

Visit [www.Fairfax275.org](http://www.Fairfax275.org)  
for more information.



A Fairfax County, Va., publication



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call 703-324-5421 or 703-449-1186 (TTY).