

FOUND IN THE ARCHIVES, no. 14 – November 2015

Fairfax Circuit Court Historic Records Center



Greetings! In *Found in the Archives*, the Fairfax Circuit Court Historic Records Center seeks to highlight interesting and unique documents in our custody.

In this edition, we will examine the court's holdings of Confederate pension applications.

Some of the lesser known documents we have here at the Fairfax Circuit Court Historic Records Center include pension records for Confederate soldiers who lived in Fairfax County. Civil War pension applications were written forms submitted for monetary support from the government for soldiers injured in the Civil War. However, unlike Union soldiers, who were paid by the federal government, Confederate soldiers had to petition their state of residence for compensation. Confederate pension applications have not been as thoroughly studied as those of their Union counterparts.

The Commonwealth of Virginia pension applications for Fairfax County soldiers, which are housed here at the Fairfax Circuit Court Historic Records Center, provide insight into the Confederate pension application process. Soldiers first submitted the application to the Fairfax Court. It was then sent from the courthouse to the Office of the Auditor of Public Accounts in Richmond. Decisions about accepting or denying a pension were made at the state level and any compensation paid out of state funds. The state kept a file of all applicants who submitted applications, but the initial applications with the letters certifying the legitimacy of the pensioners' claims were kept at each county courthouse. As a result, the HRC holds approximately 800 Confederate-pension era applications and corresponding documents.

Interestingly the pension applications themselves change from year to year. Below are two pension applications (for Landon Carter and Joseph Crouch, respectively). The application for Landon Carter from 1886 is an earlier version of the Confederate pension application than Joseph Crouch's application, which was certified two years later, in 1888.

Landon Carter's application includes not only an official form, but also a letter from G. A. Gordon, testifying to Carter's service and involvement in the Battle of Ball's Bluff, where he was wounded in the arm; and the Battle of Gettysburg, where he was wounded in the groin and pelvis.

OFFICIAL FORM.

Application for Aid to Citizens of Virginia Wounded and Maimed during the late War.

Virginia:

IN THE _____ COURT OF _____ COUNTY,
_____ 1886.

Upon the application of _____ for aid under an act of the General Assembly, approved February 25, 1884, entitled "An act to give to the citizens of Virginia wounded and maimed during the late war, while serving as Soldiers or Marines."

The Court having carefully considered the written application of the said _____ verified by his oath, and the evidence adduced in support of said application, is of opinion that the said _____ is entitled to aid under said act, and directs the said application and all the evidence in the case to be certified to the Auditor of Public Accounts.

[Here insert the application and evidence.]

April 19th 86. I certify that I have this day carefully examined the Applicant - Private Landon E. Carter of Co "C" 87th Va Infantry C.S.A., & find that he is permanently disabled from what was a serious wound rec'd at the battle of Gettysburg, the ball entering just above Poyparts Ligament, left side & passing out a little below the crest of the Ilium (posteriorly) by which he is unable to discharge the duties devolving upon him as farmer. There is also shortening of corresponding leg & he is both lame & suffers pain upon taking exercise. He also recieved a severe & painful wound in left arm at battle of Balls Bluff. It is my opinion that the said Applicant is deserving of aid under the above act of the Assembly.

W.D. McWhorter, J.C.C.
The Co to which the above applicant belonged was commanded by Capt E. Berkeley. ~~He never~~ & that he has never rec'd any aid from any source - W.D. McWhorter

Sworn to *W.D. McWhorter* April 19th 86

Full name of applicant,
Residence,
Post-Office address,

A copy—Teste: _____ Clerk.

AUDITOR'S OFFICE OF VIRGINIA. Received and filed the _____ day of _____, 1886.

Landon E. Carter, Confederate Pension Application, 1886

Richmond Va.

April 19th / 86

To Morton Mayse

Auditor

Richmond Va

I

certify that Landon E. Carter was a
member of Co "C" 8th Va Infantry and
was wounded at the ^{Battle of} Gettysburg July
3rd / 63.

L. A. Gordon

Sworn to 19 April 86
P. M. Kincheloe

Landon E. Carter, Confederate Pension Application, Corresponding Letter, 1886

Letters certifying the pensioner's time in the military had to be sworn and signed by the Clerk of the Court, who would then send them to the Auditor of Public Accounts, along with witness letters from fellow soldiers and commanders who swore the pensioner was in the military during the Civil War.

Joseph Crouch's application from 1888 indicates a slight change in the form. Crouch indicated that he had been injured in the Battle of Gettysburg – more specifically, he served in Company H, 15th Virginia Cavalry under William H. Brawner and J. C. Kincheloe, and during their retreat, he was seriously injured pulling wagons out of the mine, resulting in a "full body injury".

You can see Crouch's application below.

APPLICATION OF SOLDIER, SAILOR OR MARINE FOR A PENSION.

I, Joseph Crouch, a native of the State of Virginia, and now a citizen of Virginia, resident at Clifton in the county (or city) of Stafford 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. 15th Va. Cavalry C. S. A. commanded by Capt. W. J. Brewer of C. Nicholas on or about the 3rd day of July 1865, I was wounded in the battle of disabled whilst in the discharge of my duties on the retreat from Gettysburg, Pa. and that from the effects of such wound I was disabled, as follows: I was lifting the wagons out of the mire in doing so I lifted so hard I seriously injured myself and that by reason of such wound and disability I am now entitled to receive, under said Act, the sum of fifteen dollars 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 three 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. 55
- 2d. In what battle or combat, or under what circumstances was the applicant wounded? Ans. In the retreat from Gettysburg Pa. I was seriously disabled as aforesaid
- 3d. What was the precise nature of the wound received? Ans. _____
- 4th. What limb, if any, did the applicant lose by reason of said wound? What eye, if any, did he lose? Ans. None - only disabled
- 5th. If no limb or eye was so lost, what is the precise nature of the disability occasioned thereby? Ans. Slight internal - disability over entire body especially in lower part of stomach
- 6th. Is it total? partial
- (a) Is it partial? and, if so, to what extent does it disable him from manual labor? Ans. From working hard, without complete prostration

Given under my hand this 18 day of June 1888 Joseph Crouch

I, _____, Judge of the _____ Court for the _____ of _____ do certify that _____, whose name is signed to the foregoing application, personally appeared before me in open court, and, having the said application read and fully explained to him, as well as the statements and answers therein made, he the said _____ made oath before me that the said statements and answers are true.

Given under my hand this _____ day of _____, 18 _____

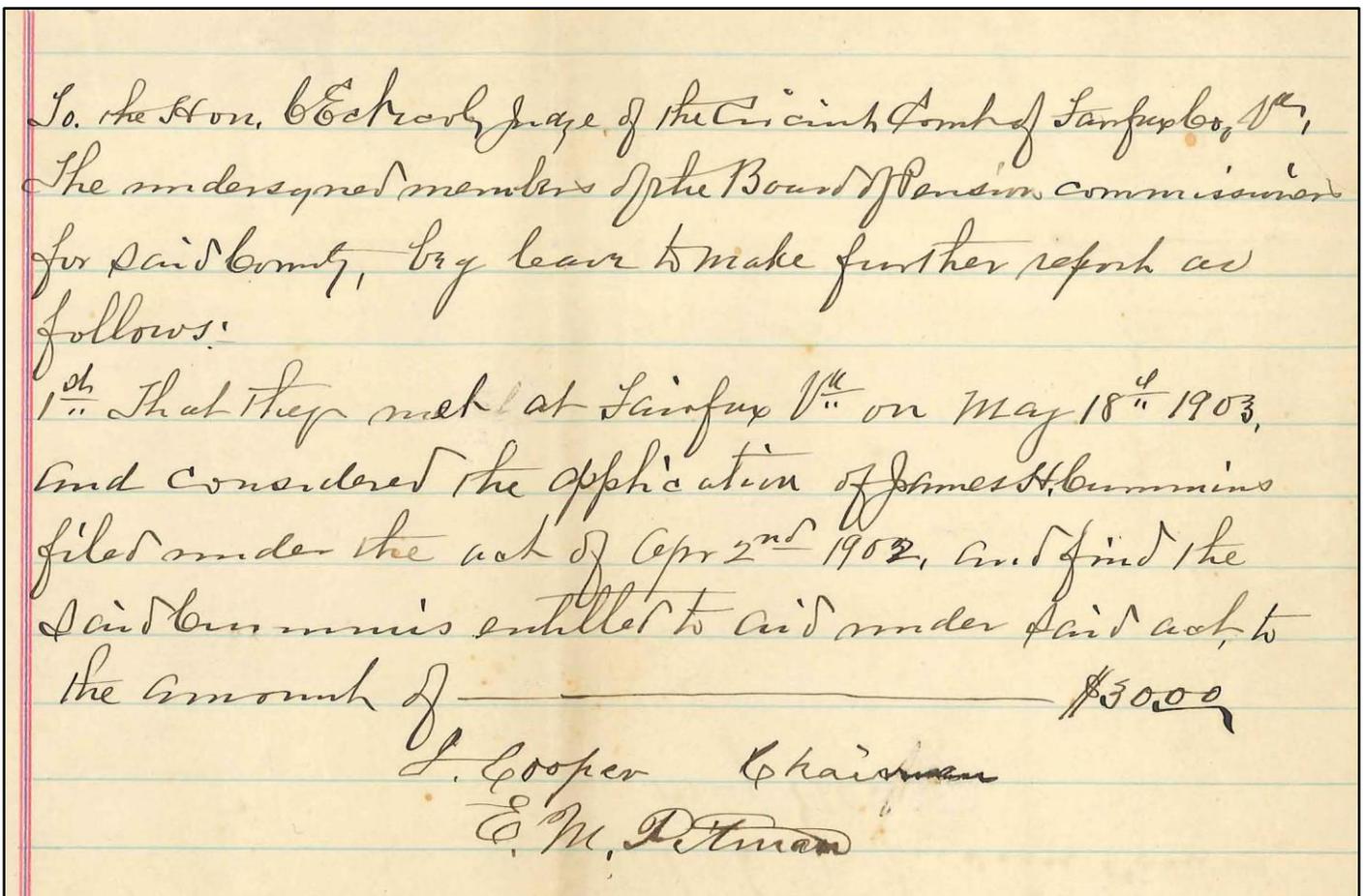
VIRGINIA, _____ of _____, To-wit: I, _____, Clerk of the _____ Court of the _____ of _____ do certify that the claim made by _____ in the foregoing paper has been adjudged just, and sustained by the proofs, by the Hon. _____, judge of the said court.

In testimony whereof, I hereto set my hand and affix the seal of said court this _____ day of _____, 18 _____

The Civil War pension files we have at the HRC can be used for many purposes. Those interested in local history benefit from having the records at the court. Repositories such as the National Archives only have pension records for Union soldiers; as a result, researchers interested Confederate soldiers must find local institutions which house these records. Along with our records here at the court, the City of Fairfax Regional Library has the microfilm of the records held in Richmond.

Patrons can also use these documents for genealogical research. The pension applications include widow's applications and information on disability, residence, age, and other family members. Of course, these documents are invaluable to Civil War historians, especially those studying the Confederacy post-war or local Civil War history in Fairfax. Many of the applications include information on the soldiers' military engagements.

The pension application of James H. Cummings would be especially fascinating to those studying John Singleton Mosby, "the Grey Ghost," who led the famous "Mosby's Raiders." In the pension records, Mosby's outfit is referred to as the "Partisan Rangers."



To the Hon. E. C. Hoyle Judge of the Circuit Court of Fairfax Co., Va.
The undersigned members of the Board of Pension Commissioners
for said County, by leave to make further report as
follows:

1st That they met at Fairfax Va on May 18th 1903,
and considered the application of James H. Cummings
filed under the act of Apr 2nd 1902, and find the
said Cummings entitled to aid under said act, to
the amount of _____ \$5000

J. Cooper Chairman
E. M. Pittman

James H. Cummings, Board of Pension Commissioners, List of Persons Approved, 1903

James H. Cummings was a member of Mosby's 43rd Battalion, and his pension records can be found at the Virginia Room at the City of Fairfax Regional Library. Cummings was a private in Company A of Mosby's Regiment of the Virginia Cavalry, the Partisan Rangers. He was a prisoner of war captured November 20, 1863, and he was also hospitalized in February 1865 at the General Hospital no. 9 in Richmond.

Mosby's Reg't Cav. Va.
(Partisan Rangers.)

James H. Cummings
Co. A, 43 Batt'n Virginia Cav.
(Partisan Rangers.)

Appears on
Company Muster Roll
of the organization named above,
for June 10 to Dec. 31, 1863,
dated Jan. 21, 1864

Enlisted:
When June 10, 1863
Where Haulover Cr. Va.
By whom Maj. J. S. Mosby
Period 3 yrs or war.

last paid:
By whom
To what time, 186

Present or absent Absent.
Remarks Prisoner of war
Captured Nov. 20th 1863.

James H. Cummings Confederate Muster Roll, *Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers* [microfilm], courtesy of City of Fairfax Regional Library

For more information about these and other records, please email the Fairfax Circuit Court Historic Records Center at historicalrecords@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-246-4168.

The Fairfax Circuit Court Historic Records Center would like to thank one of its interns, Emily Martin, an undergraduate student at George Mason University, for compiling and writing this edition of *Found in the Archives*.