

A Guide to the Montgomery County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1773-1899; undated

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History

Processed by: Library of Virginia staff

Title Statement

A Guide to the Montgomery County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1773-1899; undated

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Author: McKenzie Long

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by McKenzie Long, 9 September 2024

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Montgomery County (Va.) Circuit Court

Extent

1.15 cu. ft. (3 boxes); 5 v.

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Militia fines housed in the box with barcode 1048925 are unprocessed. All records remain tri-folded or in original bundles and may be fragile. Contact Archives Research services for availability.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These records came to the Library of Virginia in 1953 transfer under the accession number 24378, a 1955 transfer under the accession number 24278, and an undated transfer of court papers from Montgomery County.

Processing Information

Military and pension records, 1773-1899, undated, were separated from Montgomery County court records and processed by Library of Virginia staff.

Encoded by M. Long: September 2024.

Preferred Citation

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Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

See also: [Montgomery County \(Va.\) Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions, 1834](#) at the Library of Virginia.

Additional Montgomery County Court Records can be found on microfilm at The Library of Virginia. Consult ["A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm."](#)

Historical Information

Context for Record Type: Keeping large bodies of militia in the field required an elaborate system of support based on the purchase of goods and services from civilians, in addition to the usual pay and allowances to officers and soldiers. The result was the creation of a large number of records concerning the state's disbursements to both soldiers and civilians. Many claims for payment went unsatisfied until 1821. Locality military and pension records consist largely of pay and muster rolls, accounts and vouchers concerning supplies, claims for reimbursement for services rendered, and military pension applications. Pension applications summarize the applicant's service record and may include medical evaluations; information about income and property; and, in the case of widows, the date and place of marriages.

During the Revolutionary War, commissioners were appointed in each county to impress supplies and non-military services (such as driving cattle or wagons) for the war effort. Officials provided certificates or receipts so that individual suppliers could be reimbursed by the state government. Beginning in 1782, claims for reimbursement could be submitted to county courts. These "public claims," known as court booklets and lists, exist for almost all Virginia counties. Between 1777 and 1785, the Virginia General Assembly passed several laws authorizing pensions for disabled soldiers and for widows of soldiers who died while on active duty.

Throughout the Civil War, the principal responsibility for Virginia's indigent soldiers' families lay with the locality. The Virginia State Convention in 1861 gave the responsibility entirely to counties and incorporated towns and authorized whatever actions had already been taken. Acts of Assembly in 1862 and 1863 expanded the localities' powers to provide for their needy, and in 1863 some minimal state assistance was added in. The Virginia General Assembly passed several Confederate pension acts beginning in 1888. The initial act provided pensions to Confederate soldiers, sailors, and marines disabled in action and to the widows of those killed in action. A 1900 act broadened the coverage to include veterans disabled by "infirmities of age" and widows whose husbands died after the war. African Americans who had served "faithfully" as servants, cooks, laborers, hostlers, or teamsters for the Confederate army were eligible for pensions beginning in 1924. District of Columbia residents became eligible in 1926; previously, all pension applicants were required to be residents of Virginia.

Locality History: Montgomery County was named for Richard Montgomery, who was killed in the American assault on Quebec late in 1775. It was formed from Fincastle County in 1776, and the county court first met on 7 January 1777. Subsequent additions were made from Botetourt (1790) and Pulaski (1842) Counties. The county seat is Christiansburg.

Fincastle County (extinct) was named probably for George, viscount Fincastle, Lord Dunmore's son; for John Murray, fourth earl of Dunmore, viscount Fincastle; or for the town of Fincastle, Virginia, which was established in 1772 and named for George, viscount Fincastle. The county was created from Botetourt County in 1772, and the county court first met on 5 January 1773. Fincastle County became extinct on 31

December 1776 when it was divided to form Montgomery, Washington, and Kentucky Counties.

Scope and Content

Montgomery County (Va.) Military and Pension Records, 1773-1899; undated, consist of military service records, accounts and vouchers, and claims for reimbursement by civilians and service members. These include:

Pension papers, 1779-1840, consist of records related to veterans seeking reimbursement, service rewards, or other support promised by the government in recognition of their time in the military. Most papers include regiment, commanding officer names, and other details about wartime service. Records include pension lists, applications, certificates, affidavits, schedules of property, blank forms, land warrant claims, and related records. Of particular note were contracts from a large number of Revolutionary War veterans promising "one third of all Bounty Lands, commutation, or half pay, or any other compensation" for their military service to a man named Rice D. Montague, in exchange for Montague agreeing pursue this compensation on their behalf.

County militia papers, 1773-1809, undated, include militia allowances, orders, discharge papers, correspondence, expense claims, receipts, lists of militiamen, officer commissions and oaths, court martial records, fines, and related records regarding the distribution of salt among members of the militia. Militia fines are only minimally processed and remain tied in their original bundles and photocopies of the majority of the militia lists are included alongside the original records.

Revolutionary War issues papers, 1775-1783, mostly consist of records concerning clothing and provisions for the army, claims of local citizens detailing property lost to depredations by the British, oaths of allegiance and lists of non-signers, and volumes of records from the local Committee of Safety, which documented minutes, orders, and correspondence. Photocopies of the majority of the oaths of allegiance and lists of non-signers are included alongside the original records.

Civil War issues papers, 1863-1899, include applications for military exemptions, lists of deserters and exemptions, report, orders, correspondence between military officers, and records from the James F. Preston Camp, a Confederate veteran group in the county.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into the following series:

- **Series I: Military and Pension Records, 1773-1899; undated**, separated between five volumes and three boxes of loose papers, which have been loosely arranged by subject.

Contents List

Series I: Military and Pension Records, 1773-1899, undated

Extent

1.15 cu. ft. (3 boxes); 5 v.

Arrangement

Separated between five volumes and three boxes of loose papers, which have been loosely arranged by subject.

Barcode number 1048925: Military and Pension Records, 1775-1865 circa

Barcode number 1048926: Court Records; Election Records; Fiduciary Records; Land Records; Military and Pension Records; Public Buildings and Grounds; Road and Bridge Records; School Records, Tax and Fiscal Records; Wills, 1753-1873

Barcode number 1048922: Oaths of allegiance, Bond of Non-signers, Militia Lists, 1774-1787 undated

Barcode number 1157712: Order of Committee of Safety-Arthur Campbell letter, 1776 May 28

Barcode number 1157711: Minutes-Committee of Safety, 1775-1776

Barcode number 1118855: Committee of Safety - Journal and Minutes, 1775-1783

Barcode number 1157710: Journal-Committee of Safety, 1775-1776

Barcode number 1127303: Miscellaneous Records: Cites Court Records; Fiduciary Records; Military and Pension Records; Land Records; Bonds/Commissions/Oaths, 1775-1945 circa

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