

INTRODUCTION

On the rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced an estimated 80,000 pension and bounty-land-warrant application files based on the participation of American military, naval, and marine officers and enlisted men in the Revolutionary War. Most of the records in the files are dated between 1800 and 1900. The files are part of Record Group 15, Records of the Veterans Administration.

Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Legislation and Administration Relating to Participation in the Revolutionary War

Pension Legislation

For more than a century before the beginning of the Revolutionary War, British colonies in North America provided pensions for disabled soldiers and sailors. During and after the Revolutionary War, three principal types of pensions were provided by the U.S. Government for servicemen and their dependents. "Disability" or "invalid pensions" were awarded to servicemen for physical disabilities incurred in the line of duty; "service pensions," to veterans who served for specified periods of time; and "widows' pensions," to women whose husbands had been killed in the war or were veterans who had served for specified periods of time.

On August 26, 1776, the first pension legislation for the American colonies as a group was enacted. A resolution of the Continental Congress provided half pay for officers and enlisted men, including those on warships and armed vessels, who were disabled in the service of the United States and who were incapable of earning a living. The half pay was to continue for the duration of the disability.

On May 15, 1778, another resolution provided half pay for 7 years after the conclusion of the war to all military officers who remained in the Continental service to the end of the war. Enlisted men who continued to serve for the duration of the conflict were each to receive a gratuity of \$80 after the war under the terms of the same enactment. The first national pension legislation for widows was a Continental Congress resolution of August 24, 1780, which offered the prospect of half pay for 7 years to widows and orphans of officers who met the requirements included in the terms of the resolution of May 15, 1778. On October 21, 1780, the Continental Congress resolution of May 15, 1778, was amended to provide half pay for life to officers after the war; but on March 22, 1783, the half-pay-for-life provision was changed to 5 years' full pay.

Pension legislation during the Revolutionary War was designed to encourage enlistment and acceptance of commissions and to prevent desertion and resignation. After the war, pensions became a form of reward for services rendered. Both during and after the Revolution, the States as well as the U.S. Government awarded pensions based on participation in the conflict. The records reproduced in this microfilm publication pertain only to pensions granted or paid pursuant to public and private acts of the U.S. Government. Public acts, under

which the majority of such pensions were authorized, encompassed large classes of veterans or their dependents who met common eligibility requirements. Private acts concerned specific individuals whose special services or circumstances merited consideration, but who could not be awarded pensions under existing public acts.

On September 29, 1789 (1 Stat. 95), the First Congress of the United States passed an act which provided that invalid pensions previously paid by the States, pursuant to resolutions of the Continental Congress, should be continued and paid for 1 year by the newly established Federal Government. Subsequent legislation often extended the time limit. An act of Congress approved March 23, 1792 (1 Stat. 243), permitted veterans not already receiving invalid pensions under resolutions of the Continental Congress to apply for them directly to the Federal Government. On April 10, 1806 (2 Stat. 376), the scope of earlier invalid-pension laws pertaining to Revolutionary War servicemen was extended to make veterans of State troops and militia service eligible for Federal pensions. The act superseded all previous Revolutionary War invalid-pension legislation.

Before 1818 national pension laws concerning veterans of the Revolution (with the exception of the Continental Congress resolution of May 15, 1778, granting half pay to officers for service alone) specified disability or death of a serviceman as the basis for a pension award. Not until March 18, 1818 (3 Stat. 410), did the U.S. Congress grant pensions to Revolutionary War veterans for service from which no disabilities resulted. Officers and enlisted men in need of assistance were eligible under the terms of the 1818 act if they had served in a Continental military organization or in the U.S. naval service (including the Marines) for 9 months or until the end of the war. Pensions granted under this act were to continue for life.

The service-pension act of 1818 resulted in a great number of applications, many of which were approved. Congress had to appropriate greater sums than ever before for Revolutionary War pension payments. Financial difficulties and charges that applicants were feigning poverty to obtain benefits under the terms of the act caused Congress to enact remedial legislation on May 1, 1820 (3 Stat. 569). The new law required every pensioner receiving payments under the 1818 act, and every would-be pensioner, to submit a certified schedule of his estate and income to the Secretary of War. The Secretary was authorized to remove from the pension list the names of those persons who, in his opinion, were not in need of assistance. Within a few years the total of Revolutionary War service pensioners was reduced by several thousand. An act of Congress approved March 1, 1823 (3 Stat. 782), resulted in the restoration of pensions to many whose names had been removed under the terms of the 1820 legislation, but who subsequently proved their need for aid.

Congress passed another service-pension act on May 15, 1828 (4 Stat. 269), which granted full pay for life to surviving officers and enlisted men of the Revolutionary War who were eligible for benefits under the terms of the Continental Congress resolution of May 15, 1778, as amended.

The last and most liberal of the service-pension acts benefiting Revolutionary War veterans was passed on June 7, 1832 (4 Stat. 529), and extended to more persons the provisions of the law of May 15, 1828. The act provided that

every officer or enlisted man who had served at least 2 years in the Continental Line or State troops, volunteers or militia, was eligible for a pension of full pay for life. Naval and marine officers and enlisted men were also included. Veterans who had served less than 2 years, but not less than 6 months, were eligible for pensions of less than full pay. Neither the act of 1832 nor the one of 1828 required applicants to demonstrate need. Under the act of 1832 money due from the last payment until the date of death of a pensioner could be collected by his widow or by his children.

The time limit for making claims under the Continental Congress resolution of August 24, 1780, which promised half-pay pensions to widows and orphans of some officers, expired in 1794. For many years thereafter, unless a private act of Congress was introduced on her behalf, a widow of a veteran was limited to receiving only that part of a pension that remained unpaid at the time of her husband's death. By an act of Congress approved July 4, 1836 (5 Stat. 128), some widows of Revolutionary War veterans were again permitted, as a class under public law, to apply for pensions. The act provided that the widow of any veteran who had performed service as specified in the pension act of June 7, 1832, was eligible to receive the pension that might have been allowed the veteran under the terms of that act, if the widow had married the veteran before the expiration of his last period of service. An act of July 7, 1838 (5 Stat. 303), granted 5-year pensions to widows whose marriages had taken place before January 1, 1794. These pensions were continued by acts of March 3, 1843 (5 Stat. 647); June 17, 1844 (5 Stat. 680); and February 2, 1848 (9 Stat. 210).

On July 29, 1848 (9 Stat. 265), Congress provided life pensions for widows of veterans who were married before January 2, 1800. All restrictions pertaining to the date of marriage were removed by acts of February 3, 1853 (10 Stat. 154), and February 28, 1855 (10 Stat. 616). On March 9, 1878 (20 Stat. 29), widows of Revolutionary War soldiers who had served for as few as 14 days, or were in any engagement, were declared eligible for life pensions.

Pension Administration

During the Revolution and in the period between the conclusion of the war and the establishment of the Federal Government, administration of the pension laws enacted by the Continental Congress was left largely to the individual States. The act of Congress approved September 29, 1789 (1 Stat. 95), which provided for the continuance of such pensions by the newly established Federal Government, stipulated only that they should be paid "under such regulations as the President . . . may direct." The act of Congress approved March 23, 1792 (1 Stat. 244), which permitted the addition of new names to the existing list of Revolutionary War pensioners, specified that the Secretary of War was to administer its provisions. For most of the period between 1793 and 1819, Congress reserved to itself the power of final decision with respect to the allowance of claims. Thus an act of February 28, 1793 (1 Stat. 325), required the Secretary of War to send lists of claims to the Congress for action. The service-pension act of March 18, 1818 (3 Stat. 410), gave the Secretary of War the authority to approve applications submitted under that law, and by an act of March 3, 1819 (3 Stat. 528), he was similarly empowered to place invalids on the pension list without prior Congressional approval.

Within the Office of the Secretary of War, pension matters were handled as early as 1810 by a unit called the Office of Military Bounty Lands and Pensions. Between 1810 and 1815 the unit was also referred to as the Section (or Branch) of Military Bounty Lands and Pensions. In 1815 the Branch was divided into two units: a Pension Bureau and a Land Warrant Bureau; after 1816 the Pension Bureau was generally referred to as the Pension Office. Not until March 2, 1833 (4 Stat. 622), did Congress formally provide for the appointment of a Commissioner of Pensions to execute pension laws under the general direction of the Secretary of War. When an act of Congress provided for the establishment of the Department of the Interior on March 3, 1849 (9 Stat. 395), the Pension Office was transferred to it. On July 21, 1930, by Executive Order 5398, the Bureau of Pensions (formerly called the Pension Office) was consolidated with other agencies also serving veterans, and the Veterans Administration, an independent executive agency, was established.

Two pension acts pertaining to Revolutionary War servicemen were not initially administered by the Pension Office. Responsibility for executing the provisions of the act of May 15, 1828 (4 Stat. 270), was vested in the Secretary of the Treasury until authority was transferred to the War Department on March 3, 1835 (4 Stat. 779). The Secretary of the Treasury was also named to administer the act of June 7, 1832 (4 Stat. 530), but a Congressional resolution on June 28, 1832 (4 Stat. 605), relieved him of that function and transferred it to the Secretary of War.

Application procedures followed by would-be pensioners varied according to the acts under which benefits were sought. Generally the process required an applicant to appear before a court of record in the State of his or her residence to describe under oath the service for which a pension was claimed. A widow of a veteran was required to provide information concerning the date and place of her marriage. The application statement or "declaration," as it was usually called, with such supporting papers as property schedules, marriage records, and affidavits of witnesses, was certified by the court and forwarded to the official, usually the Secretary of War or the Commissioner of Pensions, responsible for administering the specific act under which the claim was being made. An applicant was subsequently notified that his application had been approved, rejected, or put aside pending the submission of additional proof of eligibility. If an applicant was eligible, his name was placed on the pension list. Payments were usually made semiannually through pension agents of the Federal Government in the States. An applicant rejected under the terms of an earlier pension act often reapplied for benefits under later, more liberal laws.

Bounty-Land-Warrant Legislation

Bounty-land warrants—rights to free land in the public domain—were granted under acts of the Continental Congress and of the Federal Government to veterans and to heirs of veterans for Revolutionary War service of specified periods of time. The promise of bounty land during the Revolutionary War was another inducement to enter and remain in service; after the war, bounty-land grants became a form of reward. Most warrants were issued to servicemen or their heirs who met common eligibility standards established by public acts passed between 1776 and 1856. Some warrants were issued to individuals as a result of private acts passed by Congress. States also granted bounty land to Revolutionary

War veterans, but the records reproduced in this microfilm publication pertain only to bounty-land warrants made available under acts of the U.S. Government.

On September 16, 1776, the Continental Congress passed a resolution that provided for granting land to officers and soldiers who engaged in military service and continued to serve until the end of the war. Representatives of officers and soldiers who might be slain by the enemy were also entitled to land. The resolution specified that each noncommissioned officer and soldier should be entitled to 100 acres, an ensign to 150 acres, each lieutenant to 200 acres, and other officers to proportionate amounts of land up to 500 acres for a colonel. By a resolution of August 12, 1780, the provision was extended to include generals, and the grant was to be 850 acres for a brigadier general and 1,100 acres for a major general. The resolution of September 16, 1776, was the basic law under which Revolutionary War veterans were granted bounty-land warrants by the Federal Government until 1855, although numerous acts were passed in the interval providing claimants with additional time in which to apply for or to locate warrants.

On March 3, 1855 (10 Stat. 701), the U.S. Congress went beyond merely satisfying the former pledge of the Continental Congress and authorized the issuance of bounty-land warrants for 160 acres to soldiers, irrespective of rank, who had served for as few as 14 days in the Revolution or had taken part in any battle. Widows and minor children of such veterans were also eligible. An individual who had received a warrant under previous bounty-land legislation was limited by the act to receiving a second warrant for only such additional acreage as would total 160 acres. An act of May 14, 1856 (11 Stat. 8), extended the benefits of the 1855 act to include Revolutionary War naval and marine officers, enlisted men, and their widows and minor children.

Bounty-Land-Warrant Administration

On July 9, 1788, a supplement to a Continental Congress land ordinance of May 20, 1785, authorized the Secretary at War to issue bounty-land warrants to eligible veterans of the Revolutionary War or to their assigns or legal representatives. When the First U.S. Congress authorized the establishment of a Department of War in the newly formed Federal Government on August 7, 1789 (1 Stat. 50), the Secretary of War was given the responsibility of issuing bounty-land warrants. By 1810 the Office of Military Bounty Lands and Pensions had been formed within the Office of the Secretary of War to examine claims and to issue warrants. In 1815 the pension and bounty-land duties of the War Department were assigned to separate bureaus, and bounty-land matters were handled thereafter by an administrative unit known successively as the Land Warrant Bureau, the Section of Bounty Lands, and the Bounty Land Office. On November 1, 1841, the Secretary of War placed the bounty-land functions under the direction of the Commissioner of Pensions. This arrangement was formally authorized by an act of Congress approved January 20, 1843 (5 Stat. 597). The laws relating to the granting of bounty-land warrants were administered by the Department of the Interior after the Pension Office was transferred to that Department in 1849.

Depending upon the period in which a claim was made, claimants for bounty-land warrants based on Revolutionary War service sent applications for adjudication to either the Secretary of War, the Commissioner of Pensions, or the

Secretary of the Interior. Affidavits of witnesses testifying to service performed, marriage records, and other forms of evidence were also forwarded by some applicants. Property schedules were unnecessary as indigency was not a requirement for the award of a Revolutionary War bounty-land warrant. A claimant whose application was approved was issued a warrant for a specified number of acres. He could then "locate" his warrant; that is, he could select the portion of the public domain that he wished to have in exchange for his warrant. The Treasury Department, and after 1849 the Interior Department, accepted the warrants and issued patents to the land. Many recipients of Revolutionary War bounty-land warrants did not choose to locate the warrants and to settle on the public domain; instead, they remained in their old homes and sold the warrants.

Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files

Types of Files

The term "files," as used in this microfilm publication, denotes 10" x 14" envelopes containing applications or other records pertaining to claims for pensions or bounty-land warrants; 10" x 14" cards summarizing information about claimants for whom no original application papers exist; and 10" x 14" cards that serve as cross-references to envelopes and summary cards. A file can therefore be a single card or it can be an envelope containing from 1 to 200 or more pages of records. The typical file is an envelope containing about 30 pages of records, consisting generally of the application or applications of one or more claimants, other documents submitted as evidence of identity and service, and papers showing actions taken by the Government concerning the claim or claims. Each file pertains to one or more claims by one or more persons for pensions or bounty-land warrants based on the service of a single person, usually in the Revolution, although some files relate to claims based on post-Revolutionary War service.

Before 1910 Revolutionary War pension application papers were folded and placed in numbered paper jackets arranged in three series. One series was reserved for approved applications of "survivors," as Revolutionary War veterans were called. The second series held approved applications of widows, and the third contained rejected applications of both survivors and widows. The series were arranged by file numbers; therefore, in order to withdraw a specific pension claim from a series, index books arranged by the first two letters of the surname of a claimant had to be laboriously examined for the pertinent file number. To eliminate the necessity of using the books and to protect the records from damage caused by frequent unfolding and refolding, the Bureau of Pensions flattened and refiled Revolutionary War pension application papers in a single series of linen-lined envelopes arranged alphabetically by surname of veteran. The project was completed in 1912. As part of the work, pension application papers of a survivor and a widow were consolidated in a single envelope if the claims seemed to be based on the service of the same person. Approved Revolutionary War bounty-land-warrant application papers were also flattened and consolidated with, or interfiled among, pension application papers at this time; previously, they had been maintained apart from the pension claims. The records reproduced in this microfilm publication are from the one large series of Revolutionary War pension and bounty-land-warrant application files that resulted from the flat-filing project.

Survivors' pension application files in the series have headings normally consisting of the name of the State or organization for which a veteran served; his name; and the letter "S" for survivor, followed by a file number. A file of this type ordinarily contains one or more post-1800 approved applications of a veteran for an invalid or service pension. The file may also contain affidavits by other veterans or persons testifying to the service or disability claimed; documentary evidence of service submitted by the applicant, such as a commission or a discharge certificate; printed briefs summarizing the service claimed; property schedules; paper jackets formerly used to hold application papers before the flat-filing project of 1910-12; certified copies of the veteran's service record provided by State officials; powers of attorney; letters from attorneys, Congressmen, and other interested persons relating to the progress of the claim; letters from genealogists and other researchers seeking information available in pension papers; and copies of replies from the Pension Office, the Bureau of Pensions, or the Veterans Administration concerning such inquiries. A fire in the War Department on November 8, 1800, apparently destroyed all Revolutionary War pension and bounty-land-warrant applications and related papers submitted before that date. Applications and related records submitted after 1800 are occasionally missing from survivors' and other types of files because papers were sometimes returned to applicants by the Pension Office.

Widows' pension application files have headings usually consisting of the name of the State or organization for which a veteran served; his name; his widow's name; and the letter "W" for widow, followed by a file number. Usually only a widow's given name appears on an envelope, but if she remarried, her second husband's surname is also included, with the notation "Former Widow." A widow's pension application file may contain records normally found in a survivor's file, especially if the widow's file is a consolidation of her papers and those of the pensioned veteran who had been her husband. Whether a widow's file represents such a consolidation or relates only to pension claims made by her, it will generally contain one or more approved post-1800 applications for a pension made by the widow. Incorporated in or attached to some widows' applications is a copy of a marriage record made by a town clerk, a clergyman, or a justice of the peace. Sometimes family-record pages from Bibles and other books were also submitted by a widow as proof of marriage.

Rejected pension application files have headings usually consisting of the name of the State or organization for which a veteran served; his name; the name of his widow if the file relates to an application or applications submitted by her; and the letter "R" for rejected, followed by a file number. Each of these files normally contains one or more post-1800 rejected pension applications that were submitted by a veteran, his widow, or an heir, and that were based on the Revolutionary War service of the former serviceman. The "R" symbol on the face of the envelope usually indicates that the latest application in the file was rejected. There may be one or more approved pension applications in the file, however, if they were approved before the last application was rejected.

Pre-1800 disability-pension application files are envelopes that have headings generally consisting of the name of the State or organization for which a veteran served, his name, and the file symbol "Dis. No Papers." The symbol indicates that a veteran's original disability-pension application and related papers are not extant, presumably as a result of the War Department fire of November 1800. In place of the missing papers, most of the files contain one or more small

cards that give information about an invalid pensioner or veteran (former rank, unit, enlistment date, nature of disability, residence, and amount of pension). The data were transcribed by the Bureau of Pensions from the Congressional publication *American State Papers, Class 9, Claims* (Washington, 1834). The volume contains information from War Department pension reports based on original application papers and submitted to Congress between 1792 and 1795. Some invalid-pension application papers submitted after 1800 were apparently destroyed in another War Department fire in August 1814. For some of these applications, pertinent entries in the 1835 *Report From the Secretary of War . . . in Relation to the Pension Establishment of the United States* (23d Cong., 1st sess., S. Doc. 514) were copied and placed in files that were also labeled "Dis. No Papers." Copying was done by the Veterans Administration, but it seems this was done only in response to and in the form of replies to inquiries concerning specific veterans.

Bounty-land-warrant application files for approved applications submitted after November 8, 1800, are envelopes that have headings consisting of the name of the State or organization for which a veteran served, his name, his widow's name if she applied for the warrant, and the symbol "B. L. Wt." for bounty-land warrant. This symbol is followed by two or three numbers, separated by hyphens, which represent the warrant number, the number of acres granted, and the year 1855 (usually written "55") in the case of warrants issued pursuant to the bounty-land act of that year. Records in the files may include applications by veterans, their widows, or heirs; family-record pages from Bibles; copies of marriage records; copies of State records showing the service of a veteran; affidavits of other persons testifying to the length or kind of service claimed; annotated paper jackets used to hold bounty-land-warrant papers before they were flat-filed, which show action taken on claims; commissions, discharges, and other original service papers; and powers of attorney.

Bounty-land-warrant files for approved officers' applications submitted before the War Department fire of November 1800 are mainly 10" x 14" cards that show the name of the State or organization for which an officer served, his name, the symbol "B. L. Wt." followed by the warrant number and the number of acres granted, the officer's rank, the issue date of the warrant, the notation "No Papers," and sometimes the name of a person other than the officer to whom the warrant was delivered or assigned. The original application papers are presumed to have been destroyed in the fire of 1800. About 1917 the cards were compiled by the Bureau of Pensions from entries in a surviving register listing bounty-land warrants issued to officers before November 8, 1800. After the cards were compiled it seems that upon the receipt of an inquiry pertaining to one of the officers, the card relating to that officer, the letter of inquiry, and a copy of the reply were placed in an envelope bearing the same heading as the card. As a result, some bounty-land-warrant application files for approved officers' applications submitted before November 8, 1800, are envelopes. Sometimes the card was discarded after the information it contained was added to the envelope file.

Bounty-land-warrant files for approved applications of enlisted men submitted before the War Department fire of 1800 are 10" x 14" cards headed "BOUNTY LAND WARRANT RECORD CARD." Each card usually gives the name of the soldier, his rank, and the name of the State or organization for which he served; the warrant number; the number of acres granted; the issue date of the warrant; and sometimes the name of a person other than the soldier to whom the

warrant was delivered or assigned. The original application papers were apparently destroyed in 1800. The cards were compiled by the National Archives from entries in three registers of bounty-land warrants issued to enlisted men before November 8, 1800. Sometimes a card was placed in an envelope containing pension application papers based on the service of the same soldier. In such a case the warrant number on the card was added to the heading on the envelope.

Bounty-land-warrant applications submitted pursuant to the act of March 3, 1855, and approved were interfiled among or consolidated with pension application papers as part of the Bureau of Pension's flat-filing project of 1910-12. The files in which these approved applications may usually be found have been described in the paragraph concerning approved bounty-land-warrant applications submitted after November 8, 1800. Most bounty-land-warrant applications submitted in accordance with the act of 1855 and rejected are in manila envelopes, the headings of which generally consist of the name of the State or organization for which a veteran served, his name, the symbol "B. L. Reg." (or "Rej.") for bounty-land register, the register entry number assigned to the application, and the year 1855 (sometimes written "55"). The face of each envelope also has a section containing military service information. The rejected applications are similar in content to those that were approved, but paper jackets accompanying rejected applications do not show warrant numbers. Some of the rejected bounty-land-warrant applications were placed in envelopes containing pension application papers based on service of the same veteran.

Consolidated files of pension and bounty-land-warrant applications and related papers are numerous, and the contents vary. Almost any combination of two or more pension and bounty-land-warrant files already described may have been consolidated. Frequently, a widow's approved pension application papers, which normally comprise a "W" file, are consolidated with approved bounty-land-warrant application papers relating to a claim made by her under the act of 1855. The resultant consolidated file bears a heading that includes both "W" and "B. L. Wt." symbols and numbers. Approved pension applications of veterans were consolidated with approved bounty-land-warrant applications of veterans or their heirs to form files with headings consisting of "S" and "B. L. Wt." symbols and numbers. Rejected pension application files may also contain approved or rejected bounty-land-warrant application papers.

"Former Widow" cross-reference cards are another type of file unit reproduced in this microfilm publication. The cards normally show the name of the State or organization for which a veteran served, his name, the surname his former widow acquired upon remarriage, the symbol and number of the file (usually a "W" file) in which pension or bounty-land-warrant application papers or information can be found, and the notation "Former Widow." These cross-reference cards are arranged by the surname of the former widow's latest husband, not by the surname of the veteran for whose service a pension or bounty-land warrant was claimed.

Cross-reference cards also exist for variant spellings of a veteran's name. A card generally gives the name of the State or organization for which a veteran served, the spelling of his name by which that card is arranged, the spelling by which the file containing papers or information relating to his service is arranged, and the symbol and number of the latter file.

There are files with headings different from those already described whose contents reflect such differences. Some files, for instance, are labeled "Not Rev." or "Not Rev. War" and contain pension or bounty-land-warrant application papers based on post-Revolutionary War service. The service period is usually shown on the face of the file. A number of pension files are overprinted with the statement "This Envelope Includes FINAL PAYMENT VOUCHER Received from GAO." Such vouchers, which were removed from a separate series of General Accounting Office records, sometimes give the date and place of death of a pensioner and names of heirs.

Some pension application files reproduced in this microcopy have headings that include instructions to "See N.A. Acc. No. 874" followed by a number between 050000 and 050201, the name of the veteran, and the notation "Half Pay" or "Not Half Pay." These instructions refer to a separate series of pension application files that are also in Record Group 15. The records in these files relate mainly to claims made by heirs under an act of Congress approved July 5, 1832 (4 Stat. 563), which provided half-pay pensions for Virginia veterans of the Revolutionary War, and to claims made by heirs for arrears due veterans of Virginia and other States under other pension acts. The files in this separate series were transferred from the Adjutant General's Office of the War Department to the National Archives in 1941 and are not reproduced in this microfilm publication. Abstracts of their contents are in Gaius Marcus Brumbaugh, *Revolutionary War Records, Volume I: Virginia* (Washington, 1936).

A few other pension application files in this microcopy have headings that include instructions to "See N.A. Acc. No. 837 - Virginia State Navy" followed by the name of the veteran and the notation "YS File Va. Half Pay." The instructions refer to another small series of Revolutionary War pension application files in the same record group. The contents of these additional files relate mainly to half-pay pension claims of heirs of Virginia State Navy officers under the act of July 5, 1832. The "YS" files, so designated by the Department of the Navy in accordance with a Navy classification scheme, were sent to the National Archives in 1941 by the Office of Naval Records and Library. The files have not been microfilmed or abstracted. All files for Revolutionary War claimants in both the "YS" and the Adjutant General's Office series are referred to in the headings of related files reproduced in this microfilm publication.

Records Withdrawn From the Files

Between 1894 and 1913 several types of records were withdrawn from Revolutionary War pension and bounty-land-warrant application files and sent by the Bureau of Pensions to other Departments or Agencies of the Federal Government. The records were generally documents of historical value dated 1775-83. Between September 6, 1894, and January 16, 1913, muster rolls, payrolls, returns, orders, and miscellaneous personnel lists and papers were sent to the War Department pursuant to acts of Congress approved July 27, 1892 (27 Stat. 275), and August 18, 1894 (28 Stat. 403). On March 22, 1907, some lists of names of seamen taken from the files were sent to the Navy Department in accordance with an act of June 29, 1906 (34 Stat. 579). Diaries, journals, orderly books, account books, and other bound records removed from files were transferred to the Library of Congress on February 9, 1909, under the terms of an act of February 25, 1903 (32 Stat. 865). There are cross-reference slips in the

files to describe the records that were transferred and to indicate the Government Department or Agency to which they were sent.

Informational Value of Records in the Files

The records contain both historical and genealogical information. Historical information pertaining to the organization of military units, movement of troops, details of battles and campaigns, and activities of individuals may be obtained from application statements of veterans; from affidavits of witnesses; and from the muster roll, diary, order, or orderly book that was occasionally submitted as proof of service and was not sent by the Bureau of Pensions to another Government Department or Agency. Naval and privateer operations are documented by applications, affidavits, and orders in some files based on service at sea. A few files contain letters written to or by soldiers and sailors during the Revolutionary War, which give firsthand accounts of military, naval, and civil events and conditions. Furloughs, passes, pay receipts, enlistment papers, discharges, commissions, warrants, and other original records of the period 1775-83 are also in some of the files.

Genealogical information is usually available in a file containing original application papers. A veteran's pension application normally gives—in addition to his former rank, unit, and period of service—his age or date of birth, his residence, and sometimes his birthplace. Property schedules often give names and ages of a veteran's wife and children. The application of a widow seeking a pension or a bounty-land warrant may give her age, residence, maiden name, date and place of her marriage, and date and place of death of her husband. A copy of a marriage record made by a town clerk, a clergyman, or a justice of the peace often accompanied the widow's pension application. Application papers submitted by children and other heirs or dependents seeking pensions or bounty-land warrants generally contain information about their ages and residences. Family-record pages from Bibles and other books submitted by pension and bounty-land-warrant applicants give the dates of birth, marriage, and death of family members. In a few pension files are final payment vouchers that sometimes contain information about the date and place of a pensioner's death and names of heirs.

Arrangement and Selection of Files and Records

Each file that is a single 10" x 14" summary or cross-reference card and all envelope files in the series of Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files have been reproduced in this microfilm publication. The files, with the exception of "Former Widow" cross-reference cards, are arranged in alphabetical order by the surname of the veteran. When two or more veterans have the same surname and given name, the further arrangement of the files based on their service is generally alphabetical by the name of the State or organization for which a veteran served, or by the word "Continental," "Navy," or some other service designation placed in the heading of some files above or before the name of a State. "Former Widow" cross-reference cards are arranged by the surname that the former widow acquired upon remarriage.

Within files, the records are unarranged. However, in each envelope file containing more than 10 pages of records, the more significant genealogical

documents were filmed first, preceded by a target headed "SELECTED RECORDS." The documents may include pension applications, jackets showing the act under which pension payments were made, bounty-land-warrant applications, jackets showing the warrant numbers of warrants granted, property schedules, family-record pages from Bibles or other books, copies of marriage records, and final payment vouchers. All remaining documents in that file were filmed after a target headed "NONSELECTED RECORDS." No distinction was made between selected and nonselected records in filming the envelope files that contained 10 or fewer pages of records; these files can be recognized by a star next to the veteran's surname in the heading.

The "SELECTED RECORDS" in files containing more than 10 pages of records, except those portions of them having no apparent genealogical value (such as attestations or endorsements), have also been reproduced in another microfilm publication, *Selected Records From Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land-Warrant Application Files (Microcopy 805)*. Records in files containing 10 or fewer pages of records were reproduced in Microcopy 805 in their entirety, as were all files that consist of a single 10" x 14" summary or cross-reference card. Upon request and for a fee, the National Archives can provide reproductions of the genealogical records filmed in whole or in part in Microcopy 805 relating to a specific veteran or other claimant.

Related Records and Sources of Information

Also in Record Group 15 are letterbooks, registers, and other administrative records of the Pension Office and its successors relating to Revolutionary War pension and bounty-land-warrant applications; Bounty-land warrants are in Record Group 49, Records of the Bureau of Land Management. Pension payment books and final payment vouchers are in Record Group 217, Records of the United States General Accounting Office. Correspondence of the Secretary of War and of the Secretary of the Interior concerning their supervision of pension and bounty-land-warrant matters is in Record Group 107, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, and in Record Group 48, Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior.

Military service records for Revolutionary War soldiers are in Record Group 93, War Department Collection of Revolutionary War Records. Naval and marine personnel records are in Record Group 45, Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library, and Record Group 127, Records of the United States Marine Corps. For additional records of Revolutionary War service and for records of applications made to individual States for pensions or bounty land, researchers should communicate with State archival agencies.

The names of most of the servicemen for whom there are pension or bounty-land-warrant application files reproduced in this microfilm publication are listed in Max E. Hoyt, *et al.*, *Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications* (Washington, 1966). Information of a general historical nature concerning pension and bounty-land-warrant legislation and administration is available in Gustavus A. Weber, *The Bureau of Pensions* (Baltimore, 1923); Gustavus A. Weber and Laurence F. Schmeckebier, *The Veterans' Administration, Its History, Activities and Organization* (Washington, 1934); William H. Glasson, *History of*

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Military Pension Legislation in the United States (New York, 1900), and *Federal Military Pensions in the United States* (New York, 1918); and Payson J. Treat, *The National Land System, 1785-1820* (New York, 1910). Many of the laws relating to pensions and bounty-land warrants granted for Revolutionary War service, and regulations established by the Secretaries of War, the Treasury, and the Interior for administering them, are compiled in Robert Mayo and Ferdinand Moulton, *Army and Navy Pension Laws, and Bounty Land Laws of the United States . . . From 1776 to 1852* (Washington, 1852).

These introductory remarks were written by Howard H. Wehmann.