

[Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements](#)

Pension application of William Nourse W6845      Rebecca P.      fn42SC  
Transcribed by Will Graves      1/23/09

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Also, the handwriting of the original scribes often lends itself to varying interpretations. Users of this database are urged to view the original and to make their own decision as to how to decipher what the original scribe actually wrote. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original.]

[fn p. 31]

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress Assemble

The Petition of William Nourse formerly of the Navy of the United States on board the Frigate *Confederacy* during the A revolutionary War humbly sheweth. That your Petitioner entered into the service of his country at the age of 17 as a Midshipman 16 October 1780 on board the United States Frigate aforesaid, Seth Hardin Esquire Commander, then lying in the Court of Philadelphia -- that in December following, he sailed in said Frigate for the West Indies, and captured on the passage a British Brig bound from New York to Turks Island for salt, and carried her into Cape Francois (now called Cape Henry) in the Island of Hispaniola -- That your Petitioner in the month of February following sailed said Frigate on a cruise in the West India Seas in company the United States Frigate *Dean*, \_\_ Nicholson Esquire Commander, and captured in that cruise an African Slave Ship called the *Diamond* bound to Jamaica, and returned with her to the then Cape Francois aforesaid, where the said ship with her cargo of slaves, and the Brig aforesaid, were condemned and sold for the benefit of the United States and the captors. That your Petitioner afterwards sailed from the West Indies, bound for Philadelphia, but was unhappily captured on Board the said Frigate *Confederacy* near the Capes of Delaware by the British Ship of war the *Roebuck* Capt. Hammond of 44 guns, and two Frigates on the 16th day of April 1781: a day long to be remembered by your petitioner having lost by his capture nearly everything but the clothes on his back, was then carried into New York at which place he suffered for many weeks the most cruel and vigorous treatment on board the *Jersey* Prison Ship then lying in the Walabough [sic, Wallabout Bay] near the harbor of New York. That your Petitioner when scarcely recovered from a Putrid fever which raged with great mortality on board the said prison ship, was sent with about 40 others from on board said prison ship, a prisoner to a fleet then lying near the Hook bound for England and put on board a British Ship of War and confined down to the hole or cable tier of said Ship (for the enemy in those trying times made no distinction between officers and men) and on its arrival at Portsmouth England, he was put on board the Admirals Ship in that Harbor, and afterwards with others his fellow prisoners taken before a civil magistrate, and after examination was committed to Forton Prison near Portsmouth on suspicion of high treason, agreeable to an Act of Parliament passed about the beginning of the Revolutionary War where your Petitioner was confined for 7 months, and during the long and tedious winter of 1781 and beginning of 1782 without any fire or other comforts of life much to the injury of his health and very detrimental to his constitution which he sadly experiences to this day. Your Petitioner would further beg leave to state -- that after the capture of Lord Cornwallis at York in Virginia (at which time your petitioner was in Forton Prison above mentioned) and the change of the British Ministry, he was sent back in a Cartel to Philadelphia with about 300 American prisoners and arrived in that City in August 1782 -- but

being then out of employment and the Navy of the United States nearly destroyed by the enemy, he entered as a Midshipman on board a large Frigate *South Carolina* John Joiner Esquire Commander then lying in the port of Philadelphia of very heavy metal belonging to, and shortly before built in Holland for that State but your petitioner was in December following again captured on board said Frigate by a Fleet of British Ships of War and again carried into New York, paroled on Long Island and afterwards to Philadelphia from which situation he was only relieved by the return of Peace and the United States obtaining her glorious Independence. Your Petitioner in conclusion would beg leave to state that he is now and has been for many years a citizen in Mercer County Kentucky -- is now in the 64th year of his age, 3 years of the bloom of which he spent in the service of his Country suffering on that account the rage of a cruel enemy, in bonds and vigorous imprisonment -- which is probably the cause that he has been laboring for many years with a broken constitution and for months together such heavy infirmities as to render him entirely unable to attend to any kind of business. He therefore prays that your honorable house to take his case into consideration and grant him that relief that as a suffering Officer of the Navy of the Revolution he is entitled to receive. S/ Wm Nourse  
State of Kentucky Mercer County

Personally came the before me James Lillard one of the Justices of the peace for the County of Mercer William Nourse the aforesaid Petitioner who being duly sworn doth say that all the facts contained in the foregoing petition are true to the best of his knowledge and belief.  
S/ William Nourse

Sworn and Subscribed before me the 1 February 1827  
S/ Jas. Lillard, JP

City of Washington 17 February 1827

My brother William Nourse, the above named was by his Father James Nourse in 1780 placed under my direction: and the circumstances narrated by him in the foregoing Memorial receive all the attestation to their verity I can give them.

S/ Joseph Morse  
(the present Register of the Treasury)

Near George Town  
12 July 1832

I do hereby confirm the Certificate annexed dated 17 February 1827 given at that time for the purpose of obtaining a Pension, but which he the Petitioner, William Nourse, never obtained either of Congress or South Carolina: the Statements he is perfectly according to the best of my knowledge and belief. Given under my hand and seal and witnessed the date & year above written.

S/ Joseph Nourse  
Late Register of the Treasury of the United States

Signed sealed & delivered in presence of  
S/ Junst Hutchinson

[The digital image of this application is very poor on both Footnote and HeritageQuest—the digital image is slightly better on HeritageQuest —use this transcript with extreme care.]

[fn pp. 3-4]

State of Kentucky Mercer County: William Nourse this day came the into open Court and made

oath to the following statement for the purpose of obtaining a pension under the late act of Congress for the relief of certain surviving officers and soldiers of the revolution approved June 7th, 1832. I hereby state that on the 16th day of October 1780 I entered into the naval service of the United States in a Frigate of the United States called "*The Confederacy*" commanded by Seth Harding Esquire then in the port of Philadelphia as a Midshipman. That in [one or more words too faint to read, could be "March"] following we sailed in said frigate for the West Indies and on our passage we captured a British Brig bound from New York to Turks Island for salt also an African Slave ship, and another [indecipherable word] in the West Indian Seas, and some time afterwards in the month of March or April in the year 1781 we sailed from the West Indies for Philadelphia and our ship the *Confederacy* was captured and we were all taken prisoners in the course of our forage by the British ship the *Roebuck* of 44 guns on the 16th day of April 1781, and I was taken and put on board the *Jersey* Prison Ship in the harbour of New York where I suffered the most cruel and sanguinary treatment for many weeks and when scarcely recovered from a severe fever which [several words too faint to discern] mentality I with forty other Americans was put on board a British Ship and was carried to Portsmouth England and was there confined in Forton Prison until the Spring 1782 when I was sent back in a cartel to Philadelphia where I again entered as Midshipman on board the Frigate *South Carolina* belonging to South Carolina under [several lines of text too faint to discern] Long Island, from which I was not release until the close of the war having been in the service of the Navy of the U. States and the State of South Carolina serving three years of faithful service including my imprisonment which was cruel and severe and in which my suffering was beyond description—I farther state that I am now in the 69th year of my age and resided in Berkeley County Virginia [indecipherable words]. That I am not [several indecipherable words]. I hereby relinquish all claim to any pension besides the one claimed by this affidavit. Witness my hand this 10th day of July 1832.

S/ Wm Nourse

[Attested by William L. Kelly, Sole Presiding Judge]

[fn p. 6, Jesse Head, a clergyman, and Peter Huff, a revolutionary soldier, gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

[fn p. 5, Catharine B. Cooke, 73, of Lexington, Fayette County, Ky, on July 23, 1832, gave a supporting affidavit saying she knew Nourse to have been a midshipmen in the US Navy, taken prisoner, imprisoned in England, released and later served the State of SC.]

[fn p. 11, On July 18, 1853, in Boyle County, Ky., Rebecca P. Nourse, 61, made application for a widow's pension as the widow of William Nourse, a pensioner at the rate of \$144/annum, stating that she married him in May 1813 in Mercer County, Ky; that he died August 30, 1836 in Mercer County, Ky.]

[In a later document, the widow states her name was Rebecca P. Kyle prior to her marriage to William Nourse, on the 2nd May, 1813; and that they were married by Thomas Kyle, Minister.]