

Clues about Joseph Martin (1763 -1833) and His Widow, Martha (1765 -1852)

Based on His Revolutionary War Record ¹

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On 9 July 1851 Martha Martin, widow of Joseph Martin, applied for her widow's pension for Joseph's service in the Revolutionary War ². In her statement, Martha Martin claimed that the delay in applying for the pension was the fault of the unnamed person whom she had hired to file the application for her. Since Martha appears to be illiterate and since she doesn't provide any legal documents as proof of her claims, we only have clues, but they are wonderful clues. With her application are included the following:

- a piece of paper that listed the names and birth dates of her children with Joseph Martin
- a testimony (on 5 Oct 1835) of Joseph's war service by his father, John Martin — himself
a revolutionary war pensioner at Athens, Ohio before Abner C. Martin, Justice of the Peace
- a testimony by the Justice of the Peace, Marcus Moore, who had lived near Martha Martin in Tyler County for about 14 years in Tyler County, Virginia, and
- a summary of Martha Martin's statement to Marcus Moore.

¹Thanksto Jane Martin Jesson of Enterprise, AL for making me aware of this Pension Application and for sharing it with me along with her history of the Martin Family (2 August, 2002.)

²Joseph Martin (Martha Martin, Widow), Widow's Pension Application W6960; Family History Library microfilm #0971640, "Revolutionary War Pension and Bound Land Warrant Application Files: Martin, John — Martin, Joseph; Washington DC, The National Archives, 1969". Borrowed from FHL in Salt Lake City, Utah; viewed at FHL, Scarborough, Maine.

Martin³ claimed that she was 84 or 85 at the time of her disposition and that she was the widow of Joseph Martin, who had served as a private in the Revolutionary War. She claimed that “she never knew her late husband until after the termination of the Revolutionary War” so her knowledge of his service was based on what her husband and father-in-law and other relatives had told her. She didn’t remember the name of Joseph Martin’s regiment, but did remember the name of the Captain was Harker and that two soldiers’ names were Ebenazer Dow and Joseph Rose.

According to the Martin family, Joseph Martin had been living with his father, John Martin, and his mother in Sussex New Jersey during the latter part of the Revolutionary War. He enlisted as a private for a period of one year. This implies that he was at least 16 years of age by around 1780. Joseph Martin served under Captain Joseph Harker and his company marched to “The Minisink” in New Jersey. At some point after his enlistment, the Indians near Sussex became “troublesome” with “frequent incursions into the settlement” of Sussex. As a result, Joseph Martin received permission to return to his mother and family to help protect them. According to John Martin, the father, Joseph Martin returned home to protect this family and his “fiancée”. If what Martha avows—that she didn’t know Joseph Martin during the Revolutionary War—and the father’s statement that Joseph Martin had a fiancée are both true, then Joseph Martin seems to have had another fiancée besides Martha during the Revolutionary War. We

³According to Jane Martin Jesson (communication 2 Aug. 2002), Martha Bryson was born in 1767 in Ireland and died on 29 June, 1852 in Tyler County, VA (now WV.) She is buried in Little Methodist Church Cemetery, Union District, Tyler Co., WV. Little Methodist Church Cemetery is located on County Road 6 Union District. Goto Friendly, WV, just below Sistersville. Then take the Friendly Hill Road east 5 miles to Little; cross the iron bridge. After that it is the first road to the right, which goes to the church, which is on the edge of the village. The grave of Martha Bryson Martin is on the far left of the church down toward the road. (Jane Martin Jesson.)

don't know whether Joseph Martin was actually married to another person prior to his marriage to Martha .

After about a month's time serving for his son, John Martin returned home to Sussex and the son, Joseph, returned to complete his original term of service as well as the month that he missed to guard against Indians at home. From the application, it was not clear whether Joseph Martin was ultimately discharged at Minisink or somewhere else.

Since Joseph was visiting his mother, we may presume that Joseph Martin's mother was alive during the latter part of the Revolutionary War. Since Joseph Martin's father, John Martin, came to serve in his son's stead for about a month, we know that John's father was alive and fit enough to serve in the Revolutionary War. We also know from Martha's pension application that John Martin received a pension for his revolutionary War service as a Lieutenant. John Martin's statement refers to him as "a pensioner of the United States under the Act of Congress of the 18th March 1818". We also know that the father John Martin outlived his son because John Martin completed a deposition about his son's service at Athens, Ohio on 5 October 1835, and Joseph Martin was said to have died in 1833. From the deposition, we also know that John Martin eventually came to Athens, Ohio. We also know that John Martin⁴ must have died before 9 July 1851 since he is unable to provide witness testimony.

⁴John Martin was born on 23 October 1739, Somerset Co., NJ. He served in the military in the Revolutionary War as a lieutenant (Pension Application Papers of John Martin, Family History Library Film #0971640.) He was discharged in the year 1778. He married in 1760 Susannah Catlin in Somerset, NJ and removed to Washington County, PA about 1787, then to Ohio County, VA (now WV) in 1797, and then to Athens County, Ohio in 1816. He died on 14 May 1837 in Athens Co., Ohio. He was buried in the family burying ground on the corner of his property adjoining his son, Ephraim's property in Athens County. (Jane Martin Jesson, written communication 2 August, 2002.)

According to her deposition of 9 July 1851, Martha Martin claimed to have married Joseph Martin about January 1786 in Washington County Pennsylvania in a service performed by Thaddeus Dodd, a Presbyterian Minister. Martha Martin stated she had no record of her birth or marriage. Martha Martin stated that she was about a girl of nine at the time of her marriage, making her birth year about 1767. We know that she died sometime after 9 July 1851 and on that date she was living in Tyler County, VA. Since she signed her name with an X, it seems she was illiterate.

Martha Martin provided a piece of loose paper, which stated the names and birth dates of all of her children with Joseph Martin. She claimed to have carried around this paper for more than forty years. Based on the microfilm picture of this document, all the names appear to have been written by the same person, probably at the same time. (Thus, unlike a family Bible, which may have dates written down close to the time of the event, this document appears to have been written at a later date and is likely to include errors. For example, it seems suspicious that two children were born on the same date — July 26 — two years apart. Since Martha Martin couldn't write and presumably couldn't read, she would not have caught any errors.) While it is not solid proof, the paper does provide strong evidence of the names and ages of the children of Joseph and Martha Martin. According to the paper, they had the following children:

John Martin - born December the 19th day 1787

William Martin - born April the 6th day 1789

Elizabeth Martin - born June the 25th day 1791

Susannah Martin - born July 26th day 1793

Jane Martin -born July 26th day 1795⁵

Sarah Martin -born June the 1st day 1797

Abner Martin⁶ -born November the 9th day of 1799

Ephriam Martin -born August the 18th day 1803

Joseph Martin -born October the 24th day 1806

Martha Martin stated that she was the widow of Joseph Martin and that she died 20 April 1833. She claimed that she never remarried. The Justice of the Peace, Marcus Moore, vouched for her and stated that he believed her statement claiming to be the widow of Joseph Martin and claiming to have had the identified children since Moore had lived near to Martha Martin for about fourteen years. (This implies that Martha Martin had been living in Tyler County at least since around 1837.) Despite Marcus Moore's endorsement and the affidavit of the father - John Martin, the Pension Bureau does not seem to have been satisfied with her story as her file is marked "rejected."

⁵Jane Martin was my great -great grandmother, whom married Joseph McCoy, Jr. on 20 June 1824 in Tyler County, VA (Tyler County Clerk, marriage record of Joseph McCoy, Jr. and Jane Martin, Tyler Co., WV.) According to cemetery stone of Jane Martin McCoy of the Polly Archer Cemetery, Jane McCoy, widow of Joseph McCoy, died 12 April 1873 at the age of 77 years 8 months and one day and was buried in Polly Archer Cemetery, Middlebourne, WV. (Tyler County Cemeteries. www.ovis.net/~gary/parchem.htm.)

⁶We don't know if this Abner Martin is the Abner C. Martin, Justice of the Peace in Athens, Ohio on 5 October 1835 when John Martin gives his statement about his son's Revolutionary War service.

Transcription of the Pension Application File of Martha Martin, widow of Joseph Martin ⁷

State of Virginia

County of Tyler

On this 9th day of July 1851 personally appeared before the Subscriber a justice of the Peace in & for the said County of Tyler, Martha Martin, a resident of the said county & state, aged eighty four or eighty five years, who being first duly sworn according to law, doth on her oath, make the following declaration, in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the Act of Congress passed July 7, 1838, Entitled "An act granting half pay and pension to certain widows." That she is the widow of Joseph Martin deceased who was a private in the War of the Revolution, that her said husband who then resided in Sussex County, in the State of New Jersey, enlisted in the service of the United States for the term of one year, under Captain Harker. That her said husband was marched to & stationed at Minisink in its neighborhood in the State of New Jersey, where the Indians had become very troublesome, by their frequent incursions into the settlement. That her said husband and the company to which he belonged remained there for some months. That during his stay there, John Martin, the father of the said Joseph Martin, went to where the said Joseph was stationed & served in his stead, while his son returned home to see his mother & relatives. That in about one month he the said Joseph returned to the company and took his place again & served out the full year for which he had been enlisted including the four weeks that his father served in his stead, and was discharged either at Minisink, or after joining the

⁷ Joseph Martin (Martha Martin, Widow), Widow's Pension Application W6960; Family History Library microfilm #0971640, "Revolutionary War Pension and Bound Land Warrant Application Files: Martin, John — Martin, Joseph; Washington DC, The National Archives, 1969". Borrowed from FHL in Salt Lake City, Utah; viewed at FHL, Scarborough, Maine.

main army again. The said Martha Martin further declares, that she never knew her late husband, until after the termination of the Revolutionary War, consequently knows nothing of his service except what she heard from her husband and his father, John Martin & other members of the Martin family after she became a member of it. And although she had often heard her husband and father-in-law, John Martin, talk of said Joseph's service, and the officers under whom he served, yet she does not recollect the number or name of the Regiment to which he belonged, nor any of the officers names, but his Captain, whose name was Harker. She well recollects of hearing her husband talk of two other men with whom he served, but does not recollect whether they were officers or privates. Their names were Ebenazer Dow & Joseph Rose as well as she now recollects. She does not recollect the year that her husband said he rendered his service in, but thinks it was near the close of the Revolutionary War.

The said Martha Martin refers in support of her claim to a pension as the widow of the said Joseph Martin, dec., to a deposition given by her said father-in-law John Martin, who was the father of the said Joseph Martin, the 5th day of October 1835 in Athens County, Ohio, before Abner C Martin a justice of the Peace of said county, taken at the time by the advice of friends, to substantiate her claim to a pension, should any law ever after be passed by the Congress of The United States, to entitle her to a pension on account of her husband's said service, as he was the only person that she knew of, who could prove the same. He having been himself a soldier of the Revolution, and at the time of giving the said deposition was a pensioner of the United States, receiving a pension as an officer (a Lieutenant or Ensign) in the said war, and being at the time a very old man & according to the course of nature could live but a short time, it was therefore deemed necessary to perpetuate the same as is done by the accompanying deposition of the said John Martin.

The said Martha Martin further declares that she was married to the said Joseph Martin, deceased, in Washington County, in the State of Pennsylvania by Thaddeus Dodda Presbyterian Minister, sometime in January 1786 (as she believes) that she was then about nineteen years of age. That her husband the aforesaid Joseph Martin, died on the 20th day of April 1833, and that she has no record either of her age or of her marriage, but has what she regarded as a record of the ages of her children, which is merely a loose piece of paper, on which were set down the names & births of her nine children, which papers she has had for the space of forty years or upwards in her possession & which she now gives up to accompany this declaration. That she was not married to the said Joseph Martin prior to his leaving the service, but the marriage took place previous to the first of January, Seventeen hundred & ninety four, at the time before stated. And the said Martha Martin further declares that it has been owing to the negligence of the person employed to get her pension, that this application has been so long delayed.

Sworn to & Subscribed on

The day & year first above

Martha (made mark) Martin

written

Marcus Moore JP

State of Virginia

Tyler County

I Marcus Moore, a Justice of the Peace in & for the county of Tyler in the State of Virginia aforesaid, before whom the foregoing declaration was made, do certify that Mrs Martha Martin, the declarant making the foregoing declaration, cannot from bodily infirmity attend the Court of said county to make the same before the said Court. And I further certify that I have lived anear neighbor to the said Martha Martin for fourteen years past and am well acquainted with her & her family. And that from such acquaintance I am fully satisfied, that she is of the age stated by her, was married at the time stated by her. That she is the widow of the said Joseph Martin, dec, never having married again since his death, and that from my personal acquaintance with the said Martha's several children, I have not the least doubt resting on my mind, but that they are these several ages, indicated by a paper writing, this day shown by the said Martha Martin and the only records she has of her childrens births & which she swears to have long been in her possession, of the truth of which I do not doubt, and which paper writing or record is attached to this declaration. Given under my hand at the residence of the said Martha Martin this 9th day of July 1851.

Marcus Moore, JP

John Martin was Born December the 19th day 1787

William Martin was Born April the 6th day 1789

Elizabeth Martin was Born June the 25th day 1791

Susannah Martin was Born July 26th day 1793

JaneMartinwasBornJuly26thday1795

SarahMartinwasBornJunethelstday1797

AbnerMartinwasBornNovemberthe9thdayof1799

EphraimMartinwasBornAugustthe18thday1803

JosephMartinwasbornOctoberthe24thday1806

StateofVirginia

TylerCounty

I David Hickman, Clerk of Tyler County Court, do certify that Marcus Moore whose signature appears to the foregoing Deposition was at the time of taking & subscribing to the same acting Justices of the Peace in & for the said county of Tyler, duly commissioned & qualified. And further certify that the foregoing signature purporting to be his are genuine. In witness whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name & affixed my seal of office the 16th day of August 1851.

David Hickman

Clerk of Tyler

County Court

State of Ohio

Athens County

This Day personally appeared before me the subscriber a justice of the peace in and for said County, John Martin (a pensioner of the United States under the Act of Congress of the 18th March 1818) who I certify to be a creditable witness who being by me duly sworn deposed and says that in the Time of the Revolutionary war, the year deponent does not recollect but states it have been in the latter part of the war, his son Joseph Martin now deceased was residing in Sussex County in the state of New Jersey where he enlisted in the service of the United States for the term of one year under Captain Joseph Harker, that sometime after his son Joseph's joining the army, the Indians became troublesome in the neighborhood of the Minisink in the State of New Jersey and Captain Harker and his Company was ordered to the Minisink to repel the savage for that deponent's son marched accordingly and was stationed at the Minisink sometime, when Deponent went and relieved his son by remaining and serving in his stead, while his son went home to visit his relations & fiancée. After about four weeks as well as Deponent recollects Deponent's son returned to duty and Deponent went home. Deponent saith that his son Joseph served out the term for which he enlisted & was discharged, but whether he was discharged at Minisink or not Deponent does not recollect but believes he was not discharged until after he joined the main army again and further the deponent saith not.

John Martin

Sworn and subscribed to before me this

5th day of October 1835

Abner C Martin, JP