

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Pension Application of John Davis W8654      Margaret Davis      NJ  
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris.

State of Virginia    } Ss.  
County of Harrison }

On this 16 day of April A.D. 1833 personally appeared in Open Court before the Justices of the County Court of Harrison County now Sitting, John Davis a resident of Green Brier [Greenbrier] Fork of Middle Island Creek Settlement in s'd County of Harrison aged seventy seven years who being first duly sworn according to Law doth on his Oath make the following decleration in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress passed June 7<sup>th</sup> 1832

That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated. That on the first of March 1777 he was drafted to go a tour of three months as a private, from Monmouth County, State of New Jersey under Capt Stephen Fleming, marched into Middlesex County, To the Town of Perth amboy, there was attached to a Regiment commanded by Col. Heard, Gen'l. Messer Was there stationed, in about ten days, after this affiant arrival there, he received the appointment of Drum Major, (in which capacity he continued to act during the period for which he was drafted) was marched from thence by way of Middle Town Point to Sandy Hook, made an attempt to go to the Light House on Sandy Hook Point, was beat back, by the fiering from the British shipping, from thence marched back to the highlands, and was engaged for a while preventing the Refugees from plundering the inhabitants, there was placed under the command of Capt. Fleming was marched southward about twenty miles, to Shark river salt works, continued there, until time of service had expiered under his draft, guarding said works and marching upon all alarms to the several points from whence they came to repel the enemy was dismissed by his Capt. Fleming and returned home. The country remaining in great danger, and Frequent plundering and wrongs, being heard of, affiant on the first of July following volenteered to go a Tour of one month as a private in the Jersey Militia under Capt. John Dennis from Monmouth County, New Jersey State, (Lieut. Joshua Bennett.) was again appointed Drummer in s'd Capt. Dennis's Company. marched to the Head of Barnegat Bay, was there placed under the command of Gen'l. Foreman [sic: David Forman] and attached to Col. Daniel Hendersons Regiment, continued at Barnegat Bay guarding salt works until time had expired for which he volenteered, and was discharged by his Capt. Dennis. In march 1778 he was again cald into service in a company commanded by Capt. Thos. Shidor [Thomas Shidor] march to Tinton Falls & remained scouting on the sea shore for the term of three months & was discharged

In July following he was again cald into service under Capt Garret Longstreet was stationed at Squans salt works to guard the sea shore & continued there three Months & discharged. immediately after he vollunterd in same company was employed as Drummer in same kind of service for three Months & discharged

In the spring he believes in March 1779 he was cald into service under the command of Capt. Ephraim Buck was stationed at Colts neck & was employed as before in guarding the shore for three Months & discharged

In Sept. following he was drafted & placed under Capt. John Walton was stationed on the shore & imployed as before for three Months & discharged

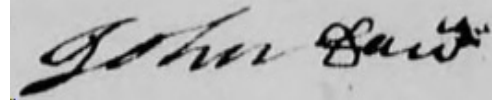
In June 1780 was drafted in a company commanded by Capt. Joshua Bennett was stationed at Tinton Falls the company was attached to a Regt. commanded by Col. Daniel Henderskson [sic: Daniel Hendrickson] & Gen'rl. Foremon was discharged having serve three Months

In May 1881 [sic] he was again drafted under Capt. Daniel Hampton attached to same Regt. stationed at Squans salt works & employed as before on the sea shore to prevent the landing of the enemy was discharged at the expiration of one Month

In Sept. same year was cald out again under same officers & employed in same service for three

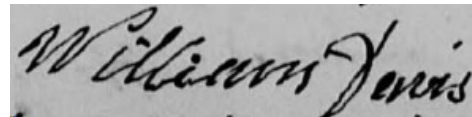
Months & discharged – depeint furthe states that he was frequently cald into service in case of alarms & served a few days each time but cannot recollect the particulars all the above discharges were oral & all the above service performed as a private: he has seen Gen'l Washington & De Lafeette [sic: Lafayette]. he further states that he was born in Monmouth county new Jersey on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of May 1755 as he is informed having no record of his age at 37 years of age he removed to Harrison County Va where he now resides – he has no documentary evidence by which to prove the above but refers to the deposition of his Brother Wm. Davis [William Davis, pension application S5329] herewith annexed. He hereby relinquishes all claim to a pension or annuity except the present & declares that his name is not inscribed on the Pension list of the Agency of any state

For his character & reputation for truth he would refer to Dav'd.[?] Wm. Williams Col. John Somerville & William Martin of his neighbourhood



[Certified by Rev. Jesse M. Chapman and James Fleming.]

William Davis appeared in court & being sworn saith that he is the Brothe of John Davis who hath signed the above declaration that he is 75 years of age that he was a soldier in the war of the revolution. that he remembers that his Brother did serve as he states under Capt. Dennis Capt. Longstreet & Capt Hampton. he further states that his Brother was cald into the service frequently & at various times but how long or at what time he does not recollect



I certify that Wm. Davis who has signed the above certificate is a credible man [re]spected & believed to be a man of truth  
[signed] Joseph Johnson JP

Harrison County } The amended Declaration of John Davis.  
State of Virginia }

Personally appeared before me Joseph Johnson a justice of the peace for the County aforesaid John Davis who being duly sworn saith, That his residence during the revolutionary War was in the County of Monmouth and State of New Jersey as stated in his former Declaration that in consequence of his residence being near the Sea Board and for several years near the Seat of War he held himself in readiness at all times to march at a minuits warning, for belonging as he did to what was called the whig Party he volunteered his servises as often as his sercumstances would admit. That on several occasions when called out with his company or class upon a sudden emergency and march to the point from which the alarm came. He volunteered and continued in service several months. Such was the case in several of the tours described in his former Declaration to wit.

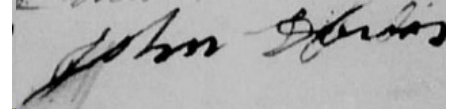
In march 1778 under Capt Thos Shaddock [Thomas Shaddock] at Tinton fall at which time he served as a volunteer three months the said company was not attached to any other Corps during said tour but was employed in guarding the sea shore. Again in July following the entire company to which he belonged Commanded by Capt. Longstreet was ordered into service and stationed at Squans Salt Works after some short time a portion of the aforesaid company was discharged & the ballance reclaimed to guard said Salt works deponent was one of the Latter and continued to serve three months Capt. Longstreet was a commissioned officer and deponant was drafted and served as above stated.

In March 1779 he was drafted together with one half of the entire company to which he belonged Commanded by Capt Ephream Buck was stationed at colts neck near the sea shore and was discharged at the expiration of three months as described in his former Declaration.

Again in Sept 1781 he was ordered into service under Capt Hampton Marched to squans Salt Works and after a short time a portion of s'd company was discharge when deponent volunteered and

continued at s'd place and under the aforesaid Capt Hampton for the term of three months he was employed as a drummer during the whole of his servises under Capt Hampton and was attached to Col Daniel Henderson Reg't. He further states that during the whole of the above service he was commanded by officers duly commissioned as he then understood and now believes and that he was not employed in any civil pursuit during such period, he further states that he does not know of any Living witness who can testify to the above servises Except his brother Wm Davis whose deposition was heretofore annexed

Sworn & subscribed before me this 4<sup>th</sup> day of June 1833  
Joseph Johnson J.P.



Gentlemen [Messrs. John & Wm. Davis, New Salem VA]

Bridgeport Aug't. 1<sup>st</sup> 1833

It affords me much pleasure to be enabled to inform you that the last Mail brought the certificates placing you on the pension list John Davis at \$88 per annum and William Davis at \$63.33 cents per annum, commencing on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1831

As the 4<sup>th</sup> of Sept is near at hand perhaps it would be best not to draw untill that time, when you can draw two and a half years pay Should it not be convenient for you to come to my house, I will make out the necessary papers and send them to squire Randolph, who will take your acknowledgement and return them to me Please drop me a line through the Mail, and let me know your wish in the matter.

with great respect & esteem/ I remain your friend J. Johnson

[The following report is by US District Attorney Washington G. Singleton who investigated hundreds of pension applications from present West Virginia. For details see my appendix to the pension application of David W. Sleeth S6111. Singleton wrote "Entitled" on this report.]

John Davis draws \$80 [sic]

on the 31<sup>st</sup> July 1834 Mr. Davis gave the following narative – is in his 79<sup>th</sup> year of age is a native of New Jersey, was 37 yrs old when he settled in Harrison cty

in the year 1777 he volunteered for one month under Capt. Stephen Fleming, marched from Shrewsbury to Perth Amboy. Joined Col. Herds Batallion under Genl Mercer, went to Sandy Hook – directly after the forgoing term expired in the same year he volunteered for two months under same Captain and served in the same place – but one Company in this service, it was guarding the salt works at Shark River.

in the 1778 (he thinks) served a 3 mo. tour under Capt John Dennis at Bannagat Bay, only one company in this service.

In same year served a nother 3 mo tour under Capt Longstreet at Squns Salt work. but one company in this service

in the years 1778 & 1779 (he thinks) he served a 3 mo. tour under Capt Joshua Bennett. part of this tour was at Trenton Falls – only one company in service.

in 1779 & 1780 served a 3 mo. tour under Capt Garrett Longstrett – in the two last mentioned tours was under the direction of Col. Henderson.

the next service perhaps in 1781 he served a 3 months tour under Capt Ephraim Back at Trenton Falls but the one company at that station – perhaps in same year served a nother term of 3 mo. at same place under Capt. Flemming but one company at the station – thinks in same year he a nother tour of 3 mo. under Capt. Bennett at same place but one company at the station.

he Davis does not pretend that the statement above given is strictly correct as to dates or classification of Officers – but of this he is certain. that he did serve the terms above detailed – and in the whole longer than two years – Jos. Johnson wrote his Declaration. Stated to him in substance what he now states – gave Johnson \$20.

[Different handwriting] In Witness that the forgoing statement contains the truth he hereto subscribed his name. July 31 1834

John Davis

A Copy

W. G Singleton/ Nov. 21 1834

[All pensions from Harrison County had been suspended during Singleton's investigation, and those he judged entitled were generally restored. Correspondence below indicates that John Davis's pension remained suspended because of the erroneous belief by James L. Edwards, Commissioner of Pensions, that militiamen in New Jersey never served tours longer than one month. See endnote.]

Winchester May 26, 1835

Dear Sir/ Yours of the 18<sup>th</sup> Inst. on the subject of Mr. John Davis Pension matters and desiring me in behalf of Mr Davis, "to direct him what is to be done" is before me, in reply I can only say that I cant direct him what is to be done. If I could I would do so with great pleasure. It seems from Mr. Edwards letter to you, (a copy of which you have enclosed) that no such service was done in New Jersey as detailed by Mr. Davis. this is his misfortune and I have no doubt attributable exclusively to his frail memory.

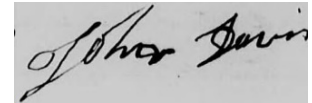
I well recollect that I was perfectly satisfied with the narration given by Mr. D. of his services. I know nothing of the kind of service performed by the Militia in New Jersey and therefore cant pretend to say whether Mr. Davis or Mr. Edwards is in error – my notes of Mr. D examination are in the possession of N. Goff [Nathan Goff] Esqr. you are entirely at liberty to have access to them.

I recollect to have reported in favour of the continuance of Mr. Davis' on the P. Roll, and and was much surprised to learn that he had been stricken off. Yours &c/ W G Singleton

Clarksburg Harrison County Va Ss

This day John Davis (named within) personally came before me James Reed justice of the peace for said County & made oath in due forme of law, that he never was drafted for a longer Term than one month, but that he was several time when out on a draft of one month detained in service 3 month and some times longer, The enemy & tories wer near them therefore they were Compeled to continue in service for longer terms than they were origionally drafted for, –, States when he give in his statemen to Mr Singleton he did not think to state that his drafts was only one month drafts, – he was only thinking of the leght of time he was out &c.

Sworne to and subscribed before me June 6<sup>th</sup> 1835  
Jas. Reed JP.



Clarksburg June 6<sup>th</sup> 1835

J L Edwards

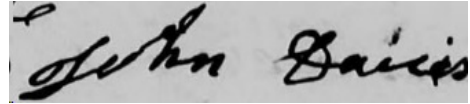
Sir there is not the smalest doubt but that Mr Davis is entiteled to a pension and done all the servis he clames to have done, – Mr Singleton & my self when we examined him were boath fully convinced that his statemen was correct or rather that he had don the servic represented in his statemet

Yours Respectfully/ Nathan Goff

Weston, Lewis County, Virginia, Oct'r 24<sup>th</sup> 1835

John Davis late of Harrison County Va who this day applied to me, to take his affadavit Explanatory of his declaration, upon which he obtained a pension cirtificate from the war department who after being first duly sworn, has made the following statement, he states that he was born in the State of New Jersey and Lived there untill he was about thirty seven years of age, that he Lived in that state during the revolutionary war that he went into the army of the revolution in the year 1776 or 1777 and continued in the service the most of the time untill the year 1781 or 1782 that he was principally engaged in guarding the tories & refugees on the Sea Board; he states the drafts were for one month, but that after he was cal'd out into the service he was kep't generally three months before he could get his discharge, & sometime Longer; he states that the salt works on the Sea Board had to be continually guarded, and the British was a most constantly about New York or in Jersey, that there was such a call for troops that they could not get their discharge at the expiration of the Term for which they were drafted, this affiant states in conferring with his agent that drew up his declaration, & did not know the Importance of particularising

the time of the drafts, thought it only necessary to set forth the time he had served in the revolution with such particular & circumstances as he could remember. This affiant states there was no regularity as to the time of service with Those that had no families, altho it was understood the drafts were but for one month at a time, there was such a call for troops, and being a single man at that time, was scarcely ever discharged under a tour of three months and on some occasions Longer. This he assigns as the reason, that it was set out in his declaration that the terms of his service were three months or some of them at Least. &c &c



Lewis County towit

The above named John Davis this day appeared before me a magistrate in and for the said county, and signed and subscribed the foregoing statement and made oath to the truth of the same Given under my and at Weston this 24<sup>th</sup> day of october 1835 Weeden Huffman J. Peace

Clarksburg November 2, 1835

The undersigned W G Singleton has been called on by John Davis who has been sworn to the annexed affidavit to state what he knows and believes of his (Davis') Character and of the character of Weeden Huffman Esqr. before whom the said affidavit was made – the undersigned in the investigation of the Pension cases received through Mr. Davis important information which lead to the detection of several fraudulent cases, among them was the case of William Davis of Ohio [pension application S10521?]. (reference is respectfully made to the report of the undersigned in that case) this fact together with Mr. Davis' frankness and fairness satisfied the undersigned that he was entitled to the amount awarded him notwithstanding the discrepancies in his two statements which the undersigned attributed to frailness & loss of memory – the undersigned has been impressed by Gentlemen of Integrity that the character of Mr. Davis is as good as any mans in the county and that he has been a highly respectable minister of the Gospel for upwards of thirty years – the character of Weeden Hoffman Esq. is above all suspicion.

Signed. W G Singleton

I William Davis of Harrison County Va. the subscriber hereto do certify that John Davis late of this county now living in Lewis County did to my certain knowledge serve different tours during the Revolutionary war in the State of New Jersey I cannot say to a certainty how long he did serve during the war. but I believe he served at least twenty four month. Given under my hand this 11<sup>th</sup> day of January 1836.



Certificate for obtaining the Deposition of a Single Witness as before to oath that he Verily believes that Elder John Davis' Claim or Defence or a Material point thereof is a Case of a pension Depending where in I am a Witness Where as I Recollect of the said John Davis being Called out in the Service of his Country time after time in the old Revolution War Different times as a Drummer and that he was out in the service at the Battle of Monmouth [sic: Battle of Monmouth, 28 Jun 1778] and I further Recollect that the said John Davis and his Brother William Davis was both taken prisoners by the Ruffegees and Robbed of all their property and I also Recollect he was Considered a faithful soldier to the End of the War

[signed] William G Davis

I Certify that William G Davis personally appeared before me Nathan Davis a Justice of the peace for Harrison County and made oath the above Certificate is true Given under my hand this 10<sup>th</sup> day of february 1836

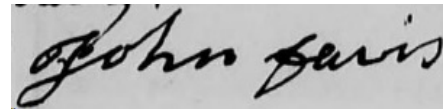
[signed] Nathan Davis JP

Weston, Lewis County, Virginia/ Feby 19<sup>th</sup> 1836

Hon. Lewis Cass/ Secretary of war

Sir Mr John Davis of this County has again Cal'd upon me, to certify to your department, in further confirmation of his services as a Soldier of the Revolution, who states as follows: he states that in the year 1777 in the month of april he volunteered as a Drummer under Capt Stephen Flemming Marched to Amboy, where the Company joined Col. Herad Batallion under Gen'l Merser, then marched to Sandy Hook, in order to destroy the light House & fill up the well, to prevent the British from Landing & geting water &c. but before Reg't got near the Light House the British lay near there, and fired up the american tropes and repulsed them. the American Tropes retired to the Highlands there the troops remained untill the month Had Expired for which he had volunteered. Mr Davis states that he Immediately Volenteered again under the same capt. and stayed in the service two months after that (the company's were Classed [and drafted by class], some [draftees] ran to the British others hid in wood & swamps, s'd Davis states he (after being classed) was Drafted for one month, but continued in the service three months before he returned home. within three days after he returned home, the Tories collected and took him said Davis with some others prissoners & took his clothes, Drum, Horse & bedding, in a day or two after the Tories let their captives go but took with them the Horse and other plunder which he s'd Davis never got. said Davis states that he very shortly after, entered the service again and Volunteered for a month at a time and when his month expired, he again volunteered, and continued to Volunteer in Like manner untill the year 1781 with the exception of three months, Gen'l. Washington having sent Col Fords Batallion to releve them for that space of time. S'd Davis states, that the Tories were so troublesome as well as the British, the malitia were (during the time mentioned) compell'd to be in actual service, so Davis states that at the time he made his declation to the War department for a pension, that it did not occur to him that the drafts were for but one month in New Jersey. he frequently continued in the service three months before he lef the army, and that his attention at that time was not cal'd to the fact the calls or drafts were but for a Tour of one month at a time. his particular object was to detail the Lenght of time he was in the service and the particular occurrances. Said Davis states that he is old, and such an Length of time has elapsed since his revolutionary services was performed that it is impossible for him to be able to detail all that then transpired, specifically.

[Certified by Weeden Huffman]



Department of War/ Pension Office/ May 26 1836

Sir [Joseph Johnson, House of Representatives]

I have the affidavit of Wm. G. Davis to be used in the case of the claim of John Davis of Harrison County, and have filed it with his papers.

Mr Davis merely states, that he knew that the claimant was in service from time to time. Of this fact, the Department was before satisfied, as was expressed in my letter to your of the 29<sup>th</sup> of March last. In my letter to you [illegible word] 21 of Dec'r, and in my several letters to Mr [Richard] Despard, Mr Goff, and the claimant himself, the objections have been explicitly stated, and no testimony can be expected to prove a service which in fact was never rendered. To attempt, on the part of Mr Davis to establish the fact that he performed eight tours of militia service in New Jersey of three months each, will be unavailing, as no such service was ever performed by any one in that state during the war of the revolution.

I have the honor to be/ Respectfully/ Your obed Ser/ J. L. Edwards

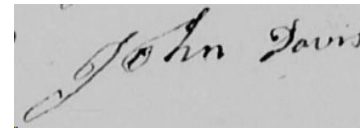
Weston, Lewis County, Va/ June 20<sup>th</sup> 1836

Hon. Lewis Cass/ Secretary of war

I have been Informed through the politeness of the Hon Joseph Johnson that upon further Investigation of my Claim, or right to be reinstated on the pension roll, you have come to the conclusion to place my name on the roll at \$44. per annum after first accounting to the department for the difference

between this sum and the sum allowed me in my pension certificate which was \$88. per annum, and I drew a pension three years and then my pension was suspended. I honestly conceive myself Entitled to the amount first allowed me & had supposed I had furnished satisfactory proof of the fact, but it seems it has not been so construed and I know of no other proof now in Existence that I can procure at this Late period was I not old poor & needy I would not have solicited the government for assistance I am now between 81 and 82 years of age and according to the Information rec'd. by the Hon Jos. Johnson I could not draw anything before Sept. 1837 and not then perhaps if Interest should be Exacted, and against that time in all Human probability I may not need any pecuniary assistance

If I would be allowed (consistently) the \$44 per annum commencing at the 4<sup>th</sup> March 1834 the time my pension was suspended, I should be enable to Releive myself from the small demands agst me, that otherwise must Embarrass me, always confidently beleiving that I should be reinstated in the amount that I had heretofore drawn, I hope therefore that if may appear reasonable & just to your Honor to reinstate me as a pensioner in such a way as to allow me (if no more) the sum of \$44 per annum to commense at the time my pension was suspended without exacting the amount that (has been conceived) I had over drawn?)  
Your obt. & Hum'bl Servt



War Department/ Pension Office/ June 29 1836

Sir [Lewis Cass, Secretary of War] In relation to the case of John Davis, I have the honor to state to you, that when his claim was first admitted, reliance was place on the statement he made under oath, and a full pension was granted. He alleged two years service in tours of three months each in the New Jersey militia; but after it was ascertained that the militia of that State performed tours of only one month each, the pension was suspended for further proof and an explanatory statement. He ha made explanations, which will be found under envelope marked EX. These explanations from the good character Mr. Davis sustains, may be deemed sufficient to remove any unfavorable impressions which may have been made in the case; but they furnish no reasons for supposing that he served so long as two years. I thought the Department would be justified under the circumstances, in allowing a pension for twelve months service. This was assented to; but the claimant does not wish to refund the amount overpaid; and from this decision the Office he now appeals to the Secretary of War.

Owing to the discrepancies in the statements exhibited it is not possible to determine how long he actually served.

A return of the papers is respectfully requested.

I have the honor to be/ Very respectfully/ Your Obt. Servt./ J. L. Edwards

Weston Lewis County/ Virginia Augs't 1<sup>st</sup> 1839

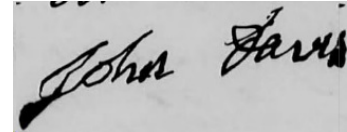
Dear Sir

I was placed on the pension List under the act of Congress of the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1832 and drew a pension of \$88 per Annum from 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1831 to the 4<sup>th</sup> March 1834 my pay as a pensioner was then suspended, untill further proof of my Military services should be furnished to the department, which I attempted to comply with but was not thought sufficient to to authorise me to full pay as a pensioner (as formerly).

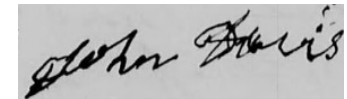
The department Informed me through Col. Johnson the Member of Congress from this district (as well as I now recollect) that they had come to the conclusion, that I was entitled to half what I had formerly drawn per annum, but req'd. that I should refund what I had rec'd from the goverment over and above what they conceived I was entitled; I felt my self justly entitled to full pay as first drawn, under the act of 7<sup>th</sup> June 1832 altho I may have failed to satisfy the department of that, by strict proff, and have had the subject twice before congress, and each time a bill passed that body; allowing me half pay from the

time my pension was suspended but owing to the great press of Congress was not taken up in the other Branch of Congress, before its adjournment each session. I am now so fair advance in years I think I am in the Eighty Sixth year of my age, and am poor & Indigent and am desirous that the department would restore me to such pension as they shall think just and right, from the evidence before them, I can't expect to hire much Lawyers, and had better (probably) accept half the amt. of what I formerly drew after being delayed untill what I had over drawn would be first settled, – under this arrangement there would be something due me, I hope therefore I may be placed on the pension List, and forward me a pension certificate, for an amount that I may be considered justly entitled

Very respectfully/ your obt servt.



ps. please correspond with Weeden Hoffman Esqr. of this place who is my agent in my bussness in this behalf



[On 15 Aug 1839 John Davis was issued a new certificate for a pension of \$44 per year, “Reduced from \$88,” for serving “one year, red from 2 year.”]

#### NOTES:

In this case, as in many others, James L. Edwards insisted that because drafted tours of militia duty were limited by law, militiaman were never compelled or volunteered to serve longer tours. This assumption is demonstrably false.

On 1 Jan 1855 Margaret Davis, 84, of Leading Creek Settlement in Lewis County VA, applied for a pension stating that she was married to John Davis in August 1814 or 1815 in Harrison County by John Waldo, a Baptist minister, and her husband died on 20 June 1842. The file contains a copy of the marriage return from John J. Waldo as follows: “Marriages celebrated by the subscriber in 1814 in Harrison County Va/ August 21<sup>st</sup> John Davis to Margaret Kelso.” A note in the file gives the date of John Davis’s death as 22 June 1842.

A letter by James Bennett dated 15 Feb 1855 states that he received Margaret Davis’s pension certificate on the same day as news of her death on 3 Feb 1855.