MEMORIAL

OF

CERTAIN SURVIVING OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS

OF THE STATE TROOPS OF NEW JERSEY,

Who served in the Revolutionary War, praying remuneration for services and sacrifices in said war.

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled:

The memorial of the undersigned citizens of New Jersey, surviving officers and privates of the State troops, volunteers and militia, of the revolutionary war, respectfully represents:

That, conscious of the equity of their claims upon their country for remuneration for their toils and perils in her behalf, during her struggle for independence, the principal part of them have, in pursuance of public notice in a number of the papers published in this State, met at Princeton, and, upon consultation, determined to make their united appeal to the justice of your honorable body.

Most of your memorialists were enrolled in the militia at the commencement of the war, and served faithfully every call upon them for military duty until its close; and as New Jersey, during the greater part of the time of its continuance, was either a theatre of its conflicts or in the immediate vicinity of the enemy, the calls upon her militia and volunteers were more frequent and pressing than in most of the other States. For a considerable time, some of your memorialists acted as minute men, and were so often called out by the frequent alarms of predatory excursions of the enemy in different sections of the State, and to guard and conduct prisoners from place to place, as to render it impracticable for them to attend to their own private affairs to any valuable purpose; and the small compensation they afterwards received, being in a depreciated currency, did not defray their expenses while out on duty. Several of them joined General Washington in his retreat through New Jersey to Pennsylvania, in 1776, when his army was reduced to a mere skeleton, and aided in the subsequent capture of the Hessians at Trenton; and a number of them were in the battles of Princeton, Springfield, Germantown, and Monmouth, and performed a much greater
amount of active duty, endured more hardships and privations, and were exposed to much greater perils, than those who entered the continental army at a late period, and are now receiving their pensions. They therefore conceive that, upon the principles of common justice and equity, they have quite as strong claims for remuneration as some of those who are now enjoying the public bounty.

Moreover, a few of your memorialists sustained heavy losses of property by the devastations of the enemy, for which they have not, as yet, received the least indemnity. Some of these, under circumstances of peculiar hardship, impelled by their reduced circumstances, and a consciousness of the justice of their claims, have, a few years since, petitioned your honorable body for redress, but as yet without effect.

They also beg leave to represent, that the greater part of them, from pecuniary losses and reverses of fortune—some in the way of mercantile and other business, some by the purchase of landed property and other real estate at high prices, many years since, on which they still owed considerable sums, by its depreciation in value, consequent on the general peace, has stripped them of their all, and at an age too far advanced to begin the world anew; while others, by long protracted sickness and disease, have been reduced to extreme poverty; and all of them being disabled by age and infirmity from procuring their support by manual labor, many of them are dependent on their relatives and friends for their subsistence; and there is at least one instance of one who had been an active, efficient, and highly useful officer, an aid to the late General Dickinson of Trenton, who, together with his wife, has been for several years consigned to the cold hand of public charity, within the walls of a poor house!!!

Having spent a considerable portion of the prime of their lives in the service of their country, and contributed their full share toward the achievement of her independence, your memorialists, when they look back and reflect, what these United States then were; what, under the smiles of Providence, they now are; and what they seem destined by Heaven to become; they cannot repress their convictions, that they are entitled at least to such remuneration for their toils, privations, and perils, as will afford them the means of sustenance for their few remaining days, without being dependent on their friends, or upon public charity.

There is only a very small remnant of them left: that remnant is rapidly diminishing by death, and, in the course of a few years, the last of them must be consigned to the tomb. It is only a very small pittance, from the abundant resources of their country, which they ask; this pittance, if granted, will be annually diminishing, and in a very few years will cease to be called for.

Conscious that their claims are well founded, and relying upon the equity and justice of your honorable body, your memorialists submit to them their cause, with a confident hope that their appeal will not be in vain; and that, on account of the needy circumstances of most of them, it will be decided upon as early as practicable.

Princeton, September 27, 1831.