

AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR
LIVING HISTORY CENTER™

ISHMAEL TITUS
WEEKLY EVIDENCE REPORT

Revolutionary War Pension Application R10623

Weekly Research Update - October 7, 2026

Prepared by	American Revolutionary War Living History Center™
Primary goals	1. Corroborate Titus's Revolutionary War service and evaluate the historical basis for the pension rejection. 2. Continue the search for his actual grave in or near Williamstown, Berkshire County, Massachusetts.
Evidence standard	Confirmed facts, strong corroboration, plausible leads, contradictions, and unresolved questions are distinguished throughout.
Distribution	Prepared for archival research, historical review, the Titus Family Foundation, and counsel as appropriate.

Research note: Complete web addresses are printed in full throughout this report for direct copying and submission.

Executive Summary

This week materially strengthens the external corroboration surrounding Ishmael Titus's 1832-1833 pension testimony. Two additional approved North Carolina militia pension files, Elias Wellborn W6465 and William Davis W8657, independently reconstruct much of the officer network, geography, and service conditions Titus described. Together with previously identified pension comparators, the evidence increasingly supports Michael C. Scoggins's conclusion that other veterans' pension records corroborate important parts of Titus's account, even where Titus confused first names, ranks, chronology, or family relationships in old age.

The grave investigation remains unresolved. No credible online burial record for Ishmael Titus surfaced this week. The already-completed Williamstown municipal request remains the strongest direct burial inquiry, while the Williams College / White Oaks research trail remains a promising complementary avenue.

Standing research controls

- NARA Archivist John P. Deeben confirmed on September 14, 2026, in request RR1R-26-87033-JD that R10623 in M804 is the complete surviving federal administrative record for Titus's pension application and rejection. No related Titus file exists in Record Group 15, Bounty Land Warrant Application Files, 1800-1900, entry A1 26, NAID 567388. The search for a separate federal rejection/supporting file is therefore treated as closed unless a specific different series is identified.

Full source URL: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/144342919>

- The targeted burial-record request to Nicole Beverly at the Town of Williamstown has already been sent. It covers name variants, the January 27, 1855 death, burial registers, sexton ledgers, interment and lot books, burial permits, removals, unmarked or pauper burials, Selectmen and Overseers of the Poor accounts, coffin/funeral bills, grave-digging payments, state pauper reimbursement vouchers for 1854-1856, and cross-checking Lucy and Harvey Titus. This outreach should not be duplicated unless a follow-up is warranted by a response or continued non-response.

Evidence status at a glance

Finding	Status	Why it matters
Elias Wellborn W6465 links John Cleveland, Isaacs, Rowan/Wilkes, Camden/Gates' Defeat, Beverly, and old-age memory problems.	Strong corroboration	Unusually close overlap with Titus's corrected command and campaign recollections.
William Davis W8657 links Cleveland, John Beverly, the Yadkin/Shallow Ford, Deep River, anti-Tory service, and lack of documentary proof.	Strong corroboration	Shows a successful pension claim with evidentiary weaknesses similar to Titus.
Multiple independent pensioners now identify Captain John Beverly.	Confirmed network	Further weakens the probative value of William Hill's statement that he did not remember Beverly.
Absalom Cleveland was a real Revolutionary veteran in the same broader family/military network.	Plausible explanation	Supports name-memory conflation, not Titus's precise rank or episode attribution.
NPS lists Ishmael Titus as Rowan County, NC Militia at Guilford Courthouse.	Federal historical recognition	Supports the battle claim, while the NPS card's underlying source chain remains to be obtained.
No credible online burial match surfaced this week.	Unresolved	Williamstown records and local archival research remain the best routes to a grave location.

1. Elias Wellborn W6465: a major new pension comparator

Finding. Elias Wellborn stated that in early 1780 he served as a substitute for his father under Captain John Cleveland in Wilkes and Rowan Counties, in a regiment commanded by Colonel Isaacs. He marched south toward Camden and described being present at Gates' Defeat. Later, he described service in Captain Beverly's cavalry company and again under Colonel Isaacs. His file records an approved pension of \$60 per year for 18 months of North Carolina militia service.

Comparison to Titus. Titus's corrected testimony likewise names Captain John Cleveland, an Isaacs command, Rowan-area service, and the Camden/Gates' Defeat campaign. Titus separately identified John Beverly as the man

to whom he first applied for enlistment. Wellborn therefore supplies an unusually concentrated, independent overlap with Titus's remembered military world.

Evidence assessment: VERY STRONG INDEPENDENT CORROBORATION

Full source URL: <https://revwarapps.org/w6465.pdf>

Full source URL: <https://revwarapps.org/r10623.pdf>

2. William Davis W8657: Beverly, Cleveland, Yadkin, Deep River, and evidentiary weakness

Finding. William Davis described militia service with Colonel Cleveland, later service under Captain John Beverly and Colonel Cleveland near Shallow Ford of the Yadkin, and further tours on Deep River under Beverly while pursuing Tory Colonel David Fanning. Davis stated that he possessed no documentary evidence and knew of no person whose testimony he could procure to prove his service. His claim nevertheless proceeded as a pension case accepted by the local court.

Why it matters. Davis supplies a close procedural and geographic comparator. Titus faced the same broad problem of irregular militia documentation, missing proof, and old-age recollection, yet Davis's account involving Beverly, Cleveland, Yadkin, Deep River, and anti-Tory service was accepted within the pension process.

Evidence assessment: EXCEPTIONAL CORROBORATION OF THE MILITARY ENVIRONMENT

Full source URL: <https://revwarapps.org/w8657.pdf>

3. Titus's correction to Captain John Cleveland gains significance

Finding. In his supplemental affidavit, Titus corrected his earlier account and identified Captain John Cleveland as the officer under whom he enlisted, while explaining that John Beverly was the man to whom he first applied for enlistment. Wellborn independently placed Captain John Cleveland under the Isaacs command network in the same Rowan/Wilkes regional military environment during the Camden period.

Interpretation. This is a more precise overlap than a simple surname match. It strengthens the argument that Titus retained the authentic structure of his Revolutionary service even when details drifted during recollection more than fifty years later.

Evidence assessment: STRONG NEW CORROBORATION

Full source URL: <https://revwarapps.org/r10623.pdf>

Full source URL: <https://revwarapps.org/w6465.pdf>

4. William Hill's failure to remember Captain Beverly is increasingly weak negative evidence

Finding. North Carolina Secretary of State William Hill wrote in 1833 that he did not recollect a Captain Beverly. Multiple independent pension files now identify Beverly in the same North Carolina militia setting. Wellborn described Beverly's cavalry company. Davis described repeated tours under Captain John Beverly near the Yadkin and on Deep River. Previously identified comparators, including Samuel Isaacs, Richard Nall, John Walters, and Matthew Sparks, also identify Beverly.

Interpretation. The cumulative record now strongly supports treating Hill's statement as a limitation of Hill's own recollection or surviving records, not as affirmative proof that Beverly did not exist or that Titus invented him.

Evidence assessment: STRONG EVIDENTIARY POINT FOR HISTORICAL AND LEGAL REVIEW

Full source URL: <https://revwarapps.org/r10623.pdf>

Full source URL: <https://revwarapps.org/w6465.pdf>

5. Absalom Cleveland was real, but Titus appears to have conflated members of the Cleveland network

Finding. Titus repeatedly used the name Absalom Cleveland, although some of the rank, family, and episode details he attached to that name conflict with the best-supported record. Wellborn independently identified Absalom Cleveland as a Revolutionary-era acquaintance. Separate genealogical and historical compilations identify Absalom Cleveland as a Revolutionary pensioner associated with the Cleveland family and service during the Southern Campaign period.

Interpretation. This does not validate Titus's precise claim that Absalom commanded every episode he described. It does, however, support a plausible old-age memory explanation: Titus was mixing together real Cleveland family members and officers rather than fabricating a nonexistent person.

Evidence assessment: PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR A REAL CONTRADICTION

Full source URL: <https://revwarapps.org/w6465.pdf>

Full source URL: <https://www.dna-discoveries.com/g1/p1127.htm>

6. Kings Mountain: modern historical recognition continues, but the primary-source chain still matters

Finding. Current public-history resources continue to identify Titus as a Kings Mountain participant. The Liberty Trail identifies him as serving at Kings Mountain under Captain John Cleveland, and a Carolana compilation of known Patriots at Kings Mountain includes Ishmael Titus, pension file R10623.

Caution. These sources are useful evidence of modern historical recognition, but they should not yet be characterized as independent primary proof. Their underlying evidentiary chain may ultimately rely on Titus's own pension testimony, later scholarship, or compiled pension evidence. The task remains to identify a contemporaneous or independently derived record placing Titus personally at Kings Mountain.

Evidence assessment: STRONG SECONDARY RECOGNITION; PRIMARY PROOF STILL UNRESOLVED

Full source URL: <https://thelibertytrail.org/travel-inspirations/tours/kings-mountain>

Full source URL: https://www.carolana.com/SC/Revolution/Known_Patriots_at_Kings_Mountain.pdf

7. Guilford Courthouse: the strongest battle-level federal recognition

Finding. The National Park Service currently lists Ishmael Titus as a Rowan County, North Carolina Militia participant among the Black Patriots documented at the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. The NPS states that park staff found documentation attesting to the participation of 43 Black Patriots.

Unresolved source question. The park also states that its soldier card file covers more than 90 percent of the estimated American participants and that each card lists one or more sources. The Titus card and its source citations have not yet been obtained. If that card cites evidence beyond R10623, it could produce an important new layer of independent corroboration.

Evidence assessment: CONFIRMED FEDERAL HISTORICAL RECOGNITION; UNDERLYING SOURCE CHAIN PENDING

Full source URL: <https://home.nps.gov/guco/learn/historyculture/african-americans-guilford-courthouse.htm>

Full source URL: <https://home.nps.gov/guco/faqs.htm>

8. Burial search: no credible grave match surfaced this week

Finding. Searches using Ishmael Titus name variants, Lucy Titus, Harvey Titus, Williamstown, White Oaks, Eastlawn, Westlawn, and Berkshire County terms did not produce a credible online grave record for Ishmael Titus. Name matches for other Titus family members should not be imported into the case without matching dates, geography, and family relationships.

Current position. The Williams College Ishmael Titus Project continues to discuss the goal of a permanent marker at his burial site or at the location of his home without identifying a confirmed burial location. The already-sent Town of Williamstown request remains the strongest direct records inquiry and should not be duplicated at this stage.

Evidence assessment: UNRESOLVED

Full source URL: <https://sites.williams.edu/afr234-ishmael-titus-project/about/>

9. White Oaks archival research remains a promising complementary lead

Finding. Public materials concerning the Williams College Africana Studies work on Ishmael Titus indicate that students and faculty conducted original archival research into Titus and the White Oaks community. Professor Allison Guess and project participants have worked with local and family history materials. The publicly available summaries do not expose the complete underlying research file or source list.

Why it matters. Unpublished notes, source lists, property references, church references, family links, or burial-related clues could exist in the project's underlying research materials. This line of inquiry complements rather than duplicates the Town of Williamstown request.

Evidence assessment: PROMISING ARCHIVAL LEAD

Full source URL: https://www.case.org/system/files/media/file/Fall_2024_Spreads_FINAL.pdf.pdf

Full source URL: <https://hub.williams.edu/africana-studies/events-and-programming/>

Full source URL: <https://sites.williams.edu/afr234-ishmael-titus-project/about/>

10. The 1855 obituary trail remains useful, but no burial statement has surfaced

Finding. A Bennington Historical Society study notes that Titus's death was reported by the Springfield Republican and then reprinted widely. Contemporary newspaper copies are preserved in the Library of Congress, including the Alexandria Gazette and The South-Western of Shreveport. The accessible notices located to date have not yielded a funeral church, cemetery, or grave location.

Research implication. The strongest newspaper tactic is now to examine the original Springfield Republican issue and the immediately following local issues for a separate funeral, burial, church, or family notice that may not have been included in the syndicated obituary text.

Evidence assessment: WORTHWHILE LEAD; BURIAL STILL UNRESOLVED

Full source URL: <https://benningtonmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/BHS-Feb-for-Web.pdf>

Full source URL: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn85025007/1855-02-22/ed-1/>

Full source URL: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn83016483/1855-03-07/ed-1>

Overall Evidentiary Assessment

The strongest new evidence this week is the combination of Elias Wellborn W6465 and William Davis W8657. Wellborn independently links Captain John Cleveland, the Isaacs command network, Rowan/Wilkes

service, Camden/Gates' Defeat, Captain Beverly, and old-age memory deterioration. Davis independently links Cleveland, Beverly, the Yadkin/Shallow Ford, Deep River, anti-Tory operations, and the absence of documentary proof or readily available service witnesses.

The cumulative pattern is now more persuasive than a collection of isolated name matches. Multiple pension files reconstruct the same officer network and geographic corridor that Titus described. At the same time, the record should continue to acknowledge Titus's genuine errors involving first names, ranks, chronology, and family relationships. The most defensible interpretation is that an elderly veteran retained substantial episodic and geographic memory of real people and events while losing precision in secondary details.

This substantially reinforces the research position associated with Michael C. Scoggins: other Revolutionary War pension records corroborate important components of Titus's account. The next phase should focus less on searching for a nonexistent second federal Titus file and more on source-chain analysis, cross-file pension comparison, NPS battlefield documentation, and local burial records.

Comparator snapshot: Titus versus two newly emphasized approved pension files

Feature	Ishmael Titus R10623	Elias Wellborn W6465	William Davis W8657
NC militia	Yes	Yes	Yes
John Cleveland	Corrected testimony	Yes	Cleveland network
Isaacs	Yes, first name confused	Yes	Not central
John Beverly	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yadkin / Shallow Ford	Yes / regional	Regional movement	Yes
Deep River	Yes	Not central	Yes
Camden / Gates' Defeat	Yes	Yes	Not central
Old-age memory problem	Explicit	Explicit	Not the central issue
Documentary proof	Weak / absent	Imperfect	Absent
Disposition	Rejected	Pensioned	Accepted pension claim

Current Unresolved Questions

- Can an independent primary record place Ishmael Titus personally at Kings Mountain?
- What source or sources are listed on the National Park Service Ishmael Titus soldier card at Guilford Courthouse?
- Can Fort Independence in Titus's narrative be identified with confidence?
- Can the Holston River "Log Court House" discharge location be identified?
- Can Lawrence Ross be independently tied to the same service/substitution network Titus described?
- Can the Tory capture episode be further corroborated at the participant level beyond the known William Riddle / Benjamin Cleveland historical core?
- Where was Ishmael Titus actually buried, and did he have an unmarked, pauper, family-lot, churchyard, or later-lost grave?

Three Best Next Research Actions

1. Build the expanded pension comparator matrix.

Add Elias Wellborn W6465 and William Davis W8657 to the existing comparison set with Samuel Isaacs S5600, John Church W9343, Richard Nall W5401, John Walters S30771, Matthew Sparks S31385, Martin Hoffner S8727, and Titus R10623. Compare officers, geography, missing discharges, witnesses, corrections, memory problems, and final pension disposition.

2. Obtain the Guilford Courthouse NPS Titus soldier card and its source citations.

The park states that its participant cards identify one or more sources. The exact citations behind the Titus entry could determine whether the NPS designation rests solely on R10623 or on additional independent documentation.

3. Pursue the White Oaks archival research record while awaiting Williamstown.

Seek the underlying Williams College / Allison Guess source list, notes, local property references, church references, family material, and any burial clues concerning Ishmael, Lucy, or Harvey Titus. This should proceed as a complementary archival inquiry, not as a duplicate municipal request.

Source Register - Full Visible URLs

The following addresses are repeated here for convenience. Each is also printed at the relevant point in the body of the report.

NARA complete Titus pension file R10623: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/144342919>

R10623 transcription: <https://revwarapps.org/r10623.pdf>

Elias Wellborn pension W6465: <https://revwarapps.org/w6465.pdf>

William Davis pension W8657: <https://revwarapps.org/w8657.pdf>

Absalom Cleveland biographical compilation: <https://www.dna-discoveries.com/g1/p1127.htm>

Liberty Trail Kings Mountain tour: <https://thelibertytrail.org/travel-inspirations/tours/kings-mountain>

Known Patriots at Kings Mountain compilation: https://www.carolana.com/SC/Revolution/Known_Patriots_at_Kings_Mountain.pdf

NPS Black Patriots at Guilford Courthouse: <https://home.nps.gov/guco/learn/historyculture/african-americans-guilford-courthouse.htm>

NPS Guilford Courthouse FAQ / soldier card description: <https://home.nps.gov/guco/faqs.htm>

Williams College Ishmael Titus Project: <https://sites.williams.edu/afr234-ishmael-titus-project/about/>

CASE Fall 2024 source cited for project research: https://www.case.org/system/files/media/file/Fall_2024_Spreads_FINAL.pdf.pdf

Williams College Africana Studies events / programming: <https://hub.williams.edu/africana-studies/events-and-programming/>

Bennington Historical Society Titus study: <https://benningtonmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/BHS-Feb-for-Web.pdf>

Alexandria Gazette, February 22, 1855: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn85025007/1855-02-22/ed-1/>

The South-Western, March 7, 1855: <https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn83016483/1855-03-07/ed-1>

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Weekly Historical Evidence Research Program**

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