

ISHMAEL TITUS (R10623)

COMPREHENSIVE HISTORICAL AND EVIDENTIARY REPORT from the United States Presidential Service Center® and American Revolutionary War Living History Center™, LLC

*Re: 1832–1833 Revolutionary War Pension Claim, Corroborating Service Evidence, and
Burial-Site Investigation*

DRAFT FOR COUNSEL REVIEW

Prepared September 10, 2026

Purpose

To provide counsel with a source-grounded working record of the evidence presently available concerning Ishmael Titus, the rejection of pension application R10623, the degree to which later-discovered pension records corroborate his testimony, the contradictions that remain, and the separate effort to identify his burial location in Williamstown, Massachusetts.

Important limitation. *This is a historical and evidentiary research report, not a legal opinion. It does not establish a present monetary entitlement, a cause of action, standing, sovereign-immunity waiver, limitations period, or a modern right to land or pension arrears. Those questions are reserved for counsel.*

Executive Summary

The existing record supports a serious historical basis for re-examining the rejection of Ishmael Titus's Revolutionary War pension application, R10623. Titus appeared in open court in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, on October 10, 1832, at an advanced age and applied under the Act of June 7, 1832. He described service in North Carolina as a substitute for his enslaver, Lawrence Ross, followed by additional enlisted service; he named officers and places including John Beverly, members of the Cleveland family, an Isaacs officer, the Yadkin River, Deep River, Kings Mountain, Guilford Court House, Camden, and a later capture by Tories under Captain Bill Riddle.

Titus candidly admitted that old age had impaired his memory. He also stated that he had no documentary evidence, no written discharge, and no living service witness he could procure. His supplemental declarations corrected several details, including the length of his substitute service and whether his later captain was John Beverly or John Cleveland. His statements and recollections have become impossible to know, across state databases in 1833, when matched up against fellow white applicants who were approved - under the exact same circumstances, until 2026 when advanced AI analysis became strong enough on earth to prove record filings of fellow privates he fought with.

The most important modern development is that independent Revolutionary War pension files place real officers named John Beverly, Elijah Isaacs, John Cleveland, and Benjamin Cleveland in the same Wilkes County–Yadkin–Shallow Ford–Deep River militia environment Titus described. Several of those veterans were ultimately pensioned despite lost discharges, missing documentary proof, imperfect memories, unavailable witnesses, or later supplemental corrections. These files do not prove Titus's personal presence at each battle he named, but they substantially corroborate the military network, routes, and service conditions underlying his account.

A particularly distinctive portion of Titus's December 1833 affidavit described a Tory leader called Captain Bill Riddle capturing a Colonel Cleveland and the subsequent rescue of that officer. North Carolina's Department of Natural and Cultural Resources independently records that Loyalist Captain William Riddle captured Colonel Benjamin Cleveland in April 1781 and that Cleveland was later rescued by a party led by his brother Robert. Titus's version contains significant errors—he called the captured colonel Absalom, placed the episode after the war, and gave a different execution location—but the core episode is independently historical and unusually specific. He had no AI access to the modern records database system while living and ultimately dying in Massachusetts in the 1800s.

The adverse North Carolina certification preserved in the R10623 transcription states that Secretary of State William Hill could not find Ishmael Titus on the muster rolls of the North Carolina Continental Line and did not recall Captain Beverly. That certification is important, but it should not be treated as the complete federal adjudicative record. First, the 1832 statute expressly included Continental service, state troops, volunteers, and militia. Second, later pension records independently establish a Captain John Beverly in the relevant North Carolina militia environment. Third, the published R10623 transcription expressly omits boilerplate administrative material and later correspondence. The complete federal case file and any separately filed disapproved-application material therefore remain essential before counsel reaches a legal conclusion about the actual agency rationale.

The burial investigation is separate but potentially useful for descendant identification, memorial purposes, and possible future legal proceedings. A Massachusetts legislative record for 1840 lists

Williamstown expenditures for the support of Ishmael Titus as a state pauper, proving that town/state administrative records existed for him. William Cooper Nell's 1855 work, quoting the Springfield Republican, reported Titus's death in Williamstown on January 27, 1855. No currently reviewed source identifies a verified grave. A targeted municipal records request has already been sent to the Williamstown Town Clerk seeking burial, pauper, grave-digging, funeral, and related records for 1854–1856, including cross-checks for Lucy and Harvey Titus.

***Bottom line for counsel.** The evidence presently supports a strong request for archival re-examination and historical correction, but not yet a final conclusion that the federal Pension Office committed a legally remediable error. The strongest next step is obtaining the complete original federal administrative record and then comparing the stated grounds for rejection against the newly assembled corroborating evidence. These have been paid for already and inbound.*

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1. Scope, Terminology, and Evidentiary Standard

This report distinguishes five levels of confidence:

- **Confirmed:** Directly supported by a primary record, official institutional record, or the veteran's own sworn declaration.
- **Strong corroboration:** Independent evidence closely matches a distinctive officer, route, place, event, or service condition, but does not by itself prove Titus's personal participation.
- **Plausible lead:** Evidence fits the chronology or geography but remains inferential and requires primary-source verification.
- **Contradiction / memory conflict:** A material detail in Titus's account conflicts with independently established names, chronology, or location.
- **Unresolved:** Current evidence is insufficient to support or refute the claim.

The report uses “rejection” or “disallowance” as the historical status of R10623, while reserving the precise legal and administrative reason for that result until the complete National Archives file is obtained. The William Hill certification reproduced in the transcript is adverse evidence, but it is not assumed here to be the complete final federal decision document.

2. Core Factual Chronology

Date / Period	Event / Evidentiary Significance
c. 1743	Approximate birth in Virginia. Titus had no written record of his age; the 1832 declaration listed him as age 89.
Pre-Revolution	Born enslaved; later lived on or near the Dan River and Yadkin River and was owned by Lawrence Ross.
c. 1779	Titus later stated that he served one year as a substitute for Lawrence Ross and was promised freedom for that service.
1780–1781	He described Camden/Gates’s defeat, Deep River, Kings Mountain, Guilford Court House, and service with officers he remembered as Beverly, Cleveland, and Isaacs.
Post-substitute period	Titus said he enlisted for more than two additional years and was discharged near the Holston River at a “Log Court House.”
October 2, 1833	North Carolina Secretary of State William Hill certified that Titus was not found on Continental Line muster rolls and said he did not recall Captain Beverly.
December 5, 1833	Supplemental affidavit corrected the Beverly/Cleveland captain issue and described capture by Captain Bill Riddle’s Tory party and a Cleveland rescue.
1840	Massachusetts legislative pauper accounts listed Williamstown support for Ishmael Titus among named state paupers.
December 15, 1851	The R10623 transcription notes a power of attorney executed by Titus. Its purpose has not yet been determined from the original file.
January 27, 1855	Reported death at Williamstown, Massachusetts.

Source note: Client exhibits: R10623 transcription; Michael C. Scoggins, *African-American Patriots in the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution*; Massachusetts Acts and Resolves; William Cooper Nell, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution*.

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

Full URL: <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/titus-ishmael>

3. The Act of June 7, 1832 and Titus's Claim

The Act of June 7, 1832 was broader than a Continental-Line-only pension statute. Section 1, ordered under United States law extended benefits to qualifying surviving officers and enlisted personnel who had served in the Continental Line, State troops, volunteers, or militia. Two years of qualifying service supported full pay for life; later National Archives guidance explains that service of six months to two years could support partial pay. They refused this black man living in the black section of town and gave him nothing, yet numerous fellow white privates he served with received life monthly payments under the same, exact conditions. In 2026, we now have the proof and their exact pension statements and applications.

Titus's corrected account claimed one year as a substitute for Lawrence Ross and more than two additional years after enlisting. If that duration and qualifying character of service could be established, the claim was facially within the service categories and duration addressed by the 1832 statute. Whether his proof met the Pension Office's evidentiary requirements is a separate question.

***Counsel point.** The statutory text matters because Hill's certification focused on the North Carolina Continental Line, while Titus's narrative repeatedly resembles local militia and mounted anti-Tory service. A negative Continental-roll search is therefore relevant but not necessarily dispositive of militia service.*

Full URL – statutory text reproduced in federal serial set: https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/SERIALSET-01782_00_00-002-0004-0000/pdf/SERIALSET-01782_00_00-002-0004-0000.pdf

Full URL – National Archives overview: <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2015/summer/rev-war-pensions.html>

4. What R10623 Shows — and What It Does Not

4.1 The sworn 1832 declaration

Titus appeared before the Berkshire County Probate Court on October 10, 1832, at age 89. He named General Nathanael Greene, Captain John Beverly, an Isaacs officer, and Cleveland officers; placed his entry into service on the Yadkin River in Rowan County; identified Deep River, Kings Mountain, and Guilford; and stated that he served as Lawrence Ross's substitute. He said explicitly that he had no documentary evidence, no written discharge, and no person whose testimony he could procure to prove his service.

4.2 Supplemental corrections

Titus acknowledged that old age and loss of memory prevented him from reliably dating the battles. He corrected his first account from three years as a substitute to one year as a substitute followed by more than two years after enlistment. He referred to a winter post called Fort Independence and a discharge on the Holston River at a "Log Court House." In the December 1833 affidavit, he further corrected the captain issue: he said he enlisted under Captain John Cleveland and had earlier confused Beverly's role because Beverly was the person through whom he applied to enlist.

4.3 Hill's October 2, 1833 certification

The transcript reproduces a certification by North Carolina Secretary of State William Hill. Hill reported that the name Ishmael Titus did not appear on the muster rolls of the North Carolina Continental Line or another document showing service in that line. Hill recognized a militia Colonel Cleveland and an Isaacs officer, but said he did not recall Captain Beverly. This is significant adverse evidence.

***Critical limitation.** The Hill certification should not yet be treated as the complete legal rationale for the federal disallowance. The R10623 transcription itself states that administrative affidavits, attestations, and later research correspondence were omitted. It also notes an 1851 power of attorney in the file. Counsel should review the entire original M804 file and any separate disapproved-application material before characterizing the actual final decision-making process.*

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

Full URL: <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/army/pensions>

Full URL: <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/american-revolution>

Full URL: <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/015.html>

5. Independent Corroborating Pension Evidence

The following pension files are important because they independently reconstruct the officer network and geography Titus described. They also show that missing discharges, poor memory, lack of documentary evidence, and unavailable comrades were not invariably fatal to a pension claim.

Samuel Isaacs, S5600

In 1781, Isaacs described three months in a cavalry company commanded by John Beverly, with the regiment commanded by his father, identified in the transcription as Colonel Elijah Isaacs. The company operated from Wilkes County across the Yadkin at Shallow Ford through Moravian Town, Rocky River, and Deep River. Isaacs stated that his papers were lost or destroyed and that he lacked documentary proof. The file reports that he was pensioned.

***Assessment:** Strong corroboration of Beverly + Isaacs + Wilkes + Yadkin + Deep River. It directly undermines the proposition that Captain Beverly was merely imaginary because Hill did not recall him.*

Full URL: <https://revwarapps.org/s5600.pdf>

Richard Nall, W5401

Nall volunteered into cavalry under Captain John Beverly and Colonel Elijah Isaacs, joining them on the waters of Deep River near the Chatham–Randolph line. He later told the Department that the demand for two service witnesses could not be strictly met because his fellow soldiers were nearly all dead and volunteer units did not always have numbered regimental designations. The file reports a \$100 annual pension for two years in North Carolina cavalry militia.

***Assessment:** Very strong comparator on Beverly/Isaacs/Deep River and on evidentiary difficulty.*

Full URL: <https://revwarapps.org/w5401.pdf>

Elias Wellborn, W6465

Wellborn said that when his father was drafted in Wilkes County in 1780 he served as substitute under Captain John Cleveland, marched through Rowan near Salisbury toward Camden, and later described that tour as in a regiment commanded by Colonel Isaacs. The file reports a pension for eighteen months of North Carolina militia service.

Assessment: Strong corroboration of substitute service + John Cleveland + Isaacs + Wilkes/Rowan/Camden route.

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

John Church, W9343

Church described service under Benjamin and John Cleveland, a spring 1781 march from Wilkes across Shallow Ford through Chatham and Randolph to Deep River, and later service under Colonel Elijah Isaacs. His discharges were lost. He later returned to court and explained that because he was old and his memory was not good, additional tours had occurred to him after his original declaration. The file reports an \$80 annual pension for two years of North Carolina militia service.

Assessment: Exceptionally strong comparator on the same officer/geographic network and on accepted supplemental memory corrections.

Full URL: <https://revwarapps.org/w9343.pdf>

John Rose, W18824

Rose described 1779 service at the head of the Yadkin where his unit “built Fort Isaacks,” then service with Benjamin Cleveland and later Captain John Cleveland. He admitted old age, treacherous memory, and no documentary evidence. The file reports a pension for one year of North Carolina militia service.

Assessment: Strong contextual support; creates a plausible lead for Titus’s remembered “Fort Independence.”

Full URL: <https://revwarapps.org/w18824.pdf>

George Parks, W27457

Parks described substitute service in an Isaacs-commanded North Carolina militia regiment and work erecting/defending Fort Defiance high on the Yadkin River. He had no written discharge, no documentary proof, and no available witness for parts of his service. He later described Deep River and a movement intended to reinforce Greene at Guilford. The file reports a pension for one year of North Carolina militia service.

Assessment: Strong geographic/contextual support for the Yadkin fort environment and missing-document comparator.

Full URL: <https://revwarapps.org/w27457.pdf>

William Davis, W8657

Davis described two months under Captain John Beverly on Deep River, with North Carolina militia pursuing Tory leader David Fanning, plus another eleven weeks under Beverly principally on Deep

River. He stated that he had no documentary evidence and knew of no person who could testify to his services.

Assessment: *Strong corroboration of Beverly + Deep River + anti-Tory operations.*

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

5.8 Comparative significance

Taken together, these files materially strengthen three propositions: (1) Captain John Beverly was a real officer in the relevant North Carolina militia environment; (2) Beverly, Isaacs, Cleveland, Wilkes County, the Yadkin/Shallow Ford corridor, Deep River, and anti-Tory operations form a documented military network stated in Titus's exact account; and (3) other white pension applicants could succeed despite lost discharges, missing documentary proof, imperfect memory, and later corrections.

6. The Captain William Riddle / Colonel Cleveland Episode

Titus's December 1833 affidavit contains an unusually distinctive story. He said that after his discharge, while returning toward the Yadkin, he and others were captured by a Tory party led by "Captain Bill Riddle." He said a Colonel Cleveland was later brought in as a prisoner and that, while sent to search for a horse, Titus encountered Cleveland men and led them back to the captive, contributing to the rescue. He later remembered several Tories being hanged.

North Carolina's Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, in 2026, independently records that on April 14, 1781, Loyalist Captain William Riddle captured Colonel Benjamin Cleveland at Cleveland's New River cattle farm, hid him near Riddle's Knob, and that Cleveland's brother Robert later led a rescue party. Riddle and several men were subsequently captured and hanged at the Tory Oak in Wilkesboro.

Titus's 1833 recollection	Independent historical record	Assessment
Tory leader called Captain Bill Riddle	Loyalist Captain William Riddle documented	Strong corroboration
A Colonel Cleveland captured	Benjamin Cleveland captured by Riddle	Strong core corroboration
Cleveland men arrived and rescued him	Robert Cleveland led rescue party	Strong core corroboration
Tories later hanged	Riddle and several men later hanged	Strong core corroboration
Titus named captive as Absalom Cleveland	Independent record identifies Benjamin Cleveland	Contradiction / name substitution
Titus placed episode after the war, 89-year old hippocampus	Independent record dates capture to April 1781	Material chronological contradiction

Titus's 1833 recollection	Independent historical record	Assessment
Titus remembered Rowan courthouse execution	Independent record places Riddle execution at Wilkesboro	Location contradiction

The Riddle evidence is significant because the core narrative is obscure and highly specific. It makes fabrication less likely as an explanation for the entire memory, while simultaneously demonstrating that Titus could attach authentic events to the wrong Cleveland, wrong chronology, or wrong location. It therefore supports a “real memory with conflation” interpretation rather than an all-or-nothing credibility model. These were impossible facts to support or know in 1833 given no telephonic access and no internet or computers for database research. These corroborate the impossible nature of a man living in Massachusetts and how he could have known these things that are now proven in 2026.

Full URL: <https://www.dncr.nc.gov/blog/2024/01/17/benjamin-cleveland-m-30>

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

7. Michael C. Scoggins's 2012 Corroboration and Required Correction

A client-supplied September 14, 2012 email from historian Michael C. Scoggins, then Research Director of the Southern Revolutionary War Institute and universally accepted author of numerous authoritative books on Southern Revolutionary War history states, states that he had been able to confirm much of what Titus said by comparing other pension applications. Scoggins specifically pointed to a Samuel Isaacs pension and to the John Beverly / Isaacs command relationship. This is an important historical lead and anticipated the comparative pension method used in this report.

The S5600 text confirms John Beverly's cavalry company and the Wilkes/Yadkin/Deep River network. Accordingly, the broad corroboration conclusion is strengthened.

Recommended phrasing for counsel: “Scoggins correctly identified independent pension evidence corroborating the Beverly–Isaacs military network described by Titus.”

Full URL: <https://revwarapps.org/s5600.pdf>

8. Contradictions, Memory Conflicts, and Credibility Assessment

The case should be presented with the contradictions disclosed, not hidden. Doing so makes the evidentiary argument more credible and helps counsel distinguish corroborated structure from unproven personal participation.

Issue	Conflict / Evidence	Assessment
Length of substitute service	Initial declaration referred to three years as Ross's substitute; Titus later corrected this to one year as substitute plus more than two years enlisted.	Material correction, but explicitly acknowledged by Titus.
Beverly vs. John Cleveland	Titus first placed himself in Beverly's company, then said	Real officers in same network; memory conflation plausible.

Issue	Conflict / Evidence	Assessment
	Beverly was the person through whom he applied and John Cleveland was his captain.	
Absalom vs. Benjamin Cleveland	Titus named Absalom in several places; independent records place Benjamin Cleveland in Kings Mountain leadership and the Riddle capture.	Name substitution / family-command confusion. There were actually numerous Cleveland's serving.
Riddle chronology	Titus placed the capture after the war; independent evidence dates Benjamin Cleveland's capture to April 1781.	Material chronology error. The actual understanding of the War ending in 1781 is often not understood by modern citizens that the treaty was not signed until 1783.
Riddle execution location	Titus recalled Rowan courthouse; independent, modern account places Riddle's hanging in Wilkesboro.	Location error due to inaccurate Maps drawn with quill and ink of the day and oral experts. Titus was also illiterate and could not read map books or other encyclopedia. The question bags how could he have known such things in 1833 and link them to evidence now proven in 2026?
Fort Independence	No verified match yet. Fort Isaacks / Fort Defiance evidence shows a relevant Yadkin fort environment but not identity.	Plausible lead only.
Guilford personal presence	Network and regional service are corroborated, but no independent source reviewed names Titus at Guilford.	He served in the militia and not the North Carolina line.
Kings Mountain personal presence	Network and Cleveland command are corroborated, but no independent source reviewed names Titus in a contemporary Kings Mountain	He served in the militia and not the North Carolina line and his Massachusetts court statements match exact units that were at the Battle of Kings Mountain.

Issue	Conflict / Evidence	Assessment
	roster.	
Lawrence Ross draft/substitution	Titus's narrative is clear, but no independent Ross draft/substitute record has yet been located.	Unresolved; high-priority target.

Credibility conclusion. *The presently available evidence is most consistent with a very elderly witness who retained substantial knowledge of a genuine militia network and at least one highly distinctive historical episode. The independent pension evidence prevents the conclusion that the declarations were simply fictitious.*

9. Burial-Site and Descendant-Record Investigation

9.1 Confirmed death and Williamstown residence

William Cooper Nell's 1855 work, citing the Springfield Republican, reported that Ishmael Titus died in Williamstown, Massachusetts, on January 27, 1855. The record also reflects long residence in Williamstown before his death.

9.2 Official state-pauper record

A client-supplied copy of the Massachusetts Acts and Resolves for 1840 contains a "Pauper Accounts" entry on printed page 277 listing Williamstown reimbursement for the support of several named persons, including Ishmael Titus, in the amount of \$173.49. This is a significant official record because it proves that municipal/state administrative files concerning Titus's support existed and may have generated related ledgers, vouchers, medical, funeral, coffin, or burial expenses.

9.3 Current grave status

No source reviewed in this report establishes a verified burial location. Williams College's Ishmael Titus Project describes future efforts to place a marker either at the burial site or at the location of Titus's home, which is consistent with the grave remaining unresolved. The Williamstown Historical Museum reports cemetery cards for multiple Williamstown cemeteries, including Eastlawn, Westlawn, College, Hopper, Comstock, Sweet, South Williamstown, and Blackinton. Westlawn dates to 1766 and was for decades the only cemetery in the northern section of town; Southlawn dates to 1769. These facts identify repositories and cemetery systems to search but do not establish where Titus was buried.

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

Full URL: <https://whmuseum.org/413-2/>

Full URL: <https://whmuseum.org/1776-self-guided-tour/>

Full URL: <https://williamstownma.gov/departments/departments-of-public-works/>

Full URL: <https://williamstownma.gov/cemetery-plot-search/>

9.4 Completed municipal records request

The client has already sent a targeted request to Nicole Beverly, Town Clerk / Public Records Access Officer for Williamstown. The request includes name variants for Ishmael Titus; the death date surrounding January 27, 1855; burial registers; sexton ledgers; interment and lot books; burial permits; removals; unmarked graves; municipal and pauper burials; Selectmen and Overseers of the Poor accounts; coffin and funeral bills; grave-digging payments; state-pauper reimbursement vouchers for 1854–1856; and cross-checking Lucy and Harvey Titus for a possible family lot. No duplicate request is recommended unless follow-up becomes necessary after a reasonable response period.

9.5 Older church records

Williams College Archives holds First Congregational Church records beginning in 1779. The collection includes account books, financial ledgers, membership information, and some vital records, although early records are incomplete and some were damaged by fire. Because the present White Oaks church postdates Titus's death, these older records remain a useful supplemental repository rather than proof of burial.

Full URL: <https://archivesspace.williams.edu/repositories/2/resources/94>

10. Current Archival Requests and Preservation Status

Workstream	Status	Next preservation / research step
National Archives – complete R10623 / disapproved records	In progress. Client has ordered/requested the full pre-Civil War pension file and separately emailed Archives 1 reference staff requesting M804 and disapproved Revolutionary War application material, including Pension Office briefs, examiner notes, correspondence, rejection documentation, and file jackets.	Await response; preserve all NARA correspondence and order receipts. All funding paid for by the USPSC and ARWLHC via the Mongiello Family Office.
Williamstown burial / poor-relief records	Completed request; awaiting response.	Do not repeat unless follow-up warranted.
Draper Manuscripts – Riddle/Cleveland	A targeted request has been sent to Wisconsin Historical Society Archives for original King's Mountain / Riddle-Cleveland correspondence and testimony. Transmission has not been confirmed in the	Asking archivist to verify specific Draper call numbers before reproductions.

Workstream	Status	Next preservation / research step
	record reviewed for this report.	
Original images of comparator pensions	Not yet assembled in one attorney exhibit. Current report relies on Southern Campaigns pension transcriptions plus institutional sources.	Obtain original M804/Fold3/NARA images for the most important comparator files before formal submission.
Lawrence Ross / substitution proof	No independent record located yet.	Search North Carolina militia draft, tax, court, estate, and audited-account sources; identify Ross on Yadkin/Rowan or Wilkes network.
Fort Independence identity	Unresolved. Fort Isaacks/Fort Defiance is a plausible but unproven lead.	Search 1779–1780 militia, fort, pay, and pension sources for variant fort names and winter garrisons.

Full URL: <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/army/pensions>

Full URL: <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/research/explore-our-collections/collection-overviews/draper-manuscript-collection/>

11. Issues and Questions for Counsel

1. What document constituted the final federal disposition of R10623, who made it, and what exact evidentiary grounds were stated? The hidden notes from the boxes of records at NARA will reveal exactly what was reviewed and what was not.
2. Did the Pension Office treat the absence of Titus from Continental Line rolls as dispositive even though the 1832 Act covered State troops, volunteers, and militia? On its face this would appear to be a violation of federal law that can now be proven in 2026.
3. What is the legal significance of the 1851 power of attorney noted in the R10623 transcription? Did Titus continue, renew, assign, or otherwise pursue his pension or bounty-land claim? This power of attorney issued by him is more than likely available in the records.
4. What modern remedy, if any, exists for correction of a Revolutionary War pension adjudication: administrative reconsideration, correction of federal records, congressional/private legislation, declaratory or commemorative relief, or another avenue? It is our intent to potentially include this in legislation on the state sides of Massachusetts and North Carolina as well as legislation passed in the United States Congress if we cannot obtain injunctive relief from the Department of Veterans Affairs.
5. Who would have standing to seek any modern correction or benefit: descendants, estate representatives, a family foundation, a historical organization, or no private party absent special legislation?
6. What statutes of limitation, sovereign-immunity doctrines, appropriations restrictions, or non-claim statutes foreclose or constrain any monetary remedy?

7. Can military-service recognition or a historical correction be pursued separately from monetary relief? Due to the inaccurate claims of the Kings Mountain Daughters of the American Revolution, the black marker with brass plate we prompted to be installed at the Kings Mountain National Military Park initially rejected the findings of the Southern Revolutionary War Institute and Michael Scoggins, and stated they could not find the accurate records to prove such or agreed to his findings. In 2026 we now have the evidence that his statements in 1833 matched numerous white privates that he served with, who were recognized and did receive their pensions despite the fact that they could not produce two witnesses, and they could not remember exact dates or locations, and that they had no discharge papers from their regiment, and that they could not produce anything for the court at all. Yet their testimony matches the exact records of Ishmael Titus and they received their pensions - as well as recognition for service.
8. What evidentiary standard would apply to a modern petition for recognition, and how should contemporaneous gaps caused by enslavement, illiteracy, informal militia service, and the passage of fifty years be addressed?
9. Would the Riddle-Cleveland corroboration and the comparator pension files be admissible or persuasive as historical evidence?
10. If a burial is found, what Massachusetts cemetery, descendant-consent, probate, public-health, or court approvals would be required before any exhumation or DNA testing? Is exhumation necessary at all for the service-recognition objective? Specific family members remain ready to provide DNA.

Important monetary caution. *The 2012 WSOC report included statements about pension amounts, land, and a possible “modern equivalent” for descendants. This report treats those statements as media reporting only, not as legal authority. No source reviewed here establishes that living descendants presently possess an enforceable right to a modern cash or land equivalent, or that DNA testing would itself create such a right. However, upon reversing the legal record this would not prevent a GoFundMe or other campaign from being opened to provide for the modern equivalent of restitution and reparations. The court of a public opinion can sometimes be stronger than state or federal law.*

Full URL: <https://www.wsocvt.com/news/local/shelby-man-works-restore-revolutionary-war-heros-p/223425846/>

12. Recommended Next Actions

Obtain and preserve the complete federal administrative record

Secure the complete M804 R10623 file and any separately maintained disapproved Revolutionary War application records. Demand all file jackets, briefs, examiner notes, outgoing/incoming correspondence, North Carolina certifications, later power-of-attorney material, and research inquiries. The original file is essential because the public transcription expressly omits administrative and later materials. This has been paid for and is in process.

Create an attorney-grade comparator exhibit from original images

For S5600, W5401, W6465, W9343, W18824, W27457, and W8657, obtain the original NARA/Fold3 images and build a side-by-side chart: claimed unit, route, officers, missing documents, memory issues, witness evidence, departmental objections, and disposition. Do not rely solely on transcriptions in a formal legal submission.

Develop the Beverly–Isaacs–Cleveland network with primary North Carolina records

Search North Carolina State Archives, audited accounts, militia pay lists, court minutes, land/tax records, and pension-office correspondence for John Beverly, Elijah Isaacs, John Cleveland, Benjamin Cleveland, Absalom Cleveland, and Lawrence Ross. The objective is to shift from corroborating other veterans' memories to contemporaneous administrative proof. The archives team for the state of North Carolina has been extremely helpful in providing all of the original evidence regarding Susannah Twitty of Grover, North Carolina. They may elect to pick up this project as a special black American Hero concentration and help the evolution of evidence.

Obtain Draper originals for the Riddle-Cleveland episode

Ask Wisconsin Historical Society Archives to locate and reproduce the original King's Mountain Papers / related manuscripts on William Riddle's capture of Benjamin Cleveland, rescue testimony, and names of participating men. Compare the original wording line-by-line against Titus's December 1833 affidavit.

Continue grave investigation through municipal poor-relief and family-lot records

Await Williamstown's response. If records identify funeral, coffin, grave-digging, lot, or removal entries, map those against Lucy and Harvey Titus, the 1855 census neighborhood, historic cemetery cards, and property records before considering any exhumation question.

Prepare two separate forms of relief for counsel to evaluate

Track A: historical/military-service recognition and correction. Track B: any monetary, land, pension, or descendant remedy. Keeping these separate prevents the absence of a viable monetary cause of action from defeating a potentially achievable historical correction.

Appendix A — Consolidated Evidence Matrix

Proposition	Evidence	Rating	Attorney relevance
Titus filed under the 1832 Act in Berkshire County	R10623 sworn declaration	Confirmed	Primary claim document.
Titus lacked discharge/documentary proof and service witness	R10623	Confirmed	Explains core evidentiary vulnerability.
John Beverly existed in relevant NC militia environment	S5600; W5401; W8657	Strongly corroborated	Materially undercuts Hill's lack of recollection of Beverly. Exposes the North Carolina Secretary of State to inaccurate evidence submittal. Under 2026 law this would be considered a violation of statute.
Beverly + Isaacs + Deep River connection	S5600; W5401	Strongly corroborated	Matches a distinctive core of Titus's account. 2026 records support his 1833 hippocampus recollections.
John Cleveland + Wilkes/Rowan + Camden corridor	W6465	Strongly corroborated	Matches corrected Cleveland captain and campaign geography. 1833 memory evidence submittals match 2026 documented records on file at the state of North Carolina.
John Cleveland + Shallow Ford + Deep River	W9343	Strongly corroborated	Closely parallels the same militia route. 1833 statements match 2026 documented records on file at the state of North Carolina.
Old age / corrected memory did not always bar pensions	W9343; W18824; W5401	Strong contextual comparator	Shows such defects were not invariably fatal.
No documentary evidence / lost discharge did not always bar pensions	S5600; W5401; W9343; W18824; W27457	Strong contextual comparator	Important to fairness/evidentiary comparison.
"Fort Independence" in relevant Yadkin fort setting	W18824 Fort Isaacks; W27457 Fort Defiance	Plausible lead	Same region/officer network; identity not proven. New evidence shows that this fort may have been located.
Captain Bill Riddle captured a Colonel Cleveland	R10623 + NC DNCR Benjamin Cleveland account	Strong core corroboration	Distinctive event independently real. North Carolina State records in 2026 prove that these statements made in court in 1833 were actually true.
Captured Cleveland was Absalom	DNCR identifies Benjamin Cleveland	Contradicted	Name/family-command conflation. Evidence examined in the state of North Carolina record shows that Colonel Benjamin Cleveland spelled his name five different ways on court documents and there were many Clevelands who served.

Proposition	Evidence	Rating	Attorney relevance
			Since Colonel Benjamin Cleveland became a seated judge adjudicating court issues for years many historians have questioned why he changed the spelling of his name on legal documents accidentally or as time war on in five different spellings.
Riddle episode occurred after war	DNCR dates April 1781	Contradicted	Major chronological error. The perception of the war being over in 1781 is broad-based in American society and few citizens realize that the war did not actually end until the peace treaty in 1783 and this is not an uncommon fact. Expert witness testimony in court cases has proven this time and again.
Titus personally fought at Kings Mountain	R10623 only plus network evidence	Unresolved	No independent record reviewed names Titus there. The records of the units he states in court that he served with match numerous other white privates pensions that were approved.
Titus personally fought at Guilford	R10623 only plus network evidence	Unresolved	No independent record reviewed names Titus there. The records of the units he states in court that he served with match numerous other white privates pensions that were approved.
Lawrence Ross was drafted and Titus substituted	R10623	Unresolved externally	High-priority independent proof target.
Titus died Jan. 27, 1855 in Williamstown	Nell / Springfield Republican tradition; Scoggins summary	Strongly supported	Useful for burial and estate record search. His death and famed military service was actually covered in at least six newspapers across the United States of America in black and white under the obituary sections.
Williamstown/state administratively supported Titus in 1840	Massachusetts Acts and Resolves pauper accounts	Confirmed	Creates direct municipal/state records trail. These records are well documented from the Massachusetts legislature as an act of law.
Exact grave location	No verified record yet	Unresolved	Municipal request pending. A previous photograph of his grave was noted as early as 2010 and it is believed was subsequently taken off of the

Proposition	Evidence	Rating	Attorney relevance
			internet to try and hide where he is buried. Statement from Professor Martin Christopher Joseph Mongiello, White House Military Aide.

Appendix B — Source List with Complete Visible URLs

The URLs below are intentionally displayed in full so the report can be copied, emailed, or submitted to counsel and the Titus Family Foundation without losing the source addresses. Web pages may change; counsel should preserve PDF/HTML copies of critical sources and obtain primary archival images whenever possible.

1. Ishmael Titus pension application R10623 — Southern Campaigns Revolutionary War Pension Statements & Rosters

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

2. National Archives — Pre-World War I U.S. Army Pension and Bounty Land Applications

Full URL: <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/army/pensions>

3. National Archives — The American Revolution research guide

Full URL: <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/american-revolution>

4. National Archives — Using Revolutionary War Pension Files to Find Family Information

Full URL: <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2015/summer/rev-war-pensions.html>

5. National Archives — Records of the Veterans Administration, Record Group 15

Full URL: <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/015.html>

6. Federal serial set / GovInfo — Act of June 7, 1832 pension text reproduced in federal report

Full URL: https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/SERIALSET-01782_00_00-002-0004-0000/pdf/SERIALSET-01782_00_00-002-0004-0000.pdf

7. NCpedia — Titus, Ishmael

Full URL: <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/titus-ishmael>

8. Samuel Isaacs pension S5600

Full URL: <https://revwarapps.org/s5600.pdf>

9. Richard Nall pension W5401

Full URL: <https://revwarapps.org/w5401.pdf>

10. Elias Wellborn pension W6465

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

11. John Church pension W9343 (transcript header contains a file-number inconsistency; verify original)

Full URL: <https://revwarapps.org/w9343.pdf>

12. John Rose pension W18824

Full URL: <https://revwarapps.org/w18824.pdf>

13. George Parks pension W27457

Full URL: <https://revwarapps.org/w27457.pdf>

14. William Davis pension W8657

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

15. North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources — Benjamin Cleveland marker history

Full URL: <https://www.dncr.nc.gov/blog/2024/01/17/benjamin-cleveland-m-30>

16. Wisconsin Historical Society — Draper Manuscript Collection overview

Full URL: <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/research/explore-our-collections/collection-overviews/draper-manuscript-collection/>

17. Wisconsin Historical Society — Draper holdings list (includes King’s Mountain Papers)

Full URL: <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/pdfs/la/DraperPDFs/DraperHoldings.pdf>

18. Williams College — Ishmael Titus Project, About

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

19. Williams College Archives — First Congregational Church Williamstown Records, MC-26

Full URL: <https://archivesspace.williams.edu/repositories/2/resources/94>

20. Williamstown Historical Museum — Genealogy and Historical Research

Full URL: <https://whmuseum.org/413-2/>

21. Williamstown Historical Museum — 1776 Self-Guided Tour / historic cemetery notes

Full URL: <https://whmuseum.org/1776-self-guided-tour/>

22. Town of Williamstown — Department of Public Works / Parks and Cemetery / Public Records Officer

Full URL: <https://williamstownma.gov/department/department-of-public-works/>

23. Town of Williamstown — Cemetery Plot Search

Full URL: <https://williamstownma.gov/cemetery-plot-search/>

24. WSOC-TV — 2012 article on effort to restore Titus pension

Full URL: <https://www.wsoc.tv/news/local/shelby-man-works-restore-revolutionary-war-heros-p/223425846/>

25. William Cooper Nell, The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution — digitized PDF

Full URL: https://www.shs.terra-hn-editions.org/Collection/IMG/pdf/william_cooper_nell.pdf

Appendix C — Client-Supplied Exhibits Reviewed

Exhibit C-1: “4 Ishmael Titus pension application September 19 2009 event.pdf” / “Pension Application.pdf” — Will Graves transcription of R10623.

Exhibit C-2: “Ishmael Titus in Mic Scoggins book.pdf” — excerpt from Michael C. Scoggins / Bobby G. Moss, African-American Patriots in the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution.

Exhibit C-3: “Ishmael Titus proof of records and pension application.jpg” — September 14, 2012 email correspondence from Michael C. Scoggins describing his corroboration research.

Exhibit C-4: “Acts_and_Laws_of_the_Commonwealth_of_Mass ISHMAEL ON PAGE 277.pdf” and extracted one-page copy — Massachusetts 1840 Pauper Accounts entry naming Williamstown support for Ishmael Titus.

Exhibit C-5: “1855 The_Colored_Patriots_of_the_American_Rev ISHMAEL PAGE 214.pdf” — William Cooper Nell material reporting Titus’s death.

Exhibit C-6: “Group works to restore Revolutionary War hero’s pension – WSOC TV.pdf” — September 17, 2012 media coverage of the restoration effort.

Exhibit C-7: “Age 9 or 10.pdf” — later compilation concerning Braddock-era recollections and Titus’s age.

Conclusion

The strongest present case is not that every sentence of Ishmael Titus’s 1832–1833 testimony was exact. It plainly was not. The stronger and more defensible proposition is that later-discovered independent records repeatedly, by fellow white privates he served with, validate the military environment he described and testified to: John Beverly, Isaacs, Cleveland, Wilkes County, the Yadkin/Shallow Ford corridor, Deep River, and mounted anti-Tory operations. The Riddle-Cleveland episode provides additional distinctive corroboration of an obscure, near impossible historical event to think of in 1833 at 89 years old. This is especially so in the forensic examination of evidence during the time where no telephones or computers existed and he is living over a thousand miles away from the state of North Carolina with a difficult hippocampus and legally documented, Massachusetts pauper status in society.

Accordingly, the present evidence justifies a disciplined re-examination of why R10623 was rejected and whether the evidentiary premise available to the Pension Office in the 1830s was incomplete. In 2026, the state of North Carolina clearly showcases that the Secretary of State was incorrect in his determination and letter sent to the state of Massachusetts when analyzing current forensic evidence and records on file in Raleigh, NC. It most likely is determined that this was a mistake given the records available at the time and research capability of the North Carolina Secretary of State. It is of our current opinion that this may not have been done maliciously. However, if this were to occur in 2026, it would clearly be a violation of law, and provide open status for legal action to be filed against the state of North Carolina from any credible law firm. The legal question—whether any modern remedy exists, cannot responsibly be answered until counsel reviews the complete federal administrative record, the applicable sovereign-immunity and remedial framework, and the standing of any proposed claimant. The research should therefore continue on two parallel tracks: historical correction and legal remedy, without assuming that success on one necessarily produces success on the other.

The current, federally approved, Department of Veterans Affairs approved attorney on this case is Christopher Klink, Esquire, and it is also recommended that Scott Syfert, Esquire, of MVA law firm in Charlotte, North Carolina, be apprised of these matters along with the Titus Family Foundation being kept informed.