

**Jesse Rector was the son of** Jacob Rector and Mary Ann Hitt. The Hitt/Heites and Rector/Rictors were 2 of 12 families who were recruited by England from the Freindenberg District of Germany near Bonn. They arrived in Virginia in 1715. Their skills as miners and toolmakers was desperately needed in the colonies.

Jesse was born 26 Dec 1759 in Fauquier County and the second generation born in the colonies. He moved west into the mountains of Grayson County, VA with his parents about 1764. Married (unknown) (S1). They had at least 12 children (Jane, Susannah, Elizabeth, Isaac, Rebecca, Cloe, Jonathan, Samuel, Mary, Leana, Margaret. & Joseph). Married (S2), Margaret Winford in (possibly) Grayson County, VA on 2 Feb, 1802. This couple had at least 1 child, Levi.

In 1781 after his service in the Continental Army, Jesse remained in Fauquier County for the next 5 years. Then circa 1786 he moved to Rowan County, NC for 5 years before moving back to Grayson County, VA (about 1791) and living for the next 30 years. (This detail was taken from his recollections at the time of his pension application. By May, 1821 he was found in Lawrence County, IN with his son, Joseph. He applied for a pension (Pension Number: R8639V) in Lawrence County, IN 11 Nov, 1833 and remained until his death on 22 Jan, 1843. He is buried in Bedford, Lawrence, IN. Burial place unknown.

**Jesse's contribution to the Revolutionary War:** Sometime during the summer or fall of 1780 he first enlisted in the Continental Army with the VA Militia as a minuteman. After serving 3 months and 10 days he became severely ill and went home. Realizing action at Yorktown was eminent, he was ordered out on 1 Sep 1781 and served under Capt. Harry Dudley. He fought during the famous Siege of Yorktown, VA which was the last major battle of the war. After the siege he marched to Portsmouth to assist with tearing down breastworks (temporary fortifications) and went on to the sea coast to capture Loyalists/Tories.

The Siege of Yorktown - (Sep. 28 - Oct. 19, 1781): Cornwallis has been instructed to establish control of the entrance of Chesapeake Bay which had a deep-water harbor and water access to many sizable cities. A summer of malaria and small pox has reduced the Cornwallis' troop numbers in Yorktown, VA near the mouth of Chesapeake Bay. Knowing this was a strategic location the British had a couple of months to set up sizable fences, ditches, mounds and removed all the trees from around Yorktown leaving the tress with limbs entangled to encumber

invaders along with trenches. Admiral François Joseph Paul de Grasse is expected to come north from the West Indies and offer support by blockading the Chesapeake Bay eliminating assistance from the British and preventing a sea escape. De Grasse is given strict instructions to head home by October 15<sup>th</sup> at the latest to avoid stormy winter weather so time was of essence. Washington heads south to Yorktown and arrives between Sept. 15-20. (Again, our Jesse has reenlisted on Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> so he is already there.) There are over 2 times the number of troops with Washington than what are waiting for them in Yorktown.

Washington has the troops make a semi-circle around Yorktown while the French fleet does the same from the water. Under the cover of night and in the rain Washington's men dig a trench about 1 ft wide x 4 ft deep a thousand yards from the town of a few thousand residents and slaves. Thousands of baskets are made of vines and sticks from the surrounding forest and filled with soil and rocks and set on top of the trenches to deflect cannonballs. 1500 men dig while another 2500 watch to make sure they are safe. De Grasse and his fleet arrive on Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>. On October 9<sup>th</sup> when all are in place the Continental army starts shooting rounds toward town. Cornwallis believes there is not much in the way of heavy artillery so they save their cannons for future use. But the Continental army bombards the town for 9 days and just about levels it. Many locals and British are killed and left lying where they were shot. As the Continental army advances they make another system of trenches within shooting distance of the remaining buildings. In all, 3600 rounds per day fall on Yorktown causing the barrels of the guns to glow orange. The French heat cannon balls until red hot before firing on the British ships causing several to erupt in a fireball. Cornwallis surrenders on Oct 19<sup>th</sup>.