

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of Samuel Bonnifield R1007

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

[Capitalization partly corrected.]

State of Virginia } SS

Randolph County }

Personally appeared before me the Subscriber an acting Justice of the Peace in and for the County of Randolph and State of Virginia on 5th Day of November 1833 Samuel Bonnifield Esq. (one of the acting Justices for the County aforesaid) a Resident of the said county of Randolph and State of Virginia aged 83 years, who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his Oath make the following Declaration in order to obtain the Benefit of the Act of Congress passed the 7 day of June 1832. that he Entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as here in after stated, in the year 1778 [sic] this affiant was mustered in a company of Militia call'd. & stiled [styled] the minute men in the County of Gloucesther [sic: Gloucester] in the State of Virginia and Commanded by Captain Richard Billups. It was the duty of this company to guard the shores of the Chesapeak [sic: Chesapeake] Bay and York River for many miles. upon this service we were often engaged both night and day as the British squadron under Lord Dunmore and others often infested our neighbourhood for the purpose of plunder and stealing negrows [spring and summer 1776] Upon one occation I recollect of intercepting a negro man belonging to Mr. Winding Kenner [possibly Lt. Col. Windor Kenner of the Northumberland County Militia]. I caught him in the night near a boat belonging to Lord Dunmore's fleet and on the next day delivered him to his master I also recollect of being call'd. to oppose the Brittish at the head of Ware River opposite Old Point Comfort [sic], but on my arrival found that the British had areven[?] near Melilia[?] Back and had possessed them selves of one schooner and two briggs loaded with tobacco, this affiant was often engaged in the services of guarding the afore said coasts but does not recolect any material transaction other than what has been mentioned until the Siege of Cornwallas [sic: Cornwallis, 28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781] at Yorktown . When affiant was again call'd on he march'd. to the scene of action and rimained some time with the army untill he affiant was ordered to go to manufacturing of salt for the use of the army in which business he continued untill the capture or surrender of Cornwallace, This affiant did not at any time receive one cent for his services or for the salt manufactured by him as he had no contract for the salt and was engaged purely for the use of the Army. After the raising of the Siege of York affiant was discharged by his Captain having served three years in the service as a minute man, (This affiant states that he was at the Battle of the Point at the mouth of the great Kenhawa under the command did by Colonel Luis [sic: Battle of Point Pleasant at the mouth of Kanawha River, 10 Oct 1774, commanded by Gen. Andrew Lewis] and was a witness to that bloody conflict and did personly suffer many privations. Such as hungar & cold & fateague, being much harrass'd by the Indians He also enlisted after his first tower expired and remained as a guard to the fort untill the next February.)

[Certification by the Justice of the Peace omitted here.]

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and he declares that his name is not on the Pension Roll of any agency of any state Sworn & subscribed to this day & year aforesaid

[signed] Samuel Bonnifield

I was born in Prince George County State of Meraland [sic: Maryland] in the year 1750

I have none [record of his age].

I was living in Gloscester County St. of Virginia. I have lived in Hampshire and from Hampshire I removed into Randolph County were I now live

I was enroll'd as a minute man and ordered to be always in readiness

As I was confind principally to my county I did not form any acquaintance with the officers of the regular

army

I did not receive any written discharge

Mr. James Long & John Long will certify [his character for veracity and the reputation of his having been a soldier of the Revolution]

Subscribed & sworn to this day and year above written [signed] Samuel Bonnifield

Weston Lewis County April 1834

Dear Sir I employed my friend Col. Camp [James M. Camp] to lay my Declaration for a pension before the war department. he has shown me the objections of that Department, it is now out of my power to bring myself within the strict rules prescribed by the department, as my services were not that of Regular Tour except that tour at the Taking of Lord Cornwallis and the precise length of that Tour I do not Recollect as I was Ordered to the manufactory of Salt for the use of the Army. It is now out of my powers at my advanced age to procure any other Testimony of my Services, than that Exhibited in my Declaration, which I Enclose to you with my petition. I hope you will use all Honourable means to have me placed upon the pension Roll, You are sufficiently acquainted with me to know that unless I thought my self entitled to a pension, I would not ask one. Your attention will be thankfully Received by your friend and Humble Servant [signed] Samuel Bonnifield

N.B. please Direct to Col. Camp

yours with respect

[The following is unsigned and undated.]

Sam'l. Bonnifield states that he went to Gloucester County Va in 1778 & was enrolled as a minute man, & always required to be in readiness to march.. He was at the time engaged in making salt. He marched to York Town during the Siege of Cornwallis & was sent back to make salt for the army. He states that he was also in the battle at Point Pleasant in 1774. He furnishes no proof except as to good character, & reputation (as a revolutionary soldier) among his neighbours, and even upon his own statement, it is evident that he has not a shadow of claim to a pension

[The following is a report by District Attorney Washington G. Singleton, who investigated many applicants from present Western Virginia. Singleton wrote "Not Entitled" on the report. For details of Singleton's investigation, see my appendix to the pension application of David W. Sleeth, S6111.]  
Samuel Bonnifield, Applicant

Mr. John Long a man of character says, he was present when Bonnifield gave his statement of Revolutionary Services to Camp & Berd [spelled "Bird" in other pension applications]. Bonnifield stated to them that he had stood as a minute man, and had been out and done some little service – that he was at the taking of Cornwallis, but did not nor could not state how long he served.

Bonnifield told Henry Farnsler [pension application S15829], that he was drafted a short time before the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, was marched to Yorktown and got there just before the surrender of the British army – was dismissed shortly after & went home – was gone but a short time.

Bonnifield was sworn to his Declaration before John Moore.

A Copy/ W G Singleton/ Nov. 27 1834

Virginia Randolph County ss:

On this the second day of December one thousand eight hundred and forty six personally appeared before me the undersigned justice of the Peace in and for the county of Randolph and State of Virginia, Samuel Bonnifield a resident of "Horse Shoe run" in the county and state aforesaid aged 94 years the 11<sup>th</sup> of April 1846 who being first duly sworn according to Law doth on his oath make the following Declaration in order to obtain the benefit of an act of Congress passed June seventh 1832 and

other acts for the relief of soldiers of the Revolution.

That he said Samuel Bonnifield has resided in the county of Randolph for fifty odd years and being of naturally strong constitution was able by industry and economy to obtain sufficient of the necessaries to satisfy the wants of nature, until age with its attendants brought him to acknowledge, what he has this day acknowledged from necessity that he can no longer supply his wants by individual exertion and that those Laws enacted by wise Rulers which untill recently he condemned are calculated in their consequences to bring up the sinking spirits of the surviving soldiers of the Revolution.

That he the said Declarant was born in the county of Prince George and state of Maryland on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of April 1752 and he has no knowledge of there being any record of his age preserved, except on the tablet of memory, which in our Declarants case is considerably impaired by age.

That he the said Declarant was residing in the county of Culpeper and state of virginia when he first enlisted in the services of his country and since that time has principally resided in the county of Randolph virginia. That the "little meadows" in the county of Green Brier [sic: Greenbrier] was the Point of Rendezvous in his first enlistment and they proceeded from thence to Point Pleasant at the mouth of the Kenhawa river, where he the said Declarant was engaged in the sanguinary battle of the 10<sup>th</sup> of October. That he recolects the name of Col Fields [sic: John Field] who was killed in the engagement and a number of other enlisted officers who survived the battle, among whom he [illegible word] Capt Meriam Russel, Capt George Slaughter, Lieutenants [Isaac] Shelby and Roberts.

That he the said Declarant is under the impression he received a discharge from the service but does not recolect by whom it was given or what has become of it. That he thinks during that enlistment which was his first he was out eighteen months at least yet has no memorandum to which he can now refer that he can ascertain to a certainty – That he enlisted under Capt George Slaughter among his companions as private he can mention the names of them as Gordan [Gordon Flannigan?] and William Flanigan [possibly William Flannigan] who with the rest of his companions at the battle of Point pleasant, so far as his information extends are all dead.

This Declarant after his first enlistment again entered the service of the United States as a private some time during the year 1780 and was in the engagement under one Capt Billips or Phillips when Cornwallis surrendered in October 1781 and recolects the name of some of the field officers, but has a very indistinct recollection from the lapse of time, yet he cannot state the exact time when he entered the service or when he was discharged, but thinks he left the service about the close of the war and was out from twelve to eighteen months.

This Declarant knows of no person whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his service as aforesaid and that he has no documentary evidence in his possession establishing the fact but from neglect upon his part the last one of his comrades has departed this life and he would here refer the department to the accompanying testimony of James Parsons and Henry W Smith as to his character for veracity and their belief of his services as a soldier of the Revolution, to whom he has been long known and who reside in his neighborhood

That he the said Samuel Bonnifield relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state.

[The following bears no date:]

To the Honourable the Sennetee and Hous of Representatives in Congress Assembled. Your petitioner Humbly begs leave to represent to your Honourable bodies that in the year 1778 in consequence of the great scarcity of salt in the Country he Removed to the County of Glouster in the State of Virginia for the purpose of manufacturing that Article, that as soon as he arrived there he was enrolld into a Company of Militia Comanded by Capt Richard Billups. this company was stiled the minute men whose duty it was to be always in readiness to march at a moments warning, (at this time the British Squadron lay in the Chesepeak bay, the crews there of, often making incursions into the Country for the purpose of

Plundering the inhabitants and inducing the negroes to run away from their masters and join them) in this Service your petitioner was compelled to spend much of his time from the year 1778 until 1783 both night and day often marching whole nights from place to place to watch the movements of the British Boats who were sometimes in York River some times in the bay and some times in Ware River upon one Occasion when your petitioner was ordered to Ware River he arrived soon after the British had succeeded in driving away the Troops who had been guarding a Schooner and two brigs loaded with Tobacco which had been Run up said River to be kept out of the way of the enemy, these Vessels were taken off by the British at that time Your petitioner was fortunate enough upon one of those night Excursions, to apprehend a negro belonging to a Mr. Wineding Kenner, this negro was making his way to a boat belonging to the fleet of Lord Dunmore, there lying in the Bay near to the place where your petitioner apprehended said negro in this kind of service your petitioner was so constantly engaged that he could do but little at the business of manufacturing of salt, and what little he did manufacture was often Taken for the use of the United States army. in the year 1781 your petitioner together with the Company commanded by his said Captain were ordered to march and join the main army at Yorktown then engaged in Besieging Lord Cornwallis, that at that time salt was very scarce in the army and the General Washington, learning that your petitioner had been engaged and was skill'd in the manufacturing of that article gave orders that your petitioner should be detailed, for that purpose and was sent to his [illegible] and did manufacture salt for the use of the Army until [illegible] render of Lord Cornwallis, for all which services and [illegible] by the Army your petitioner has not to this day received one Cent. in this company your petitioner served three years and altho he cannot state the precise time he was actually engaged on duty, yet feels confident that he was more than two third of the time in the service of his country, your petitioner has laid his Claim before the war department, and is informed by that department, that his services are not provided for by the Act of Congress passed June 7 1832, Your petitioner is of Opinion that his services Asimitates[?] to that of an Indian Spy. With this difference that the Indian Spies Received in hand five shillings per day, when their service was Rendered, and your petitioner got nothing then nor has he Ever Received one Cent to the present day.... Your petitioner being now old and very infirm in Body and much Reduced in Circumstances pray your Honourable body to pass a law to place him upon the Pension List and to give him such further aid as to your Honourable Body shall seem right and your petitioner will Ever pray

[signed] Samuel Bonnifield