

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

Pension Application of William P. Napier S15944

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Virginia }

County of Caroline } Seilicet

On this 12th day of August 1833 personally appeared in Open Court before the justices of the Court of Caroline County now sitting William P. Napier a resident in and of said County and State of Virginia aged between 67 and 70 years of age 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 June 7th 1832.

I am now aged between 67 and 70 years my register being as I believe lost or destroyed in the ravages of Cornwallis while in Virginia in 1781 so that my age cannot be exactly ascertained. I was born, raised and educated in the County of Goochland tho' I have been a resident of Caroline for upwards of 40 years. The first time I entered the service of the United States was in December 1779. very young - a substitute in the militia and served two tours at the barracks in Albemarle County in guarding the British prisoners [captured at Saratoga, 17 Oct 1777] — I served one tour under Capt John Curd of Goochland County and one under Capt Warren Lewis of the same County These 2 tours embraced one of the severest winters of my time (79 and 80)

In 1780 I substituted again for 6 months in a six months draft which took place in Goochland County. I think the officer commanding at that time was a Colo. Nath'l. G. Morris [sic: Major Nathaniel Garsden Morris]. The Captains name I do not recollect. Before the six months tour had expired I enlisted for Eighteen months and was under a Capt Bratcher [sic: probably Bradshaw, possibly Ensign Robert Bradshaw] for the purpose of joining General [Horatio] Gates in South Carolina. We marched from Goochland Court-house to Richmond crossed James River at that place and marched up to Powhatan C house for an examination by a Major Scott who was placed there to receive the new recruits. Myself and three or four others were sent back to the Colonel of the County The Colonel's name was [John] Woodson. The intention of our being sent back as I understood was to work in the magazine at Westham near Richmond — and from thence down and up James River till we met Genl Lafayettes army [which arrived in Virginia in Mar 1781] and marched under him throughout his retreat through all the lower Counties (nearly). I remember a French Major belonging as he said the third Regiment by the name of Declowman [sic: Charles Deklaman].

I then continued with Lafayette's Army substituting myself at different times throughout his retreat in the upper counties and throughout all his meandering in Virginia down to Old James Town where a smart action took place [Battle of Green Springs Plantation, 6 Jul 1781]. Followed Lord Cornwallis to York-town and after a close Siege of 10 or 12 days [sic: 28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781] had the good luck to see his Lordship march out and lay down his Arms. I was then with different companies of Militia appointed to guard the prisoners to Maryland where they were received by the Maryland militia and taken to a place of safe keeping. We all (what there was) officers and soldiers laid down our Arms without paper or discharges with empty bellies and dirty shirts in November 1781 and returned to our homes. In April 1782 I stood a draft in Hanover County and it fell to my lot and others to return to Yorktown under Capt Doswell and Richardson Officers to haul the cannon from different entrenchments and to put them on board vessells to carry to New York. I think in June we returned to our homes nearly clothless and quite moneyless — The field officers whom I remember were Gen'l. Muhlenburg [sic: Peter Muhlenberg] - Gen. [Edward] Stevens of Culpeper, and Marquis Lafayette. I was with Gen Lafayette when he crossed the Raccoon ford on the Rapid Ann river between the Counties of Culpeper and Orange [Rapidan River, 6 Jun 1781] and when he cut the road known by the name of the Marquises road [Marquis Road through Orange and Louisa counties to Mechunk Creek]. I believe that I am known to almost every individual in the county of Caroline — In my neighbourhood I am well known to Robert B. Corbin, Joseph Morment, John Graves, Booth Brown (late Col. of the County) Mic'l. Young. Nathaniel Ware

And the said W. P. Napier further deposeth and swears, that by reason of old age and consequent loss of memory he cannot swear positively as to the precise length of his service but according to the best of his recollection he served not less than the periods mentioned below and in the following grades. for Eighteen months served as an enlisted soldier - and for Ten months served as a militia man and for such service I claim a Pension — He hereby 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

Sworn to and subscribed in due form of Law the day and year aforesaid

[signed] W. P. Napier