

[Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters](#)

Pension Application of William Burnitt S1645

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Tennessee } County court August 1832
Rutherford County }

On this 27th day of August 1832 personally appears in open court before Benj Ransom James C. Mitchell and Varner D Cowin Justices of s'd court now siting William Burnitt a resident of said county and state aged 73 years who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benfit of the Act of congress passed June 7th 1832.

That sometime about the first of Sept, but does not recollect the year in the county of Maclenburg [sic: Mecklenburg] state of Va. He enlisted in the service of the united states under Capt Thomas Ship for a term of 3 months, but was not discharged till some time afterwards but does not recollect how long afterwards. He enlisted to guard the magazine on Roneoak [sic: Roanoke] River near Taylors ferry [S of Boydton] in Va. Colo Munford commanded the magazine. During the time we were guarding the magazine, Colo Morgan [Gen. Daniel Morgan, late Dec 1780] with his Rifle Corps from the north, and Genl Blueford [sic: Col. Abraham Buford, probably Apr 1780] with his Regulars passed by remained some days and proceeded towards the South. Again some time in jan. 1781 he thinks, he entered the service of the US as a substitute in the place of Jno. Stevens [John Stevens] as well as he recollects in the county of Maclenburg, he does not recollect who he entered under, but recollects that the officer under whome he entered resigned soon after and he was put under Capt Charles Davis. He was marched through Petersburg thence through a town called Smithfield thence through Suffolk, which had been burnt but does not know how long before, where he remained about a week, thence to the Dismal Swamp where he remained about two months where one or two of the soldiers died, while he was stationed at the swamp the british forces were stationed in Portsmouth and as he was informed under the command of Genl [Benedict] Arnold. The main body of the American army commanded by nunenburg [sic: Gen. Peter Muhlenberg] and he believes Lafayette were statione about 10, or 12 miles west of Portsmouth he under Capt Davis, Major Long, Colo Dick and as well as he recollects about 400 infantry wir station upon the south side of the Dismal about 2 miles from the main boddy. He was told there were about 4000 under Nunenburg and Lafayette. He was in the battle of Portsmouth [see endnote], recollects to have seen Nunenburg in the engagement, the battel commenced about 8 oclock in the morning, he thinks that the infantry were to bring on the engagement Capt Knol who commanded the riflemen was killed in the engagement, he was informed that not more than 10 american soldiers were killed in the engagement, he thinks that when he first fired he was not more than 50 yards from the enemy and was informed by some Hessian deserters that about 30 of the enemy were killed by the 1^s [first] fire.

The Infantry were marched back through suffolk crossed Nancymond river [sic: Nansemond River] at the town proceded some distance down, and was encamped on the shore in sight of 5 or more he does not recollect how many more, British men of war, to prevent the british from landing and committing depredations on the neighbourhood, he remained there till he was discharged, he was discharged as well as he recollects towards the last of Aprile of the same year.

Again he does not recollect at what time he was drafted under Colo Burrel [sic: Lewis Burwell], Major Street was marched to Gloster [sic: Gloucester] courthouse where he was put under Capt Jeffries & Major Cary who commanded the infantry was encamped on the Gloster side, remained there during the whole siege of York [28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781] Colo Tarlton [sic: Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton] was encamped on the same side of the river. The larger part of the British and american army were encamped on the York side Cornwallace [sic: Cornwallis] surrendered at york – Washington and Lafayette comanded the American & french forces, The french Grenadiers encamped on the Gloster side. He recollects some other

circumstances which are so generally known that they need not be mentioned He was discharged soon after the surrender He was ordered out for 3 months but does not recollect how long he served, thinks he served 3 months or more. does not recollect to have received any other than a verbal discharge. He has no documentary evidence and knows of no Person whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his service

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present & declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any State,

Sworn to the day and year aforesaid William Xmark Burnitt

And the said court propounded the follow interrogatories to William Burnitt the within named applicant for a pension in open court on the day and year aforesaid.

Question 1st, Where and in what year were you born.

A. I was Born in King & Queen [King and Queen] County State of Va, can not tell when I was born but think I am about seventy three years old

Q2. Have you any record of your age and if so where is it?

A. I have no record of my age.

Q 3^r. where were you living when you were called into service? where have you lived since the revolution and where do you now live?

A. When I was called into service I I was living on Meherrin river in Maclinburg County State of Va I remained there some time after the revolution, and from there mooved to Rutherford County State of Tennessee where I have been living about 30 years as well as I recollect.

Q4 How were you called into service? were you drafted, did you volunteer? or were you a substitute, and if a substitute for who

A. The 1st time I was in service I enlisted the 2nd time I went as a Substitute, but do not recollect for whome. the 3rd time I was drafted.

Q. 5th. State the names of some of the regular officer who were with the troops where you served such continental and malitia regiments as you can recollect, and the general circumstances of your service

A. A french officer was with me at york town who was called the french Duke but I do not recollect his name. [Probably Armand-Louis de Gontaut, duc de Lauzun], Major Card commanded the infantry to which I belonged at York. Genl Washington & Layfayette were also present at York I do not recollect any continental or malitia regiments by any particular name, except Major Carys Infantry and the french grenadiers At Portsmouth Major Cary Alexander Dick Colo Boyier [probably William Bowyer] and Lafayette also Genl Nunenburg. I belonged to the infantry at york & Portsmouth and was kept some distance below the main army and consequently did not knows much about the Regular officercers or the continental regiments by name.

Q 6th Did you ever receive a discharge from the service, and if so by whome was it given and what has become of it?

A. I do not recollect at either time how we were discharged, but appears to me that we were called up and discharged verbally.

7 State the names of persons to whome you are known in your present neighbourhood and can testify to your character for veracity and their belief that you served in the revolution

A. I am known by Martin Clark Genl William Brady and many others.

NOTE: I could not identify a Battle of Portsmouth. Possibly Burnitt meant the Battle of Blandford Hill near Petersburg, 25 Apr 1781.