

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of James Norton S38266

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

[An attempt has been made to transcribe the following as it was written by the clerk, whether or not it makes sense, but the writing is difficult to read, and ink has bled through the paper.]

State of Kentucky }

Lawrence County }

On this 19th day of May personally appeared before the County court of Lawrence County, James Norton, a resident of Kentucky in the County of Lawrence and State of Kentucky aged seventy four 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 June 7th 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States and served under the following named officers to wit.

1st Tour

Under Col George Thompson, Capt William Smith, Lieutenant Ben Smith in Rockingham County Virginia on the 17th day of April 1779, as he now recollects was the time, but it was in that year, for six months in that States troops of Virginia or what was then called the Millitia. the troops marched from this place (Rockingham) to Albemarle barracks where they arrived after a few days march they remained here for a cause he never knew. the length of the time he has no precise recollection of. from this place he was then marched down to Richmond, from there to Petersburg. at each of these places there were some military stores which required moving. At Petersburg he remained guarding some Tory Culprits and prisoners and some military stores musketts &c for two months, or upwards. from this place he was marched to Portsmouth [sic: Portsmouth] and Norfolk where there was a [?]ard house and some military stores. the tories now and then made some attacks on the farms of Whigs which required the interference of the drafted troops. on several of these kind of occasions we took many and some we killed, and many run away negroes were taken. the Col was not with him all the time, and from this place in August 1779 he marched back to Albemarle County State of Virginia, and there remained until his term of service of six months up (he was a drafted man) and there he received a written discharge for the term before mentioned he knows of no particular circumstance worthy of mention which ocured during the continuation of this services. there was many millitia regiments out but he served with no one but his own, he knew several officers both in the millitia and regular service. To wit Col Hitower Col Taylor Capt. Smith Capt Baily (afterwards he was killed) Col May from Buckingham Capt. William Johns Capt Chas Burkes Col Fleming Gen Mullenburg [Peter Muhlenberg] were regular officers. The former were millitia according to the recollection of him at this time. the Country through which he marched was the State of Virginia and as given above on the 17th day of September 1779 as he recolects the 17th but it was in Sept, he received his discharge from his captain which was handed him by his orderly Sargeant.

2nd Tour

He then in the same month volentered for three months in Albemarle County under Col [Gawen] Hamilton, Capt [Nathan] Lamb, and marched from the barracks to Winchester barracks and conveyed some prisoners there. there were many prisoners at this place which the Americans had taken in the North states [see endnote]. About the time he volentered there was a talk of the british a coming down the bay in the vessells and comeing from the north to attack the State, which turned out to be no such thing. at Winchester barracks where many of Burgoins men were he staid[?] until the middle of November. perhaps it might have been the last, but evey body had pulled and halled in there corn, he was marched back to Albemarle, where he volentered. Where he remained on duty until the three months was up for which he volentered, and he does not recollect wether he received his discharge from his Captain or his Leftenant he was in no battles in this tour nor was he in any in the first tour of six months he knew Col Gorden, Capt Johnson, Capt Perkins, Gen [Robert] Lawson, Col Bradford and many persons with titles that he does not know whether they were really commissioned or not. the country through

which he marched was the state of virginia. he was discharged about the last of Dec 1779.

3rd

He substituted for six months for John Shannon at Albemarle barracks in Albemarle County Virginia under Col Harrison and Capt Giles who he understood lived in Bedford County virginia. Shannon furnished him Norton with suitable cloths and everything except a Gun, and when he marched down to Gochland Ct house [sic: Goochland Courthouse] he there drew one a rifle he substituted March 12th 1780. Giles company was an entire rifle company the british were then in Virginia, in different parts of the state. he was marched to [illegible but possibly Buckingham intended], and in May 1780 he was transfered to Williamsburg was there state there he staid until the month of August we the rendevouzed the british burnt during the summer of 1780. there were several persons killed down on the Chesapeake [sic: Chesapeake] bay and some persons up on the South branch of Potomac in Hampshire County the british did not invade Virginia that summer the comes down near the mouth of James Rive killed and man and his family by the name of Jamisson [probably Jameson] and there was considerable sickness in the camps from this place place he was marched to Camel Court house [sic: possibly New London in Bedford County; in Campbell County after 1782] by the way of Competition[?] through Pitsylvania [sic: Pittsylvania] County and at this place he received his discharged for his term of substitution and Giles company broke up. Some enlisted and many went to their homes. he was in no battles in this last tour of service, or in any difficulty with the Tories that he now remembers of there were many millitia companies out during 80 for each day news came of the intentions of the british army from Phil'del or the Jerseys were a coming to attack the state. the legislature came and set up the cuntry that year for the fear of Phillips [see endnote] there were many millitia Officers out that year & some of them were along the troops where I served. There was Col Buford from Beford [Col. Abraham Buford from Culpeper County] Col Havie[?] Col Miller Col. Jones Col Silas Wadkins, Capt Wilson Capt. Breckenridge, Capt Wooden Capt Cabel Capt Maston Capt Gilmer Col Boyers [possibly Henry Bowyers], Col Leftnick Leut Jabez Aflend[?] Capt Joel Leftwich, Capt Jesse Davis. Some of these were regular & some millitia officers. This discharge he sent to Shannon by one of his neighbours as it properly was his to shew to exempt him for another call —

4th Tour.

He then after his 3rd tour went to Rockingham and resided there until he commenced his 4th. there was a call that spring of 1781 or in the winter to go against Arnold down to Norfolk [sic: Gen. Benedict Arnold at Norfolk, Jan 1781], he was not bound to go under the law and therefore did not stand a draft. in June the day thereof the other came which is the 4th tour, and he was drafted for six months at Harrisonburg in Rockingham County under Col Harrison who resided either in Rockingham or Augusta [Benjamin Harrison of Rockingham]. under Capt. Leonard Thompson [illegible word] he was called - it was about the last of the month before the troops got ready and a particular day he cannot state but in July or August he was marched down within a few miles from Richmond and Cornwallis was near Petersburg [May 1781] and Genl Lafayette [sic: Lafayette] was the commander of the troops together with Mulenburg [sic: Gen. Peter Muhlenberg] and the French army from Richmond where the enemy had just left. the army that is to say Millitia marched down through New Kent County. the detachment in which he was in rendevouzed here till Gen Chois [sic: Claude Gabriel marquis de Choisy] a frenchman took the command of his Company. this [illegible word] before the Surrender. Gen Washington army from Delaware [sic: Delaware] came and [illegible word]. he states the Siege commenced, and remained in the army during the whole Siege [Siege of Yorktown, 28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781]. The only circumstances in particular he now remembers of was that during the Siege of York and Gloucester [sic: Gloucester] on one morning about four OClock the british broke out and tooke a little battery where the french troops were posted and spiked the cannon and the battery [16 Oct] they were repulsed at length with some loss on both sides but the American side suffered most this was after as he now remembers the fight of Pigeon Hill which also took place during the seige. He states that he was not stationed on the york side [of York River] where the most of the Virginia troops were until the day preceeding the surrender. he state that he was on the Bank of York river on the night the british from the York side medetated an escape [16 Oct], but was prevented by the swifness of the water, he was present drawn up in lines when the british gave

up, having crossed over to the other side

he states that he has been endeavoring for some time to get his case processed, but has had no opportunity of doing being very poor and few being willing to transact his business for him he marched alone in Virginia this last service he was commanded mostly by French Officers whose names he has mostly forgotten. Gen Choix [sic: Rochambeau] Commanded the division during the siege that he was in. he knows no witness by whom he can establish his services satisfactorily to the War Department. The foregoing comprise the services he rendered during the Revolution, One thing is that from the time he entered the service he was not out on furlough one day. After the British gave up the American lines went to the North where the Cause for[?] and most of the Virginia militia troops went home. he went with the baggage wagons and some prisoners to Winchester. here he remained till the last of December 1781 and was discharged & received his discharge from one Patrick Shannon who was in the barracks from the barracks he went home, and from there he came to this state, where he has resided ever since, in the mountains he served in all the Indian wars. for which he is informed he is not entitled to any thing for service rendered in those wars, and therefore he does not them further
- 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 the agency of any state - Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.
James hisXmark Norton

[George Hardwick (pension application S8674) deposed that he had known Norton in Virginia and knew of his services.]

[Norton's original pension was only for service at the Siege of Yorktown. On 24 September 1852 at age 89 he wrote from Clarke County requesting (apparently unsuccessfully) an increase in his pension for the following additional service:]

My first tour was for three months in the year AD 1779 (seventeen hundred and seventy nine) I was drafted for this tour in Fluviana [sic: Fluvanna] County Virginia in the Summer Season. My Captains name was — Dupree or Duprey Our Colonel's name was Guy Hamilton. As well as I remember our Majors name was Giles or Jiles. We were in a battle in North Carolina with the British at a place called "Hot Water" [sic: see endnote] We were in the open field when the battle began and after some firing the Cavalry of the enemy under Colonel Tarlton charged on us and we retreated to the woods under the protection of our own Riflemen under Colonel Morgan. My next tour was in the fall of the same year. My Captains name was Nathan Lamb and my Colonel was the above named Guy Hamilton. This expedition was against the Tories and was a short tour but how long I do not now remember. I was drafted to it in Rockingham County Virginia. We went to the South branch of the Potomac to a place called "Cowpasture River" and attacked and took prisoners of about 100 of them. they were all paroled by our colonel Guy Hamilton. This was in Rockingham County [sic: probably Augusta County] but it is now (that place) I believe called Bath County.

My third tour was the next Spring against the Tories on the South Branch of the Potomac. My only officer in this tour as well as I remember was the above named Guy Hamilton. Our Company was a small one and our tour was a short one but I do not remember how long. We had no engagement or even skirmish in this tour The Tories surrendered. Their leader as well as I remember was named Hoover. This was on what was then called the "Bull Pasture" fork of the Potomac, then called Rockingham County Virginia

Upon comparing dates and reflection I believe that my service began in 1780 (seventeen hundred and eighty) or perhaps one year earlier I place my first tour in the summer because I remember that the whole of it was in warm weather. I place my second tour in the fall because I remember that we fed our horses on the corn of the Tories which was then just ripe and hard. I place my third tour in the Spring because my present recollection is that it was just a few months before I entered on my fourth and last tour which terminated in the fall after the Siege of Cornwallis at Yorktown, and for which last tour I only when I applied for the pension which I am now receiving as mentioned before herein according to my best recollection.

Our Colonel the above named Guy Hamilton was authorized to call out men whenever necessary. Our tours as above stated in actual Scouting were short but being what were called

“Minute Men” we had to be always in readiness so that we could go at less than an hours notice. I was in the service and at all times ready for service for a period of time fully six months or longer exclusive of my first and last tours. For the particulars of my last tour I refer to the proof upon which my Pension which I am now receiving was granted. I make this declaration for the purpose of obtaining an increase of my pension bleiving I am entitled to receive the same.

NOTES:

The prisoners at Albemarle Barracks were British and Hessians surrendered by Burgoyne at Saratoga on 17 Oct 1777 and taken to the barracks in Jan 1779. On 20 Feb 1781 after Gen. Benedict Arnold's invasion of Virginia, the Hessian prisoners were sent to Warm Springs and to barracks near Winchester.

Gen. William Phillips entered Virginia in Chesapeake Bay on 20 Mar 1781, not in 1780.

There was no battle with the British in North Carolina in 1779. The Battle of Hot Water Plantation occurred about 6 mi NW of Williamsburg VA on 26 June 1781. Tarleton was not at that battle. The action Norton describes sounds like the Battle of Cowpens SC on 17 Jan 1781 in which Gen. Daniel Morgan defeated Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton.

Milly Black, 78, sister of James Norton, deposed that she had frequently heard Norton discussing his services with her late husband, John Black (R891).

On 31 Oct 1855 James Norton, 92, of Nicholas County KY, applied for bounty land. On 4 July 1856, at age 93, he reapplied for bounty land.