

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of Lewis Bonnett S5294

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Virginia }
Lewis County } SS.

On this 5th day of Feby in the year 1833 personally appeared in open Court before the Justices of Lewis County Court (at the Court House of said County) now sitting Lewis Bonnett a resident of the said County of Lewis in the State of Virginia aged 71 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 of the 7th June 1832 That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated. That he was drafted in March 1779 or 1780 (He cannot now say which year) from what is now Harrison County in Virginia under Capt Jonathan Coburn and Major William Lowther who commanded Captain Coburn, George Jackson, and Jacob Westfalls companies. He descended the west fork River to where Brownsville now stands, from thence to what is now Elizabeth Town near Pitts [sic: Pittsburgh]. was halted there as a kind of rendezvous. from this point the diferent companies performed in detachments several trips down the Ohio River towards wheeling during that summer and fall on the Virginia side of the Ohio, below Pittsburg guarding against Indian incursions other part of the troops were engaged in constructing boats and guarding some beef cattle at Matures Island about five miles below Pittsburg. The troops or the greater part of them wintered at Newells Store and at Pittsburg and during the winter finished three Boats and laid in a stock of rations. In the spring of 1780 the troops descended the Ohio in Boats under the command of Col. Joseph Crockett who had joined them at Pittsburg. We were then told some were to join Gen'l. [George Rogers] Clark in Kentucky, some to stop at Neals Station at the mouth of the little Kenhawa [sic: Little Kanawha River at present Parkersburg WV], and some to stop at Big Beaver [at present Beaver PA] Some time in April 1780 we landed at Neals Station where Capt Ward with some Militia were stationed, at this place Capt Coburns company was stopped our Major Lowther and Col Crockett proceeded down the Ohio. Here declarant and his brother Peter Bonnet [pension application S5293] were detached from the Company to act as Indian Spies, under Captain Coburns Ensign Benj'n Sills, they were ordered to and did Spy in what is now Mason, Jackson, Wood & Tyler Counties until October 1780, when they were discharged by order of Col. Duvall who commanded the Station. Captain Coburn gave them their discharges they having served 18 months for which they were drafted. At the earnest request of Capt Coburn declarant & his brother Peter agreed to volunteer to serve one year longer as Indian Spies over the same territory. They commenced again in October 1780 to serve each one year as an Indian Spy under Captain Coburn and spied untill the severity of the winter which was unusually great [1780 - 81, "The Cold Winter" in Virginia] drove them into winter quarters at Neals Station where the troops suffered exceedingly from severe cold and want of Rations. In March 1781 the weather became more moderate, and the Indians soon appeared along the river again declarant then became an active spie again with his brother Peter in Mason, Wood, Jackson & Tyler Counties (now so called) They continued to spy untill October 1781 when they were discharged by Captain Coburn having performed 18 months service under their draft and each one year under their last engagement, as volunteer Indian Spies. They then returned home and in the Spring of 1783 were ordered out by Col. Benja Wilson as Indian Spies in what is now Lewis County in March of that year. In April 1788 in a skirmish with a band of Indians, had a brother John killed. we put his body in a well known Cave in Lewis County where his bones are yet to be seen. this declarant served longer this last tour than his brother Peter about two months. was discharged some time in June or July 1783 having served in all 18 months as a private Militia man and Indian Spie. Then one year as an Indian Spy. The four months as same, all between the years 1779 and 1783. He has no documentary evidence, he knows of no person except his brother Peter Bonnett whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his services. He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension except the present, and declares that his name is not on the pension Roll of the agency of any State.

Sworn to and Subscribed this day and year aforesaid Lewis hisXmark Bonnett
This declarant answers the seven several Interrogatories prescribed by the War Department as follows Viz.

- 1st. That he was born in Virginia in what is now Hardy [then Hampshire] County in the year 1762.
 - 2^d. That he has no record of his age.
 - 3^d. That he was living in what is now Harrison County Virginia, that he has lived in Lewis County ever since 1816 and still lives there.
 - 4th. That he was drafted to serve 18 months on the western waters in March 1779 as a private Soldier and so served 'till October 1780 was discharged a then volunteered for one year from Oct 1780 'till October 1781 then in 1783 ordered out as an Indian Spie.
 - 5th. He saw at Pittsburg a General has forgotten his name, saw Colo Gibson, Crockett, Duval Wilson saw Regulars and Militias saw Maj'r Wales, Lowther, and others, names forgotten, has suffered greatly and is now much crippled.
 - 6th. He received two discharges from Capt Coburn, one for 18 months service as a private Militia Man. One for one year as an Indian Spie. was verbally discharged by Col. Wilson for his service in 1783. He has lost his other discharges many years since
 - 7th. He is known in his neighbourhood to Jacob Abbott and Philip Cox Jun'r. They can testify as to his character for veracity & their belief of his services as a soldier of the revolution. There are no Clergymen residing near him, he can prove his services by his brother Peter Bonnett who he now produces in Court and who is a younger brother aged 69.
- Subscribed and sworn to this day and year aforesaid Lewis hisXmark Bonnett

Peter Bonnett appeared in open Court before the Justices of Lewis County Court this 5th day of February 1833 and made oath that he is the brother of Lewis Bonnett who has signed and sworn to the above declaration, that Lewis is older than affiant that they were companions in arms and generally acted together throughout their Campaigns. that his said brother Lewis did serve as he has above stated. Sworn to and subscribed this day and year aforesaid
Philip hisXmark Bonnett

We Jacob Abbott and Philip Cox Jr. residing in Lewis County in the State of Virginia hereby certify that we are well acquainted with Lewis Bonnett who has subscribed and sworn to the above declaration, that we believe him to be 71 years of age, that he is reputed and believed in the neighbourhood where he resides to have been a Soldier of the revolution and we concur in that opinion.

Sworn to and subscribed this day and year aforesaid Jacob Abbott
Philip Cox, Jr

[The following is a report by W. G. Singleton, who investigated many fraudulent pension claims from Lewis and Harrison counties. For details, see pension application S6111 of David W. Sleeth.]

Lewis Bonnett. aged 71. Served two years.

John Mitchel [pension application S5761] of Lewis County aged 71 yrs. (a Pensioner) has known Lewis Bonnett for 35 yrs. thinks him too young to have been in the Revo. War. the General belief in the neighbourhood is that Bonnett is not entitled to Pension-

Jno Neely [W5408] aged 76 years has known Lewis Bonnett for forty five years. he was then a young chap. too young (entirely) to have been in the Rev. War.

Samuel Bonnett (brother of Lewis, Jacob [S8080] & Peter Bonnett, the three latter of whom are Pensioners-) says that he is now in his 65th year. that Jacob & Lewis are twin Brothers and are four years older than himself. - his brother Peter is 18 mos. older than himself. neither of his brothers (Lewis Jacob & Peter) were soldiers or done service in the War of the Revolution. and to this he is ready & willing to Sware when called on. — Jonathan Wamsley wrote their declarations and got their pensions. Wamsly told him that his brothers (Lewis Jacob & Peter) were to allow him out of their pensions twenty dollars a piece each for five years. Wamsly proposed getting him (Samuel) a pension on the same terms after he Samuel had told Wamsly his age and that he

had not been in the Revo. War
Witness
Nathan Goff.

Signed Samuel hisXmark Bonnett

Saw Lewis Bonnett June 30, 1834 who stated that he was 71 or 72 yrs. old. has lived on the west side of the Allegany Mountains for fifty years. was raised on the South Branch of Potomac. when there he was out against the tories for about one month. this was all the service he done during the war of the Revolution. after it closed he was in service against the Indians. Jonathan Wamsly wrote his declaration. agreed to give Wamsly the two first draws - he Wamsly got \$160. told Wamsly that he had not been in the Revo. War. Wamsly replied that he could him a pension nevertheless.

This man Bonnett is exceedingly Ignorant & with all wholly Illiterate. Respectfully
Submitted W. G Singleton Special Agent

NOTE: In the pension application of Jacob Bonnett, twin brother of Lewis, the time and place of birth is given as "in or about the year 1761 on Cedar Creek in what is now Frederick County Virginia." Lewis Bonnett's situation may have been similar to that of Jacob Bonnett, who said he was tricked into swearing to a false declaration. Lewis Bonnett's pension was suspended on 16 Mar 1835.