

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

Pension Application of Joseph Bell S6608

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

Virginia, Augusta County, to wit

On this 30th day of August 1832 personally appeared in open Court before the Justices of Augusta County Court now sitting (Maj) Joseph Bell a resident of the county and state aforesaid, aged about seventy seven 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 7th day of June 1832.

That he was born in Augusta County & State of Virginia in the month of February 1755 as he has always understood and believes, that there is no record of his age known to him, that he has always resided, and still resides on the farm where he was born in said County of Augusta.

That as one of the Militia of Augusta County he was drafted for the protection of the Western frontier from the Indians, that he rendezvoused at Lexington in the County of Rockbridge about the 15th July 1776 and was attached to the company under the command of Capt. John Lyle and marched to Holston River under Col. Russell [possibly William Russell of Fincastle County Militia], from thence he marched to the great Islands of Holston River [Long Island of Holston River at present Kingsport TN], and was there placed under the command of Col. William Christian; from thence he marched to the Cherokee Towns south west of the Tennessee River, and was stationed there for some time, and returned home about the middle of December 1776, being absent in the service about five months, that he received no written discharge, that he knows of no one living at this time, except Maj. William Willson [pension application S6393] of said County of Augusta by whom he can prove the service above set forth, that the said Willson was with him on said tour of duty. He was drafted as one of the Militia of Augusta County for a second tour of duty, and rendezvoused at Staunton in Augusta County & State of Virginia on the 22nd day of Septem'r 1777 and was placed under the command of Capt Thomas Smith of the Augusta Militia and he was elected as first sergeant of the Company, in which capacity he served during the said tour of duty. from Staunton he marched to the little levels in the County of Greenbrier in the State of Virginia, at which point they were joined by other troops under the command of Colo. [John] Dickenson, Sam'l. McDowell and Geo. Skilern [sic: George Skillern], from the little levels they marched to the mouth of the Great Kanawha River (Point Pleasant) to join the army under the command of Gen'l. [Edward] Hand after having remained for some time there, the army was drawn up, and Col Saml. McDowell made along the lines and proclaimed that Gen'l. Burgoine the commander of the British Army had surrendered the army under his command as prisoners of war [sic: John Burgoyne, one of the British commanders, surrendered at Saratoga 17 Oct 1777], and the Troops were discharged, and the said applicant reached home with other men from Augusta County about the second week in December 1777 after an absence in the service of about two months & three weeks. that he received no written discharge, that he has no knowledge at this time of any person living by whom he could prove this tour of duty.

That he was ordered out on a third tour of duty Col Sampson Mathews the Commandant of the Augusta Militia for the protection of the Western frontier from the murders of the Indians, that he rendezvoused at Staunton in the County of Augusta & State of Virginia on the 16th day of April 1779 and was placed under the command of Capt. James Trimble of the Augusta Militia, that applicant was appointed orderly sergeant of the company, and in that capacity served during that tour of duty. that they marched from Staunton to Tigers Valley [sic: Tygart Valley] in the state of Virginia, and from thence to the head waters of Jackson's river [Jackson River in present Bath County] in the State of Virginia, that after his tour of duty which was for three months expired he returned home, having received no written discharge, nor is there any person now living that he knows of, whose Testimony he is able to procure to prove his service on this his third tour of duty.

That he was ordered out as one of the militia of Augusta County and rendezvoused at

Rockfish gap in the County of Augusta, for the purpose of guarding the prisoners taken at the battle of the Cowpens [17 Jan 1781] by Genl. [Daniel] Morgan, from Rockfish Gap he marched as one of the guards of said prisoners to the County of Shenandoah, and from thence returned home, being absent in the service about 15 days.

His fifth and last service in the war of the Revolution was as an Ensign in the Militia of Augusta County. He rendezvoused with the troops called into service from Augusta County at Col Easoms [Esam's] (now Waynesborough [Waynesboro] in the County of Augusta) on the 6th day of June 1781 and marched from thence as an Ensign in Capt Francis Long's company, and joined the Troops under the command of Genl. Lafayette at Col. Dandridges in the County of [blank] that he acted with the army under the command of Genl Lafayette, was in the battle of Hot Water [Spencer's Ordinary (Hot Water Plantation) 6 mi NW of Williamsburg, 26 Jun] under the command of Col. [John] Willis, was at the battle of James Town [Green Springs Plantation] under the command of Genl. [Anthony] Wayne in July [6th] 1781. that he continued with the army and marched to York Town where he continued in his command as an Ensign until the surrender of Lord Cornwallis [19 Oct] shortly after which the troops were discharged and he returned to his residence in Augusta County, having been absent in the service about five months. that his commission of Ensign was signed by Thomas Jefferson while Governor of Virginia, that he remembers when looking over his papers some few years since to have seen it, but that on looking for it lately he has not been able to find it, and supposes it has been destroyed lost or mislaid.

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 the day & year aforesaid [signed] Joseph Bell

NOTE: William Davis, a Justice of the Peace for Augusta County, deposed as follows: "he remembers particularly to have heard his Brother James Davis (now deceased) speak of having served three several tours of duty with the said Bell and being one of his mess - that he knows the fact that his brother James was absent from home in the service."