

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

Pension Application of Mordecai Barbour S8043

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Virginia        }  Sct.

Town of Petersburg    }  

On this 14<sup>th</sup> day of June personally appeared in open Court before the Judge of the Circuit Superior Court of Law and Ch[ancer]y for Petersburg now sitting, Mordecai Barbour a resident of Dinwiddie County, and State of Virginia aged 70 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 under the following named Officers, and served as herein stated: Sometime in the winter 1780-81 he was called to perform a tour of duty about Fredericksburg & Hunter's Forge (Va) with the Culpeper Militia – the Orange and Frederick Militia were also called out. an attack was expected at Fredericksb'g. with a view to destroy a manufactory of arms at said Forge which he believes was the only establishment of the kind in Virginia – after remaining in that neighborhood for sometime and all apprehension of an attack blowing over, they were discharged after a tour of about one month. He does not know a single individual now living who was there. In the month of May or June 1781 he was again called into service in what was called the running war, part of which he performed on horseback attached to Gen'l Muhlenburg's [sic: Peter Muhlenberg's] family – the latter part of the tour he served in a Light Battalion of Militia Infantry commanded by young gentlemen of the State, namely John Nicholas, John Woodford and John Stewart were Captains, William Ruffin late of Raleigh (N.C.) was a Lieut. I think in Woodford's comp'y. and I was Ensign in Capt. Stewart's Company. My Capt. was taken prisoner in the skirmish at Hotwater [Battle of Hot Water Plantation, 26 Jun 1781]. some days after this we were with Lafayette at the battle of Jamestown [Green Springs Plantation, 6 Jul]. Cornwallis then crossed James River and moved toward Norfolk when our Army moved about above Williamsburg and Richmond till the tour expired and we were discharged. The tour is computed at 3 months service. Soon after the termination of this tour the capture of Cornwallis was formed [Siege of Yorktown, 28 Sep - 19 Oct] and the Culpeper Militia were again called out – on this occasion the declarant was a volunteer and received the appointment of Lieut. in White's Company, [Elias] Edmund's Regiment & [Gen. Edward] Steven's Brigade. He continued in service throughout the Siege and with the Culpeper Militia guarded the British to the barracks beyond Winchester and remained there till they were discharged by their troops, having been on this occasion full three months, and having then served in all about seven months during the Revolutionary War.

In reply to the several interrogatories put by the Court, the declarant says

1 & 2. That he was born in Culpeper County, Va on the 21 of Oct'r. 1763, according to the register in his Father's family Bible (which he supposes is in the hands of some of his relations, but he knows not where) and consequently that he is now 70 years old & upwards. 3. That he resided in Culpeper when called into service as above stated, and continued to reside in that County until about 1806, when he removed & resided in Fredericksb'g. Va until about 1808 – he then removed to & resided in Richmond almost one year, from which place he removed to this Town, where or in the immediate neighborhood of which he has resided up to this time, and now resides in Dinwiddie County about 4 miles from this place (the 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> interrogatories are answered above) – 6<sup>th</sup>. He never received any other discharge than by general order, nor any formal commission, but was requested to act as an officer as before stated, by the Comd'ts. of Regiments. 7. The Rev'd. And'w. Syme will testify as to his veracity, and the evidence of his service in the Revolution is contained in the annexed certificates & affidavits.

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 and year aforesaid.

[signed] M. Barbour

[The following is from James Brown Rice, pension application R8746.]

Orlean fauquier Co. Va Sep't. 15 – 1832.

Dr. sir. It appears that congress has granted to all the old soldiers of the Revelution a pention agreeable to the time they serv'd. I was one and servd under Capt. William Stanton in the Spring of the year '81 – and you was our Leutenant. Brawdus our adgident [sic: Broaddus, Adjutant] and Nat welch [Nathaniel Welch] our Majer. thorn our Colonal, for a part of the time, when old alcott came down and took command. Stephens was our general – and now sir in order to sattisfy you that I was one with you I will Relate some of the circumstanstes that accurd first we marched on from culpepper towards Richmond untill we met our troops reteating Before the Brittish army. we met them some where between Richmond and gooland [Goochland?] [at?] arrel Bridge we turnd about in Retreat and went on up the country. I Recollect that we met with a great alarm one night at cots town or skotch town of Dont no the Rite name of the place [possibly Scotchtown in Hanover County] But I well Recollect the time and place and Recollect that we stayd that night by and old mill of General nelsons [Thomas Nelson's], and I Recollect Col's. thorns Expreshons the next morning when the offissers got together he say'd he was much pleas'd to find that his men had not Run of as the Orrange [sic: Orange County] men had Done there was a great many of them that Left their guns ther napsacks and hats which I have no Doubt but you will Recollect. we continued our Reteat on through Spotsilvania [sic: Spotsylvania County] and up through Culpepper and on to the Rackkoon ford [sic: Raccoon Ford on Rapidan River] where we stay for several Days while we was Laying there there was a man got shot by a horsmans pistol which perhaps you may Recollect we went on from there a while and was joint by genral wain [sic: Gen. Anthony Wayne, 10 Jun 1781] and then the Brittish turnd about and we pushd on after them untill we overtook them at the green springs where we had a battle with them but was forst to give Back – I Dont Recollect that all the troops was in that ingagement but I know that wains men and the Light infantry was for I with some of the Rest of the company had Been cald out and had Been sent on to join the infanttree some time before and we ware cept there untill we ware Discharged, we ware cep some time after you was Discharged we ware sent a cross james River and went on to the appomattox River and croset it at goods Bridge [sic: Goode's Bridge] and was told that we would have to go on to the South, but we was Discharged at that place it has Been so Long that I Dont Recollect but verry few of the men that was with us your son John S Barber [sic: John S. Barbour] told me a few Days ago that you were living and living near that place. I Recollect that capt. william green was 1 he was cald Taylor Billey he got a commission soon after he went Down there was some of Browns and Longs from the neighbourhood of Stephensburg [sic: Stevensburg] and my own name is Rice I Spell it James Brown Rice I was young as well as yourself but I was certainly with you through all, at Difficult and Laborious tour cald the Runing tour, and now sir if you can from this assertion venture to say that you beleve I was there please Rite to me as soon as you can and send me on a certificate to that amt, and greatly oblidge an old soldier who stands in great need, our son sayes he will attend to it for me. perhaps you may Recollect Hezekiah Brown Near Stephens Burg I am of that fammerley. your attention to this Request will be greatfully acknowledged – by your friend &c Ja's. B. Rice

[The following is by William Madison, pension application W9944, addressed to Barbour.]

Dear Sir It is important that I should establish the fact that I was an officer in the artillery at the siege of York in 1781 Harrison's [Col. Charles Harrison's] Reg't 2<sup>d</sup> Lieut in Capt [Whitehead] Coleman's company. I believe you was at the siege and, probably, in the Brigade commanded by Gen'l Stevens & may have observe me as this company of Artillery was posted on the right of that Brig'de and did duty in the grand Battery. Death has deprived me of all the officers who recognized me as 2<sup>d</sup> Lieut and as from

the lapse of time positive testimony can scarcely be had, secondary will be accepted. I shall be very thankful if you will endeavour to carry y'r recollection back to the above period and state what you then knew, heard and believed respecting this matter, or even now think. I acted by appointment and if you have subsequently heard it be so good as to say so. Be precise to throw your answer somewhat into the shape of a certificate. I do not know that it will be essential that you s'd be qualified, but if it is convenient for you to do so, it may obviate any difficulty that might otherwise occur. I shall be much obliged by your early attention, as the case does not admit of delay. Accept of my best wishes and sincere Regard. Yrs &c

Wm Madison 18<sup>th</sup> Jan'y 1833

Address to O Court House or to Locust Dale Madison County.

Orange 22 Feby 1833

Dear Sir Yours of the 11<sup>th</sup> is today received – An absence from home for a fortnight prevented its coming to hand earlier. In regard to the subject of your letter, I have no recollection that you formed one of the company under Capt. Henry Bill when we fell in with Mr. Thomson in Fluvanna, but the circumstances you relate in relation to him I well remember – except that I think it was Mr. William Foote of Prince William who applied for the tobacco. It made the deeper impression on me, because I thought Capt. Bell wholly unjustifiable in striking Mr. T. and his doing so was very much regretted by me. I have no remembrance of you and the other Gentlemen you name, having been appointed to offices either in the army or militia. Mr. Foote is still living as far as I have heard. I do not for a moment doubt but that you were one of the company, because the incidents you mention in respect to Mr. Thompson, could scarcely have been retained unless you had been an eye witness to them. To have received them merely by the relation of another would not have impressed them enough upon your mind

Yrs resp'tfully Robert Taylor

[On 19 Apr 1833 Daniel Brown (pension application W5907) deposed that in June 1781 he saw Barbour serving as an officer.]

Culpeper C'ty April 19 1833

Sir Agreeable to your request I have certified your being with us in the service 1781 June Tower, but do not recollect your being at York. Mr. Reubin Rossin [sic: Reubin Rosson, pension application S6016] says that he recollects your being with us with the prisoners on our March to Winchester he being the Only one that I have yet seen that has any [illegible word] of you on that Tower (Fall Tower) Do not doubt but there are many that recollects you on both Towers Mr. E Birch who has been agent for a grate many in getting their claims establish'd could by refering to those that served on those towers to establish yours I am D'r Sir with sentiment of Respect your &c Daniel Brown

State of Virginia Culpeper County to wit

On this 8<sup>th</sup> day of May 1834 before me a Justice of the peace in and for the said county personally appeared Reubin Rosson a resident of said county aged Eighty one years last september and entitled to the fullest credence in all he says, who being duly sworn deposeth and saith that during the siege of York in virginia in the year 1781 that Mordecai Barbour now living near Petersburg Va. was in the sevice as an officer with the Culpeper Malitia, and went from york to Winchester Va. as an escort with the british prisoners. The tour at yourk was a long and ardous one, and it was two months after joining head quarters and at least three months from the time of leaving home to the time of returning; that he does not recollect the rank said Barbour held but simply that he was an officer he thinks Ensign or lieutenant

Dear Sir [David Jameson, pension application S5607]

I herewith send you a letter from J L Edwards esquire of the War office department directed to Wm. S. Archer who presented my Petition for a pension under the Law of Congress passed in June 1832 in

which Letter Mr. Edwards says – “No claim has been allowed for services in the grade of a Commissioned officer unless the Services in the said grade were performed under a commission or some instrument of writing tantamount to a commission”. Knowing as I do that you performed considerable services during the Revolutionary War; and that from the opportunities in your way, you much have been well acquainted with the Routine of conducting business at that time, in the Virginia Militia when called into service – I take the liberty of asking you the following interrogatories – Vizt.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Were you with Gen’l. Stevens in the Virginia Militia about the time of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse [15 Mar 1781]
- 2 What office did you hold, & how did you receive your appointment
- 3 Was it not customary in the Militia when in service that camp appointments were made – by the commandants, suffering ordinary officers to resign or to discharge them in order to fill these places with more valuable officers – If you will you please state the instances of that character that came under our knowledge
- 4 When appointments were made as stated in the 3<sup>d</sup> interrogatory did such Officers not rank according to grade & seniority with the other officers in service whether acting under camp appointments or under regular commissions from the Governor –
5. Was there not an ordinance of the Virg’a. Convention in the early part of the Revolution giving to commandants the power to appoint officers in the above summary way – and was not that authority acted up to to the close of the War [see endnote]

Your full answers to the above interrogatories is requested in order that it may be laid before the War department, on my renewed application for a pension.

Very respectfully I am D’r Sir  
Your Ob’t Serv’t  
M. Barbour

I David Jameson of Culpeper County Virginia aged 86 years do certify that what follows is my reply to the five Interrogatories contained in the above Letter – To the first query I answer thus, I was then a Lieutenant in a detachment of disbanded Militia marching home after serving about seven months in North & South Carolina under Gen’ls Gates and Greene, when an Express from Gen’l Greene to Gen’l Stevens to return and join him arrived a few days before the Battle of Guilford. To your second query, I certify that I acted as a Lieutenant and got my appointment thus: In August 1780 the County of Culpeper was called on to furnish Two Companies of Militia to march to South Carolina under proper officers, and on the day they assembled at the Courthouse to march, I Enlisted as a Common Soldier voluntarily in the company of the Eldest Captain, who informed Colo. James Barbour (your Father) of the circumstance, who was Denominated County Lieutenant, he immediately waited on me to know if I did intend to March? I told him nothing but the want of abilities should prevent it: he then asked me if I would not prefer acting under a commission than as a Common Soldier? I replied I should; but that I supposed was not attainable as there was a full proportion of officers there then under marching orders; He said the Lieutenant of the Company I had enlisted in, had made some complaint of his inability to bear the fatigue of marching and that he would take me as his substitute (taking out of his pocket a bundle of commissions (which the Governor had signed and sent him to fill and deliver on emergencies) and entered my name in one as Lieutenant, dated it and handed to me, and it was under that I acted during the tour: I also Certify that after arriving at Hillsborough in North Carolina, The place for the rendezvous of the Virginia Militia, I (being acquainted with General Gates) was applied to by a man by the name of Cristler to go with him and a man by the name of Clayton to Gen’l Gates to receive Clayton as a substitute for Cristler who was a regular commissioned Ensign, that I mentioned the matter to Gen’l. Gates for them, who without hesitation gave Cristler a discharge and Clayton a Certificate of appointment under which he marched to the end of the tour as an Ensign. This circumstance also happened at Hillsborough, before our Brigade was fully organised; There were about one hundred Militia Men who had deserted after Gates’s defeat [Battle of Camden SC, 16 Aug 1780] brought to our camp who were subjected by Law to serve Eight

months whom Gen'l. Stevens had formed into two Companies, and from the Body of Militia appointed a Captain Lieutenant and Ensign to each Company by General Orders or Special Certificates (I don't remember which) which officers took rank according to their grades and so acted in all respects under what were originated Camp appointments, but I know of none others but those I have mentioned; As to the 5<sup>th</sup> query respecting an ordinance of Convention, I never (to my recollection) heard of such an ordinance, and think there never was such a one; Given under my hand this 12<sup>th</sup> day of October 1838

D Jameson

Sworn to before the subscriber a justice of the peace in and for the County of Culpeper state of Virginia the 16<sup>th</sup> day of October 1838.

F. J. Thompson JP

Mordecai Barbour amends the annexd declaration in the following particulars, first as to the mode of appointment

– By an ordinance of the Virg'a. Convention authority is given to commanding officers, to appoint subordinate officers during actual service – see Hennings Statutes at large Volume 9<sup>th</sup> page 90 [endnote], and the affidavit of Colo. David Jameson proves that such appointments were made in August 1780 – and such appointments were considered to give rank with other commissioned officers according to grade and seniority – At the Siege of York Ensign [John] Bradford of the Fauquier County Militia with a regular commission conceivd he had the right to take precedence of me on account of my Lieutenancy being by virtue of a Camp Appointment – the matter was decided by the field officers in my favor – The manner in which these appointments were made I cannot now recollect, but the made was sanctioned in the army, and gave rank according to the grade of seniority of the appointment – The troops with whom I servd were regularly calld into service by competent authority – my appointment was made in the room of Lieut. Humphrey Spark, who was permitted to resign not being considered a valuable officer – I served the whole Tour before & after the Siege of York, and after the Surrender of Cornwallis [19 Oct 1781] escorted the British Prisoners to the Barracks beyond Winchester, which is prove by the affidavit of Reuben Rossen to have been full three months – The tour previous in June 1781 is proved by the affidavit of Capt. Daniel Brown to have lasted also for 3 months and the tour at Frdksburg is believd to be about one months a few days under or over – The services herein stated were performd 57 years past, my memory will not support me in speaking more precisely than I have. If Congress meant to remunerate for services faithfully performd then I am entitled to pay as a officer, and I can hardly think such services cou'd be intended less liberally rewarded for want of formality in the mode of appointment

[signed 18 Oct 1838] M. Barbour

NOTE:

The reference in Barbour's letter to Jameson and the amended declaration is apparently to the following passage in Hening's Statutes at Large (<http://vagenweb.org/hening/vol09-04.htm>): "That the commanding-officer shall appoint proper officers to command the men so called into duty, according to the number, during the time of their being employed in actual service, having regard to the seniority and rank of the officers of the county or corporation in such appointment." This directive was by a Convention of Delegates on 1 Dec 1775 and appears to have been superceded in Oct 1777 by a law providing for companies to elect Captains, Lieutenants, and Ensigns, who would then be commissioned by the Governor.

Barbour was eventually granted a pension for service of three months each as Private, Ensign, and Lieutenant.

The file contains the following letter to J. L. Edwards, Commissioner of pensions:

"  
Catalpa [in Culpeper County] Feby 12<sup>th</sup> 1846  
Sir The record death of my father will leave a small sum due his children for the bala[nce] of his

pension.

Will you let me know what it is, that will be so due & to whom it is payable? He died the 21<sup>st</sup> Jany of this year & my elder sister the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the same month – she surviving him two days. My younger sister Maria, (now a widow) & myself are the only living children at this time – tho' my elder sister survived my father two days & she has left children, (well off)

The am't. must be very small, & small as it is it may be useful to my niece in Ky who is also the niece by blood of [illegible] F. P. Blair. My surviving sister has no children & is wealthy. I feel confident that she will unite with me in relinquishing our claim to Mr Blair that he may remit it after drawing it to the niece I have referred to. For this end I will thank you to write me such letter, shewing the amount that I may send it to my surviving sister in Alabama & obtain her signature to the proper papers for drawing the bal'a. due. (Please send the forms). Very Resply yrs

J. S. Barbour"

A letter dated 17 Aug 1847 states that Mordecai Barbour died without leaving a widow, that he had four children, one of whom had died before him and two since (one leaving children), and that only one child of Mordecai Barbour still lived.