

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of Jacob Bonnett S8080

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Virginia } (Copy)
County of Lewis }

On this 6th day of August personally appeared before the Justices of Lewis County Court at the August term 1833 of said Court in open Court now sitting Jacob Bonnett a resident of Lewis County in the said State of Virginia aged 72 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 7, 1832. That in the month of March 1780 (as he now believes) he was drafted in what is now Harrison County to serve a tour of eighteen months in the Virginia militia for the defence of the Western waters. That he was marched from home in March of that year under Captain Jonathan Coburn and Major William Lowther. The troops descended the West fork of the Monongalia [sic: Monongahela] river in boats to its mouth, thence down the Mongalia river to what was then "Red Stone" now Brownsville thence to Pittsburg [Pittsburgh] and there at a place called Newell's Store rendezvoused there joined some State Troops under Col. [Joseph] Crockett. Captain Coburn's company acted as Indian spies during that Summer and Fall on the West side of the Monongalia in what is now Ohio, Brook, and Tyler Counties. the residue of the troops were engaged in building boats to transport men and military stores down the river as was then said to join General Clarke [sic: George Rogers Clark] - some troops wintered at Newell's Store, some in Pittsburg. The Indian Spies hunted after Christmas when there was no danger of Indians, killed meat for the troops. In the Spring or Summer of 1781 the troops descended the Ohio river in boats we nearly all started from Pittsburg, but as we descended the river some small detachments were stationed along the river in what was considered exposed situations. Some were left at Wheeling, some at or near the mouth of Big Beaver [at present Beaver PA]. When we arrived at what is now Parkersburg, then called Neal's station Captain Coburn and his company, of which declarant was one, were left to defend that point and prevent Indian incursions into Virginia by spying up and down the Ohio. This Captain Coburn and his Troops were engaged in during the whole of the Summer and Fall of 1781 and declarant was one of them. In October of that year 1781 our draft expired we were discharged at that time there were many Indians in the vicinity of that place some on the North side of the Ohio and some had crossed and gone into the settlements. there appeared to be much excitement and danger. Col. Duvall requested and urged Captain Coburn and his men to volunteer again and stay until we could be relieved. That Captain Coburn & declarant and others (the most of the troops) did agree to stay one year longer to act as spies. Col. Duvall gave orders to spy in what is now Mason, Jackson, Wood, Tyler and Brook Counties. This he done in the Summer, Spring and Fall of 1782 till October of that year when he and all the troops were discharged by the arrival of Captain Bogard's Company & Capt. Westfall's company. I went home having been absent two years and a half and most of his time was with his brothers Lewis and Peter Bonnett [pension applications S5294 and S5293]. He is a twin brother of the former [see note below]. Then in March 1783 he and his brothers Lewis, Peter and John and others were ordered out as Indian Spies by Col. Duvall as he now thinks. they spied in what is now Lewis and Harrison Counties, had a skirmish with the Indians on Little Kenhaway [sic: Little Kanawha River] in which his brother John was killed. they put his body in a cave on Kenhawa some time in the Spring of 1783. This was the last of his services during the Revolutionary War. But he served as an Indian Spy every year after the Revolution down to 1794. He acted as a militia man and Indian [sic] as above stated during the revolutionary 1st. from March 1780 till October 1781 - Then again from from Otober 1781 till October 1782- Then again from March 1783 till June of the same year - this last tour was under Captain James Tanner. In all not less than two years and nine months. He has no documentary evidence, knows of no person except his brothers Lewis and Peter Bonnett whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his services. He hereby relinquishes ever 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) Jacob hisXmark Bonnett
The Court propounded to the applicant Jacob Bonnett the seven several interrogatories prescribed by the War Department which he answered as follows

1st. That he was born in or about the year 1761 on Cedar Creek in what is now Frederick County Virginia.

2^d. That he has no record of his age.

3^d. That he lived in what is now Lewis County on Hacker's Creek then Mononghala [sic: Monongalia] County or Augusta, afterwards Harrison now Lewis. That he now lives near the same place in Lewis County Virginia.

4th. That he was drafted first to serve 18 months on the Western Waters as it is was then called. Then he volunteered for one year. Then in 1783 he was ordered out by Col. Duvall under Captain Tanner.

5th. He knew Col. Crockett. He saw at Pittsburg some State troops some continental troops and some Pennsylvania militia. He saw a General at Pittsburg, has forgotten his name. He knew Col. Duvall and his own Major Lowther. He cannot now name the regiments which he saw at Pittsburg. He saw a Col. or General Gibson.

6th. That he did receive a discharge from his first service from Captain Coburn which he soon lost. At the expiration of his second term when he applied for a discharge his Captain told him he had no paper to write on - he received no other discharges in writing that he can remember.

7th. That he is known in his neighborhood to [blank] and [blank] They can testify as to his character for veracity and their belief of his services as a soldier of the Revolution. That there is no Clergyman residing near him except William Sims Esq'r. (signed) Jacob hisXmark Bonnett We Wm. Sims a Clergyman and Samuel Z. Jones [pension application S18474] both residing in the County of Lewis in the State of Virginia hereby certify that we are well acquainted with Jacob Bonnett who has subscribed and sworn to the above declaration that we believe him to be 72 years of age - that he is reputed and believed in the neighborhood where he resides to have been a soldier of the Revolution and that we concur in that opinion.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.

(signed) Samuel Z. Jones Wm. Sims

Lewis Bonnett and Peter Bonnett both appeared in open Court and sevrally stated under oath that they are the brothers of Jacob Bonnett who has subscribed and sworn to the above declaration, that he (Lewis) is a twin brother that they were both drafted in or about 1780 to serve a tour of 18 months on the western waters, that they marched from home in March of that year under Captain Coburn. that Jacob Bonnett, their brother was drafted to perform the same service and did perform the services set forth above, that they were generally with him except that in spying the nature of such service frequently separated for short periods they all came home together in October 1782 having been in service two years and a half.

[The following report is by W. G. Singleton, a district attorney who investigated a large number of fraudulent pension applications from Lewis and Harrison counties. See the pension application (S6111) of David W. Sleeth for details.]

Jacob Bonnett. aged 72 yrs. served two years.

John Mitchel aged 71 yrs. (a Pensioner [S5761]) of Lewis county. lives a neighbour of Jacob Bonnett has known him for 30 yrs. from repeated conversations had with Bonnett about their respective ages and from Bonnetts own statement he thinks this man in his 68th year of age. (Jacob is a twin brother of Lewis.) [See note below.] in a conversation with Jacob in returning from Weston the county seat of Lewis he asked him whether he got a pension. Jacob replied "Yes. he supposed so" but said he had never been in the Revo. war but had been against the Indians.

Henry Flesher of Harrison County has known Jacob Bonnett since he Jacob was eight or nine years old. Bonnett is a year or two older than himself (i.e. 58 or 59 yrs.) Says Bonnett could not have done service in the Rev War. was too young.

Nicholas Carpenter of Harrison County aged 65 yrs. Nov. next has known Jacob Bonnett for 46 or 47 yrs. Says Bonnett is too young to have done duty as a soldier in the R. War.

Williams Powers Esqr. [S18164] says that Jacob Bonnett came to the country west of the

allegany mountains in 1785 then a lad mergeing toward manhood.

Samuel Bonnett (brother of Jacob, Lewis & Peter Bonnett Pensioners) says that he is now in his 65 yr. Jacob & Lewis are twin brothers four years older than himself. his brother Peter is 18 mo. older than himself. neither of his brothers (Lewis Jacob or Peter) were soldiers or done duty in the War of the Revo. to this he is ready & willing to swear when called on. Jonathan Wamsley wrote their declarations and got their pensions. Wamsley told him that his brothers (Lewis Jacob & Peter) were to allow him out of their Pensions twenty dollars a piece each for five years. Wamsley proposed gitting him (Samuel) a Pension on the same terms after he Samuel had told Wamsley his age and that he had not been in the War of the Rev

Witness

Signed Samuel his mark Bonnett

Nathan Goff

after this evidence had been collected I met with Jacob Bonnett on the 28th June 1834 & received from him the statement here following to wit.

Says he never was in the Revo. War but that he done service in the Indian war, after the Revo. war closed. Jonathan Wamsley called and told him that he was entitled to a pension & that he could get it for him. he replied that he had not been in the R. War but had been in the Indian War. Wamsley wrote his declaration it was not read to him. he signed it by making his mark. Sworn to it in open court. by contract he agreed to give Wamsley one half of what he should be allowed for five years. Says that he has never received one cent on account of his pension. Wamsley lent him ten dollars.

I the undersigned Nathan Goff was present & heard Jacob Bonnett make the forgoing statements

Nathan Goff

This man Bonnett is exceedingly Ignorant and with all[?] wholly Illiterate. Respectfully Reported
W. G Singleton Special Agent.

NOTES:

The pension application of Lewis Bonnet, said to be the twin brother of Jacob, gives the time and place of birth as 1762 in Hampshire County. The 1830 federal census of Lewis County lists Lewis Bonnett as 60 - 70. The 1840 federal census of Lewis County, lists Jacob Bonnett as 70 - 80.

On 27 Apr 1860 in Upshur County Samuel Horner, administrator of the estate of Jacob Bonnett, applied for the pension that Bonnett would have received from the time it was suspended, probably aroud 1835, until his death in Lewis County in Dec 1847. He stated that Bonnett left the following children: "Martha wife of this affiant - Delilah wife of Abraham Hess - Eliza wife of Fleming Sproull and Lucinda wife of Jesse Butcher all of whom are living in Lewis County Virginia. Samuel who has since died leaving children - Gracie West who has since died leaving children and Elizabeth Allhue who has since died leaving children."