

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of Robert Nicholson (Nicolson)<sup>1</sup> W5422

Elizabeth Nicholson f49VA

Transcribed by Will Graves

1/18/13: rev'd 11/18/17

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Where the meaning is not compromised by adhering to the spelling, punctuation or grammar, no change has been made. Corrections or additional notes have been inserted within brackets or footnotes. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. A bracketed question mark indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. The word 'illegible' or 'indecipherable' appearing in brackets indicates that at the time I made the transcription, I was unable to decipher the word or phrase in question. Only materials pertinent to the military service of the veteran and to contemporary events have been transcribed. Affidavits that provide additional information on these events are included and genealogical information is abstracted, while standard, 'boilerplate' affidavits and attestations related solely to the application, and later nineteenth and twentieth century research requests for information have been omitted. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading skills fail to catch all misinterpretations. Also, dates or numbers which the software treats as numerals rather than words are not corrected: for example, the software transcribes "the eighth of June one thousand eighty six" as "the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1786." Please call material errors or omissions to my attention.]

State of Virginia Gloucester County: to wit

On this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of November 1838, personally appeared before the subscriber, a justice of the peace in and for said County, Elizabeth Nicolson, a resident of said County, aged seventy-seven years in May last, and having first duly affirmed the truth to speak according to law, doth, on her said affirmation, make the following declaration, in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the Act of Congress passed July 7<sup>th</sup> 1838, entitled "An act granting half pay and pensions to certain widows." –

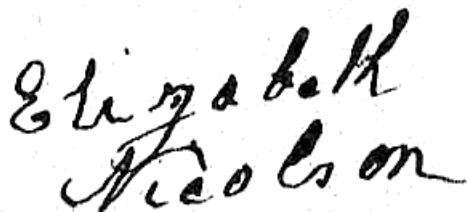
That she is the widow of Robert Nicolson who was a Surgeon in the Virginia Line in the War of the Revolution as proof of which she refers to the records in Richmond and Washington. The State of Virginia has of late years granted the land bounty due for said services of said Doctor Robert Nicolson to her grandchildren, who are the heirs at law of said Robert Nicolson to wit, Robert W Nicolson, George L Nicolson and others. And the half pay which was due by the General Government for the same services has also been of late years paid, in part to herself as widow, and the same heirs of said officer.

She further declares that she was married to the said Robert Nicolson on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 1784 – that her husband, the aforesaid Robert Nicolson died on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of August 1798 – that she was not married to him prior to his leaving the service, but the marriage took place previous to the first day of January 1794 – viz. at the time above stated.

Sworn to and subscribed on the day and year above written before me the justice as aforesaid

S/ Peter R Nelson

S/ Elizabeth Nicolson



[p 7: Copy of a marriage bond dated April 3, 1784 issued in James City County to Robert Nicolson, Jr. and Robert Nicolson conditioned upon the marriage of Robert Nicolson, Jr. to Elizabeth Digges, Spinster of said County.]

<sup>1</sup> Va. Half Pay N. A. Acc. No. 874 See 050 127 Half Pay Robert Nicolson or Nicholson

Executive Department Richmond March 27, 1834

The Heirs of Robert Nicholson are allowed Land bounty for his Services as a Surgeon in the State line for 3 years. The Register shall issue a warrant accordingly if not heretofore drawn.

S/ John Floyd

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of June 1834 a warrant No. 7774 for 6000 acres of land issued to Robert W Nicholson, George L Nicholson, Andrew S Nicholson and James M Nicholson children of Doctor George D Nicholson; George W Nelson, Robinson Nelson, William R W Nelson and Reginald Heber Nelson children of Sarah B Nelson – Heirs of surgeon Robert Nicholson

[The above document certified as being true copies by the Register of the land office in Richmond in November 1838]

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Pension office July 14, 1837

On a review of the case of the late Dr. Robert Nicholson, deceased, on account of whose revolutionary services in the Regiment of Virginia State Artillery, a claim was allowed by this Department on the first of the present month, under the act of the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1832, I find that by an act of the Virginia Legislature passed May Session 1778 (vide page 453 of Hening's Statutes at Large) all officers of the State Artillery were allowed the same pay as was customary in Artillery regiments in the service of the United States, and as it appears from the settlements made with the Surgeons of the United States regiments of Artillery, that they were paid at the rate of \$725.51 per annum, instead of \$720 per annum, as I had supposed. I now certify that the claim should have been allowed at the rate of \$362.75 ½ per annum, and that the difference between the sum and \$360 per annum should now be allowed from the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 1783 to the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1798, and that the amount is payable to Vespasian Ellis, attorney for Robert W Nicholson, administrator de bonis non of said Robert Nicholson, deceased.

S/ Commissioner of Pensions

Approved July 1837

Secretary of War

[p 48]

State of Virginia Gloucester County: SS

Be it known, that before me William Person a Justice of the Peace for the County of Gloucester, and State aforesaid personally came Mrs. Elizabeth Nicolson of said County, aged eighty-four years and made oath in due form of law, that she is the widow of Dr. Robert Nicholson, who was a Surgeon in the Revolutionary War. That the said Dr. Robert Nicholson resided in the County of York in the State of Virginia, for the space of 15 years that previous thereto he resided in Williamsburg Virginia. That the said Dr. Robert Nicholson died in the County of York on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1798 – leaving the affiant his widow – That she was married to the said Dr. Robert Nicholson on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of April 1784 and that she has received the sum of \$480 per annum from the 4<sup>th</sup> day of March 1836 to the 4<sup>th</sup> day of March 1841, under the Act of Congress of the 7<sup>th</sup> July 1838, entitled "An Act granting half pay and pensions to certain widows," That she has been informed she was entitled to receive the sum of \$600 per annum instead of \$480 per annum for the services of her deceased husband, the said Dr. Robert Nicholson, as surgeon in the revolutionary Army, under the act of Congress of the 7<sup>th</sup> of June,

1832. – She refers to the public records for the proof of his service, and of the statements and she makes this application for the balance of pension so do you and unpaid to this affiant, as widow of Dr. Robert Nicholson, from the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1836 to the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1841.

S/ Elizabeth Nicolson

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elizabeth Nicholson". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and somewhat slanted to the right.

[Veteran's widow was pensioned originally at the rate of \$480 per annum increased to \$600 per annum March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1836 for her husband's service as a surgeon in the Virginia Continental line.]

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[From [bounty land records in the Library of Virginia](#)]

[Note from Will Graves 11/20/17: W. C. Breihan has submitted the following full transcription of the testimony of Henry Buchanan. Thanks!]

On the first of January 1781 when the Invasion was made upon this state by a detachment of the British Army under General Arnold [Benedict Arnold], Doctr Nicolson acted as Surgeon to a body of militia which had been hastily directed to oppose the enemy at Burwell's ferry – all kind of military stores having been before that period, moved away from Wmsburg [Williamsburg] to Richmond, the Doctor found the medicine and materials which his department required—From that date the Doctr by appointment of Gen'l Nelson [Thomas Nelson] acted as Surgeon & Physician to the Troops assigned to my command, still finding his own materials & medicine, at their different stations of Wmsburg, York, Richmond, Portsmouth, Westover, Norfolk and Hampton Town until about the middle of April, when the militia retreated from Wmsburg to Richmond before the British army commanded by Gen'l Philips [William Phillips]. The bearing and confusion of these times renders it impossible to ascertain with precision the number of troops, which the Doctr had under his charge for the space of time he acted with me, suffice it to say, my command was never less than two Regiments, which upon an average turn had from 7 to 8 ct [hundred] men, these troops without Blankets & head feathers, jackets, and entirely devoid of every camp accoutrement, were directed to act in the low sunken country, about Hampton and its vicinage, the precariousness of the situation, occasioned hard and frequent duty, a circumstance which [,] added to the inclemency of the season and the naked situation of the soldiery, occasioned a degree of sickness among them, the cantonments of the militia were distant from six to twelve miles, every neighbouring [neighboring] house was crowded with invalids. — I owe it to Justice, I owe it to the honor of a Zealous & disinterested patriotic Citizen, to affirm, that Doctr Nicolson (who was not at any of these periods performing his necessary Tour of duty) neglected his private & lucrative practice, attended to a numerous and dispersed body of militia, with such tenderness, Industry and skill, that in his Hospital returns not a single man was returned dead — I wish it was in my power to appear before the Board of Auditors to give minute testimony to these facts upon Oath.

[Henry Buchanan]

On orders issued at Hampton on the 21<sup>st</sup> of May last Robert Nicholson Esquire was appointed to act as Surgeon to the State Regiment of Artillery till the sense of the Field officers and Captains

could be further known. The far greater part of them having been since consulted, and given their approbation, the appointment of the said Robert Nicholson Esquire as Surgeon to the said Regiment of Artillery is hereby affirmed. Given under my hand at York this 15<sup>th</sup> day of July 1779.

S/ T. Marshall, Colo. S. A. [Thomas Marshall, Colonel State Artillery]

To his Excellency John Floyd Governor of the State of Virginia

The petition of Peyton Randolph Nelson & others of Gloucester County & State of Virginia respectfully represent that Dr. Robert Nicolson, a Surgeon to the State Regiment duly commissioned the 21<sup>st</sup> day May 1779 departed this life in the year 1797 leaving a widow and six children only two of which survived to the age of maturity – Namely Sarah B. and George D. The latter intermarried with Sarah T. Wormley, of Middlesex County and died about the year \_\_\_ leaving a Widow and four children Namely Robert W, George L, Andrew S & James M infants under the age of twenty-one as their Guardian. As far as your Petitioners [indecipherable word or words] it in the power to ascertain they verily believe that Dr. Nicolson never received any compensation for his services or money or land, they now seek to obtain that Justice in the premises which by a recent Act of Congress has been awarded to all the similarly circumstanced with themselves. They therefore [one or more indecipherable words] to his Excellency the Justice of their claim supported by Surgeon Nicolson's commission signed by Colonel Marshall; the certificate of Colonel James Innis dated 9 April 1783 and the deposition of Henry Bohannon. Your petitioner Peyton R Nelson [one or more indecipherable words] Sarah B the widow living that your Excellency may grant to the Heirs of Doctor Nicolson what may be justly due them and as in duty bound they will ever pray.

S/ Peter R. Nelson