

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

Pension Application of John Isham Bethell W8131

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Tennessee } January Term 1833

Jefferson County }

On this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of January 1833, personally appeared in open Court (the same being a Court of record, having a Clerk and seal) John Isham Bethel, a resident of said County, 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 June 1832.

That he was drafted in Henrico County, State of Virginia the year he cannot recollect, but it was the first draft made in that County, during the war: [See endnote] that he rendezvoused in the City of Richmond, under the command of Captain Reuben Whitlock, and marched thence to Hillsboro N.C. where they remained a few days – from thence, they marched to Camden S.C. where they joined the Souther Army under the command of Gen'l Gates. He does not recollect the number of the Regt. to which his company was attached, but it was commanded by Colo. or Maj'r. Woodson. He states that from the length of time, he cannot recollect the names of the other officers, attached to the army. That they lay there some two or three weeks, when they had an engagement with the British Army under the command of Col. Tarlton & other officers: this was in the month of July or August. The Americans were drawn up in order of battle – they stood two or three fires of the enemy, when Genl. Gates wheeled and run and his army followed him. After the battle of Camden Capt. Whitlock's company, was marched to Newgate in S.C. where they remained some time, when they were discharged by Capt. Whitlock, and returned home. The applicant got home in Henrico County Va. the last of Sept. or 1<sup>st</sup> of Oct. having been absent on duty four months.

This applicant states, that in the spring or summer following, he was again drafted under the command of Capt. Thomas Prosser. they rendezvoused at Richmond, and marched to a place near the seashore in Va. called Rich Neck, at which place, as well as he can now recollect, they joined Genl. Neilson [sic: Thomas Nelson], and were stationed there some five or six weeks. From thence, they were marched to Norfolk, which place had previously to that time been burned by the British, who had left the place; they were stationed there several weeks, when they were marched back to Rich Neck & discharged by their Capt. This was called a three month tour, but the applicant was absent three & a half months.

The applicant then remained at home for some time, until the spring before the close of the war [sic: 1781], when he was again drafted – his captain's name, he cannot recollect – they rendezvoused at Bottom's Bridge, near Chickahomny [sic: Chickahominy] swamp – his Col's name was John Pleasant [possibly John Pleasants], his Genls Neilson – from thence they marched to Four Mile Creek [Fourmile Creek in Henrico County] on James River, & camped at a place called Mathis Spring – at that place they were stationed two or three months, watching the Brittish, who frequently ascended the River in flat bottom boats, many of which were taken by the Americans. From this place they marched to a place called, Mobbin's Hill [sic: Malvern Hill, 15 mi SE of Richmond] where they were stationed ten or fifteen days – from thence they marched to Maho's Old field near Richmond, where they encamped a few days. They then had orders to retreat to the Chickahomany's Swamp at the New Bridges, to take up the bridges & burn them, which they did – the Brittish followed them & crossed at the same places – when the Americans crossed the bridges, they were in Hanover County – then in Louisa – then in Orange – then in Culpepper [sic: Culpeper] – while they were in Culpepper, the British got before them, and made the nearest route they could to Richmond, to which place the Americans followed them; but the enemy had left that place before their arrival. Near Richmond they were joined by Genls. Green [possibly Col. John Green] & [Anthony] Wayne, after which junction they marched to a little place called, Old James Town,

where they had a skirmish with the British [Battle of Green Springs Plantation, 6 Jul 1781], who retreated. At this place, the applicant was discharged, by this Capt. whose name he cannot recollect, having been out on that tour five months

This applicant further states, that during the winter following the surrender of Lord Cornwallis [19 Oct 1781], he was called out with others upon a months tour to guard the magazine at Richmond, the British arms & ammunition having been brot up in boats. They were then under Capt. Wm Smith [William Smith].

This applicant cannot remember the Regts. to which was attached during these several tours – he recollects that on one tour, a Capt. Masdill commanded – He was born in Henrico County Va. 15th Dec. 1755, as informed by his parents – he has no record of his age – at the time he was called in service, he lived where he was born, in the year 1789 he removed to New River Va. – from thence he removed to Jefferson County Tenn, where he now lives. Genl. De Kalb was at the battle of Camden, in which he was killed – he knew a Genl. De Marquis [sic: Marquis de Lafayette], a frenchman, who commanded a troop of regulars – that he is acquainted with John McCampbell, John Caldwell & others signed to this declaration in his present neighborhood, who can testify to his character for veracity, & their belief of his services as a soldier of the revolution

This applicant states that he has lost all his discharges, and has no documentary evidence, nor does he know of any living witness, by whom he can prove his services. – He hereby relinquishes every claim to a pension except the present, and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of any agency in any State.

[signed] John I Bethell

#### NOTES:

Bethell's account of the Battle of Camden does not agree with the historical record. In the summer of 1780 Virginia militiamen joined the Southern Department commanded by Gen. Baron De Kalb at Hillsborough NC, but I could not identify a Col. or Maj. Woodson who was there. The only Reuben Whitlock I could find is said to have resigned as a Lieutenant in the Virginia State Regiment on 29 Oct 1779. Gen. Horatio Gates arrived at Hillsborough on 13 July, and after taking command of the Southern Department he marched southward, arriving at Rugeley's Mill 12 mi north of Camden on 15 Aug. At about 10 that evening they marched toward Camden, but about 6 mi north of there, at about 2 AM on the 16<sup>th</sup>, they encountered the British commanded by Gen. Cornwallis, including the Legion of Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton. At sunrise the troops formed for battle, with the Virginia Militia on the left, the North Carolina Militia in the middle, and Continental troops from Maryland and Delaware on the right. By most accounts the Virginia militiamen broke and fled, many without even firing. The North Carolina Militia soon followed. Gates then rode after, attempting to rally the men, who fled in many directions. I could not identify a place called Newgate SC.

On 5 Feb 1849 in Grainger County TN Margaret Bethell, aged 72 on the following 28 April, applied for a pension, stating that she was married to "John J Bethel" by William Porter, a Baptist minister, in Wythe County VA on 10 Aug 1798, and her husband died 17 Dec 1848. On an application for bounty land dated 2 May 1855 her age was said to be 78, and her name before marriage was Margaret Brabston.