

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Pension Application of James Biscoe W8230 Polly Biscoe VA Sea Service
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 11 Sep 2017.

State of Kentucky Franklin County Towit

On this the 18 day of April 1831 personally appeared in open Court being a court of Record for Franklin County aforesaid James Biscoe a resident in said County aged 71 years who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the provisions made by the acts of Congress of the 18th of March 1818 and the 1 of May 1820 that he the said James Biscoe enlisted for the term of three years on the 22 day of May 1778 as a boatswain in the virginia State Navy on Continental establishment under the Command of Commodore James Barrow [sic: James BarronW12264] first and then under the command of Commodore Richard Taylor [S25873]. That he continued in said service until his term of enlistment had expired which was in May 1781 when he was discharged from the service That he hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension except the present that his name is not on the Roll of any state except Virginia he further states that the reasons why he has not applied sooner for a pension are that until within a few years past he had a competency for a support and was still able to do some work but he state that he is now 71 years of age and is very infirm and entirely unable to work for a support that from misfortunes which he could neither see nor prevent he has been stripped of almost every particle of property which he ever possessed and in persuance of the act of congress of the 1 of May 1820 I do solemnly swear that I was a resident Citizen of the United States on the 18th day of March 1818 and that I have not since that time by gift sale or in any manner disposed of my property or any part thereof with intent thereby so to diminish it as to bring myself within the provisions of an act of Congress entitled "an act to provide for certain person engaged in the land and naval service of the United States in the Revolutionary War" passed on the 18th day of March 1818 and that I have not nor has any person in trust for me any property or securities contracts or debts due to me nor have I any income other than what is contained in the Schedule hereto annexed and by me subscribed That since the 18 of March 1818 the following changes have been made in my property. That as the security of James and Sandy Holton I had two negro girls and one negro Boy and one waggon and two horses sold at sheriffs sale and that they the said Holtons are wholly & hopelessly insolvent and unable to pay any part of it back to him again and that since said period he had a horse that died which is all the change that has taken place. A schedule of all the property which I own necessary clothing and a Bed only excepted

60 acres of 3 rate land worth say \$4 per acre	\$240
one old woman slave of little value on account of her advanced age and infermaties	<u>40</u>
	\$280

I owe to John Carter near one hundred dollars the amount not exactly known and some several debts amounting in all to about the sum of \$.00

James Biscoe

State of Kentucky }
Franklin County }

On this 6th day of July 1832 personally appeard before the Franklin Circuit Court James Biscoe a resident of Franklin County in the State aforesaid aged seventy two the third of July 1832 who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by an act of Congress passed June 7th 1832. that he enlisted in the Navy of Virginia on the 22^d day of May 1778 for three years under Comadore James Barren and served under him untill he was taken in the board of war and was in so many batles [how?] many I can not tell, being all most every week a fighting and then was aboard the "liberty" and in six months or thereabouts made a boatswain (having previous to my enlistment been a sailor, onboard a merchant vessel and a prisioner[?] 13 months with british onboard a man of war) being the best sailor on board the vessell, John Britten was the immediate commander after Barron all under the command of Comadore Marcum [James Markham R72],

this vessell being a look out vessell, was all ways out our commander of the vessell after Commadore Barren left her changed frequently, after Commadore Marcum Comadore Taylor had the command of the fleet & I had the command of the schooner Liberty, as a boatswain but never was higher while I commanded their was no officer onboard but Carpenter & gunner the number battles scrimages and runnings out after the ennemy & from them, this affiant can not tell, the whole three years was spent in one continual sean allmost of fighting at the time I was discharged I was at quenstree [Queenstree?] up York river having served out my time, was discharged by Lieutenant Thophilas Fields [sic: Theophilus Field]. my discharge the lord knows what became of it, as I kept it no time never expecting any thing – your affiant refers to his application for a pension if they can be found, also to be place on the roal & his proof for land in Virginia. he hereby declare my pay was while a boatswain one dollar per day, he hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension except the present and he declares that his name is not on the pension roll of any agency in any state

James Biscoe

Norfolk Virginia March 28th 1851

Vespasian Ellis Esq'r.

Dear Sir In answer to your letter of the 26th instant I beg leave to say, that during the Revolutionary war, I knew James Briscoe [sic], a Gunner, of the Pilot boat schooner Liberty, mounting, ten, two pounders; on swivels; I distinctly recollect Mr. Briscoe, was esteemed a deserving officer, of the State Navy of Virginia;

There was also a Brig, called the Liberty; in the Virginia State Navy; mounting, fourteen, one pounders, but I do not know that Mr. Briscoe ever served in her; My father commanded the Liberty at the time Mr. Briscoe was her Gunner.

Very respectfully I am Your Obedient Servant

James Barron [pension application W12264]

P.S. The word Gunner; was inserted in the letter, written to you yesterday, by mistake, insted of the word Boatswain, which I much regret.

James Barron

March the 29th 1851.

[The following are from [rejected claims in the Library of Virginia.](#)]

The Petition of Jas. Biscoe respectfully states –

That he entered the Navy of Va at an early period during the Revolution served faithfully therein until all active duty ceased when he returned to private life – soon after he first enlisted which was for the term of 3 years, he was appointed a Boatswain & held that Commission for the whole period of the subsequent services & acted as such during the time except for a short time during which he commanded temporarily a small vessel called the “Liberty” which was not however the larger vessel of that name in the service.

Soon after the close of the war ye petitioner received a land warrant for his services but not the whole to which he was entitled. He rec'd no more than a Common Sailor who enlisted for the war. Yr. Petitioner solicits that a warr't. [warrant] for the add'l. bounty due him maybe granted and that he may be allowed the quantity of land allowed others of his grade who served three years.

James Biscoe by his atty./ J. Green

The foregoing is a copy of the original petn. filed in the Executive Chamber on the 3 June 1831.

Council Chamber, 21st November 1783.

I do certify that James Biscoe is entitled to the proportion of Land allowed a Boatswain of the State Navy who has served three years.

Thomas Meriwether

Benjamin Harrison.

A Warrant for 200 acres issued to James Biscoe 22^d November 1783.

Land Office Virginia

I certify that the above is a true copy from the record, and that no other Warrant has issued on account of the same services. Given under my hand this 3rd June 1831. [undeciphered signature]

Frankfort 21 March 1832

Dear Sir

As I have not heard from you for some time, I take it for granted that you have not obtained a decision of old Mr. Biscoe's claim – And it has occurred to me, that it might be strengthened by referring the Governor and Council to allowances which have been made in parallell cases. Some indeed I consider not so strong as his. If the Claims I refer to have been allowed from a sense of Justice to the individuals, then Mr. Biscoe pleads the Justice of his case. If on the score of generosity then he pleads his age and poverty, and the helpless Condition of a dependant family. The cases I refer to are as follows viz.

Wt. no. 2818	Burgess Longwith [Burgess Longweth VAS974], a Gunner	2666 $\frac{2}{3}$ acres
“ ” 4329	William Cook [VAS2522]	do Same
“ ” 4331	Philip Evans [Phillip Evans VAS2521] a Carpenter	Same
“ ” 4401	Morris Lloyd [VAS956] Gunners' mate	Same
“ ” 4422}	William Green [Will Green VAS2519] Gunner	Same
&“ ” 4423}		
“ ” 4424	Ambrose Amanda [Ambrose Amando VAS1102] do	Same
“ ” 724	John Gibson [R52] Sailing Master	Same
“ ” 752	Richard Smart [VAS2520] Master's mate	Same
“ ” 1201	Lewis Jones [VAS1304] do do	Same

Cases of this kind might be multiplied almost to any given extent, but I forbear and feel content to rest the claim upon its merits, believing that the Governor & Council will do what is right in the premises. I am well assured that Mr. Biscoe has Justice on is side, he has rendered many important services to his Country, in doing which the better part of his live was exhausted, and all he has to shew for it is the proceeds of 200 acres of land. I am sir with great respect/ yo'r ob't servt/ H. Wingate

NOTE: On 26 Aug 1854 Polly Biscoe, 48, applied for a pension stating that she married James Biscoe on 16 Dec 1832, and he died 11 Dec 1853. On an application for bounty land dated 14 April 1855 her age is given as 49, her name before marriage as Polly Kendall, and the name of the person who performed the marriage as Joseph Taylor, a Baptist minister.