

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Pension Application of Ezekiel Billington W8365 Esther Billington NJ
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris.

State of Tennessee }
Bedford County }

On this 16th day of August 1832 personally appeared in open court before Samuel Phillips John B Armstrong and John L Neil Justices of the court of Pleas and quarter Sessions for Bedford County now sitting Ezekiel Billington a resident of Bedford County and State of Tennessee aged 73 years and nearly 5 months 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. Applicant entered the service of the United States under Capt Thomas Seglar and Lieutenant Abram Garrabrant and Colonel Joseph Allen of Newark in the State of New Jersey the spring of the year 1776 at Elizabeth Town point the day and month not recollected as a Volunteer and remained one month or more. Applicant then substituted in the room of John Garrabrant served one month was then dismissed from service Then in the month of September of the same year turned out volunteer under the same Captain that applicant first volunteered under and served on the Pasafe [sic: Passaic] River at the big Bridge at the town of Aquacanac [sic: Acquackanonk] staid there until first of November of the same year when General Washingtons army come on from the White Plains and informed Captain Seglar that the Brittish Army were after him and applicant with the balance of the New Jersey Militia that were then under Capt Seglar were dismissed and sent home General Washington taking head quarters at Morristown. In the month of December following the Brittish coming into New Arch [sic: Newark] The inhabitants of that vilage moved over New arch Mountain applicant volunteered under Bill Camp [William Camp] and met the enemy at the Bridge and fired on them from the hill or bank near the bridge this company consisted only of about twenty in number The Brittish Cavelry went up the Creek on the opposite side to where they could ford crossed over came in on the rear of Bill Camp's company who were giving a fire or two before they would leave their vilage of New arch, this company retiring to the mountain were met in their rear by the Brittish Cavelry who kill some of the company took applicant with the Captain and severil others prisoners there being 18 of the number Captured and killed The captured with applicant were taken to the city of New York and put into a Sugar house where there were a great many other Prisoners who all suffered much with both hunger and cold and many died until about the first of April 1777 when the prisoners were removed from the Sugar house aboard the Prison Ships that were laying in the bay applicant with others there being a proposition from the enemy to join them rather than remain in prison inlisted in the Brittish Army stationed on Statton [sic: Staten] Island in the month of June or July applicant intending to desert and swim the River from Staton Island to Elizabeth Town point which is about a mile across and having previously revealed his object to one John Tucker who had joined the Brittish at the same time applicant did in order to get from their imprisonment the said Tucker betray this applicant's plan to the Brittish Colonel who sent a sergent with a file of men to carry this applicant before the Colonel but before they got to applicant he learned the object of the Sargant and the file of men and that they were coming to take him with applicant charged the said Tucker with having betrayed his secret who replied yes you Rebell you did propose deserting and wanted me to go with you at which words applicant struck Tucker with his fist and said Tucker gave applicant a severe wound on the hand with a knife which has left a scar to this day when he was taken before the Colonel his hand bleeding The colonel wrote a few lines and gave to the Sergent directing him to go to the watering place and hale the man of war Experiment where he was put aboard and his wound on his hand sowed up and cured where said Billington remained two months after which he was put a board of a vesel called the Badger where he remained till the fall of the year 1777 Then removed to the Transport vesel called the William and a fleet was then made up to go to Savanah [sic] Georgia and started when there came up a storm at sea and the fleet were scattered and transport William driven far out at sea and seperated from the fleet and the Captain directing his course for Savana when he arrived at Tibe [sic:

Tybee Island] the fleet had not arrived. Transport William then put to sea again and a storm blew her off to the coast of the west Indies a sloop was sent after transport William by the name of Chiseway who took this vessel to the capes of Augustine [St Augustine FL] when General Provo [sic: Augustine Prevost] was going from there to Savannah with a regiment of British the soldiers belonging to Transport William were sent upon small Boats up Augustine Creek to Lansberry from thence we marched to Savannah when we arrived Savannah had been taken by the fleet [29 Dec 1778] where we remained until the latter part of the winter 1778 when we marched to Augusta Georgia remaining there but a short time went down to Hudson's Ferry [near Blue Springs GA] where we were stationed when one who joined the British army under the same circumstances as applicant deserted by name of James Yarborough who was caught and brought back by the Tories who was hanged in a hour afterwards to a tree. About this time General Ash [sic: John Ashe] landed his army in Georgia and come down to Briar Creek where he was attacked by the British army and on the first onset was routed scattered and defeated Battle of Briar Creek GA, 3 Mar 1779]. Applicant then with the British army marched up to Augusta where a small detachment among whom was this applicant were removed to Savannah after which the French fleet laid siege to Savannah [Siege of Savannah, 24 Sep - 19 Oct 1779] the present applicant was in a fort on the River Bank The Americans also laid siege and in the attempt to storm the Town The French and Americans were defeated The British forces were commanded by General Provo The Americans and French were commanded by the French General Countersang [sic: Count d'Estaing] after the siege said Billington was marched up to Augusta after staying there a while he was marched to 96 in South Carolina This was some time in the year 1778 and some time in that year was Gates defeat at Campden [sic: defeat of Gen. Horatio Gates at Battle of Camden SC, 16 Aug 1780] applicant remained at 96 till General Greene come to Campden [Nathanael Greene, Battle of Hobkirk Hill, 25 Apr 1781] about this time another one of applicants comrades deserted by the name of James Bell was caught in three days by the Tories and brought back to the British Army but was not allowed to be brought in camp when a Sergeant Major sent out with the Law read it to him applicant being one of this number under said Sergeant Major when he was hanged. General Green about this time marched against 96 [Siege of Ninety Six SC, 22 May - 19 Jun 1781] and Billington was with a party of British near Saluda when he saw some of Colonel Lees Light horse [Henry Lee's Legion] under the command of Cornet Carran[?] applicant being a small distance from this party ran to them when he was fired on by the British Party that he had left was pursued by the British until Cornet Carran ordered one of his light horse men to take him behind him on his horse which was done who took me to the camps of General Greene the otherside of Saluda when applicant got to Greenes army he was known by Major William Burnett [sic: William Burnet] then aide camp to General Green said Burnett was raised with applicant near Newarch and knew him well and the circumstance of his Captivity said Burnett was son of Doctor Burnett [sic: William Burnet] of the Village of New arc New Jersey and seemed very glad to meet with applicant when brought in by said Company of light horse Said Billington then join'd as a volunteer Captain Feilas company of Infantry and remained with General Greens army about 12 months until April 1780 in August 1779 applicant was in the memorable Battle of the Eutaw Springs [sic: Battle of Eutaw Springs SC, 8 Sep 1781] if it had not of happened that the America Troops got to some hogsheads of Rum that belonging to the British the British Army would have been totally defeated General Green marched from the Battle about four miles and took up camp in order to get his men sober The next morning about the break of day Greene marched his men on the Battle ground again and the British had gone leaving about one hundred of wounded men under care of a Doctor from which place General Greene marched to the high Hills of the Santee and in the fall of this year marched down towards the City of Charlestown took head quarters at Doggester [sic: Dorchester, 1 Dec 1781] applicant remained with Greens troops during this winter until the month of April in the mean time General [Francis] Marion had quelled the Tories very much applicant desired of Major Burnett a discharge to return home to New Arch New Jersey General Greene then gave applicant a discharge from Military duty during the war to return home to New Arch applicant was about 21 years of age at this time on his way home ward he stoped at Cape Fare [sic: Cape Fear River NC] in Cumberland County in order to work to get some clothing he then being very naked he remained in Cumberland some time become attached to the

People of his acquaintance and pursued the business of an overseer from Cumberland County applicant went in Wake County North Carolina and overseer for Major Simon Turner still remained in North Carolina and in the month of November after applicant was 26 years of age he married in Johnson County and then removed into Wane [sic: Wayne] County North Carolina taking possession of a quarter and Over Seeing for Col. Samuel Smith lived five years in Wane then bought land in Johnson County N Carolina Then sold his land and other property and moved to Bedford County Tennessee in the year 1810 where he has resided ever since up to the present period Applicant while a single man in North Carolina left his discharge that was given him by General Greene in a chest of Billy Jones in Wake County together with a recommendation given him by General Greene in allusion to the captivity and imprisonment of applicant the papers were missen and on search part of them were found made into a paste board for a womans bonnett applicant knows of no person now alive that can testify as to his services Simon Turner who died some three or four years ago has seen applicants discharge said Turner resided in Maury County of this state.

Said Billington 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.

Ezekiel hisXmark Billington

The following are the questions propounded by the court to the applicant for pension on account of his service.

Question 1st Where and in what year were you born. Answer Either on the 22 or 27th day of march 1759 in the Township of New Ark in the state of New Jersey.

Question 2nd Have you any record of your age and if so, where is it?

Answer. I have no record of my age there was a Record in my fathers family Bible but applicant cannot tell what has ever become of it.

Question 3rd Where were you living when called into service, where have you lived since the revolutionary war and where do you now live?

Answer. I was living in the Township of New Ark state of New Jersey when called into service Since the revolutionary war I lived first 5 years in Wane County in the State of North Carolina removed from Wane County to Johnson and lived in Johnson County 21 years still in North Carolina from Johnson North Carolina I moved to Bedford County Tennessee going on 22 years ago where I now live.

Question 4th How were you called into service; were you drafted, did you volunteer or were you a substitute? And if a substitute for whom.

Answer. I volunteered in the service of the United States

Question 5th State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops where you served; such continental and militia regiments as you can recollect and the general circumstances of your service.

Answer. I remember the names of General Greene William Burnett AideCamp to General Greene Col Lee Captain Feilds & Cornet Carran of the light horse; applicant does not now recollect the name of any Continental or militia regiment the general circumstances of his service he has already set out in his declaration as made out

Question 6th Did you ever received a discharge from the service and if so by whom was it given, and what has become of it?

Answer. I received discharge from General Greene the spring of the year after the Battle at the Ewtaw Springs and also a recommendatory Letter from General Greene specifying the nature of his caption by the Brittish and his desertion from them as set out in my declaration

Question 7. State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighborhood and who can testify as to your Character for vracity and their belief of your services as a soldier of the revolution

Answer. I am known to James Y Green William Norvell Esquire a Deputy Sheriff of Bedford County Wm D Orr the high Sheriff of said County John Wortham a former Sheriff of Bedford County

Captain Andrew Patterson Wm S. Mayfield Michel Roberson Esquire Joseph Rosson Esquire
and John Land Esquire who could testify as to my Character for veracity and their belief of my
services as a soldier of the revolution. Ezekiel hisXmark Billington

NOTE: On 1 Aug 1853 Esther Bilington (as she signed), age 66, of Rutherford County TN, applied for a pension stating that she married Ezekiel Billington in November 1829, and he died on 29 Sep 1848 while a resident of Marshall County TN. A document in the file states that Ezekiel Billington and Esther Sargeant were married in Bedford County on or about 5 Nov 1829 by William Norville. On 13 July 1855 she applied for bounty land.