

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

Pension application of John Burch W5238

Transcribed by Will Graves

State of Kentucky, Barren County & Circuit

On the 17th day of December 1832 personally appeared in open court before the clerk of the County court of Barren County now setting, John Burch a resident of said county & state, aged 74 years who, being first duly sworn according to law doth, on oath, make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefits of an act of Congress passed June 7th 1832 That he entered the service of the united States & served as hereinafter stated.

He was born in Prince George County Maryland on the 18th day of January 1759 & when quite a child was taken by his father to Charles County Maryland. He lived there until he was, he thinks near about 19 or 20 years of age. When it was reported Dunmore was coming up the Potomack [sic, Potomac] River, & he was called out with others to meet him, marched about 30 miles down the river when news was brought that the vessels had gone down the river & sailed off & after about a weeks service on this duty he returned home & was discharged & went home with directions to await further orders. No written discharge was given, as it was from the beginning only an expedition gotten up for to meet the emergency. Samuel Smallwood was his Captain, Elisha Smallwood, Lieutenant, the other officers not remembered. He thinks there were two other companies but they were little together & he does not now remember their officers.

In the second year of the Revolutionary War he moved with his father to Prince William County Virginia & shortly after he was called out in the militia of Virginia & marched down to Alexandria under Captain Peter Evans, 1st Lieutenant William Jacobs, 2nd Lieutenant William Peck & under Col. Henry Lee who commanded. He lay there for about two months during which time the British vessels lay in the Potomac just below Alexandria. At the end of probably a week or so the vessels moved off down the river & the company of Captain Peter Evans followed after them by a very rapid march (the men running all the way) down to Mount Vernon, Genl. Washington's residence a distance of about 9 miles. He was there until midnight of the day on which he got to Mount Vernon when Captain Evans marched them to Genl. Washington's mills which contained something like 400 barrels of flour & which, it was feared, would be attached by the enemy. While they lay at Mount Vernon the vessels had stopped on the opposite aide of the river & burnt Col. Lyle's buildings. The vessels then moved off down the river & Captain Evans company followed on after. His march was, however, intercepted by a creek, which he thinks was called Chappawampsick [sic, Chopawansic Creek¹] & while the company was marching around this creek the enemy burnt Brant's buildings. When the Company arrived at the head of the creek orders were received from Col. Henry Lee that the enemy's shipping had gone & for the company to return to Alexandria, which it did, the applicant among the rest. They lay at Alexandria for sometime to see if the vessels would return & were then discharged, receiving no written discharge, & were marched home by his Captain. He thinks this tour or term of service lasted about two months & a half.

The applicant cannot now specify all the particular periods of his service on the Potomac River. But as he lived near the river, he was continually on every alarm of the approach of vessels up the Potomac River, called upon to march to the river to watch the vessels. He thinks he can safely say he was two years in actual service of this kind upon the Potomac in the same Company above named & under the same officers above named. He could, in fact safely say that he was in the service well on to three years. Sometimes he was out a week, sometimes two weeks & sometimes 3 or 4, not being allowed to stay at home sometimes not more than a day or two & he cannot now remember that he was ever permitted, during the time, to stay at home for the space of one whole week. So that it may be said in fact that he was on service all the time, never being permitted to stay at home long enough to work a

1 See, Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chopawansic_Creek

crop or do anything else for himself. The company of Captain Evans was kept enrolled for that purpose & was subject to be called on at any moment that it might be demanded by an emergency. It is impossible for the applicant now to relate every particular period which he spent in actual service of this kind, but he is confident he actually served 2 years if not 3.

He was drafted in the summer before Cornwallis was taken & marched down to Fredricksburgh on the Rappahonock [sic, Rappahannock] River under Capt. Peter Evans, first Lieutenant Robert Overhaul, he thinks & 2nd Lieutenant Pur. Harrison & were commanded shore by Genl. Weedon [George Weedon] & Major Armistead. While at Fredricksburgh, orders were received from Genl. Washington to clear out a road around the tide water of Ockoquon river [sic, Occoquan River] in order that ~~Genl. Washington~~, the troops & baggage from the north might march along that road down to Little York where Cornwallis was besieged. While he was engaged with the rest in cutting out the road, Genl. Washington & some other officers passed on to the Little York, & the baggage & troops came on after the road was finished. After they (the North Army) had gone on some days the applicant & company were marched down the Little fork by Captain Evans & were stationed with the militia on the opposite side of York River from Little York, for the purpose, as was said, of preventing Cornwallis from escaping. He continued there until the surrender of Cornwallis, when he was marched home by his Capt. & discharged. He does not remember having received a written discharge at any time. If he did it is now lost. In this last term of service he served out, within a few days, the tour for which he was drafted. He is now unable to say for what time they were drafted or how long this tour was. He has no documentary evidence, nor does he know of any person whose testimony he can procure, who can testify to his services.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present & declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state. In answering to the questions prescribed by the War Department he sayeth that he was born in Prince George County Maryland on the 18th day of January 1759 & raised in Charles County Maryland. He has no record of his age except an old bible at home of his father in which it is set down. When first called out to meet Dunmore he lived in Charles County Maryland afterward he lived all the time in Prince William County Virginia. From that county he moved to Fauquier County where he lived 16 or 17 years. Thence he moved to Amherst Co. & lived there near about 16 years. Thence he moved to Barren County Ky where he has lived 15 years & still lives. During the time he served on the Potomac River they were galled out by Company by orders, as the applicant thinks, from Col. Henry Lee. The tour of duty he served when Cornwallis was taken, he was drafted. He was so little with the regular troops that he can not name the regular officers that he served with & continental regiments. He will however name Genl. Weedon & Major Armistead. He saw other officers at the Little York but cannot now remember them. The Regiment he does not now remember. He served on the Potomac River to guard the country against the enemy's shipping, helped to cut the road round the tidewater of Occoquan River for the Northern troops & was on the opposite side of York River when Cornwallis capitulated. He does not remember ever to have received a written discharge, neither did he ever receive a commission. In answer to the 7th he would name: William Glover, Andrew Nuckolds, John Glover, John Nichols, John Glover, William Baily, Francis Scott, James Bennett Esqr., William Bennett, William Elliot, William Pursely, James Wood, Abner Wells, Saml. Marshall & Thomas Bransford, William & Alexander Tolls, & he could name others.

Sworn to & subscribed the day & year aforesaid.

John Burch, X his mark

Mr. Andrew Nuckolds, a clergyman, residing in the county of Barren, Kentucky & William Glover, residing in the same county, hereby certify that we are well acquainted with John Burch who has subscribed & sworn to the above declaration: that we believe him to be about 71, years of age, that he is reputed & believed in the neighborhood where he resides to have been a soldier of the Revolution &

that we concur in that opinion.
Sworn to & subscribed the day & year aforesaid.

S/ Andrew Nuckols
S/ Wm. Glover

State of Kentucky, County of Barren

Be it known that before me Thomas J. Helm a Justice of the Peace in and for the County aforesaid personally appeared John Burch, and made oath that on the 17th day of December 1832 he appeared before the County Court for Barren County and made out his Declaration for the purpose of obtaining a pension in pursuance of an Act passed 7th June 1832. That said Declaration was forwarded for the consideration of the War Department, and has been returned with Objection V, to wit that affiant has not stated "with precision the length of his service and the different grades in which he served in language so definite as to enable the Department to determine to what amount of Pension he is entitled." To obviate this objection he now makes this Affidavit. He is now an old man and his memory much impaired, and in consequence he cannot positively swear to any precise length of Service. When he marched about 30 miles down the River upon the Report that Dunmore was coming up, he served at least one week as a private according to the best of his recollection. On his second Tour he served under Captain Peter Evans as a Private Soldier at least two months and a half and thinks it must have been if anything more, however according to the best of his recollection he will say at least two months & one half.

As to the balance of Affiant's actual Service on the Potomac River, he would again refer to his Declaration, with this addition, that he served during the whole period as a Private. He was what might be called a minute man, subject to be called out at a moment's warning. It is impossible for him at this period in consequence of old age, the loss of memory and the great lapse of time to specify the precise period of his actual service, but he can safely say that, exclusively of the one week and two months & a half before mentioned, he was out on the Potomac under Captain Peter Evans in actual service against the enemy at the least two years as a Private. Further than this he cannot go. He is old and feeble, his recollection faint and his mind decaying; and although he needs the bounty of the Government for the comfort of his declining life, yet he will have to do without that bounty rather than execute the impossible task of giving a precise statement of his Potomac Services more than he has done above.

On the last tour when he went to Little York he served within five days of the termination of the term for which he was drafted which according to the best of his recollection was three months; so that he can safely say that on this tour he served as a private at least two months and 25 days according to the best of his recollection. He therefore prays for a Pension. If he cannot obtain it for two years or more he will take it for less; for the time actually and precisely specified or for such service as the Department may allow.

Sworn and subscribed this 11th day of May 1833 before me. S/ John Burch, X his mark
S/ Th. J. Helm, JPBC

[Bible record:]

Robert B. Burch was born July 11th 1797
Margaret F. Burch was born June 21st 1799
Landon I[?] Burch was born August 9th 1801
Anne Burch was born September 30th 1803
Fanny P. Burch was born December 19th 1806
William D. Burch was born October 9th 1809
John Burch was born February 12th 1816

[On November 13th 1850, Elizabeth Burch, 71, widow of John Burch, filed her application for a

pension in Barren County, Ky.; she states that she was married to her husband when she was in her 17th year [of age] by Richard Majors in Louden County, Virginia; that she and her husband had 7 children, the oldest being Robert B. Burch who is now 53 years old; that she has no record of their marriage; that her husband died on March 1, 1834, and that she was remained a widow ever since. She signs her own name without a mark.]

[son, Robert B. Burch also filed an affidavit in support of his mother's application, in which he adds that his mother and father were married about the year 1796; he also states "That he was married on the 21st day of May 1821 and is now a man of Family, and has only twelve children." ONLY 12 CHILDREN!]