

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

Pension application of Elijah Bankston (Bankston) R478

fn80Ga.

Transcribed by Will Graves

State of Georgia, County of Butts

On this 21st day of September Personally appeared in open Court before the Superior Court of said County, now sitting, Elijah Bankston, a resident of said State and County aged, 81 years the 26th day of September Instant who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following Declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provisions made by the Act of Congress passed June the 7th 1832. That he volunteered in the Army at the call of Colonel Elijah Clarke, and in the Company of Captain Micajah Williamson in the month of February in the year 1779 in the County of Wilkes and said State, the Regiment was Georgia Volunteers Commanded by Colonel Elijah Clarke, and Captains in said Regiment were Micajah Williamson, John Autry, John Clarke and George Barber and David Madden and Joshua Welch were Lieutenants. The former belonged to the same Company that this declarant did the other officers names had slipped the memory of this declarant. That this declarant resided at the time of his volunteering in the County of Wilkes and State aforesaid.

After volunteering I was stationed at a Fort in Wilkes County called Williamson's Fort to guard it and remained there until we were called upon to go to Augusta to dislodge Colonel Grayson [sic, James Grierson]¹ a Tory Colonel, who had possession of the Fort in Augusta. Colonel Clarke had command of the Regiment that I was in, in said expedition. This took place in the latter part of the year 1780, as well as I recollect. In a few days I think the second day after Colonel Grayson was dislodged our spies brought in intelligence of the march of a number of British troops towards Augusta under the command of Colonel Brown [Thomas Brown], in British Officer. Col. Clarke believing himself not able to meet successfully the forces of Colonel Brown, gave orders to leave the Fort and Augusta which we had rescued from Colonel Grayson, which we did and fled to the wilderness. In the course of a few weeks, Colonel Clarke, heard that General Lee [sic, this is probably a reference to then Colonel Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee] was in South Carolina, and Colonel Clarke sent for him to come and assist him to dislodge Colonel Brown, of the British Army who had taken possession of Augusta and its Fort which General Lee did and we marched against Col. Brown and besieged the Fort and forced him to surrender with all of his troops which took place in the early part of the year 1781, as well as I now recollect, we remained in Augusta after the surrender of Colonel Brown, but the few days, when Colonel Clarke was requested by General Lee to go with an assist him in this lodging the British and Tories who had possession of 96 in South Carolina. We took up the line of march for the last mentioned place, but before we reached it Colonel Clarke received an express that Shannon's Fort on Savannah River on the South Carolina side was in danger of being attacked by the Indians. Colonel Clarke immediately dispatched 25 men to said Fort for its defense, and I was one of that number and remained there three months during which time I acted as an Indian Spy. I was then marched to Barber's Fort on Long Creek in Wilkes County Georgia, where I remained some four or five weeks. I was then marched to and stationed at, Water's plantation in the fork of Broad and Savannah Rivers where I remained some five or six weeks, from there I was marched to Williamson's Fort in Wilkes County, Georgia, where I remained until I received my discharge as well as I now recollect. Captain Gunnells had the Command of Shannon's Fort on Savannah River during the time I was stationed there: at Barber's Fort on Long Creek I was under the command of Captain Barber and at Water's plantation I was under the command of Captain John Autry and at Williamson's Fort in Wilkes County, I was under

1 The Siege of Augusta at which Fort Grierson was taken by the Whigs occurred on May 23, 1781. Clarke had earlier laid siege to Augusta in mid-September 1780. Clarke was forced to retreat from this earlier siege by the arrival of reinforcements under the command of Col. John Harris Cruger. At the time of the mid-September 1780 siege, Thomas Brown commanded the British/Tory troops at Augusta. James Grierson was taken prisoner by the Whigs in the May 1781 siege, not the mid-September 1781 siege. The applicant seems to have 'scrambled' his facts relating to the two sieges of Augusta in which he claims to have participated.

the Command of Captain Autry and Captain Micajah Williamson who had the Command of the Fort.

The whole length of time I served in the Army as a Volunteer was two years and four months. I received my discharge, as well as I recollect in June 1781: during the whole time, I was not employed in any civil pursuit. I know of no person now living by whom I can establish my claim as a Revolutionary Pensioner, as the last Soldier that I knew of with whom I served was one David Madden, who was a Lieutenant in one of the Companies in which I had Served and died a few years ago and whose affidavit I obtained, I will think in the year 1837, Setting forth the Services that I rendered as a Revolutionary Soldier. Said affidavit was forwarded to the Pension Office at Washington City and since that time I have not Saw [sic] it and that it is lost or mislaid by some one so that I cannot get hold of it.

Answers to Questions propounded by the Court

To the first he answers

He was born in Guilford County North Carolina, in the year of our Lord 1765, on the 26th day of September.

To the Second,

He has the Original Record of his age which is at his residence.

To the third

He answers he was living in Wilkes County, when he was called into Service and has lived since the Revolutionary War in the Counties of Wilkes, Hancock, Clarke, Walker, DeKalb and now resides in the County of Butts, all of the State of Georgia.

To the fourth

He answers he entered into the service as a Volunteer, at the call of Colonel Elijah Clarke in the County of Wilkes and State of Georgia.

To the fifth

He answers: Colonel Elijah Clarke had the command of the Regiment he first entered and Bama Hurd [?] was a Major in the Same Regiment as for the other Officers who he was acquainted with, and who he was under, at various times and places he refers to his Declaration above for answer. The names of many of the Officers who he was with he has forgotten.

To the sixth

He answers he did receive a discharge from the Service from both Captain Micajah Williamson as well as he now recollects which was afterwards Stolen by a band of Robbers who entered his Father's House and cared away a Trunk which contained his Own and his Father's discharge together with a number of other papers none of which was ever obtained afterwards.

To the seventh

He answers he can refer to all his neighbors and refers particularly to Willis Jarrell and John S. Irby.

I Elijah Bankston do hereby relinquish every claim whatever to a Pension or Annuity except the present and declare that his name is not on the Pension roll of the Agency of any State or Territory.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year first aforesaid.

S/ Elijah Banckston [sic]

[Willis Jarrell, a clergyman, and John S. Irby gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

[Ga., Butts County, Elizabeth Bankston, widow of Elijah filed for a pension stating; that her husband died February 22, 1849 in Butts County; that they were married February 1, 1787 in Chester District SC. Filed March 29, 1851.

"State of Georgia, This is to certify, that Elijah Bankston hath steadfastly done his duty, from the time of passing an Act at Augusta, to wit. on the 20th of August, 1781 until the total Expulsion of the British from this State; and the said Elijah Bankston cannot, to my knowledge or belief, be convicted of

plundering or distressing the Country; and is therefore, under the said act entitled to a Bounty of two hundred and Fifty acres of good Land, free from Taxes for ten years.

Given under my hand, at Savannah the 2nd day of July 1784

S/ Elijah Clarke, Col."

[NOTE: For some reason, Footnote.com has two listings relating to this applicant. One is an 80-page file listed under "Elijah Banckston" and the other is a 16-page file listed under "Elijah Bankston." Both files are under the number R478. The Clarke certificate quoted above appears only in the second, 16-page file at page 13. It is not the original but a certified copy made by John T. Smith, Secretary of the Executive Department of the State of Georgia on April 7, 1851.]