

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of Edward Barnwell W8352

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of South Carolina }
Beaufort District } On this twenty fifth day of October, 1849,
St Helena Parish } Before me John M. Baker magistrate of said District personally
appeared Mary Barnwell aged Seventy five years a resident of said district, and doth under oath
make the following declaration, in order to obtain the benefit, of the provission made by Act of
Congress 3^d March 1837 granting five years half pay to certain widows, and the act of 3^d Feby.
1848 continuing the same for life, viz — That she is the widow of Edward Barnwell who was a Lt.
Colonel commanding in the Militia of South Carolina in the war of the Revolution. That her
husband the said Edward Barnwell entered the service in or about June 1775 immediately after
the breaking out of the war, and the levying of an army in South Carolina by the provincial
Congress, which immediately assembled, his commission being among the first issued; Said
Edward entered the service as first or second Lieutenant, she cannot say which. He served as
such Lieutenant under the command of Col. Stephen Bull, who was sent in March 1776 to
Georgia by the Charleston safety committee. He was acting as first Lieutenant in the company of
Cavalry, commanded by his brother, then Captain John Barnwell, when they routed the British on
Port Royal Island early in 1779 [3 Feb], and served with the same company, raised in Beaufort
and the neighbourhood, until 20th May in that year 1779, when the Company, being then under
the orders of Captain James Doharty, was surprised by the british at the plantation of Mr.
Mathews on John's Island, near Charleston, and the whole party either killed or taken prisoners.

Deponent's husband was taken to Charleston, and confined aboard the prison ship
Packhorse, then lying in the harbour of that City. This vessel was some time after ordered to the
North, with the prisoners for the purpose of effecting an exchange. Off the coast of North
Carolina Edward Barnwell and his companions, thirty five in number [see note below], rose upon
the guard, took possession and run the vessel into Halifax North Carolina. Thence after many
hardships, they made their way through North Carolina to their several homes. Soon after his
return, this deponent's husband was promoted, and continued constantly serving in arms,
against the enemy until the close of the war, when he had risen by regular promotion to the
command of the Beaufort Regiment of Militia, — and that since the war, he ever after, enjoyed
the title of Colonel.

Deponent swears she was married to the said Edward Barnwell on the 29th July seventeen
hundred and ninety, consequently before the 1st day of January seventeen hundred and ninety
four; and that he died at Beaufort So. Ca. of gout on the 15th Apl. 1808, and that she is still his
widow and unmarried, and she refers to the proofs hereto annexed.

Sworn to before me on the day & year above }
mentioned Jno. M. Baker Magistrate }

Mary Barnwell

State of South Carolina }
Beaufort District }

Before me Jno M Baker Esq a magistrate in & for the district personally came Edward
Barnwell Esq, aged about 64, sixty four years, a respectable & credible person, & a resident of
this district who being duly sworn according to law, says on his oath, that he is the son of Col.
Edw'd Barnwell deceased, an officer of the Revolution, by his first marriage, that Col. Edw'd
Barnwell was born on the sixteenth November, seventeen hundred & fifty seven, that he was
married (for the second time) on the twenty ninth July, seventeen hundred & ninety to Miss Mary
Wigg, now Mrs Mary Barnwell, a claimant under the act of Congress, concerning the widows of
deceased officers &c of the Revolution; and that since his death, she has remained & is still his
widow. All of which facts also appear by reference to the Public Parish Register.

And with reference to the military services of his said father Col. Edw'd Barnwell, he
gives the following particulars on oath, which are derived from the tradition in the family from
the reputation in the neighborhood, & also from the statements of his said father before his

death, made in conversation with this witness. Viz. That his said father Edw'd Barnwell being about 18 years of age, & going to school, at the time the war broke out, received a Lieutenants commission in the troops raised by South Carolina. It was among the first issued, & accordingly entered the service of his country. And this deponent says, that his father has often been with him, on the battle ground at Port Royal in this district, where Gen'l Moultrie engaged with brilliant success a British force under Major [Valentine] Gardiner in 1779 killed one of their Majors, dismounted their howitzer, drove them back to their shipping in broad river, & made them bear seven dead upon the field. These particulars were related to him by his father, who also stated, that this was the first action in which he was engaged with the British. The next action in which his said father was engaged, was upon one of the islands near Charleston, namely at Mathews' plantation, on John's Island on 20th May 1779.

The Americans were commanded by Capt'n James Doharty who was soon after killed. Edward Barnwell the father of this deponent was 1st Lieutenant on this occasion. The detachment was betrayed by a gentleman in high estimation, & surprised at the dead of night. A severe fight ensued, when deponent's father's younger brother Robert Barnwell, who was also serving with the americans, although but sixteen years of age, received seventeen wounds, many of which this deponent hath seen —

Subsequent to this, the surviving soldiers & officers were carried to Charleston, where many were transferred to the Prison ship Pack horse, then in that harbor. Deponent's father Edward & his two uncles John & Robert Barnwell were among the officers confined there [see note below]. An exchange of prisoners being ordered previous to the evacuation of Charleston [by the British, which did not occur until 14 Dec 1782], the schooner Pack horse was ordered to New York for the exchange. a favourable opportunity occurring off the coast of North Carolina, the prisoners in the Pack horse rose upon the guard, & ran the Schooner into Halifax North Carolina from which place deponents father with thirty five others, returned through the pine barrens of that state to their homes in a very destitute condition. Deponent has understood, & believes that his father Edward returned to the public service soon after reaching home, but cannot state at this time, what rank he held afterwards, or when he rose in commission. but, during the war with Great Britain in 1812, this deponent held a Captain's commission in the staff of Gen'l John A Cuthbert, who commanded the Brigade in this section of the State, & in conversation with him in reference to the regiment in this district, & through which Gen'l. Cuthbert afterwards rose to the Brigade, he the said Gen'l Cuthbert informed this deponent, that his said father commanded the Beaufort Regiment towards the close of the revolution & held the rank by seniority of commission, which was then the law of South Carolina. And this deponent says, he believes that it was in this command that he acquired the title of Colonel, by which he was afterwards known, until the time of his death, on the fifteenth of April Eighteen hundred and eight. Deponent has always understood, & believes, that his father the said Edward Barnwell, served as before stated, from the beginning until the close of the Revolution, in the various capacities above named. and further states, that the names of his said father, & of his uncles, John & Robert Barnwell, are to be found among those who signed the request to Gen'l Greene, that he would suffer no consideration of their safety, while prisoners on board the Pack horse, to suspend his threat of retaliation for the murder of Col Hayne [see note below].

Deponent states further, that his father, was first married to Miss Mary Bower Williamson, on Eighth June seventeen hundred & eighty three, & that he is the only issue of that marriage —

Sworn to & duly certified before me this 9th } Edward Barnwell
 day October 1849 Jno. M. Baker Mags't }

State of South Carolina }
 Beaufort District }
 St Helena Parish }

Personally appeared before me Jno M Baker Esquire Will Phoenix servant in the family of late Col Rob't Barnwell & now belonging to Col Rob't. Barnwell of this Town of Beaufort, who maketh oath to the following enquiries. 1st question. What is your name, & age? In reply to 1st question this deponent saith, Will Phoenix is his name, & that he is about Eighty three years of

age.

2nd Question what was your occupation during the Revolutionary War - In reply to 2nd question Will Phoenix saith, he waited upon his old mistress the mother, & his young masters her sons, John, Edward, & Robert Barnwell.

3rd Did you know Edw'd Barnwell, when did he enter the service. What was his rank, what relation to Rob't Barnwell. In reply to 3rd question Will Phoenix saith, he lived in the house with him from childhood, & he entered the service young from school, had a commission, but cannot say exactly what was its rank, & that he was older than his Brother Robert.

4th were you present at the battle on Port Royal in 1779, between the Americans under Gen'l Moultrie, & the British under Major Gardiner? Which of the Barnwell commanded the Militia there, & what relation to Edw'd Barnwell was he? In reply to 4th question Will Phoenix saith, he was not present at that battle, but on the Plantation a few miles off, that the eldest brother John, commanded a small company of cavalry on that occasion —

5th If you say the Edward Barnwell was not Captain on that occasion, was he present, & in what capacity. In reply to 5th question Will Phoenix saith, he knows Edward Barnwell was there, and an officer, but what rank he cannot say exactly.

6th state what you know, or have heard relating to his service in any other battles, & in any other capacity or rank. In reply to 6th question Will Phoenix saith, he remembers his three young masters, John, Edward, Robert Barnwell, & their nephew William Elliott were among the troops under Col Step'n Bull, sent by the council of safety of Charleston, to assist the council of safety of Georgia, to put down some alarms, & disaffections, about Savannah and Purysburgh.*

[footnote] *History says March 1776. - Saith further, he knows Edward Barnwell was at the battle at Mathews' plantation on John's Island, because his young master Robert, was taken off the field, by his fellow servant Harry, the body servant of Edward Barnwell, & that Edw'd Barnwell was an officer there; but cannot exactly say what rank.

7th what afterwards became of Edw'd Barnwell, When did you see him again after this battle. where had he been? When he returned to Carolina, did he do duty in the Army, & in what capacity did he serve? what rank did he reach? In reply to 7th question Will Phoenix saith the three brothers & nephew, Wm Elliott, were confined in a prison ship in the harbor of Charleston, & as only a few servants were allowed, his fellow servant, Harry, waited on the Brothers, John, Edward, & Robert Barnwell, & their nephew Wm Elliott; saith Edward, was an officer in Capt Doharty's company, but cannot say what rank. Did not see any of the above Brothers, for nearly two years after this battle, & when they returned from North Carolina.

8th question What do you know of his marriage? where did it take place? what was the lady's name? Is she the same, & known as Mrs. Mary Barnwell? has she remained his widow? where does she reside? In reply to 8th question, Will Phoenix saith, he waited on his then Master Robert Barnwell, at his Brother Edward's wedding to Miss Williamson, soon after the peace, but cannot say positively the year, that they had one child, a son, & that this lady died in a few years, & then Edward Barnwell married the 2nd time Miss Mary Wigg in 1790, when he was waiting on his master Rob't. Barnwell; that this lady is now the widow of Col. Edw'd Barnwell, & lives in Beaufort, in his house, where he died, on fifteenth April 1808, and further, that his Master Rob't Barnwell married Eliza Wigg, sister to this Lady, & that his Master & mistress are both dead.

Sworn to & duly certified before me this 9th } [signed] Willim Phoenix
day October 1849 Jno. M. Baker Magst - }

To the Hon. A. P. Butler
My dear Sir

I am told that my testimony may be important in determining the rank held by Edward Barnwell of So. Carolina at the time he was imprisoned on board the Packhorse in Charleston harbor in 1781. What I know in relation to this matter is what I learned from my father [William Elliott, pension application W8690], who was the nephew of Edward Barnwell, and was imprisoned and detained as hostage in the same vessel, and was liberated at the same time.

He told me explicitly, that Edward Barnwell was a Captain, in command of a company, serving on Savannah river, while the British occupied the City of Savannah - at which time he commanded a detachment under him. This was prior to the capture of John's Island - on which

occasion Edward Barnwell also acted as Captain, though "Leacrass" was in command of the post, at the time of the surprise. I suppose he was an older Captain. These are all the facts bearing on the precise question of the rank held by Edward Barnwell at the time of his imprisonment - which I gathered from the conversations of my father, in reference to the incidents connected with his service in the militia of So. Carolina during the revolutionary war - none could know better than my father - who served with him throughout - and my conviction amounts to a certainty that he was a Captain at the least at the time of his imprisonment on board the Pack horse.

Washington 28th Feb'y. 1855

I am with great regard yours truly Wm. Elliott
Willards Hotel

NOTES:

A biography of Robert Barnwell states that he was carried from the field to his aunt's house nearby, where he recovered. He returned to action at the Siege of Charleston, and was captured when the city surrendered on 12 May 1780.

Col. Isaac Hayne was hanged in Charleston on 4 Aug 1781 after being convicted of treason for violating parole. In response, Gen. Nathanael Greene threatened to target British officers. The deposition of Edward Barnwell, Jr. refers to a letter signed by his father and other prisoners supposedly urging Greene to carry out his threat without regard to their safety. The letter to Greene, however, is apparently one written before the hanging of Hayne. It is copied in the file from a published history and is transcribed here, with other documents to provide context, with the list of prisoners' names completed from another source (<http://www.battleofcamden.org/sm810518b.htm>).

Ramsey's [sic: David Ramsay, MD] History of the Revolution in South Carolina. II Vol., appendix note 45 page 277.

Charleston, May 17 1781

Gentlemen: Several prisoners on parole having been this day taken up and sent on board ship, the motives for which are explained in the enclosed copy of a letter to them, I am directed by the Commandant [Lt. Col. Nesbit Balfour] to desire you will insert the same in your next paper, for the information of the public.

I am, gentlemen Your Obt Svt.

H. Barry, Secy & D A General

Meeks Wells & Son printers to the King's most Excellent Majesty.

Charleston 17 May 1781.

Gentlemen: Many have been the representations which the outrages committed by the American troops and their violations of all the humane principles of war have compelled me to make of such of their offences as commanded parties in this province, but more particularly have I been obliged to remonstrate against the rigorous treatment in many cases extending to death which the loyal militia, when made prisoners, most invariably experience.

These representations, gentlemen, having been grounded on the truest principles of benevolence, and which it behooves each side equally to have advanced, I was as much surprized as I was mortified to find them in all cases practically disregarded, and in many, wholly disregarded. It is therefore become my duty however irksome to myself, to try how far a more decided line of conduct will prevail, and whether the safety of avowed adherents to their cause may not induce the American troops to extend proper clemency to those whose principles arm them in defence of British Government.

Induced by these motives I have conceived it an act of expediency to seize your persons and retain them as hostages for the good usage of all the loyal militia who are, or may be made, prisoners of war, resolving to regulate, in the full extent, your treatment by the measure of theirs, and which my feelings make me hope may hereafter be most lenient. And as I have thought it necessary that those persons who some time since were sent from hence to St. Augustine, should, in this respect, be considered in the same point of view as yourselves, I shall send notice there that they be likewise held as sureties for a future propriety of conduct towards our militia prisoners. Reasons so cogent, and which have only the most humane purposes for their objects will, I doubt not, be considered by every reasonable person as a sufficient justification of this most necessary measure, even in those points where it may militate with the capitulation of Charleston, though the daily infractions of it, by the breach of paroles would

almost warrant this procedure.

Having been thus candid in stating to you the causes for this conduct, I can have no objections to our making any proper use of this letter you may judge to your advantage and will therefore, should you deem it expedient, grant what flags of truce may be necessary to carry out copies of it to any officer commanding American troops in these parts, and in the mean time the fullest directions will be given, that your present situation be rendered as eligible as the nature of the circumstances will admit.

I am, Gentlemen, Yr most Ob Svt

(signed) N. Balfour

To the Militia prisoners of war late on parole in Charleston now on board a prison ship.

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Prison Ship Torbay

Charleston Harbor 18<sup>th</sup> May 1781.

In conformity to your letter of yesterday we embrace our offer of forwarding a copy of the same, together with a roll of the prisoners on board this ship and a letter addressed to Major Gen'l. Green all which are enclosed. We could wish one of our number might be suffered to attend the flag of truce.

We are, Sir, Your Obt Svts.

Stephen Moore Lt. Col.

John Barnwell Major - in behalf of ourselves and one

hundred and thirty other prisoners.

Lt. Col. Nesbit Balfour.

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Torbay prison Ship

Off Charleston, May 19, 1781

Sir. Yesterday we transmitted to you a letter enclosing a copy of yours, with a list of one hundred and twenty nine prisoners of war confined on board this ship, which we hope is forwarded to Major Gen'l. Greene agreeable to your promise, and make no doubt but that your feelings as a gentleman will, upon this occasion, induce you to do everything in your power to liberate from an unjust and disagreeable confinement those against whom there can exist no charge of dishonor, and whose only crime, if such it can possibly be termed by men of liberal ideas, is an inflexible attachment to what they conceive to be the rights of their country, and who have scorned to deceive you by unmeaning professions.

In justice to ourselves we must say, that if the Americans have at any time so far divested themselves of that character of humanity and generosity which have ever distinguished them, we feel ourselves most sensibly mortified, but are induced from generous treatment of Colonels Lechmere [Nicholas Lechmere, captured 13 Apr 1781], Rugelly [Henry Rugeley, captured 4 Dec 1780], Fennick [probably Capt. Edward Fenwick, captured 13 Apr 1781] and Kelfall [William Kelsall, captured 13 Apr 1781] and their parties, and from a number of other instances which might be easily adduced, to believe, that the outrages which you complain of must be the effect of private resentment (subsisting between British subjects and those who, after having availed themselves of the Royal proclamation have resumed their arms in opposition to that government) and totally unsanctioned by any American Officer, and which we are well convinced they would reprobate and would punish in the most exemplary manner, could the perpetrators of such horrid acts be detected.

In a war circumstanced as the present, there will be some instances of enormities on both sides. We would not wish to particularize, but doubt not there are acts of cruelty frequently committed by the irregulars of your army, and are convinced that on our part as well as our own they are generally to be attributed to an ignorance of the rules of warfare and a want of discipline; but the idea of detaining in close custody as hostages a number of men, fairly taken in arms and entitled to the benefit of a solemn capitulation is so repugnant to the laws of war and the usages of civilized nations that we apprehend it will rather be the means of increasing its horrors, than answering those of humanity you expect.

As a most strict adherence to the terms of our paroles and a firm reliance on your honor have been the only reasons of our being in your power, at present, we trust that upon equitable proposals being made for our exchange by General Greene, no objections will be raised, but every thing done to bring the matter to a speedy issue. As you have thought proper to publish

your reasons for seizing upon our persons, we request our answer may also be inserted in the next Gazette.

We are Sir, Your mo Ob Svts.

(signed) John Barnwell John Baddeley Charles Pinkney Jr
Stephen Moore Samuel Lockhart Benjamin Guerard in behalf of the whole.
Lieut Col. Balfour Comm'y Charleston

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Prison Ship Torbay

Charleston Harbour May 18, 1781.

We have the honor of enclosing you a copy of a letter from Colo Balfour, commandant of Charleston, which was handed us immediately on our being put on board this ship. the letter, speaking for itself, needs no comment. Your wisdom will best dictate the notice it merits. We would but beg leave to observe, that should it fall to the lot of all or any of us, to be made victims, agreeably to the menaces therein contained, we have only to regret that our blood cannot be disposed of more to the advancement of the glorious cause to which we have adhered.

A separate roll of our names attends this letter. With the greatest respect, we are, Sir,  
Your mo Obt & mo humble servants,

Stephen Moore Lt. Col. N. C. Militia

John Barnwell Maj. S.C. Militia

for ourselves and 130 prisoners.

Major Gen'l Greene

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On board the prison ship Torbay.

William Axon, Samuel Ash, George Arthur, John Anthony, Ralph Atmore, John Baddely, Peter Bonnetheau, Henry Benbridge, Joseph Ball, Joseph Bee, Nathaniel Blundell, James Bricken, Francis Boyle, William Basquin, John Clark Jr., Thomas Cooke, Norwood Conyers, James Cox, John Dorfius, Joseph Dunlap, Rev'd. James Edmonds, Thomas Elliot, Joseph Elliot, John Evans, John Eberly, Joseph Glover, Francis Grott, Mitchell Gargie, William Graves, Peter Guerard, Jacob Henry, David Hamilton, Thomas Harris, William Hornby, Daniel Jacoby, Charles Kent, Samuel Lockhart, Nathaniel Lebby, Thomas Lifter, Thomas Legare, John Lesesne, Henry Lybert, John Michael, John Minott, sr., John Moncrief, Charles M'Donald, John Minott, jr., Samuel Miller, Stephen Moore, George Monck, Jonathan Morgan, Abraham Mariette, Solomon Milner, John Neufville, jr., Philip Prioleau, James Poyas, Job Palmer, Joseph Robinson, Daniel Rhody, Joseph Righton, William Snelling; John Stevenson, jr., Paul Snyder, Abraham Seavers, Ripley Singleton; Samuel Scottowe, Stephen Shrewsbury, John Sawunders, James Toussiger, Paul Taylor, Sims White, James Wilkins, Isaac White, George Welch, Benjamin Wheeler, William Wilkie, John Welch, Thomas You.

On board Schooner Pack Horse.

John Barnwell, Edward Barnwell, Robert Barnwell, William Branford, John Blake, Thomas Cochran, Joseph Cray, Robert Dewar, H. W. Desaussure, Thomas English, John Edwards Jr., John W. Edwards, William Elliot, Benjamin Guerard, Thomas Grayson, John Gibbons, Philip Gadsden, John Greaves, William H. Hervey, John B. Holmes, William Holmes, Thomas Hughes, James Heyward, George Jones, Henry Kennon, John Kean, Stephen Lee, Philip Meyer, George Mosse, William Nuefville, John Owen, Charles Pinckney Jr., Samuel Smith, William Wigg, Charles Warham, Thomas Waring Sr., Richard Waring, John Waters, David Warham, Richard Yeardon.

William Neufville in the above list was possibly a surgeon, according to an application for bounty land (BLWt2056-400-B). Catherine C. Smith, widow of Samuel Smith, applied for a pension (W22271) and stated that Smith was exchanged about June 1781. For some reason Edward Barnwell was not exchanged in Charleston, but was sent north for exchange.

In Beaufort on 12 Sep 1849 Phoebe Elliott, widow of William Elliott deposed as follows: "I remember the present Mrs. Mary Barnwell from my earliest youth, first as the daughter of Major Wm. H Wigg, and afterwards as the wife of Col. Edward Barnwell who was the Uncle and intimate friend of my Husband during their lives. I knew her intimately during her married life, and since as a widow for more than forty years - She living always in the Town of Beaufort." A document in the file refers to Major William Hazzard Wigg as an officer in the South Carolina militia, probably the William Wigg on the list from the *Packhorse*.

