

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of Walter Billingsly (Billingsley), Nat'l Archives Series M804, Roll ___,
Application #R840 f35NC

Transcribed by Nancy Poquette and Will Graves

1/28/07 rev'd 9/7/14


[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Where the meaning is not compromised by adhering to the spelling, punctuation or grammar, no change has been made. Corrections or additional notes have been inserted within brackets or footnotes. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. A bracketed question mark indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. The word 'illegible' or 'indecipherable' appearing in brackets indicates that at the time I made the transcription, I was unable to decipher the word or phrase in question. Only materials pertinent to the military service of the veteran and to contemporary events have been transcribed. Affidavits that provide additional information on these events are included and genealogical information is abstracted, while standard, 'boilerplate' affidavits and attestations related solely to the application, and later nineteenth and twentieth century research requests for information have been omitted. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading skills fail to catch all misinterpretations. Also, dates or numbers which the software treats as numerals rather than words are not corrected: for example, the software transcribes "the eighth of June one thousand eighty six" as "the 8th of June 1786." Please call material errors or omissions to my attention.]

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State of Tennessee, County of McMinn

On this 8th day of September 1832, personally appeared before the Justices of the County Court of said County, Walter Billingsly, a resident of said County and State, aged about 71 years, 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 the act of Congress, passed June 7, 1832. That he enlisted in the army of the United States in the year 1780, with a Sergeant Armstrong, he believes his name was Thomas, who said he was recruiting for Captain John Williams Company, to be attached to the 17th Virginia Regiment, but was never attached to any regiment. After his enlistment, he remained at Salisbury North Carolina, where he was enlisted, and was engaged in making cartridges &c &c and in training by a person by the name of Williams. He was marched by Sergeant Armstrong, with others, down the Yadkin and crossed at Sloan's ferry 7 miles from Salisbury, then crossed the Yadkin again above the [illegible word]¹, after receiving information that Buford [Abraham Buford] had crossed the Yadkin, and followed him, and overtook him at the Waxhaw Meeting House, where he was encamped. Sergeant Armstrong and his small party of recruits arrived about dusk at Buford's encampment, and the next morning between day break and sun rise, Buford was attacked by the British forces under Tarleton [Banastre Tarleton], and entirely defeated [Battle of Waxhaw or Buford's Defeat, May 29, 1780], and nearly all was killed.

Declarant made his escape into the woods, and on that day after sundown he fell in with a regular soldier by the name of Whitlock, a Virginian, who had also escaped from the defeat of Buford. The day after the battle in the evening, the declarant and Whitlock fell in with a militia soldier, and the three saw two old Negroes who told them that they were but 3 or 4 miles from the battle grounds, though they had been constantly going the most of 2 days. On the 3rd day they crossed the Yadkin, and [paper damage, text illegible] out went to the house of a Captain William Cole, a militia Captain who was very much in the service during the war, and was known to declarant. Cole directed declarant to go to Gates' [Horatio Gates'] army, which was then somewhere on their march near Hillsboro, & conducted declarant to a waggon [sic], laden with supplies for the army, or some part of it, and under the guard of a few militia men. Declarant remained about 2 days with this waggon, at the end of which a company of Tories under Samuel Bryant [Samuel Bryan] came upon us and made us prisoners, and took us the first day to Kimbrough's Mill on Litch [?]² River, a branch of Pedee [Pee Dee River],

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where Bryant's main force was stationed. The second day Bryant crossed Pedee at Grassy Island Ford—on the 3rd day they marched to Anson Court house where was a party of Tarleton's dragoons, who refused to take charge of the prisoners, of whom there are about 15 or 20; thence they were taken to the Gum Spring between Anson Court house and Cheraw, where they remained about a week, and was thence conducted to Cheraw Hills, were given up to the British 71st regiment, commanded by Major McCarty [Archibald McArthur]. Here an inferior British officer named Thomas Proctor was sent with us in charge to Camden—lying the first night at a Captain Johnson's—the 2nd night, in the woods, -- the third night, the same -- the 4th night on the bridge across Lynches Creek in the midst of Lord Rawdon's camp, about 13 miles from Camden; and the 5th night they were lodged in the jail of Camden. Here they were kept until about the 4th of January 1781, when the troops at Camden consisting of Colonel Hamilton's regiment, a regiment of enlisted Tories & prisoners, and the Hessian division under General Leslie [Alexander Leslie], and grenadiers of General O'Hara [Charles O'Hara]. Declarant and other prisoners amounting to 18, set off under guard of about 20 men and overtook the British army on few days before the battle of Cowpens, and was marched to Ramsour's Mill on the South branch of Catawba. Here they burned their wagons, in order to make rapid march after Morgan [Daniel Morgan] and the prisoners he had taken to Cowpens. Thence they marched to main Catawba where there was a fight with Genl Davidson [William Lee Davidson], who was killed;³ thence to Salisbury; thence to the Shallow Ford of Yadkin; thence to the 3 Moravian Towns; thence in direct course to the Dan River, passing Troublesome Ironworks; thence they retreated to Hillsboro; thence crossing Haw River at the High Rock Ford, thence in various directions until the Battle of Guilford, and at last on the 12th March, declarant made his escape, and on the 13th declarant fell in with the militia of North Carolina with whom he remained, till after the battle, after which declarant met with his brother James Billingsly, captain of a militia company and who, as he informed declarant, acted as guide to Genl Green [Nathanael Greene] just before, and on the day of the battle of Guilford [March 15, 1781]. Here declarant's brother represented his case to Genl Butler [John Butler], who sent declarant furlough till called upon, and declarant reached home in Randolph County the 22nd day of March, 1781. About the month of October declarant went to Sullivan County, and in December was employed in the station on Big Creek at Captain Coils. In November, declarant went with Sevier [John Sevier], and Tipton [Jonathan Tipton] in an expedition against the Indians, crossing the Tennessee River at an Island Ford above the mouth of Tellico [River], destroyed the towns of Eastwallen, Chickamauga, and various towns on Coosa, returned and crossed Hiwassee River at Hiwassee Old Town, thence to Tellico Plains, and at Chota had a talk with the Indians, and returned home, and declarant has never been in the ____ service. Declarant was in the service and a prisoner about 2 years and a half.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatsoever to a pension or annuity except the present, and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of agency in any state. Sworn to and described this day & year aforesaid.

S/ Walter Billingsly, X his mark

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Bradley County, Tennessee }

On this 1st day of January A. D. 1835, personally appeared before the Justices of the County Court for Bradley County, Walter Billingsly, a resident in the County of Bradley and State of Tennessee, in that part which was originally McMinn [County], where the said Walter Billingsly made his original declaration for a pension under the act of Congress of the 7th of June 1832, who, being duly sworn according to law, doth on his oath, make the following amended declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provisions made by the Act of Congress passed June the 7th, 1832: that he was

3 Davidson was killed on February 1, 1781 at the Battle of Cowan's Ford.

borned in Baltimore County, State of Maryland on the 14th day of July 1761—according to the record & information left to him by his parents, which record is severely torn and mutilated, lost or destroyed, but a copy of which was taken from it many years ago is herewith enclosed to the department; declarant's first recollections was in Guilford County, North Carolina in that part which is now Randolph [County], but declarant resided in the county aforesaid until about the first day of June, 1780, when he went to Salisbury, where he was on the 1st day of January 1780, solicited to enlist in the service of the United States by Sergeant Armstrong, as mentioned in his original declaration. Declarant never was placed under Captain Williams nor Joined the 17th Virginia regiment, & prays the department to have reference to his original declaration, and submits the facts there stated, & also stated in this declaration to the War Department, & whither, according to the rules of the same, the presumption is raised against him, of his name being upon the Virginia rolls of the 17 Regiment, as he never was attached to his intended company, nor to said regiment further states whereas that from the day of his enlistment, 1st of January, 1780, up to Buford's defeat, 1st of June 1780, was five months that he faithfully served the United States as a private soldier and asks a pension of the Department for the same. Declarant submits to the Department whether according to the pension law and the rules of the Department, he was entitled to a pension for the times he was a prisoner of War in the British lines & shows by reference to his original declaration that it was nine months making fourteen months from his enlistment, up until after the Battle of Guilford, when he was furloughed by General Butler, which furlough has long since been lost.

Declarant states that on the first day of December, 1781, he was living in Sullivan County, then North Carolina, but now Tennessee. He was ordered into the service of the United States by Colonel Sevier, and in pursuance of said order he on the 1st day of December, 1781 entered the service of the United States under Captain Coil as an Indian Spy at the station on Big Creek. Declarant states that he does not now recollect of his having any Lieut. or Ensign, as he did not enter, nor was he attached to any Regiment, but was ordered by Colonel Sevier to spy against the Indians under Captain Coil, and said company spied in small scouting parties in protection of said station & Prewitt's Station; and they ranged from Coil's Station and Prewitt's Station and about Ray's [?] Mountain, Lick Creek & Flat Creek. Declarant served as an Indian spy as aforesaid, & in protection of said Forts or stations under the command of Col Sevier & Captain Coil from the 1st of December, 1781 to the 1st of October, 1782, as a private soldier. This is the service named in Declarant's original declaration where it speaks of his being employed in December, in the station at Big Creek, which makes a term of service of ten months that he served as a private soldier in spying against the Indians, in which he had no engagement or Battle with the Indians, but Frequently re-took stolen property and give notice of approaching danger by the Indians. Declarant again, on the first day of October, 1782, volunteered and entered the service of the United States as a private soldier under the following named officers: Captain Anderson, whose given name is not now recollected from old age & consequent loss of memory, but believed to be Robert, & who afterwards was promoted to Major; George Russell succeeded Captain Anderson in command, Lieutenant John Talley, Ensign William Newcum [Newcum], David Bragg, sergeant, corporals names not now recollected from causes above stated. Col John Sevier, Major Tipton given name not now recollected from causes above stated. Rendezvoused at the mouth of Boyd's Creek on French Broad River the 3rd day of October, 1782, then marched in the campaign named in original declaration. Had no general, the force consisted of Colonel Sevier's Regiment. Declarant was honorably, but verbally discharged upon the last day of November 1782 upon the Tennessee River, above the mouth of Tellico. Declarant was out this campaign two months as a private. Declarant never received any written discharge. When he was discharged from spying at Coil's Station, declarant shows that he has no documentary evidence of his service and does not know of any person living by whom he can prove the same. Declarant prays a pension for so much of his services as was proved in the rules of the department. Declarant states & shows that he is acquainted with the following named persons residing in his neighborhood who can testify to his veracity and their belief of his service as a

soldier of the Revolution to wit: the Reverend Henry Price, Ezekiel Baty, William Cain, John H. Robertson, Willis Burk, William Jones, John W. Price, Nathaniel Smith, Alexander Westmoreland.

1st Applicant states & shows that he was born in Baltimore County State of Maryland on the 14th day of July 1761.

2. That he has no record of his age except a copy which was taken from the original which has long been lost or destroyed. Said copy is herewith exhibited with this declaration.

3. Declarant states that before he entered the service of the United States, he was living in Randolph County State of North Carolina; and that since the Revolutionary War he has lived in the states of North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee, and that he now resides in the county of Bradley & State of Tennessee.

4th. Declarant understands at the time he first entered the service of the United States, that it was by enlistment & to be joined to Captain Williamses Company of the 17 Virginia Regiment, but never was Joined to said regiment or company. That the 2nd time he entered the service it was by the order of Colonel Sevier. The third and last time that he entered the service of the United States, & ___ the campaign down the Tennessee River he volunteered.

5. Declarant was acquainted with the following named officers of the United States army: at Salisbury, General Rutherford [Griffith Rutherford], General McDowell [Charles McDowell], General Davidson, Colonel Lock [sic, Francis Locke], Captain Gilbert Fall—Was acquainted with the following named officers in Sullivan County Colonel Sevier Colonel Loony, Major Tipton, Major Anderson, Captain Russell, Major Sevier [Valentine Sevier?].

6. Never received any written discharge from the service.

7. That he is acquainted with the following named persons resident in his neighborhood who can testify to his veracity and their belief of his service as a soldier of the Revolution and to wit the Reverend Henry Price, Elijah Bates, William Carn, John H. Robertson, Willis Bunk, William Jones, John W. Price, Alexander Westmoreland, Nathaniel Smith.

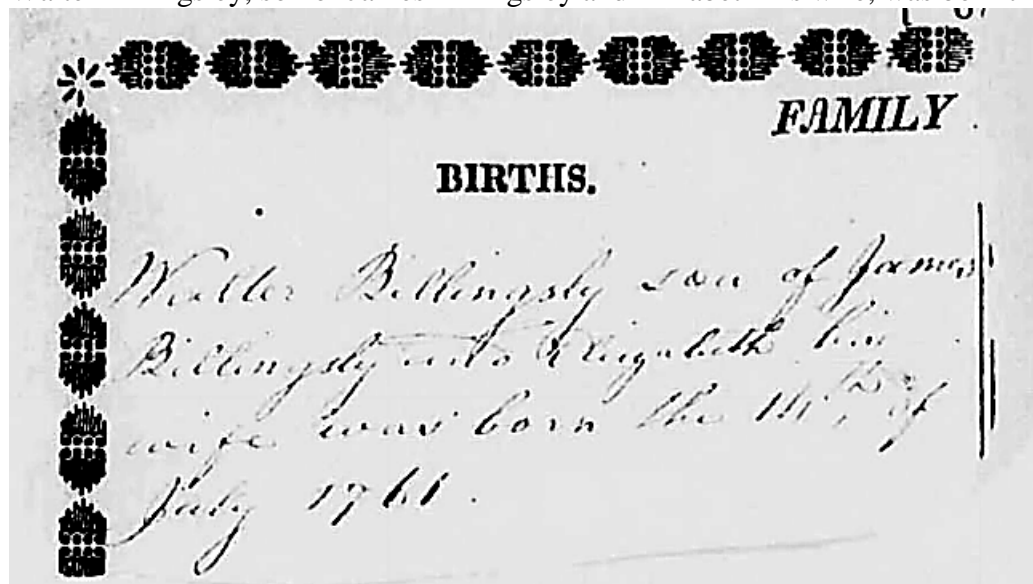
Sworn to and subscribed this day and year aforesaid.

S/ Walter Billingsly (his mark)

[Henry Price, a clergyman, and John H Robertson gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

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Walter Billingsley, son of James Billingsley and Elizabeth his wife, was born the 11th of July, 1761



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Miss C. L. Barnett
1014 Vermont Avenue, N. W.
Washington, D. C.

Rev. War Section
January 20, 1915

Madam:

In response to your undated letter received in this Bureau January 18th, requesting the record of Walter Billingsley for Mrs. N. J. Cruger, Hotel Bristol, 122 West 49th Street, New York City, year are advised that in the claim R. File No. 840 Rev. War, it appear that Walter Billingsley was the son of James and Elizabeth Billingsley and was born July 14, 1761 in Baltimore County, Maryland and while a resident of that part of Guilford County, North Carolina, which was afterwards Randolph County, in January 1780, he was enlisted by Sergeant Thomas Armstrong and remained at Salisbury, North Carolina, making cartridges and training, and at Buford's Defeat he was one of the small body of recruits under Sergeant Thomas Armstrong and made his escape into the woods; afterwards while on his way to join General Gates' army, he was surprised by a company of Tories under Samuel Bryant, taken prisoner and carried to jail at Camden where he was kept until about January 4, 1781, when he and other prisoners under guard were marched to join the British Army which they reached a few days before the battle of Cowpens. He was kept a prisoner of war in the British lines until March 12, and then escaped, and with his brother, Captain James Billingsley, succeeded in getting a furlough from General Butler and returned home March 22, 1781.

On December 1, 1781, while living in Sullivan County, then North Carolina, he entered the service as an Indian spy under Captain Coil, he was not attached to any regiment but was ordered by Colonel Sevier to protect different forts and stations until October 1, 1782, when he volunteered as a Private under Captain Anderson and Colonel John Sevier and served two months.