

[Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters](#)

Pension Application of John Barmer (Balmer) S8042  
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of North Carolina Montgomery County – Court of Pleas and quarter Sessions July Term 1833 – On the first day of July AD 1833 personally before us Arch'd. Graham – John C. Atkins and Littleton Harris justices of the peace for the County and state afs'd in open Court then in session John Barmer a resident of the said County and state aged as nearly as can be ascertained between eighty and eighty five 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 act of Congress passed June 7<sup>th</sup> 1832.

That he was born in the County of Southampton in the state of Virginia in what year or month he is unable to state as he never had any record of his age as neither himself or his father before him could either read or write. that from the best information he has on the subject from the ages of his children and other circumstances, he is now between eighty and eighty five years of age and was as well as he recollects when he entered the service of the United States about thirty years old. That the statement is true to the best of his knowledge and belief. that he entered the service of the United States as a private, the year or month, for the reason above named he is unable to state, but thinks and believes it was about two years or eighteen months before the battle at Guilford Courthouse [15 Mar 1781]. that he enlisted under Col [David] Mason at Williamsburg in the state of Virginia in the fifteenth regiment of the Virginia line [renumbered the 11<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment on 14 Sep 1778], which enlistment was for the whole term of the war and as a compensation besides his daily wages he was promised, at the end of the war, to have a certain tract of land but how much he does not now recollect [several illegible words] Williamsburg, I was put on board of a vessel called the Tartar together with fifty or sixty men under one Captain Crittendon [probably John Crittenden] who sailed with us from a place called Little York [Yorktown] on the seacoast – and about a weeks sail we landed at a place called Burk[?] Town and from there we were marched to Philadelphia. The place we landed at was at the mouth of Elk River [now Elkton MD]. When we got to Philadelphia we remained there a while in Barracks and shortly afterwards were carried to a place called Middlebrok [sic: Middlebrook NJ] which I think was not far from Philadelphia where we joined General Washingtons Army, and then we met Col Taylor [probably then Maj. Francis Taylor] who commanded the fifteenth Virginia Regiment and I was placed under his command and that of one Captain Boyer [probably Lt. Henry Bowyer, pension application W5856]. At Middle Brook the whole army, which consisted of several thousand men went into winter quarters [11 Dec 1778]. At Philadelphia I was inoculated for the small Pox as the Desease was at that time raging in the town – In the beginning of the next Spring when we left winter quarters there was a considerable number of men detached from Genl Washingtons main army for the southern service. I do not know how many men were Detached but I think there were a thousand or more and they were placed under the Command of one Col Bluford [sic: Abraham Buford, 3<sup>rd</sup> Virginia Detachment] – of the number this affiant was one Captain Boyer also went with us and he was my immediate Commander – Col Bluford marched us back to Petersburg and from there we went through north Carolina crossing the Yadkin River at the Shallow ford passing through Salisbury and Charlotte in No Carolina – from Charlotte we marched into South Carolina, passing through Camden – from thence crossing the Santee River. We marched six or seven miles in the Direction of Charleston near a place called the block House when Col Bluford Received intelligence that the British had taken Charleston [12 May 1780] which caused Bluford to retreat over the Santee River up to that section of Country in what is called the high Hills of Santee until his army was met and Defeated by the British at a place called the Hanging Rock under the Command of Rawdon and Tarleton the last of whom commanded the enemies cavalry [sic: at Waxhaws SC, 29 May, by Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton; Col. Francis, Lord Rawdon not present]. The soldiers under the command of Bluford after his Defeat received orders

to Rendesvous at Petersburg in Virginia. The affiant states that himself and six others made the best of their way to Petersburg. The Defeat of Bluford was in the fall of the year as I recollect Some of the British were digging Sweet Potatoes [see endnote]. That the engagement commenced — When we arrived at Petersburg we were joined by a number of Blufords men and we were all placed under the Command of one Col. [Richard] Campbell. We remained in Petersburg until the coldest of the weather was over, and we were marched by Campbell to join Genl. Greens [sic: Nathanael Greene's] army which was then in North Carolina. It was short time before the battle at Guilford [Guilford Courthouse NC, 15 Mar 1781] that we joined Greens army. This affiant further states that at the battle of Guilford he was commanded by one Captain Howard & Col. Campbell — When General Green was Defeated at Guilford He retreated for several miles and remained for the night [at Speedwell Iron Works on Troublesome Creek]. Cornwallis who Commanded the British Army march off toward Deep River and crossed that River at Ramsays Mills [Ramsey's Mill] to which Place Genl Green following him with his army. When Genl Green had crossed the River at the Mill instead of following Cornwallis, he marched across in the Direction of Camden — in the neighbourhood of Camden Green had a partial engagement with Gen [sic] Rawdon [Battle of Hobkirk Hill, 25 Apr 1781] just at the time his cannon which was bringing up arrived when many of his army was engaged in washing and cooking. After the engagement at Camden Greens Army marched to ninety Six which it besieged [Siege of Ninety-Six SC, 22 May - 19 Jun] and was on the point of blowing up when the British received a reinforcement and Genl. Green abandoned the place and continued on the march until He engaged the british at the Utau Springs [sic: Battle of Eutaw Springs SC, 8 Sep] at which Place Col. Campbell under whom this affiant was placed at Petersburg was killed at which engagement the british were worsted — and a good number of them killed. This affiant states that this was the last battle that he ever was engaged in and afterwards not a long time but he Does not recollect the time — This affiant together with a good many others were marched to Salisbury in North Carolina where he received his Discharge in writing by Captain Howard Having been Constantly engaged in actual service since the time he entered the service at Williamsburg in Virginia under Col. Mason — That after the war was over he never returned to South Hampton [sic: Southampton] in Virginia but came into Montgomery County where he married and has ever since lived which is more than fifty years. He states that He took up at one Christopher Chappels to which place he came in Company with one Saml. Taylor who had been in the service with him — At Chappels he left his Discharge which has been long since lost. This affiant states that he once asked Chappel if he had his Discharge and he stated he had lost it but well remembered having seen it. Taylor and Chappel are the only persons that knew any thing about this affiants services. Taylor is Dead and Chappel is so old that he has entirely lost his memory — so that he (this affiant) cannot obtain the benefit of their testimony: This affiant has understood that his name is not on the roll of the Virginia soldiers which he is not able to account for except that he never went back to claim the land which was promised [line missing at top of page] Good character as a man of truth and also testimony as to his reputation of having been a soldier of the revolution. That there are many respectable old men in his neighbourhood who have known him ever since the revolutionary war ended or not long after he came into this County who can testify as to his reputation in both of the aforesaid respects This affiant states that although at this late period of time he is not able to give a detailed and particular account of Different services, and their dates, yet he is well assured and feels no hesitation in saying & swearing that he was engaged for two years and six months at least as a reference to the Detail of his services will show — and for this service he claims a pension: This affiant is known to Mr Edmund De Berry Esqr. George Bruton, Benjamin Bell & William Chresan who can testify to his character for veracity and their believe of his services as a soldier of the revolution —

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or an annuity except the present and he Declares that his name is not on the Pension roll of the agency of any state — John hisXmark Barmer  
Questions propounded to the Declarant by the Court —  
Question first — Where and in what year were you born?

Answer – I was born in the County of South Hampton in the state of Virginia and in what year I am unable to state, as I am an unlettered man and have no knowledge of the date – but according to the best information I have on the subject I am now more than eighty years of age

Q. second Where were you living when called into service – where have you lived since the revolutionary war and where do you now live

Answer – I lived when called into the service in South Hampton County in the state of Virginia. At the breaking up of the war I settled in Montgomery County in North Carolina and never returned to my native place and I have ever since lived in Montgomery County afs'd where I still reside.

Question 3<sup>d</sup> Have you any record of your age and if so where is it?

Answer. My father was an illiterate man and never made or kept records of his childrens ages

Q. 4<sup>th</sup> 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 enlisted with one Col. Mason as I have stated in my declaration during the war and immediately went on to the north to join Genl. Washingtons Army – The conditions of my service were that at the end of the war I should be paid a tract of land besides my wages, but I never went back to Virginia to present my claim for said Land, owing to the Distance and the Difficulty attending [line missing at top of page]

Q 5<sup>th</sup> 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 services

Answer I recollect Col. Mason with whom I enlisted in South Hampton. Col Taylor who Commanded me when I went to Middlebrook near Philadelphia and also Captain Boyer who was my Captain. I always understood and still believe that I belonged to the fifteenth Virginia Regiment and that this regiment was Commanded by Col. Taylor, but in as much as I was shifted about from one service to another and was at Different times placed under so many Different officers – I may be possibly mistaken in this opinion or belief. Col Bluford afterwards took command of me and marched to the South. I was still commanded by Captain Boyer who also went. I was also after the battle at the Hanging Rock placed at Petersburg under one Col. Campbell and Captain Howard who ever afterwards Commanded me until he was killed at the battle of the Utaw Springs near the close of the war. I recollect a Col. Haws [sic: Samuel Hawes] and Col. Martin the last of whom commanded the Militia at the Battle of Guilford. I am not able to state the names or number of the regiments in the Different service that I was engaged – I Given a Detail of the general circumstances of my services as well as I could recollect them in my Declaration

Q. 6<sup>th</sup>. Did you ever Receive a Discharge from the service and if so by whom was it given and what has become of it?

Answer. I received a Discharge in writing at Salisbury in North Carolina, from Captain Howard – which I left with one Christopher Chappell who lived in this County and still lives here. After the war was over I remained at Chappels House for some time engaged at work and when I left there I neglected to bring away my discharge which afterwards was lost I afterwards called on Chappel for it and it could not be found although Chappell recollected that he had seen it and that I had left it at his house – I am not able to procure the testimony of said Chappell in as much as he has entirely lost his memory and is in able to relate any thing. This fact I can establish by others

Q. 7<sup>th</sup> State the names of persons to whom your known in your present neighbourhood and who can testify as to your character for veracity and their belief of your services as a soldier of the revolution

Answer. I am known to Edmund De Berry Esqr George Bruton James M. Lilly & William Chrishan and Benjamin Bell all of whom are my neighbours and they can establish my character for veracity and their belief of my services as a soldier of the revolution

John hisXmark Barmer

State of North Carolina Montgomery County –

Personally appeared in open Court at the Date afs'd Benjamin Bell a resident of the County and

State afs'd who being duly sworn according to law Depoeth and saith that he has been well acquainted with John Barmer the above applicant for fifty years or thereabouts, that he became acquainted with him immediately after the war and to the best of his knowledge & Belief he had on a uniform Coat, which the said Barmer represented to him to have been worn in the war of the revolution, that the said Barmer has uniformly from his first acquaintance told this Deponent that he served as above stated, that it is the general belief of all the applicants neighbours that he was a soldier of the revolution and the Deponent fully concurs in that belief; that the said Barmer has supported the character of a man of truth and that his statement is entitled to cred [sic] [signed] Benjamin Bell

State of North Carolina Montgomery County

The Amended Declaration of John Balmer in order to obtain the Benefit of the act of Congress passed June 7<sup>th</sup> 1832.

On this 18<sup>th</sup> day of January 1834 personally appeared before me Edmund F. Lilly one of the justices of the peace in & for the County af'd John Balmer a resident of said County who being duly sworn according to law Depoeth and saith, That the Declaration he has heretofore made with respect to his services as a soldier of the revolution is substantially true and that notwithstanding his name is not found on the rolls of the War Department he certainly enlisted as already stated as a regular soldier of the revolution in the County of South Hampton in the State of Virginia, as long as the war should continue and that he continued in service until the expiration of the war under the several officers whose names have been already mentioned. this Deponent saith that he may have been mistaken as to the number of the regiment to which he belonged and instead of the 15<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment he may have been attached to some other, and he begs the Department to make a strict search to see if his name Does not appear some where on the rolls as a regular soldier of Virginia, for it Does no where appear he is well assured that there must have been neglect in not recording it, and he calls heaven to witness when he asserts that he has faithfully served as heretofore stated. This Deponent further states that his name has been called in Different ways. Sometime Balmore & sometimes Barmer.

This Deponent further states that he has a vailed himself of all the testimony which it is now in his power to procure which he hopes will afford strong circumstance in aid of his claim. He herewith transmits the testimony of Mrs. Patience Harris, Parks Chappell & Mrs. Elizabeth Chappell, respectable and aged persons who prove the time he first came into Montgomery County and the circumstances under which he came and if it were not for the infirmity of old Mr. Christopher Chappel, who has from age lost his memory, he has no doubt he could prove by him, that he left his written Discharge in the possession of said Chappel. This Deponent further saith that the papers of said Chappel have been searched & that his Discharge cannot be found. This Deponent saith that he came from the battle at Eutaw Springs to Salisbury where he was Discharged and in making his way back to Virginia he took up for a while in the neighborhood of Chappel & Haris, until he could procure clothes, and remained in that neighbourhood until he married and never afterwards returned. This Deponent saith that he has made every proof that is in his power as to his services, that he can produce abundant proof more of his character & reputation if necessary and that he now submits his case to the Department, Confidently hoping that they will sustain & comfort the Declining years of a poor but faithful soldier of the revolution  
John hisXmark Barmer

[Patience Harris, 80, deposed that John Barmer came to the house of her late husband and herself on Uwharrie River and said he had just served a tour of two or three years as a regular soldier, and that he gave the appearance of having done so.]

State of North Carolina Montgomery County

On this [blank] day of December 1833 personally appeared before me William A Mark a justice of the

peace in and for said County, Parks Chappel a resident of said County about the age of sixty two years who being duly sworn according to law, touching what he knew concerning the services of John Balmer as a soldier of the revolution Depose and saith that somewhere about fifty years ago for this Deponent thinks he was then about ten or twelve years of age, John Balmer in company with one William Taylor came to the house of his father (christopher Chappel) in a very ragged and dirty condition, being almost covered with vermin and stated that they had been regular soldiers in the war of the revolution. this Deponent thinks that Balmer stated he had been a soldier almost during the whole war at least for two or three years. This deponent states that the said Balmer had every appearance of a soldier who had been in the service for a long while, that he remained with his father for a year or more, working on til he could get clothes &c. This affiant states that he has often heard the said Balmer, shortly after he came to his father's, recount the many trials and difficulties he had had in the war and especially that he was at the battle of Guilford under General Green and a great many other things that happened while he was a soldier. This deponent saith further that his father Christopher Chappell, who is now so old and infirm that he has almost entirely lost his memory, could if it were not for his want of memory, give a more satisfactory account of the said Balmers services, for he has often heard him speak of him as an old soldier and that he ought to receive a pension for his services – This affiant states that the said Balmer has always been an inoffensive man and a man of truth – and has invariably stated to this Deponent that he was a soldier of the revolution – This affiant states that Balmer came to his fathers about the breaking up of the war and that he stated he had been discharged in the South and was on his way to Virginia South Hampton County where he had enlisted and further this Deponent saith that a good number of soldiers passed about the same time from the South on their way to Virginia and that Balmer was one of them but that he took up at his fathers and remained there and in the neighbourhood until he married a few years afterwards. Sworn to and subscribed before me this day & date above written [certified 18 Jan 1834]

[signed] Parks Chappell

[Elizabeth Chappell, 85, deposed that Barmer came to her husbands home “very derty and almost without clothes and full of vermin and that she washed & boiled his clothes but was at much trouble get them free from dert & vermin and the he the Balmer had to lay on the floor for some time until he was clothed.”]

NOTE:

A size roll taken at Chesterfield Courthouse after 1 Sep 1780 has the following entry: John Barmer/ age 23/ height 5 6¼/ planter/ born and resided in Southampton County/ hair dark brown/ eyes gray/ complexion dark/ enlisted for during the war.

The British would not have been digging sweet potatoes prior to the Battle of the Waxhaws. Not only was it the wrong time of year, but Tarleton's advance was so typically fast that there would have been no time. Barmer may have been confused with the Battle of Eutaw Springs, before which the Americans encountered a foraging party of British digging potatoes.