

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

Pension Application of Jacob Burrus W340

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Tennessee

Smith County

On this 20<sup>th</sup> day of August 1832 personally appeared before me Samuel W McMurry one of the acting Justices of the peace for the county aforesaid, Jacob Burrus, a resident of the said county of Smith & State of Tennessee, aged seventy seven 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<sup>th</sup> 1832. That he enlisted in the Revolutionary army the spring of the year 1776 with Capt Frank Taylor [Francis Taylor], in Orange County State of Virginia, for two years. That soon after that time, he was marched with the company commanded by the said Frank Taylor, (William Taylor being Lieutenant) to Williamsburgh [sic: Williamsburg] in the said state of Virginia & there attached to the second Reg't of the line of that state commanded by Col Spottswood [sic: Alexander Spotswood] and was there when Independence was declared. In the latter part of the summer the troops became very sickly – and that he and some others of the sick, were furloughed home, that he himself was long sick. when able to do so, he rejoined his company – which was marched to Dumfries, where they were annocolated with the small pox. The capt (meaning Taylor) with such of the men as got well first, went on, & joined the main army under Genl Washington. deponant was left behind; as soon as he got able to march, he fell in with Capt John Marks, with his company from Albemarle, and with him went on & rejoined his own company at head quarters, (the place not recollected) this was in the spring of the year 1777. continued to do duty in the army, & to be with it, in all its movements which were many untill the Battle of Brandywine [11 Sep 1777], was in that Battle. soon after which was detailed with others & marched to mud Island fort, or Fort Mifflin, in the Delaware, a little below Philadelphia, the enemy then having possession of the latter place. To get there, they crossed the Delaware some distance above Philadelphia, went silently down on the Jersey side, to some distance below, then, in the night embarked on Boats, & went to the Fort, commanded by Col Samuel Smith. here he done duty as a Seargeant, during the whole of that long & sanguinary siege [10 Oct - 15 Nov]. Col Smith was of the Maryland line. He was then attached to the company commanded by Capt Treat [Samuel Treat of the 2<sup>nd</sup> NY Artillery] who was killed by a ball from the enemy striking a handstick standing by a gun, the stick, or part of it, striking the Capt, & killed him on the spot. He witnessed the attack made on the Fort (Red bank) on the Jersey Shore [Fort Mercer, 22 Oct 1777]. the blowing up of a British war vessel, set on fire by a hot ball from the fort [probably HMS *Merlin* or HMS *Aurora*, 23 Oct]. At length had to abandon the place with but a small portion of those brave men, who went in during the siege, was wounded twice by splinters, knocked off the timbers by the enemies balls – once badly – for a while dead to appearence. From this fort marched under our gallant commander Col Smith, & rejoined the main army at Vally forge [sic: Valley Forge] continued here untill say March 1778 when he was discharged. except while on duty at Ft Mifflin as above, continued the whole two years in the company commanded by Capt Taylor as above & in the said 2<sup>nd</sup> Reg't Va line, William Taylor, continuing to act as Lieut. Other subalterns not recollected. Thinks Col Spootswood continued to command the regt. the whole time. Tho not certain but Col Freebecker [sic: Christian Febiger] might have commanded it the latter part of the service. Has lost his discharge. Knows of no one now living within six hundred miles, by whom he could prove his service. He is not on any pension roll, nor has he ever before, applied for a pension and that he hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension, or annuity except the present. That when they abandoned Fort Mifflin, they crossed over to Red bank Fort, marched up thro Jersey, recrossed the Delaware, & went on to Vally forge.

Sworn to & subscribed before me this day & date above written      [signed] Jacob Burrus

[To Burrus from Samuel Smith, pension application W9303, U.S. Senator from Maryland:]

Dr Sir                      Washington. 25 March 1830

I had great fortune in receiving a few days past your kind and friendly letter of the 10<sup>th</sup> Instant. you were one of the gallant Soldiers who by their Bravery gave me a Niche in the forge of history, and made me known to my Country. It cannot therefore fail to give me pleasure to hear from any of them. It is curious to think that so many of them are still living. Every year I hear from some one I have presumed to be dead. Some are like you in Easy Circumstances at which I rejoice, others require my aid to obtain something from government. you may recollect that Cap Hazard of the Delaware line, lost his hearing by a Bomb bursting near his head – he is now old and poor and has applied for a Pension – It has passed the Senate.

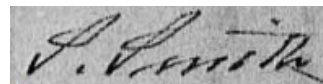
I remember perfectly, as if it had been yesterday, the two cases to which you allude, immediately after we fired the gun, an 8 pounder, and had seen that we had done execution. I said. Boys get off as quick as we can for the Rascalls will fire on the Block house and they did so – I have not the most distant recollection of ever having had a letter from you before; if I ever did, I must have answered, for I should not have left unanswered a letter from one of my brave Companion in Arms.

Fortune has been favorable to me, and I had been rich worth half a million. In the year 1819 whilst I was here, My Fortune entered into an Enormous Speculation by which the Earnings of my long life were swept from me and without my knowing it – I have however a competence. I keep up my Spirits and with them my bodily health. I am now past 77 years of age stand as Erect as when you knew me a young & gallant Officer. I walk fast and Easy, hear well as Ever I did, my voice strong as when I commanded, no Gout, or Rheumatism – Gravel or Serious Complaint of any kind, am Chairman of an important Committee, which requires as much labour, and am considered among the most active Member of the Senate. My political Career will probably terminate 3 years hence, when I shall have been 40 years in Congress, being four years more than my friend [Nathaniel] Macon, who has retired from Congress.

You wish to know how our public affairs go on. I answer as well as that of any government can do. I except none. Complaints by those who have left Office some of whom have plundered the publick and to large amounts, and others who had been negligent, are heard[?]. Better men are put in their places. Men in whom the Government can place confidence.

So far General Jackson [illegible word] well, and I have no doubt will continue to act to the satisfaction of all unprejudiced men. He is in excellent health, and indefatigable in the duties of his high Station. The late Administration lost us the trade to the British Colonies which took [illegible word] produce five millions annually. The T\_\_t is endeavouring to recover it. he is confident of success. I am sceptical. The national debt will be extinguished in 1832, at which time, duties (which are heavy taxes) will be paid off to the amount of Ten million of dollars. Silly people compare him to General Washington, which he despises – for who can compare with our immaculate Commander – you and I will answer. No one – No not One

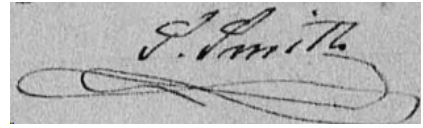
I trust you may live in Ease and plenty and Enjoy your health, which is the greatest blessing, is the sincere wish of/ your friend & Old Commander  
Mr. Jacob Burrus.



Baltimore 24 July 1832. I do hereby Certify that from the details of particular circumstances given me by Jacob Burrus in a letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> Ins[tant] from Dixon Springs, Tennessee, I am perfectly satisfied, nay certain, That he was one of the men drafted from the Army to serve under me at Fort Mifflin in 1777. that he did serve there until the Fort was Evacuated appears to me perfectly certain, for no man that had not could have given the details he has done. I think that he belonged to a Virginia Regiment. his name may probably be found on the Rolls of that State. I can say nothing of the term he served. But presume it must have been Two years at least. He thinks that he was Enlisted for that term. I suppose that he must

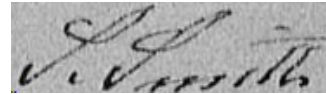
(as others were in the same Regiments which were raised in 1777) have been Enlisted for three years or during the War.

Formerly Lieut Colonel/ 4<sup>th</sup> Maryland Regiment



Sir/ Baltimore 24 July 1832.

I received your letter of the 6<sup>th</sup> Instant on yesterday and recollect perfectly the particulars to which you have referred. The Certificate I now hand you may be of service to you. The Member of Congress from your district will have the case. The letter of Secretary [of War] Cass and the instructions from which he can direct the course you will have to pursue to obtain the pension for which no man has a better claim. The Oath I took [for Smith's own pension application] was to the day I Entered the Service, the time I served, the Battles I had been in, my age – and that I had never been on the pension list. – Before I could draw my pension I had to take another Oath as to where I was born, my age, and the term of my Residence in this City. However you will obtain the proper directions thro your Member [of Congress]. It will afford you pleasure to know That your Commander who will count 80 years on the 27 of this month, Enjoys good health. Walks well. Sleeps well. and talks his full share in Congress. With Sincere wishes for your health & happiness I am Dr Sir/ your Old Commander  
Mr. Jacob Burrus



State of Tennessee  
Smith County

On this 20<sup>th</sup> day of Aug't 1832 personally appeared before me, Samuel W McMurry one of the acting Justices of the peace for the county aforesaid, Col William Martin, resident of the county & state aforesaid, aged 66 years, who being first duly sworn according to law, doth on his oath make the following declaration in favor of Jacob Burrus, who is now making application for the benefit of the provision of the act of Congress, of the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1832 granting pensions, to the surviving officers & soldiers of the war of the revolution

That the said Jacob Burrus took up his residence in the Family of his Father Genl Joseph Martin Henry County Virginia, in the summer of the year 1778. That he then spoke of his having recently returned from the army of the united states, or Washingtons Army – as it was then frequently called – that he had been in the Battle of Brandywine – and the siege of Fort Mifflin – recounting various incidents which transpired during his service, particularly at Fort Mifflin, under the command of Col Samuel Smith, corresponding with the declaration accompanying this, made by said Burrus, but then, more in detail – his recollection now having failed considerably. He continued the most of the time from then, untill sometime in the year 1780 or 1781 in the employment of his Father Genl Martin, when he married deponents sister . From then untill now, the acquaintance has been intimate, & cordial, and for more than the last thirty years, they have lived near neighbors, where they now reside. That during this long acquaintance, the subject of his revolutionary service has been the them above all others, on which he mostly delighted to dwell, often [illegible word] to it, & never without that lively sensability peculiar to the heroes of that day – always detailing the events substantially the same way. And even now, when much worn down with age, & disease (Cancer) touch that subject, his countenance dilates & his heart responds. – Washington – and liberty for ever. That deponent has heard at different times, many others, early acquaintances of said Burrus – speak of his revolutionary service. That he had been long in the army &c. all this, together with the confidence he has in the honor & integrity of him, the said Jacob Burrus – he has not a shadow of doubt on his mind of his having served as set forth in his declaration, as above. That said Burrus, owing to age, & other causes has been for a number of years past, rendered in a great measure incabable of writing and has employed him deponent to write several letters, under his diction,

to Genl Sam'l Smith of Baltimore, his old Col at Fort Mifflin. The contents of these letters, were mostly, recounting the events of that siege. To all of those letters Gen'l Smith promptly replied, always recognizing the said Burrus, as one of those who so gallantly defended that place.

Sworn to & subscribed before me this day & date above written. [signed] Wm Martin

NOTE: On 14 Oct 1833 William T. Burrus, 33, stated that Susanna Burrus was the widow of Jacob Burrus, who died on 1 Oct 1832, and that Susanna Burrus was blind and lived 12 to 15 miles from the courthouse in Smith County. On 20 Dec 1838 Susannah Burrus, 75, applied for a pension stating that she married Jacob Burrus in March 1781.