

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

Pension Application of Joseph Bass W5765

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Virginia } Ss:

County of Dinwiddie }

On this 17th day of Sept'r 1832, personally appeared in open court, before the Justices of the County Court of Dinwiddie, now sitting, Joseph Bass, a resident of the County and State aforesaid, aged 72, the 30th day of November last, 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 7th 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States under the following officers, and served as herein stated, towit:

1. That early, he thinks it was in the year 1780, he was called into the militia service from the County of Chesterfield, where he then resided, and continued to reside until long after the war, as a private in a company which had volunteered, & marched under Capt. Ezekiel Dance, first to Broadway where the troops with whom he acted were stationed for some time; – subsequently to Randolph's Mill, on Swift Creek between Petersburg and Richmond; and after occupying that position for a short time to Proctors Creek, near Osborne's town on James River, where they remained until about the time of the expiration of their three months tour of duty, when they were marched up to Manchester, & on its full completion, discharged. That during this tour, (having been appointed to it immediately on going into service) he acted as Quarter Master Sergeant, and was attached to the command of Colo. James Monroe who was subsequently Governor of Virginia, & President of the U. States.

2. That, soon after, he was called out by draft, according to the regular routine[?] of numbers [see endnote], and served in the militia company from Chesterfield commanded by Capt. James Elam who was stationed part of the three months which the company served at Chesterfield Court House – part, at Falling Creek – and part in Manchester – positions in Chesterfield County, which intervenes between Petersburg & Richmond; and as the British were in James River, & occasionally running up and down it, the militia were often moved backwards and forwards, as the enemy by his movements seemed to indicate an approach to the one or the other of those towns – and it often happened that when the militia were discharged, that within a few days it became necessary, or was supposed so to call them out again. That he once had a written memorandum of the precise dates – stations – &c of his different tours of service, but that this has long been lost or destroyed, in moving or otherwise, and after more than fifty years, & without any precise object for periodical refreshment of his memory, having not expected ever to receive any pecuniary compensation for his then services, he now finds himself entirely unable to recur to particular dates – or even to remember the different officers who were out with him, so as to distinguish between the different tours, with the exception of those whom he enumerates. That on the second tour, as on the former, the company was attached to the command of Colo. Monroe, and he again acted in the capacity of Quarter Master Sergeant. He recollects in discharge of that duty, often to have given \$100 in the paper currency of that day for a bottle of milk for the officers.

3. That soon after this he received the commission of Ensign in the Militia [see endnote], and served two other tours of three months each as such, as will presently be more particularly stated. In reply to the question he states that he retains now no recollection by whom his commission was signed – that it was like other commissions of the day, but he has not seen it in many years – never expecting to have further use for it, it was not very carefully preserved, & as he cannot now find it, presumes it to have been lost with the other papers alluded to. That the third tour he was called out as Ensign under Capt. Sam'l. Goode [Samuel Goode] from Chesterfield, with a company of Light horse, which marched first to Cabin Point [in Surry County], was stationed there and in the neighbourhood of Smithfield until the expiration

of the period for which they were called out.

4. That the forth and last tour which he served was as Ensign, under Capt. George Markam [sic: George Markham] of Chesterfield, that the company marched first to Cabin Point on James River, and thence up to Broadway where the company was at the time that the British with Phillips and Arnold came to Petersburg [Generals William Phillips and Benedict Arnold, April 1781] & burnt so much of it – on intelligence of their approach the company marched rapidly up on the north side of the Appomattox [sic: Appomattox River] toward Petersburg, & got to Baker's hill on the Chesterfield side, in sight of the town just in time to meet the Va. militia retreating from there [from the Battle of Blandford Hill, 25 Apr], with whom they proceeded on the route to Richmond, to Randolph's Mill, whence after a halt of two, or three days – they marched to Chesterfield Court House before it was burnt [27 Apr]. That while there, some scouts sent out to discover the movements of the enemy, & ascertain if they were approaching in that direction, met three British soldiers & supposing them to be the advance of a considerable force, gave the alarm, and the militia retired from the Ct. House to Falling Creek Church, & he is mortified to say the three British soldiers came & burned the Court house without resistance. About that time also Richmond was burned. From the church the troops marched to the Meadow Bridges – thence to Colo. Byrd's ferry in Charles City, on James River – thence to McKey's Mills [Mackey's or Mackie's Mill below Smithfield] where he saw Baron Steuben, who was in command in that neighbourhood – thence to Cabin Point – thence to the Brick Church in Blandford about the time that their tour of duty terminated, and, the second day after Lord Cornwallis surrendered at York [19 Oct 1781], the news of that event reached the militia at the old Church and they were discharged.

He states that he never received any written discharge that he recollects during the service, but that the companies were always verbally dismissed by the Captain, and that he has no documentary evidence whatever of his service. That every officer with whom he served he believes is dead – & that he knows of no person in his old neighbourhood and County, Chesterfield, now alive who served with him, but he has understood that Ezekiel Perkinson [pension application W5506] of that County, knows of his having been in the service. He recollects that Capt. Creed Haskins of Chesterfield commanded a company, about the same time that he was out, But that he also has long since died. That he was born in Chesterfield & resided there until the year 1807 in which he removed to this County, Dinwiddie, where he has ever since resided. That he never saw any record of his age, but from the most satisfactory tradition does not doubt it is as above stated. That it would be very difficult for him at his age & in his circumstances to ascertain & bring individuals from Chesterfield here to depose as to the traditionary belief of his services, but that he can most confidently appeal to most – perhaps all, of those who have ever known him, in either County, as to the fact of its always having been understood – reported – & believed that he rendered the services above detailed – & this of course long before any motive could have existed for the representation, had it not been true.

He the said Joseph Bass hereby relinquishes every claim whatever, to a pension, or annuity, except the present, & declares that his name, is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state whatever.

Sworn to and subscribed the day & year aforesaid. [signed] Joseph Bass

I Peter Eppes [pension application S8424] a resident of Dinwiddie County & a Captain in the Militia of Va. in the year 1781 do hereby certify that I am well acquainted with the applicant Joseph Bass & have known him a great many years – & that when I commanded a company of militia from Dinwiddie Cty. the said Bass was in service in a company from Chesterfield at various positions below Petersburg – & we joined the army of Lafayette at Richmond & marched down to Wilton on James River. That he has no personal knowledge of the performance of the other services stated by the applicant but has no doubt they were faithfully rendered as he states.

Sworn & subscribed to the day & year aforesaid [signed] Peter Eppes

State of Virginia, Dinwiddie County towit —

Personally appeared before me the undersigned, a Justice of the peace for the said County on this [20th] day of May 1833 Joseph Bass, who being duly sworn deposes that by reason of age, and the consequent loss of memory he cannot swear positively as to the precise length of his service, but that according to the best of his recollection he served not less than the periods mentioned below, & in the following grades; For six months as Quarter Master Sergeant, and for six months as Ensign, for which service he claims his pension. He states that there does not reside in his neighbourhood any clergyman who knows any thing of his services, or as far as he can learn any in the county who has had an opportunity to hear of them. He states that, for the reason aforesaid he cannot now state further than he has already done the names of any of the regular officers, or what Continental, or other Militia Regiments, were in service at the same time and with him: – nor is he able to procure the evidence of any living witness to his services. He refers to Joel Manlove & Thomas F Scott persons resident in his present neighbourhood who can testify as to his character for veracity and their belief of his services as a soldier of the revolution. Sworn to & subscribed this day above written. [signed] Joseph Bass

Dinwiddie C’y Oct’r 14th 1833.

The undersigned, though he knows that during six months of his service, he acted as Ensign, has no distinct recollection of any commission having been rec’d. by him as such – and as he finds himself entirely unable to adduce evidence of his having served in that grades, he hereby relinquishes any claim for compensation as Ensign for any portion of time, and prays to be allowed the pension to which he would be entitled as a private had his services during all the time been rendered in the ranks.

[signed] Joseph Bass

NOTES:

County militias were divided into numbered classes, with each class selected for service in turns.

According to county records abstracted in J. T. McAllister’s *Virginia Militia in the Revolutionary War*, Joseph Bass was appointed Ensign by the county court of Chesterfield on 6 Apr. 1781 in the company of Capt. Benjamin Branch. In order to be official, a commission by the Governor would have been required.

On 6 April 1844 Jenny Bass, 71, applied for a pension stating that she married Joseph Bass in Chesterfield County on 5 Dec 1790, and he died 13 March 1844. Her brother, Joel Manlove, about 57, certified the marriage. The file includes a copy of the return of Rev. Needler Robinson of Dale Parish stating that he married Joseph Bass and Jenny Manlove. A document in the file states that she died on 17 Jan 1852.