

A Guide to the Botetourt County (Va.) Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions, 1820-1833; undated

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A Collection in the Library of Virginia
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History

Processed by: M. Long

Title Statement

A Guide to the Botetourt County (Va.) Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions, 1820-1833; undated

Subtitle: Botetourt County (Va.) Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions

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Publication Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: Machine-readable finding aid derived from being created directly into EAD, created by McKenzie Long, 13 February 2026

Language Usage: Description is in English

Descriptive Summary

Language

English

Collector

Botetourt County (Va.) Circuit Court

Extent

.23 cu. ft. (1 box)

Location

Library of Virginia

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Access to original Botetourt County records is not granted without an appointment and without prior discussion with an archivist. Same day access to records is not possible. Advance notice of at least one week is required so that an archivist will have time to inspect the requested records. An archivist may determine that some materials cannot be served due to their physical state. The records were heavily water damaged and as a result are extremely fragile and can be severely moldy. Persons with mold or dust sensitivity may want to avoid research in these records. Patrons must consult with Archives Research Services prior to a visit to the Library of Virginia to view any original Botetourt County records.

Use Restrictions

There are no restrictions.

Acquisition Information

These items came to the Library of Virginia in a transfer of court papers from Botetourt County.

Processing Information

Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions, 1820-1833; undated, were removed from the Botetourt County court papers by Library of Virginia staff and processed by M. Long.

Encoded by M. Long: February 2026.

Preferred Citation

Botetourt County (Va.) Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions, 1820-1833; undated. Local government records collection, Botetourt County Court Records. The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia, 23219.

Adjunct Descriptive Data

Related Material

Additional Botetourt County Court Records can be found on microfilm at The Library of Virginia. Consult "[A Guide to Virginia County and City Records on Microfilm.](#)"

Botetourt County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. Additional Botetourt County Court Records may be found in the Lost Records Localities Digital Collection available on the Library of Virginia website. Search the [Lost Records Localities Digital Collection](#) available at Virginia Memory.

Historical Information

Context for Record Type: In 1818, Congress passed the first of three major Revolutionary War pension acts. The act granted lifetime pensions to all men who had served as regular army soldiers in the Continental Line and who could demonstrate financial need. Prior to the passage of this act, pensions had been restricted to former soldiers who were no longer able to support themselves due to injuries sustained while in service. The second act, passed by Congress in 1820, required applicants to provide more concrete evidence of this financial need in the form of a certified inventory of his property and income. They also had to include an account of all members of the applicant's family, including their health and ability to contribute to household income. In 1832, the third act extended pension benefits to include soldiers who had served in the state troops or militia. Congress also passed a related act in 1836 granting pensions to the widows and orphans of Revolutionary War veterans.

Locality History: Botetourt County was named for Norborne Berkeley, baron de Botetourt, the royal governor of Virginia from 1768 to 1770. It was formed from Augusta County in 1769, and part of Rockbridge County was added in 1785.

Lost Locality Note: Botetourt County is one of Virginia's Lost Records Localities. On 1970 December 15, a fire gutted the Botetourt County courthouse in Fincastle, Virginia. The court records were not burned but were heavily water damaged. Many of the court papers are extremely fragile today as a result of this water damage and some are not useable. Because of the near-loss of the Botetourt County records, the Virginia General Assembly passed the Virginia Public Records Act in 1975. The act mandated that deeds, wills, and other vital records be inventoried and microfilmed and copies of the film stored permanently in the Library of Virginia in Richmond for safekeeping. Counties could also choose to send court records to the Library of Virginia for storage and safekeeping as needed.

Scope and Content

Botetourt County (Va.) Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions, 1820-1833; undated, primarily record the declarations of individuals seeking to obtain Revolutionary War pensions provided by various acts of

Congress. The applicants present detailed testimony of their time of service during the Revolutionary War. Information found in the declarations include date and location applicants entered into service, names of military companies they served in, names of military commanders they served under, names of fellow soldiers they served with, length of service, their age, and their place of birth. The predominant portion of the declarations are narratives of their tours of duty during the Revolutionary War with emphasis on battles they fought. The declarations also include affidavits from witnesses who could verify information provided by applicants.

Applicants in this series reported to have served in various Virginia military units, including the 6th Virginia Regiment; 8th Virginia Regiment; 10th Virginia Regiment; Virginia State Line, Company of Artillery; Frederick County militia; Albemarle Barracks Guards; Cherokee expedition; Detachment of Light Infantry; Frontier guards; Working Corps; Winchester Barracks Guards; Wythe County Lead Mines Guards; and the Virginia State Line generally.

Applicants also reported serving in many units outside of Virginia, including the 1st Pennsylvania Regiment; Corps of Artificers; First Rifle Regiment; Continental Establishment, 5th Brigade of Waggon; Frederick Town Barracks Guards; and the Pennsylvania State Line, Continental Establishment, and Army of the Revolution generally.

Applicants also gave accounts of being present during several military engagements, including the Battle of Alamance, Battle of Brandywine, Battle of Cowpens, Battle of Dorchester, Battle of Germantown, Battle of Guilford Courthouse, Battle of Hanging Rock, Battle of Jamestown, Battle of Long Island, Battle of Lytchmoth Point, Battle of Monmouth, Battle of Paoli, Battle of Princeton, Battle of Reedy Fork of New River, Battle of Stony Point, Battle of Trenton, Battle of White Plains, and Siege of Yorktown.

Significant materials in this collection include the pension declaration of a free Black soldier, John Roe. Notable records also include the 1832 declaration of James Trenor, an Irish immigrant who joined the army in 1776. He initially served in the "Cherokee expedition." Temporarily worked as a teacher after being discharged before rejoining the army as a substitute. After returning to the army, he was appointed as a sergeant and eventually as the assistant commissary of issues for a detachment of Light Dragoons. Contains copies of correspondence that verify Trenor's military service, which includes a large amount of praise by his superiors.

Arrangement

This collection is arranged into the following series:

- **Series I: Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions, 1820-1833; undated**, arranged chronologically. Housed in a box with other Botetourt County court records.

Contents List

Series I: Declarations for Revolutionary War Pensions, 1820-1833; undated

Extent

.23 cubic feet (1 box)

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Barcode number 1188248: Miscellaneous Records, Tax and Fiscal Records, Military and Pension Records, 1779-1863