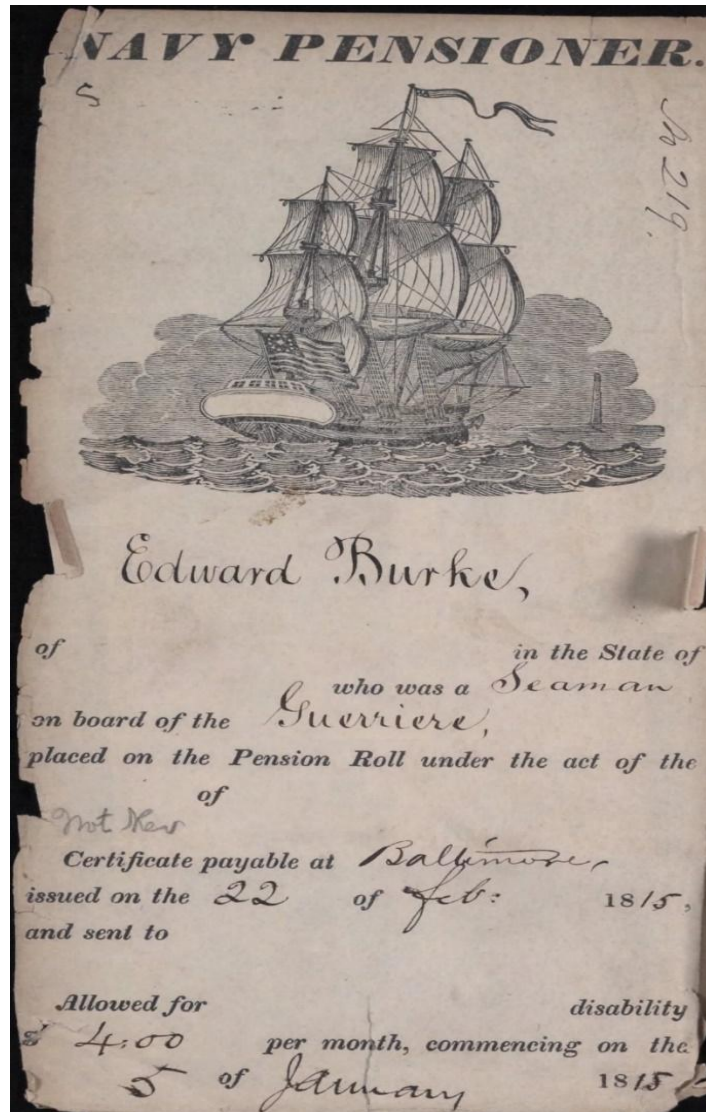


Edward Burke (1778-1815)

USN Ordinary Seaman (U.S. Frigate Guerriere)



War of 1812 Pension of African American from Fell's Point, Seaman Edward Burke, U.S. Frigate Guerriere who died from an accidental explosion of gunpowder on Hampstead Hill.

Burke a native of Fell's Point, served on board the U.S. frigate Guerriere of Philadelphia as an Ordinary Seaman whose crew of 300 sailors and 50 U.S. Marines followed Commodore John Rodgers in a forced march to aid Baltimore in her defense in 1814. They took up positions along the front line of 18-Pdr artillery redoubts and infantry entrenchments on Hampstead Hill (today Patterson Park). This rare naval pension for an African American provides the following:

“Edward Burke (black man) of the City of Baltimore in the State of Maryland lately a Seaman on board the U.S. Ship Guerriere under the command of Commodore John Rodgers was so seriously injured by an explosion of [cannon] Powder as to be deprived of the free use of one of his legs and having been disabled in the service of the UNITED STATES, whilst acting in the line of his duty, is entitled to receive Four Dollars per month....”

Burke's certificate was approved by Commodore Rodgers. He later died at the Baltimore Hospital on January 5, 1815, and likely was buried in the adjacent Potter's field (now parking lot of Johns Hopkins Hospital). He was pensioned on February 5, 1815 at the rate of \$48 per year. With his death the pension likely was forwarded to his wife, though no evidence was brought forward, despite the pension continued from 1816 to 1830.

SOURCE: FOLD3 (online Pension Record Documents)

#Naval Pensioners of the United States 1817-1851 by Lloyd de Witt Bockstruck (Genealogical Publications,).p. 29; He was pensioned 5 Jan. 1815 at the rate of \$48 per annum. 1816, 1824-1830. Federal Pension Records, War of 1812. Filed by mistake under the State of Maryland, not the U.S. Navy.