

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

Pension Application of William Pryor: S8979

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Virginia, County of Amherst Sc

On this 15th day of October 1832 personally appeared in open Court before the Justices of the County Court of Amherst now sitting William Pryor, a resident of Lexington Parish in the County of Amherst and State of Virginia aforesaid aged about 79 or 80 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 7th 1832.

Who states that he has no record of his age and if any exists he does not know it, that he was born upon Pedlar River in that part of Albemarle County now the County of Amherst, that he was born about 1752 or 1753 for he well recollects the war of 1755 or what was then called Braddocks War, that he removed to the great Kanawha River in the western part of Virginia in the autumn of 1773 and planted a crop of Corn on that River the next spring, but was driven back to Amherst by the Indians. that again he visited that River and was at Point Pleasant in the Spring of 1775 and there saw Capt Isaac Shelby late Governor Shelby of Kentucky, who had been left at that place with the wounded men after the battle at that place on the 10th October 1774; that was occasionally there and in Amherst until the early part of year 1776 when the Indians became so troublesome that he was compelled with many others to take shelter in the fort at Point Pleasant. that he then substituted himself for a man by the name of James Frazer under the command of Capt Matthew Arbuckle, who then commanded the fort at said place whose subaltern officers were Lieuts Andrew Wallace, James Thompson, and Ensigns Saml Woods and James McNutt. that he served out said Frazers time which was about 8 months, that he then enlisted under said Arbuckle in the latter part of the year 1776 for two years but whether he belonged to the State troops or continental does not know, and about that time Capt William McKee with Lieut James Gilmore, and many private Soldiers came to said place, and were there stationed under the command of said Arbuckle. that he served under that enlistment in or about two years that whilst there he was held to various services as a Soldier. he was often with others detailed and sent up the Kanawha River to The Plantations above the Point after corn. that he was often stationed on the Ohio above the fort as a guard. that he often as a spy. that whilst there in the year 1777 and in the fall of that year, that Colonels [George] Skillern and [John] Dickenson came to said fort with a number of men under their command on an expedition as they said against the Shawnee towns that I was sent up the Kanawha and met said men at the mouth of Elk River 60 miles above the fort. that amongst others who were along in that expedition were James Harrison now of the County of Rockbridge, Micajah Goodwin and many others, that when we arrived at the fort a Scout Gilmore went over the Kanawha to shoot Turkeys and was there killed by some unknown Indians, and so soon as his dead body was brought into the fort, and was seen by the men of that expedition they immediately murdered the Indian Chief Cornstalk with his son Nipseko [sic: Ellinipsico or Elinipsico] and another principal Indian who were then in the fort, and had there been held for some time by Capt Arbuckle as hostages or a guaranty for the safety of the men in the fort and the settlers. That whilst the said Skillern and Dickenson were at the fort General [Edward] Hand of the United States Army came to that place from Pittsburg [sic: Pittsburgh PA] and ordered said Officers and men to return into the settlement saying it was too late in the season to go over the Ohio and attack the Indians towns the principal of which was Chilicatha [sic: Chillicothe in Ohio]. That whilst said Hand was there he command Capts Arbuckle and McKee to shorten the pay and daily allowance of the men under their command saying that they feasted too high. that when this order was put into execution almost every man in the fort shouldered their arms and girded[?] on their knapsacks and were resolved to leave the fort and absolutely started in their march home, when a Colo [Samuel] McDowell who was there in the fort stated to Hand the impolicy of such a measure and obtained permission of said Hand to follow and speak to the men, which he did, and promised the men their former part and accustomed allowances, and the matter was made up and the men returned. that he himself took no part in this mutiny.

That in consequence of the massacre of the Shawnee Chief Cornstalk in the fall of 1777 That nation in Spring of 1778 mustered all their strength and surrounded the fort at Point Pleasant and laid siege to it for several days, that at that time they killed one man Paddy Shearman and wounded Lieut Gilmore. that finding they would not be able to take the fort, they killed up all our stock and marched to attack the forts and settlements in Greenbrier. We obtained information of this fact from the Grenadier Squaw who was said to be a sister of King Cornstalk. she had taken shelter in the fort soon after its erection and had continued with us, and when her stock was killed with ours, she obtained a leave of Capt. McKee to go out to the Indians. she went out with some spirits and soon became intoxicated and although in that state she overheard the intentions of the Indians and when she got sober and come in she informed the officers of the fort the designs of the Indians. when Capt McKee heard this he then made a proposition that if any two men would leave the fort and give information to the Inhabitants of Greenbrier of the design of the Indians to attack them that altho he could not discharge them, yet he would so extend their furloughs as would be paramount to a discharge. two men Jno. Intehminger and Jno Logan accepted the proposition and started after the Indians. they became so alarmed that they returned on the same evening and after they returned Philip Hammond and myself agreed to go, when my elder brother Jno. Pryor saying that he was more experienced in Indian Warfare and finding that Hammond preferred that my brother should go I gave way, and they were dressed in Indian style by the Grenadier Squaw, and followed the Indians and passed them at the meadow within ten or twelve miles of Donnelleys fort [near present Frankford WV] where they arrived and gave information to the Inhabitants of that place and the settlers in Greenbrier. they had been in that fort but a short time when the Indians arrived and attacked said fort, and a dreadful conflict ensued. it so happened at that time that Capt Arbuckle was in Greenbrier on a visit to his family and hearing of the coming of the Indians and hearing the firing at said fort, he with a Capt. Lewis raised a company and forced a passage into said fort and finally drove off the Indians, after many of them had been killed and wounded. it was by these efforts that Greenbrier was saved. The Indians were so discomfitted that they now abandoned their expedition and made their way homeward. That during this expedition of the Indians General Clarke [sic: George Rogers Clark] of the United States Army stopped at Point Pleasant on his way to take possession of a place then called the O Post but now Vincennes [in Dec 1778].

That during the autumn of 1778 there was a man in said fort by the name of Morgan who had been a prisoner for many years with the Indians, that he had a Squaw with him who was said to be his wife. Morgan was held in custody and Ironed by order of the officers for the purpose of taking him to his father who had offered a large reward to any one who would bring his son to him. this man finding himself but slightly guarded ran off with his wife, and was never more heard of. The officers suspecting that he would reach the Indian towns and inform them that our time had nearly expired and that we would a great many of us leave the fort in a few days, the officers then discharged myself Zedekian Shumaker and many others and we left the fort a few days before my two years had actually expired.

he further states after his return to Amherst at the close of 1778 that in the year following he was drafted in the militia from the County of Amherst and served a tour of three months stand a little below the City of Richmond, that he was commanded by Capt Samuel Higginbotham and was attached to a Regiment commanded by Colo. Christian. that he served this tour of duty with Zedekiah Shumaker, William Brown, Sam'l Allen & many others, and that further in the year 1780 he served another tour of duty of three months duration at fort Powhatan on James River below Richmond now called fort Jefferson, that he was then under the command of Capt Richard Ballinger, and he served this tour with Richard Tanskersley, Nicholas Pryor an elder brother, and many others. and that he now resides in the County of Amherst aforesaid, and has there lived ever since the Revolutionary War, and that he is known to the Rev'd Jno Davis, Abram Carter Bartlett Cash and the above named Zedekiah Shumaker who can testify their belief as to his services. that he received regular discharges for these services, which have long since been lost or mislaid. I hereby relinquish every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and I declare that my name is not on the pension of the agency of any state.

[signed] William Pryor

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.

The Court proceeded to propound the interrogatories prescribed by the War department in the following manner Viz.

1st Where and in what year were you born?

Answer- I was born in that part of Albemarle County now the County of Amherst in the year 1752 or 1753.

2^d Have you any record of your age. if so where is it?

Answer. I have none-

3rd Where were you living when called into service, where have you lived ever since the Revolutionary War, and where do you now live?

Answer. I was living on the Kenawha river in the western part of Virginia, when I enlisted under Capt. Arbuckle at Point Pleasant. I lived in Amherst when drafted in the militia, where I have lived ever since the Revolutionary War and where I now live.

4th. How were you called into service, were you drafted, did you volunteer or were you a substitute and if a substitute for whom?

Answer- In the first place I substituted in the place of a man by the name of Frazer. I then enlisted and served two years or near it. and after that was drafted in the militia and served two tours of three months each.

5th. 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 service?

Answer. I have named Capts. Arbuckle and KcKee and Lieutenants Gilmore, Thompson, Moore and others. I do not now recollect whether they were attached to the State troops or whether we belonged to the continental troops. Generals Hand and Clarke and a Col. MacDowell were at Point Pleasant whilst I was there. they I think belonged to the Regular troops. and also Colo Dickerson and Skilleren with many subaltern officers of the militia were at said fort whilst I was there. and as to the general circumstances of the service in which I was engaged, it is particularly related in the foregoing statement.

6th. 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, I think it was signed by Capt. Matthew Arbuckle, but I have long since lost it.

7th. State the names of persons to whom you are 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 by the Rev'd Jno Davis, Abram Carter, Zedekiah Shumaker, and Bartlett Cash, who can testify as to their belief of my services

NOTES:

Compare the pension application of Zedekiah Shumaker S7480.

On Pryor's pension certificate is written "Dec'd Dec 30, 1834."