

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

Pension Application of Stephen Arther (Arthur) R271

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Kentucky } SS

County of Powell }

On this 17th day of October 1853 Personally appeared in open court before the Probate court of said County now sitting, Stephen Arthur a resident of Powell County, and State of Kentucky aged ninety three (93) years who being first sworn according to law, doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of an act of Congress passed the 7th June 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States under the following officers, and served as herein stated That his first captain was Thomas Leftdridge [sic: Thomas Leftwich], and William Triggs [sic: William Trigg] was his col and George Washington was his general. His second Capt was Clark [probably Robert Clark], his given name he don't now recollect. His Left [Lieutenant] was Walters.

That he entered the service of the United States in June in the year seventeen (1780) hundred and eighty, and that he was discharged immediately after the capture of Cornwallis at Yorktown [on 19 Oct 1781] which was about the 24th or 25th day of October 1781 that he was a resident of Bedford County Virginia when he entered the service, and after remaining in the service several months in various parts of the country confined to Virginia, his regiment was detached to aid General Green [sic: Nathanael Greene] at Guilford Court House which battle [Guilford Courthouse NC, 15 Mar 1781] he was in and he thinks it was faught in the spring 1781. He states the battle came off in March 1781 and that the action commenced about the brake of day and lasted nearly all day. That General Green after a desperate conflict retreated across the [Haw] river, and rested until he [illegible word] up all of his men and then encamped at the Iron works [on Troublesome Creek] from thence he went to South Carolina Gen. [Robert] Lawson on that day commanded the the Regiment that he belonged to. Stephenson [sic: Edward Stevens] Colonels [Henry] Lee and [William] Washington was also in that battle And that Cornwallis directed his whole efforts towards Virginia from that time on until the battle at Yorktown That his regiment and company was in various parts of Virginia, in defending the settlements and people, as Cornwallis was ravaging the whole country. That for sometime previous to the siege of Yorktown [28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781], General Washington was at New York and as it was generally understood amongst the American army, and American officers a concentration of all the American forces was to be directed towards Yorktown, and for the express object of defeating the whole British army, and they believed it could be done. That he was in the siege of Yorktown and lay before that place, and in sight of the British army for 8 weeks before Cornwallis was taken. That he was drafted, and to serve during the war and first entered the service under Capt Leftdridge and Col Triggs [see note below]. That he was acquainted with General Green, General Gates, General Morgan, General Sumter, Marion, Stark &c [see note below]. He states from the effects of old age he has forgotten a good deal of his past history, and that he during his service in the old war, kept a record of all his encampments, marches, the battles, skirmishes, and the most important circumstances that happened during his service, and knowledge of the old war, but from some cause or other, either by mistake, accident, or negligence all those old papers together with his discharge has been lost —

That he was discharged by Col. Triggs and that he had his discharges for many years together with his other papers before mentioned, and that during his service he went home twice by a written permit given to him by Capt Leftdridge at one time and the other he forgets who gave it to him.

That he has no documentary evidence now in his possession, but he relies on Patrick Masterson [pension application R7012] to prove his service in part. That he became acquainted with him before and during the siege of Yorktown.

That he applied last year, or had papers prepared for a pension, but he learns they have never been authenticated and that the reason he did not apply for a pension before this time, he

always come to the conclusion that he could live without a pension and hated to be called a pensioner, but being now worn down by age and infirmity he seeks for it. That he was born 8th of March 1760 That he moved from Bedford county Virginia to Camel county [sic: Campbell County, formed from Bedford County in 1782], and from Camel county, he moved to Kentucky in the year 1794 and has remained in this state ever since that time, That he never had no record of his age except as given to him by his parents and that he kept in his memory - his parents died when he was young

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity, except the present; and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state, or, if any, only on that of the agency of the State of Virginia [signed] Stephen Arther

State of Kentucky } Sgt.
Owsley County }

Patrick Masterson States upon his oath that he is now a pensioner and Drawing twenty per anum for services rendered in the Revolutionary war that he has knone Sephen Arther who has made application for a pention in the county of Powell for many years that he first became acquainted with s'd. Arther in the County of Bedford Va. and afterwards saw him in the Siege of Yorktown which took place in Oct. 1781 that During the time the American army Lay before that place he became verry formelera with him that he was will acquainted with Capt. Lefttridge and that they Lay before that place Several weeks before Cornwallis surrendered that he was well acquainted with Gen. Green, Dekalb [sic: see note below], Col. Trigg, Layfaette [sic: Lafayette], and Left Walters — he states that at the Battle of Guilford C h. that s'd. Arther was under Thomas Yong Capt. but in this he might be mistaken that he himself Enlisted under a Recruiting officer Jonathan Langden Capt. Grooms and Mulenburgh [sic: Gen. Peter Muhlenberg] that while they were engaged in the Siege of Yorktown Arther showed to deponent sketches as he said he kept by him of all the battles, skirmishes, and the most important events of his services. that when the Siege was over they was discharge that Deponent understood that some of the Prisoners was sent to Anapolis [sic: Annapolis] and some to Petersburg [sic: Petersburg] that when they parted, he saw Arther no more untill the year 1803 in the State of Kentucky at the Ponds on Red River and he Recognized him so soon as he saw him and has known him ever since that time. that said Arther came from a noble family of V.a. that the Arthers was a talented family and all of the old ones was Solders and fighting men talented and Respectable, for Deponent knew many of them. that Stephen was a well informed man and was always considered a verry useful and praiswearthey person all his life that he frequently advised him years ago to apply for a Pension and his Repy was Generely that he could Live without it that said Arther and deponent differed as to one circumstance and that was this when Cornwallis appeared after it was under stood that the Surrender of his whole Army was to serender Arther thought he came out on his white horse (the horse is what is cauled a flee-bitten horse) to Surrender but Deponent is positive that he came out on foot and surend[ered] his sword to Gn. Lafayette and Lafayette handed to washington who took it wiped it with his white pocket hankerchief and handed it back to the British Gen. but Tarlton came out on the flaebitten horse [sic: see note below] he Dont no how Long Arther was out but Recolects that thar was a company Raised in Bedford Co. by Capt Leftrege but Dont no whether Arther entered then or not but States most Positively that he was in the Seige at york Town that he has no Interist in the clame of Arther of whatever descripsion nor is he any akind to him. 28th October 1853
Further saith not Patrick hisXmark Masterson

State of Kentucky, Owsley county; Sgt.

This day [8 Mar 1854] Patrick Masterson appeared before the undersigned a Justice of the Peace, and made oath that sometime in october 1853 he gave hs affidavit in the case of Stephen Arther of Powell county Ky. he having applied for a pension for services rendered in the Revolutionary war. He states that when he made his other statement that his attention was not called to the circumstances attending his entering the service. That Capt Leftridge raised a company in Bedford county Virginia, and that he saw the company after it had organized, and said Arther left with the company as a soldier in May or June previous to the battle of Guilferd court House

[The rest reiterates that Masterson next saw Arther at the Siege of Yorktown.]

State of Kentucky, Owsley County Sct

this 19th day of August 1854, personally appeared before the undersigned a Justice of the peace of Owsley County Patrick Masterson who being first sworn according to Law doth on his oath state that in addition to what he has already stated in regard to the services of Stephen Arther of Powel County Ky. as a Revolutionary Soldier that said Arther is now present that he dont now recollect precisely what his other statements contained but he states that he and Arther was acquainted before he entered the Company of Leftridge he states that he did enter the Company of Capt. Leftridge in June or July previous to the Battle of Guilford C. H that he does not recollect now whether he returned back after the Battle of Guilford to the same place or not these circumstances he knows by actual observation and recollection that in June previous to the Siege of York town there was a skirmish at Williamsburg [Battle of Spencer's Ordinary (Hot Water Plantation) 6 mi NW of Williamsburg, 26 Jun 1781] and in the next month July he thinks about the first there was a Battle at the Green springs [Green Springs Plantation on Jamestown Island, 6 Jul] that he Masterson was there under Col. Muhlenburg and they had made a force march to aid General [Anthony] Wayne and did not reach in time it was near this place and at this time that he again saw said Arther again in the company of Leftridge & under Col. Trigg and at that time he had a talk with him and after these skirmishes all eyes towards York Town though General Green fought the Battle of Eutaw Springs [SC] in Sept. [8th] before the siege and after he saw Arther near the Green Springs he dont recollect whether he saw him on the way to York or not but noticed [his] company frequently but while they were engaged [at] the Siege he saw him frequently & had frequent conversations with him and both was discharged about the same time and started home together he states at the time [Art]her first entered the company of Captain Thomas Leftridge Johnathan Langlen or Langdon was in that neighbourhood and County to wit Bedford recruiting for the regular service under Baron D Steuben [sic: Gen. Baron von Steuben] while the company of Leftridge was a volunteer company and intended for the service of General Green he states that he has no interest in the claim of Arther of whatsoever description has no object but truth no motive but a good one.

Patrick hisXmark Masterson

NOTE:

Capt. Thomas Leftwich and Lt. Col. William Trigg were officers of the Bedford County Militia, in which drafts were generally for tours of three months each. Only Continental soldiers enlisted for "during the war."

Arther could not have become acquainted with Generals Horatio Gates, Thomas Sumter, or Francis Marion during either the Guilford Courthouse or the Yorktown campaign. Gates was in the Carolinas only during the latter half of 1780, and Thomas Leftwich commanded a company under him at the Battle of Camden SC on 16 Aug 1780. Sumter and Marion were part of this campaign, but not in the battle. Gen. Daniel Morgan was in the Carolinas from Dec 1780 until Feb 1781, including the time of the Battle of Cowpens SC on 17 Jan 1781. He returned to active service in Virginia in Jul and Aug 1781.

Gen. Baron De Kalb arrived in the Carolinas in May 1780 and was mortally wounded at the battle of Camden.

The account of the surrender at Yorktown given by Masterson is one of many legends. In fact, Cornwallis did not surrender his sword in person, but delegated the task to his second-in-command, Gen. Charles O'Hara. Washington, declined to accept the sword from O'Hara, and had his second-in-command, Gen. Benjamin Lincoln, receive it.