

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of James Fraley R3736

f24VA

Transcribed by Will Graves

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[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Where the meaning is not compromised by adhering to the spelling, punctuation or grammar, no change has been made. Corrections or additional notes have been inserted within brackets or footnotes. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. A bracketed question mark indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. The word 'illegible' or 'indecipherable' appearing in brackets indicates that at the time I made the transcription, I was unable to decipher the word or phrase in question. Only materials pertinent to the military service of the veteran and to contemporary events have been transcribed. Affidavits that provide additional information on these events are included and genealogical information is abstracted, while standard, 'boilerplate' affidavits and attestations related solely to the application, and later nineteenth and twentieth century research requests for information have been omitted. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading skills fail to catch all misinterpretations. Also, dates or numbers which the software treats as numerals rather than words are not corrected: for example, the software transcribes "the eighth of June one thousand eighty six" as "the 8th of June 1786." Please call material errors or omissions to my attention.]

State of Kentucky, County of Floyd

On this ___ day of June 1834 personally appeared before the undersigned one of the Commonwealth's Justice of the Peace for said County, James Fraley, resident of Lawrence County, Kentucky, aged Seventy five years of age 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 7, 1832. —That he entered the service of the United States and served under the following named officers as herein stated —Col. William Camel [sic, William Campbell?], Captain Snody, for nine months as an Indian spy in the County of Washington, and the State of Virginia this was the 3rd of March, as he now recollects, 1779. His employment was to scout & spy. He served with no Continental Officers or Militia Regiments during the period of his tour, and traversed and spied during that year on the frontiers of the state bordering on the Clinch River Settlements in the County aforesaid. The spies did not go all together, by two & by fours, chiefly in twos. He marched and spied during the months of April, May, and June, not far from the fort on the Clinch River known by Moore's fort situated about a mile from the Clinch River. In this fort there was constantly about 20 families & 20 or 25 men besides the spies out. The Indians were not so troublesome in the immediate vicinity of Moore's fort, but they were more troublesome lower down on Clinch and Powell's Valley. In August the Wyandots from the north appeared in our vicinity. When out he saw Indian signs. Three persons only were killed in his neighborhood, to wit: John English's wife, Molly and two of her little boys. The Indians retreated down Sandy and they were pursued by the spies as well as the others who remained in the fort to guard it. We were unable to overtake the Indians. They had stole some horses. These are the particular circumstances that I now recollect of. The spies had particular sections allotted to them, where the war paths of the Indians passed, and some time we would not return unless Indian signs were seen for a month, but in August and September the Indians were always most troublesome in stealing, murdering, and burning. The spies below had a running fight with the Indians and they retreated. This was with the lower squads. He rec'd [received] his discharge sometime about the 10th of December, 1779 for nine months served, he thinks it was a kind of recommendation & stating his service to get his pay. He has never seen it since. The man who spied with him this year as his companion was Lazrus Damron [sic, Lazarus Dameron?].

2nd: In April, the date has escaped him, 1780 he enlisted for one year in the County of Washington and State of Virginia as an Indian spy under Colonel Camel [sic, William Campbell?], Captain Snody again, and Lieutenant Cowan to spy in the same section. The spies were be recollected to find themselves [?]. They lived on venison & bear meat. Early in June the

Indians made their appearance in his quarter of Washington County. They first stole many horses. In July, they killed one Dorten, and stole two girls, to wit, Ann and Mary Bush, and made off for Canida [sic, Canada]. They succeeded in getting down on the waters of Sandy [River] with them as far as Journey's Creek in Floyd County, about 12 miles from the court house. At that time there was not a single white person living in Floyd County. It was entirely Indian country then. Our Company came up to the Indians when they were in the act of skinning a buffalo they had just killed. Our men fired on the Indians and they retreated to the camp about 200 yards distant, and as they ran by they tomahawked Ann Bush. Mary jumped down the bank and escaped any violence. Ann Bush got over it, and afterwards married and was again tomahawked by the Indians after that time & still survived. Our Company lost in the running fight only one man, James Coyle. When the Indians retreated from the camp he followed and as he now recollects, shot only once. One Indian stopped behind a tree top, fired, & mortally wounded him. He was carried back to Clinch [River] and died at Moore's fort. The father of this applicant was the surgeon that extracted the bullet. He served with no Continental Officers or militia companies. He marched and spied in the same section of the county that he did the year previous. When the spies enlisted they enlisted under this kind of arrangement: that they could be retained for one year or discharged at 9 months. In January, at the end of 9 months, we were all discharged. The Shawnee Indians had killed several persons down the river. The lower settlements were in a bad situation in that fall as Col Camel [sic, William Campbell] had taken many of the frontier men with their rifles to Kings Mountain., some of which had to break up their forts & come further up & some to the north fork of the Holstein [River]. This he believes are chiefly the circumstances as he now remembers them that occurred during the year 1780. Col Camel [sic, William Campbell] was the Col of Washington County, but he was never in company with spies, but it was under his orders his Captain acted. Camel [sic, William Campbell] was killed¹ and Col Henry Smith succeeded him, as he now remembers. During this service Lazarus Dameron who enlisted the 2nd time when said Fraley did, again spied as his comrade. The spies were divided out in twos.

³rd The first day of March 1781 he again enlisted for nine months in Washington County, Virginia to spy that season under Col Smith, Capt Cowan. His range was changed. He and Samuel Auxier [?]² spied together that nine months on the headwaters of the Cumberland and Kentucky rivers. The Shawnee came up there the most frequent. A portion of the country he spied in is now Perry County, Kentucky & Harlan, Kentucky. It was all Virginia then. This year the Shawnees done more injury than any year since 1775 or 1776. When the Cherokee attacked the Clinch [River] forts in his neighborhood they killed Sol. Kindrick [sic, Solomon Kendrick]. They ran him into Clinch River and shot and killed him in the river. The men from the fort sallied out then got Kendrick's body in the river, and took him & buried him in Beckley's Fort [sic, Bickley's fort?]. They also killed the wife of John Cates and four of his children and set the house on fire and burnt them up in it. From August till the leaves were pretty near all fallen down Indian signs was fresh and they killed, burnt and scalped a great many persons that fall down Clinch and on Powell's river & valley. He thinks that there was another murder that year

¹ William Campbell (1745-1781) was a Virginia backcountry militia leader. He was appointed to lead the Whig forces at King's Mountain. He was also present at the Battle of Guilford County Court House and at Yorktown, where he fell ill with "camp fever" and died August 22, 1781. Boatner, *Encyclopedia*, 172-173.

² *Samuel Auxier*

committed by the Indians. One Ally's daughter, but it might have been the year after. He received his discharged for nine months service.

He then in the month of May 1782 was again engaged for a spy for nine months in the same county & state aforesaid. He was to get 5 shillings per day & spying was a good business, as the state paid her spies in good money. Col Smith was still the Col and Capt Charles Beckley [sic, Charles Bickley] was the captain of the spies. Cowan was made Major. He was transferred from Moore's Fort to Beckley's Fort, but he served a portion of his time at Blackmore's fort [Blackmore's Fort near present Fort Blackmore in Russell County, was built on the land of John Blackmore]. His range this year was from Elk Garden, down as far as Cove Creek. His comrade was Austin Bush. He spied as usual in that section of the country. The Indians came more than usually early and the circumstances of his service and the events that transpired during 1782 are about these: he spied altogether on the Clinch waters and consequently altogether in Virginia. Our settlements were attacked, and the Indians killed Thomas Osburn [sic, Osborn or Osborne?]³, and Mimy his wife, which he helped bury in the same coffin and they took two girls prisoner, to wit, Lucretia Osburn, the niece of Thomas Osburn, and Betsey Wall. In spite of all that could be done they took off the girls to Canida [Canada] and kept Lucretia Osburn four years. Betsey Wall the Indians killed by beating her on the head as he learnt. Lucretia Osburn was exchanged and brought to Detroit. She then married one Armstrong who brought her back to Virginia, and from whom he learned the fate of Betsey Wall. About the same time or a few weeks after, they killed Mary Hamlin, wife of Henry Hamlin, and one Isaac Newland. These are not half the murders, only those in his range during the revolution. He states he is the identical man that killed the celebrated plunderer and Indian Chief Bench ^{not Benj}. He states that he fought the Indian in 1777 & 1778, but he is informed as it was under no organized corps, that the same need not be set forth. He is now very infirm, in body and is unable to attend our court. He never took any care of his papers, and therefore his discharges have been lost for a great while. He assigns as a reason for submitting his declaration in Floyd County is that he would not get an person there to do his business that knew him. That last fall was a year ago he employed a man to do it for me but he said never got any forms. 2nd It's more convenient to attend at the Justices in Floyd than in Lawrence. He can establish his three tours by many living witnesses. He has no documentary evidence in his favor. He has always lived in the backwoods and a hunter he never served with any Continental Officers, nor did he ever see one to his recollection. He moved to this county many years since. He was born in North Carolina in Rowan County. He hereby relinquishes every pension or annuity except the present & declares his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state.

Sworn to and subscribed to me this 23rd day of June, 1834.

S/ James Fraley, X his mark

S/ Daniel C. Hager, Esq.

State of Kentucky Floyd County Sct.

John Marshall an aged man being called on to state what he knows of the services of James Fraley who is an applicant for a pension, states that he resided in the Western part of Virginia during the Revolution, and that he was well acquainted with Fraley during that period, and that said Fraley served as an Indians by during the year 1780, and that he said Fraley had served the year before 1779, both nine months tours. That he also served in the following year

³ The story of the massacre of the Thomas Osborne family is told by Emory L. Hamilton in a story posted at <http://www.rootsweb.com/~varussel/indian/86.html> .

1781 for nine months, and also nine months in 1782. The three last years service he knows of from the fact of seeing the services or the most of them performed by the said Fraley the other service was rendered before he came from old Virginia he states that Fraley was selected as an Indians by in consequence of his skill as a hunter and a dexterous use of the rifle, he states that for a great many years they both (Fraley & him) lived in the County & on the same water course he has been acquainted with him ever since – he states that said Fraley did kill an Indian as he was informed & he says place as stated by him in his declaration, there is no doubt, but said Fraley served the whole time stated by him, and much longer. And further this deponent sayeth not

S/ John Marshall

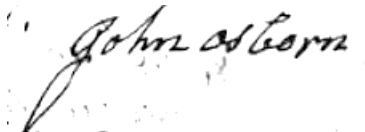


[Attested in Floyd County Kentucky June 25, 1834]

State of Kentucky Floyd County and Circuit to wit

I John Ausborne of Floyd County State of Kentucky being called on to state what he knows of the services of James Fraley of Lawrence County Kentucky – as a soldier of the Revolution – during the Revolution his father moved to Clinch in Washington County Virginia. We all had to fort from the Indians, that he became acquainted with James Fraley during the Revolution. Fraley was a man grown but he (Osburn [sic]) was not, but he well remembers Fraley's services, and he thinks that he was in the same Fort which he protected for more than three years. He himself did not serve with Fraley about that time he was too young but has a perfect, distinct recollection of the performance of all the services stated by him, and much more that he has not stated. He states he was fortified in more's Fort, and also in Thomas Ausborne's Fort who was murdered by the Indians as stated by Fraley in his declaration. He has a perfect recollection of the capture of Betsey Wall and Lucretia Ausborne, Lucretia was my own cousin, he states that said Fraley killed the Indian chief Bench. That was the Indian name as engraved on his powder horn as he was informed. When the Indian was killed he then lived in the same County where [Fraley? or the Indian?] did, & though he did not see Fraley killed the Indian yet he is well convinced of it as he could be of anything. He has seen the place as to the dates of Fraley's service, he cannot state but he was in the character of a spy before the Battle of Kings Mountain and afterwards. The fact that Fraley was engaged as a soldier and spy ever since he could recollect till the close of the revolution & afterwards for the Indians did not cease when the revolution ended. I have given this detailed statement because I was an eyewitness to many of the scenes & know from my own knowledge of his Fraley's services as stated by him & much more than he has stated as a soldier of the revolution. I have hereunto set my hand and seal & depose to the above this 22 day of August 1834.

S/ John Osborn



[Note: In a letter dated December 27, 1834 dressed to Congressman R. M. Johnson, JL Edwards, the Commissioner of Pensions explained the rejection of this claim because "it is very doubtful whether his services were of that character which would bring his case within the provisions of the act of June 7, 1832."]