

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of James Gillilan R4029

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

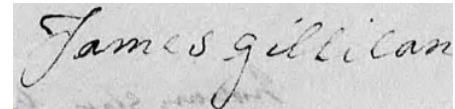
State of Virginia } S.S.

Greenbrier County }

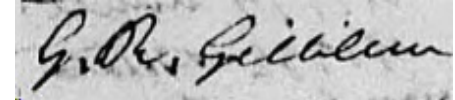
on the 17th day of December 1833 personally appeared before me George R Gillilan a Justice of the peace in and for said county and State aforesaid James Gillilan a resident of said County and State aforesaid aged 85 years who being first Duely sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provisions made by the act of Congress passed June the 7th 1832

That he was amongst the first settlers of western Virginia that he came to the county of Botatourt [sic: Botetourt, formed in 1778] now Greenbrier so early as the year 1769 and endured all the hardships of the Indian warfare that at the commencement of the revolutionary war he had acquired such a knowledge of the Country that he was compeld to remain at Renick Fort [near present Renick WV] to aid in guarding the frontier settlements and in the year 1777 he was chosen as Sergent under Cpt Hamilton [Capt. Andrew Hamilton of the Botetourt Militia] but princaibly to call out Indian Spys that during this season he was frequently called out along the Greenbir [sic: Greenbrier] River to watch the Indian paths but that the inhabitants along Greenbrier Settlements was much favoured that year but in the year 1778 so early as in May while he was stationed in Renicks fort he received inteligence that upwards of three hundred Indians was on their way to Greenbrier Settlement and as Donleys Fort [sic: Fort Donnally near present Frankford WV] on their rout he was requested to repair to the defence that and that he immediately marched to the Fortt but before he reached it the Indians had attacked it and with the timely aid of the arrivel of Col. [Samuel] Lewis and Capt Stewart from a fort where Lewisburg now stands with about 60 men the Indians was repulsed without doing much damage to the Fort he arived at the Fort soon after and thare had been three men killed Pritchett Ockeltree[?] and Bines before the action commenced and that onely one was killed in the Fort James Graham and he was killed by a ball passing through the porthole and glancing and struck him Sixteen or seventeen Indians lay ded in the yard Col. Lewis with a party of men pursued them but he found they had parted and Dispersed in every direction he then with others went out in scouting parties to watch the path fearing they would lurk about the frontier settlement and the repeated irruptions of the Indians and the frequent murders and the great devastation committed by them on the Greenbir inhabitants during the Springs and Summers of 1778 79 80 81 and 82 rendered it indispensibly necssery that a continial watch should be kept out he witnessed a party of about twenty Indians who ranged about the border Settlement frequently Directing and lurking in small parties at one time they were to be found on Mudy [sic: Muddy Creek] and Peters Creek killing those inhabitants at other times in the neighborhood of they littlelevels [sic: Little Levels near present Hillsboro WV] where fell to them prey at different periods Henry Baker McKeever Prior Smith Drinnens and famileys and in the Summer 1782 he was Elected Ensign in Capt Renicks Company [William Renick's company of Greenbrier County Militia] in which capacity he acted three months in that year altho owing to some cause his commition did not issue untill the Spring after that early in they Spring 1783 he and others was called to range along they frontier country to watch they paths oft traveled by the Indians and that when not Spying he was stationed to guard Renicks Fort in they capacity of Ensign he continued to Spy and guard they fort from they first of April untill they first of Sept. a period of five months he during all they revolutionary war witnessed they murder and bloodshed of the inhabitants of Western Virginia and in all these suffering scenes he was one of the actors He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or an annuity except the present and he declares that his name is not on they pension roll of any agency in any State only on that of the agency in they State of Virginia

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid



And I George R Gillilan a Justice of the peace do hereby declarer my opinion that the above named applicant was an Indian Spy and served as he states



- Indian spy from 1777 }
untill untill – 1783 } Total 2 years 11 Month
- Rank of Claiment
- Sergent from the spring of 1777 untill the }
summer of 1782 – total 2 years 1 month } Total Sergent & Ensign 2 y - 10 M
- Ensign from the summer of 1782 untill Sept 1783 – 9 Month }
5 Month in each year }
- 3 months of which time he acted before his commition issued
- Interrogatories answered
- 1st [Born in] Augusta County Virginia in the year 1748
 - 2^d I have my name recorded in a Bible
 - 3 I lived in Bottetourt now Greenbrier County Va where I have lived ever since and do yet live
 - 4th I volunteered
 - 5 Col Donley [sic: Andrew Donally] untill the summer of 1780 or 81 then Col Lewis
 - 6 my commition was signed by Benj Harrison and is here in my possession

The Commonwealth of VIRGINIA

To James Gillilan Eqr greeting,

KNOW you that from the special trust and confidence which is reposed in your fidelity, courage, activity, and good conduct, our GOVERNOR, with the advice of the Council of State, and on the recommendation of the worshipful court of the county of Greenbrier doth appoint you the said James Gillilan Ensign in the militia of the said county of Greenbrier. IN testimony whereof, these our letters are made patent.

WITNESS, Benjamin Harrison Esquire, our said Governor, at Richmond this 15th day of April 1783
Registered in the WAR OFFICE.

William Davies

Benj Harrison

State of Virginia } Ss

Greenbrier County }

this 18th day of December 1833 personally appeared before me George R Gillilan a Justice of the peace for s'd County John Patton [pension application R8012] age 86 years who being first duly sworn according to Law doth on his Oath state that he is and was well accuainted with James Gilliland that he knew him previoust to the Revolutionary War – and knew him dureing the revolutionary War to be spying and guarding the Fort for meny years and is yet recognized as an Old Indian Soldier

Given under my hand this day and year above written George R Gillilan J.P.

and I George R Gillilan do hereby certify that that I am well acquainted with John Patton and believe him to be 86 years of age and that he is a creditable person and that his statement is intitled to credit

and I do further certify that to my knowledge James Gilliland who has subscribed and sworn to the foregoing declaration is not able to attend court owing to age and infirmities – given under my hand this day and year aforesaid
George R. Gillilan J.P.

War Department/ Pension Office/ January 29, 1833 [sic]

Sir [David W. Sleeth Esq'r, pension application S6111]: The declaration of James Gillilan has been examined and is herewith returned.

The applicant must distinctly set forth the number of tours and their duration which he performed; the Officers under whom he served in each tour, and by what authority he was called out His services under his Commission of Ensign will be also distinctly stated.

Simply holding a Commission in the militia, or having performed from time to time irregular service will not entitle him to a pension – but he must shew that he was legally called out and bound to serve for a given period, and state the nature of the service.

As nothing is said upon his commission to shew that he was to take rank anterior to its date – no allowance can be made for services under it previous to that time.

I am Respectfully/ Your Obt. Servant./ J. L. Edwards [Commissioner of Pensions]

State of Virginia } SS
Greenbrier County }

On this 12th day of February 1834 personally appeared before me George R Gillilan a Justice of the peace in and for said county James Gillilan of said county aged 85 years.

and after being first duly sworn according to Law doth on his oath state – in addition to the foregoing Declaration which this is an appendix

That he entered the servis as an Indian spy in the county of Botetourt now Greenbrier in Western Virginia about the first of May 1777 under the command of Capt Hamilton

That the nature of his servises, their duration and by what authority he was called out was as followeth

That owing to the depredations committed by the Indians on the Frontier Inhabitants of Western Virginia dureing the Revolutionary War Government ordered or permitted a regular embodied Corps to be stationed in garrisons along the new settlements for their defence against the Indians – that the garrisons was also was furnished with Amunition from government

That he volunteered under Capt Hamilton about the first of May 1777 to serve untill the firs of October which time was usual for the Indians to leave the countary

That he received the appointment of Orderly sergent when he first entered the service. That he was stationed in Renick's Garrison at the forks of Spring Creek a branch of Greenbrier River then in Botetourt County now Greenbrier

That he regularly enterd the servis as an Indian spy and served from the first of May untill the first of October dureing the revolutionary war – that is to say five months in each year – 1777 - 78 - 79 - 80 - 81 82 & 83

The nature of his servises and the particular events is breafly detailed in the accompanying (former) declaration

The place where the officers under whom he served and his grade is as followeth

That he rendered all his servises in Renicks garrison or in spying the countary up and down the Greenbrier River

That he acted in the capacity of orderly sargent from the commencement of his servis untill about the first of June 1782 – under the command of Capt. Hamilton whose company was divided a part stationed in Mcclanahans garrison on Calvesons Creek [sic: McClanahan's garrison on Culverson Creek] a distance of five or six miles from Renicks Garrison where him self and a ballance of the company was stationed

That in this capacity he was engaged in keeping regular rolls occationally detailing certain men to go on spying parties &c

that in the spring or summer of 1782 there was a call for a certain number of men to be Drafted

out of the several compaines then in garrison along the Greenbrier and New Rivers to go a six months tower against the Indians down the Big Kannahawa [sic: Kanawha River] or to the state of Kentucky – when Capt. Hamilton was promoted to mager and William Renick appointed Captain to succede him and himself chosen Ensign under Capt Renicks – in which capasity while in garrison that summer he took rank – of which he has no docamentory evidence therefore do not now claim the rank

That he took rank as ensign soon as he went to garrison in the spring of 1783 which was the first of May and served in that capasity unill the first of October

That he served from the first of May untill the first of October either in garrison (or on spying parties) with embodied corps five month in each year above named – dureing which time he followed no civil persuit

That he can further support his declaration by the evidence of Joseph McClintick [R6623] and Henry Hederick [sic: Henry Hedrick, R4841] both of this county – who served with him

sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid before me [signed] James gillilan

George R. Gillilen J. P.

State of Virginia } SS

Greenbrier County }

On this 12th day of February 1834 personally appeared before me George R Gilliland a Justice of the Peace in and for said County Joseph McClintick and after being duly sworn according to Law –

doth on his Oath state That he was well acquainted with Captain James Gillilan who has subscribed and sworn to the foreging declaration – that he knew him anterier to the Revolutionary War and that he well recollect that he was stationed in Renick’s Garrison every summer dureing the war

That he recollects of him acting as sargent having the care of the Amunition &c intrusted to him in the absence of the Captain – that he recollects of him at one time prepareing the roll when a certain number was to be drafed to go against the Indians that he drew under him

That he has ever since the Revolutionary War lived a neighbour to him

That he was ever considerd as a brave Indian Warriar and is yet frequently spoken of – in the neighbourhood – as having been such

Given under my hand the days and year aforesaid George R Gillilen J.P.

And I George R Gillilen a Justice of the peace do hereby certify that I am well acquainted with Joseph McClintic and believe him to be 82 years of age and that he is a credible person and his statement is entitled to credt George R Gillilen J.P.

Lewisburg Va – 14th February 1834

Sir [J. L. Edwards] The declaration of Capt. James Gillilan is herewith returned with an adition anex in which you will see that he served in Garrison with an embodied corps

That he served and ranked as he states will not be doubted by any who knows him his credibility for varasity is surpassed by but few

he is frequently spoken of in the neighbourhood where he resides as having been a very active and brave Indian warier And am Respectfully Yours &c/ David W Sleeth

Lewisburg Va 14th February 1834

Sir [James L. Edwards, Pension Commissioner] The declaration of Joseph Mcmillan [sic: Joseph McMillan, pension application S18116] is herewith returned with out an alteration – the six weeks in his declaration and refered to in yours of the 29th ulto you will perceive is only explaining where and how he was employed in the first three months tower

The two towers of three months each is all that he claimes which claim you state to be correct

The declaration of David Williams [R11572] is returned with an appendix attached – in which they have endeavored to bring their claims within the rules of War Dept. if they have not I shall consider

that it is for the want of knowlede on my part not being fully able to represent their case as they merit – I am fully persuaded if any of the old Indian soldiers or spies in the Government is intitled to a pension it is them – they are all men of respectability and no doubt have served as they have stated in the most perilous kind of Warefair

for candure and varasity on my part if a statement from an individual would give wait to their claims – for Information on that subject I would refer you to the Honorable John J Allen a representative in Congress who has long been acquainted with me
Yours Respectfully – David W Sleeth

[The following report is by US District Attorney Washington G. Singleton, who investigated many pension applicants in present West Virginia. Singleton prosecuted George R. Gillilan and David W. Sleeth for fraudulent pension applications, but both were acquitted. Singleton wrote “Not Entitled” in his report regarding James Gillilan, having previously concluded that such service against Indians on the frontier was not properly authorized, even though it was under commissioned militia officers. For details see my appendix in Sleeth’s pension application S6111.]

James Gillelan Applicant

I the undersigned James Gillelan, being called on by W. G. Singleton for a statement of my services in the war of the revolution & age give the following to wit. I shall be 86 years old the 16th of March next – was born in augusty county Virginia and lived where I now live during the war of the Revolution – the land which I now own and live on, I acquired by “settlement right” – from the year 1776 to 1783 my self and family during the summer season, were forted at Renicks fort, two miles from my house, in the winter season we left the fort & returned to our Cabbin – all the people in my settlement lived in Renicks Fort for the time above mentioned – in the summer season, kept up a garrison – & worked our little crops as well as we could – would all turn out in a body and work each others places by turns – whilst some were working others would be watching and guarding – to give alarm of the approach of Indians – I was Sergeant of the Garrison, Hamilton was Captain for a while and after him Renick was captain – whenever an occasion required I went out from the Fort in pursuit of Indians – but dont recollect of being out in this way but once, & then only for a few days – this was when the attack was made on Donley’s Fort some ten miles distant from the Fort at which I lived – I think I was in this service four days – there was no attack made on the Fort in which I lived – in corn making season more or less of us were generally engaged in making corn potatoes &c – “after our corn was laid by” we remaind in the Fort “until corn gathering time” then we would turn out all together – and get our corn in – I was employed all through the war in the manner above stated – I acted as ensign some short time before the the war closed – but was not commissioned until after it did close – Jany 24, 1835
James Gillilan

Witness Wm. R. Woods

A Copy. W. G Singleton

Note – the Declaration in this case, was written by Sleeth & Gillelan, the latter the son of the applicant. I thought it prudent therefore, to ask him no questions touching the manner &c in which his declaration was procured.
W. G Singleton