

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of James McMeans (McMeins) R6793

f21VA and

Transcribed by Will Graves

5/10/13

[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. 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 fails 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 errors or omissions to my attention.]

State of Missouri County of Jefferson: SS

On this 24th day of March in the year 1835 personally appeared James McMeans a resident of the County and State aforesaid aged about sixty-nine years, who being first duly sworn according to law, doth on his oath make the following declaration – That in the year 1780 he joined the Troops of General George Rogers Clark at Louisville in the now State of Kentucky in Captain Pickett's Company and went from thence to the Iron Banks and assisted in building a Fort and remained there about six months, went from thence to New Orleans, and from thence to the Island of Cuba, then enlisted on board of the *Count De Grasse* ship¹ in the service of the United States commanded by Captain Griffin [John Gifford]; and after cruising about five weeks in the Gulf of Mexico and about the West in these Islands, said ship was surrounded by an English fleet and was driven on shore and blown up by order of the Captain somewhere on the coast of Cuba. That affiant then went to Havana and entered on board of a ship bound to Calais in France & was captured by the English and carried prisoner to New York and was kept a prisoner until peace was declared. This affiant states that he only received \$8 bounty at the time he entered on board the *Count De Grasse* ship which is all he ever received from the United States. That he is now 69 years of age and infirm and stands in need of the assistance of his country for support. Affiant further states that during the time of his service for his country he had one of his arms broken and a wrist put out of place which has made his arm crooked, and has prevented his laboring as much as he otherwise could have done. The affiant prays that he may receive assistance from his Country if agreeable to the provisions of the acts of Congress.

State of Missouri County of Jefferson: Sct.

This day personally appeared before me John Speed a Justice of the peace for the County aforesaid James McMeans and makes oath to the truth of the facts as set forth in the foregoing declaration and statement. This 24th day of March 1835

S/ John Speed, JP

State of Missouri County of St. Louis: SS

On this Sixth day of November in the year while Lord 1835 personally appeared in the County Court for the County and State aforesaid, at the City of St. Louis, before the Judges of the said Court, James McMeans, a resident of the County of Jefferson, in the State of St. Louis aforesaid, aged seventy 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 provisions made by the act of Congress passed June 7th 1832. That he enlisted the service of the United States, as a Volunteer, sometime in or about the years 1779 or '80, or '81 or '2, but by reason of old age, and the consequent loss of memory, he cannot swear positively as to the precise year. That he

entered as such private and volunteer into the Company commanded by Captain James Piggott, in which said Company formed a part of the Regiment under the command of Colonel George Rogers Clark, in the Virginia line. This affiant entered into the said service at the Falls of the Ohio under the said Captain Piggott, and served therein from time to time and under various officers for between two and three years, sometimes in the capacity of such volunteer, at others, acting as an Indian Spy, and again in the militia service.

That according to the best of his recollection, he served ten months under the said Captain Piggott.

He was also six months under the command of Major J. Harlin, who was slain in the "Battle of the Blue Licks" [August 19, 1782]. He does not remember the names of the other officers under whom he served, or the length of time.

He was also in the Battle under the command of General Wayne, when he defeated the Indians on the Western frontier, under the command of Captain Henry Lindsey two months and eight days. While under the command of Captain Piggott, at the Iron Banks on the Mississippi River, the Fort was attacked by a party of Indians, who were headed by a British officer by the name of Colbert: This affiant was in many other skirmishes, and received a wound in his right arm, which has ever since considerably disabled him.

Since the period referred to, he has resided in the States of Illinois and Missouri, and for the last twenty years has resided in the County of Jefferson, in this state, about twenty-six miles from the City of St. Louis. This affiant has been introduced to apply and appear in this Court, because it is much nearer his place of residence, has friends residing here who know him and of whose services he could avail himself in this matter, having none who are sufficiently confident in the vicinity where he resides, who could be equally serviceable to him.

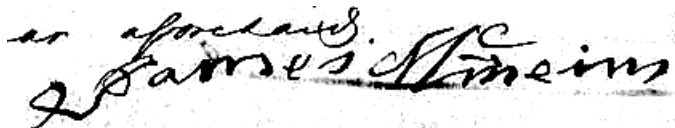
This affiant knows of no other person now living and within his reach by whom he could establish the above facts, and is therefore without any other evidence than such as he has already furnished. At the time he entered into the said service, he resided in Kentucky on the waters of the Salt River, at Floyd's Fork and during the whole of the said time, he was so engaged in service as aforesaid, he was not employed in any civil pursuit.

And this affiant further states that he is informed and believes, that the said Company of volunteers under the command of the said Captain Piggott was not mentioned in the regular returns of the Virginia line, and therefore is incapable of referring to any documentary evidence to confirm what he has stated in relation thereto.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or an annuity, except the present, and he declares that his name is not on the Pension Roll of any Agency of any State. Sworn to and subscribed in open Court the day and year aforesaid.

S/ Henry Chauteau, Clerk

S/ James McMeins

as attested.


[John Boly and Margret Carter gave a standard supporting affidavit.]

ⁱ Ken Kellow's wonderful site on the Naval aspects of the Revolution has the following account of the *Count De Grasse*

Count de Grasse

Commander John Gifford

Armed Ship
Pennsylvania Privateer
Ship

22 December 1781-6 August 1782

Commissioned/First Date: 22 December 1781

Out of Service/Cause: 6 August 1782/captured by HMS *Jupiter*

Owners: Blair McClenachan and Stewart, Colton & Co., all of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Tonnage:

Battery:

Date Reported: 22 December 1781

<u>Number/Caliber</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Broadside</u>
10/		

Total: 10 cannon/

Broadside: 5 cannon/

Swivels:

Date Reported: [April] 1782

<u>Number/Caliber</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Broadside</u>
16/		

Total: 16 cannon/

Broadside: 8 cannon/

Swivels:

Crew:

22 December 1781: 32
[total]

Description:

Officers:

(1) First Mate Joseph Bennet, 22 December 1781-

Cruises:

(1) Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Havana, Cuba, [January] 1782-

(2) Havana, Cuba to sea, 3 July 1782-6 August 1782, with Pennsylvania Privateer Brig *Schuykill*

Prizes:

Actions:

Comments:

Pennsylvania Privateer Ship *Count de Grasse* was commissioned on 22 December 1781 under Commander John Gifford of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Joseph Bennet of Philadelphia served aboard as First Mate. She was reported as being armed with ten

guns and as having a crew of thirty men. Her \$20000 bond was executed by Gifford and by Alexander Stewart of Philadelphia.¹

Count de Grasse sailed for Havana, Cuba about January 1782. At Havana an embargo was placed on the sailing of American vessels. Luke Matthewman, a former Lieutenant in the Continental Navy, was at Havana. He says that he “there found that an embargo was laid on all American vessels, in consequence of advice from Spain that America was making separate peace. The Governor concluded the embargo should be taken off, provided two of the American vessels, mounting 16 guns each, were fitted out to cruize the coast of Cuba, which was complied with, and myself ordered the command of the *Schuykill*, of 16 six pounders, and 100 men, mostly Spaniards.”² *Schuykill* was the Pennsylvania Privateer Brig *Schuykill*; the other vessel “selected” was the *Count de Grasse*.

Both privateers sailed on their cruise on 3 July 1782. On 20 July they were off the Isle of Pines, south of Cuba proper, where they spoke with the brig *Swan* (Goodhue). Goodhue reported all was well but the two had captured nothing.³

On 6 August the two Americans encountered a British fleet and were captured by HMS *Jupiter* (Captain Thomas Pasley).⁴ Matthewman recounts the incident: “After cruising about a month without success, fell in with the British fleet of 27 sail of the line, and in the night was taken and brought into New York . . .”⁵ *Schuykill* was sent in to New York, New York, where she was tried and condemned.⁶ The *Count de Grasse* was also probably sent to New York and tried there.⁷

¹ NRAR, 260

² From the “Narrative of Luke Matthewman,” in McManemin, *Captains of the State Navies*, 261

³ *The Pennsylvania Gazette* [Philadelphia], Wednesday, September 4, 1782, datelined Boston, August 19, 1782

⁴ Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail 1714-1792*, 159

Winfield names the ship as *La Comte de Grasse*, presumably thinking she was a French vessel.

⁵ From the “Narrative of Luke Matthewman,” in McManemin, *Captains of the State Navies*, 261

⁶ HCA 32/450/11/1-12

⁷ HCA 32/299/15/1 contains the records of the trial of a *Count de Grasse*, with no name given for the master. This is likely the same vessel as the privateer.



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Posted 29 July 2012

<http://www.awiatsea.com/Privateers/C/Count%20de%20Grasse%20Pennsylvania%20Ship%20%5BGifford%5D.html>