

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of William S. Melson R7112

f19PA/SC

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 North Carolina, County of Yancey

On the fifth 5th day of October AD One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirty Six personally appeared in open court before the Justices of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions held for the county above mentioned William S. Melson (sometimes passes by the name of William F. Melson) aged Eighty two 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 the 7th 1832. States he entered the Service of the United States as a privateer about the year of 1776 in the City of Philadelphia, Penn sailed from that city in a ship called *The Three Brothers*¹ under the command of Capt. Johanna Watson and sailed in her about twelve months. Was in the battle near Cape Charles in which Capt. Watson was killed and himself taken prisoner. Was taken to Philadelphia and exchanged. In that battle [he] received three wounds one in each leg and one [in] the arm—reentered the Service at Philadelphia under the command of Capt. William Smiley and sailed from that city in a vessel called *The Rainbow*: served on that vessel Eighteen Months—was again taken prisoner by the British and taken to Charleston and exchanged; then joined the regular Army of the United States under the command of Col. William Washington and Capt. Will Cox [William Cox]--was in the Battles of Eutaw Springs [September 8, 1781], Guilford [March 15, 1781] and Brandywine [September 11, 1777]; received a wound in the battle of Guilford in the thigh. That time of service not recollected supposed to be over six months was hauled from Brandywine to Philadelphia in a Baggage wagon—there received a regular discharge which he states is lost.

Question 1 - Where and in what year were you born?

Answer State of Virginia in Accomack County. In the year 1754.

Q 2: Have you any record of your age and if so where is it?

Ans: I have none.

3 Question: Where were you living when called into service, where have you lived since the revolutionary war, and where do you now live?

Ans: In Philadelphia (Penn) have lived in South Carolina Tennessee and now in North Carolina Yancey County

Q 4: How were you called into Service; were you drafted, did you volunteer or were you a substitute and if a substitute for whom?

Ans: As a volunteer.

¹ <http://www.awiatsea.com/Index.html>

Q 5: 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 Capt. Johannas Watson, Col. William Washington and Capt. Will Cox and Capt. Smiley part of the time as a privateer part in the Regular Service. The exact length of time not recollected but not less in all than three years.

Q: - Did you ever receive a discharge from the Service, if so by whom was it given and what has become of it

Answer Received a discharge of Capt. William Smiley which I have lost

Question [sic]

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and he declares that his name is not on the pension roll of any Agency in any State.

Sworn to and Subscribed the day and year aforesaid. Sworn to and subscribed in open court.

S/ William S. Melson, 0 his mark

Test.

S/ J. W. Garland, Clk

We the undersigned have been acquainted with the applicant having lived in his vicinity believe him to be of the age he states and performed the services as stated in his declaration having never heard it reported to the contrary. And we concur in that opinion. Sworn to & Subscribed.

S/ David Honeycutt

S/ Isaac Whitson, X his mark

S/ Jacob L. Straley

I, Jacob L. Straley, A clergyman for said county do hereby certify that I have been acquainted with Isaac Whitson.

Declaration

In order to obtain the benefit of the provision of the Act of Congress passed June the 7th A.D. 1832.

State of North Carolina, Yancey County

On this 9th day of April 1839 personally appeared in open court before the Justices of the Peace of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions for the County of Yancey now sitting William Melson a resident of said county aged about ninety 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 of the Act of Congress passed June the 7th A.D. 1832. That he was born in Accomack County in Virginia in the year of 1749. But that he has not record of his age. And, that he was living in Philadelphia when he first entered the service the three first tours; and that when he was enrolled into the land Service in the Army he was in Charleston South Carolina—and that since the revolutionary war he has lived in Tennessee, South Carolina and North Carolina in the neighborhood where he now lives in Yancey county. His first tour he enrolled himself under Captain Watson of *The Three Brothers* and went to Sea. His second tour was under Captain William Smilie of the *Flying Jib*. The third tour was under the same captain William Smilie of *The Rainbow* - In all three of these tours he served as a common sailor. His last tour he was

enrolled under Captain Wilcox of the Army in South Carolina at Charleston soon after he landed there in this tour he served as a private until the close of the war. When he got to the main army Colonel Harrison and Colonel Baily was among his commanding officers. He recollects the names of Capt. Ashby and Captain Rily, and that General Washington was head commander when he was in the Battle of Brandywine.

--And says soon after he entered the service under Captain Watson they sailed from Philadelphia and put to Sea. When they fell in with the enemy and had an engagement in where he received a wound by a boarding pike and that Capt. Watson and his son was both killed and their vessel captured and the crew made prisoners. He was sometime after exchanged and sent to New York—from this [place] he return[ed] to Philadelphia again. Where he soon after entered on board the *Flying Jib* under Captain William Smilie and put to Sea where after cruising some time they had an engagement with the enemy and their vessel was captured and the crew made prisoners, where he was kept for some length of time, but at last they were exchanged and sent to Philadelphia--where it was not long before Capt. Smilie got the command of the *Rainbow* and he put to Sea once more under Capt. Smilie and cruising sometime fell in with the enemy had an engagement and was taken prisoner a third time and was again exchanged and landed in Charleston South Carolina in the year of 1777. And says that he believes he commenced his tour under Captain Watson in the year of 1775. And saith that by reason of old age, and the consequent loss of memory, he cannot swear positively to the precise length of his services in these three tours but according to the best of his recollection he served not less than two years under Capt. Watson and Capt. Smilie—Before he was landed at Charleston.

His fourth and last tour commenced in the year of 1777—he was enrolled under Capt. Wilcox in South Carolina to serve in the regular army this took place soon after he was landed in Charleston and was marched up the country where they were attacked several times by the Tories they had sixty or seventy men under Captain Wilcox at this time. They were marched through North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland to where the Army under General Washington was, near the Brandywine—That they were joined by several bodies of soldiers before they reached the army and that he had but just arrived there a day or so before the battle of Brandywine came on where he received two wounds one in each leg—after the battle he was hauled in a wagon to Philadelphia but in a few days after he was taken up the country where he was kept with a number of the wounded. And says he was not in any more battles after this, but remain[ed] with the Army in this section of country until the close of the war. And that he received a discharge in Philadelphia and that his former Captain Smilie was there and attended to see that he got it and thinks Capts. Wilcox & Smilie was both together when he received it. The discharged [sic] was in print but that he lost his pocketbook with his discharge in it many years ago.

And says he knows of no living witness by whom he can prove his services. But that there are several that can testify as to his character for veracity and their belief of his services as a soldier of the Revolutionary war - Among those whom I think can testify for my veracity and their belief my being a soldier of the Revolutionary war, some of whom have been acquainted with me for many years - There is James Whitson, John Whitson, Isaac Whitson, James Howell Esq., and Jesse Sprouse and many others that are present—and in this county & Tennessee.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present, and he declares that his name is not on the pension roll of any agency in any state or United States.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.

S/ William Melson, O his mark

And the said court do hereby declare their opinion that the above named applicant was a Revolutionary soldier and served as he states.

S/ Charles Byrd Chairman

S/ B. Hartman JP

S/ J. B. Ray JP

I John W. Garland Clerk of the Court of Pleas and Quarter sessions for the county of Yancey do hereby certify that the foregoing contains the original proceedings of the said court in the matter of the application of William Melson for a pension.

In testimony whereof I have here unto set my hand and seal of office this 9th day of April 1839.

Test. S/ John W. Garland, Clk

S/ By William J. Lewis, D. C.

Misters Nathan Honeycut, Esq. and John Whitson residing in the county of Yancey and Jacob L. Straley a clergyman residing in Burnesville hereby certify that we are well acquainted with William Melson who has subscribed and sworn to the above declaration. That we believe him to be about the age of ninety years and that he is reputed and believed in the neighborhood where he resides to have been a soldier of the revolution. And that we concur in that opinion and that some of us have been acquainted with the applicant between forty and fifty years.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.

S/ Nathan Honeycut

S/ John Whitson

S/ Jacob L. Straby

The examination of William Melson in open court at the April term 1839 and the following interrogatories propounded and answers given.

Quest 1st Where and in what year were you born?

Ansr: In Accomack county in Virginia in the year of 1749.

Quest 2nd Have you any record of your age and if so where is it?

Ansr: I have not, but from the best information I can obtain I was born at the place and time above stated.

Quest 3 Where were you living when called into the service; where have you lived since the Revolutionary [War], and where do you now live?

Ansr: In Philadelphia in the state of Pennsylvania, and in Charleston in South Carolina. And since the Revolutionary War I have lived in Tennessee, South Carolina and North Carolina in the neighborhood near where I am now living in the county of Yancey.

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

Ansr: I entered as a volunteer and served as a common sailor under Captain Watson of the *Three Brothers*. The second tour was entered as a common sailor under Captain Smilie of the *Flying Jib*. The third tour was under the same Captain William Smilie of the *Rainbow*. My last term of service was entered in South Carolina soon after we were exchanged at Charleston and was enrolled under Captain Wilcox into the Army of the Revolutionary War together with sixty or

seventy more of our ship's crew. I always served as a private while in the service on board a ship as also on land. I never bore any commission while in the service during the Revolutionary War. Quest 5: 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.

Ansr: My first captain was of the name of Watson and the ship was called the *Three Brothers*. My second and third captain was called William Smilie. In the first tour or trip he commanded the ship *Flying Jib* and the next tour he commanded the *Rainbow*. In my last tour when I entered my last tour of service under Capt. Wilcox in the land service. When we joined the army Colonel Harrison, I think and Cols. Thomas Baily and I believe Colonel Harrison was of the Virginia Line and there was Capt. Ashby and Capt. Riley and Genl. Washington was our head commander at the Battle of Brandywine. When I first Enrolled myself into the service of my country under Captain Watson commander of the *Three Brothers* I considered myself enrolled for during the war. We went to Sea and met the enemy where we engaged in battle. Captain Watson and his son was killed and my brother Daniel Melson and some more myself & others was wounded. I myself received a wound in my right arm just above my wrist from a boarding pike. And after a hard struggle was made prisoner together with the whole crew. And was retained a prisoner for some time but at length was exchanged or released from prison and set at liberty in the city of New York we landed. This trip I think was some time in the year of 1775. After being set at liberty I returned to Philadelphia again and shortly after I went aboard the *Flying Jib* Captain William Smilie - and put out to Sea again and after cruising a while our ship was captured and we were all made prisoners once more. And kept so for some time when we were exchanged and set at liberty once and sent to Philadelphia - This was my second tour. My third and last tour at Sea --- The *Rainbow* was armed & fitted for Sea and Captain William Smilie commander. I went on board once more to try my fortune at Sea under Captain Smilie - And after being at Sea a good while I think it was off Cape Charles, we engaged with the enemy and our vessel was captured we were all made prisoners. We were afterwards exchanged and landed at Charleston South Carolina. In these three trips or tours I am satisfied that I did not serve less than two years. And underwent much suffering by imprisonment besides. My last tour commenced in the foot service sometime early in the year 1777 soon after I was released and landed in Charleston in South Carolina where I was march up the country with about seventy more - We were enrolled under Captain Wilcox and marched through South Carolina where we had some little skirmishes with the Tories and as we marched on to the North to join the Army under General Washington we were joined by several small detachments and joined the main army near Brandywine in time to be in the engagement. Where I received two wounds one each leg - After the battle I was taken in a wagon to Philadelphia a few days and then was taken up the country to where all the wounded was kept where I was cured of my wounds. I continued in this section of country until the war was over but was in no more general engagements.

Quest 6th: Did you ever receive a discharge from the service and if so, by whom was it given, and what has become of it?

Ansr I did, I received it in Philadelphia by the hands of Captain Wilcox and my former commander Captain Wm Smilie who was kind enough to attend to it - it was in print - But I lost it a good many years ago together with my pocketbook.

Quest 7th: State the name of persons to whom you are known in your present neighborhood and who can testify as to your character for veracity and their belief of your services as a soldier of the revolution.

Ansr: There is several. I will name two or three James Whitson, Isaac Whitson and John Whitson, James Howell, Esq. and Jesse Sprouse an old Revolutionary soldier besides several others that I could name.