

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of William Sparks R9960

Transcribed by Will Graves

f22NC

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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. 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 Texas, County of Nacogdoches

On this 14th day of September, A. D., 1846 personally appeared before Honorable District Court of said County now sitting in open court, William Sparks, a resident of Sparks' settlement in said County of Nacogdoches and State of Texas aged eighty five years on the 3rd day of April last, 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 this applicant entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated. Shortly before this applicant entered the service his father Matthew Sparks removed with him from the Yadkin River in the County of Wilkes and State of North Carolina across the Blue Ridge to a place on New River in the said County of Wilkes, which is now about two miles from the County seat of Roan [sic, Rowan] County, North Carolina. Also shortly before I entered the service the Cherokee Indians had committed depredations and murdered five persons, I think, three children and two women, near the head of the Catawba River, at least, above John's River, at a place then, I think, in Burke County, North Carolina. In the part of the country in which I lived, after the war had lasted several years, all of us capable of bearing arms were divided into four classes, as well as I remember, by lots. I fell into the fourth class. About this time it came to the turn of my class to enter the service; and while we were making preparations to do so Capt. John Cleveland, (nicknamed Devil John) son of Col. Benjamin Cleveland, who afterwards fought at King's Mountain, and who then resided near our former residence on the Yadkin, come over to our settlement on New River, and proposed to my class to volunteer to go with him against the Cherokee Indians, saying that this tour would be accounted the same as the same length of service against the British, against whom we were then preparing to go. Four of my neighbors of my class viz. John Baker, Israel Campbell, John Waters, and George Humphreys, with myself, accepted John Cleveland's proposition, and in obedience to his order rendezvoused at Wilkes Court House (Wilkesboro) and entered the service under the said John Cleveland as our Captain on the 15th day of August. From old age and consequent loss of memory this applicant cannot state positively in what year this was, but he does recollect, that it was when he had just entered his seventeenth year, and several years before the battle of King's Mountain. At Wilkesboro, which was the place of general rendezvous for the North Carolina troops raised for this expedition, Capt. Cleveland's Company was filled to the number of about sixty, and about one thousand in all rendezvoused here. We were all mounted gunmen, and nearly all armed with rifles, tomahawks, and butcher knives, each man, and myself amongst the rest, furnishing his own horse, arms, and equipment. At the end of about two days we took up the line of march by Pleasant Gardens on the Catawba [River], crossed John's River, then by Cathey's Fort to Turkey Cove on the Catawba [River], a distance, I supposed, of about one hundred miles in all from Wilkesboro. At Turkey Cove we remained about two weeks collecting Beef and other provisions for the campaign. Here we were joined by the rest of the North Carolina forces, making our number from twelve to fifteen hundred, and here the Command in Chief was taken by Genl. Charles McDowell of Pleasant Gardens, Burke County,

North Carolina, in which he continued throughout the Campaign. At this place my Capt. John Cleveland was informed by letter that his wife was dangerously ill, and went home, and did not again return to us. Myself and my New River neighbors, Baker, Campbell, Waters and Humphreys, at the request of Capt. Cleveland were then permitted to join Capt. John Beverley's Company, in which we remained to the end of the Campaign. I do not remember positively what disposition was made of the rest of Cleveland's company, but I believe that as Beverly had not before a full company they all joined him. My Regiment was commanded by Col. Benjamin Hearn of Wilkes County. The Captains under him were as far as I remember, John Cleveland and John Beverly and I think others whom I do not recollect. Col. Joseph Dowell, brother of our Genl. commanded the Burke County Regiment. There was also a Maj. McDowell in under Col. Joseph McDowell. I think his given name was also Joseph, and that he was a cousin of the General and this Colonel. I do not remember any of the other North Carolina officers. At the end of about two weeks we marched from Turkey Cove up the Catawba [River] on the East side along an old Indian Trace, and crossed the mountains through a gap the name which I do not recollect; struck the waters of Swano [sic, Swannanoa] River, went down the same and crossed French Broad River just above the mouth of Swanano [sic, Swannanoa River?]. Here the foot company from Wilkes County in which was my uncle James Sparks, and which marched behind us built a station, and remained to guard the frontier until our return from the Indian Country. (Here I saw my uncle on return.) From the mouth of Swanano [Swannanoa River?] we proceeded across Richland Creek and then Hominy creek. Here we met and were joined by twelve or fourteen hundred mounted gunmen from South Carolina. I do not remember their commander, or any of their officers except a Maj. Lytle, and him I recollect only from his afterwards in the course of the campaign accidentally killing one of his own men by the name of Morrison in an Indian skirmish. The whole Army then proceeded across another ledge of mountains and then crossed Tuckaseegee River. The night of the day we crossed this River a scouting party of thirty or forty of our men under Maj. McDowell was attacked by a party of Indians of whom they killed two or three, and made prisoners of a woman and child, an old man and one or two boys. The old Indian was shot the next day by a friendly Indian, a servant of Col. Miller, NC, who I think was with us, but in what capacity, I do not recollect. I regret to say that I believe all the prisoners were murdered, except two boys. We then marched on to the Tennessee River a distance of some 20 or 30 miles, here we found several Indian Villages on the South East side of the River, which gave every indication of having been but recently deserted. We remained some two weeks destroying the houses, corn, beans and everything of utility in and about the villages, we then received orders one evening that on the next morning we were to march to the Valley Towns some 70 or 80 miles further on, but in the morning these orders were countermanded, I have never known why. We next proceeded about a day's march up a River, the name of which I forget, on the South East side of the Tennessee, to a large town surrounded by villages where we spent several days more in destroying the town and Villages and everything in and about them. Rumor afterwards stated, and I believe truly, that the devastation committed by us on this campaign was the cause of the death of many hundreds of Indians from starvation. After spending a week or two more in endeavoring through our Scouts in vain to find the Indians we commenced our return march, and retraced the same route as well as I recollect. When we repassed the station near the mouth of Sewanee the foot company was still there to protect the frontier, and remained there for some time afterwards. To the best of my recollection the South Carolina troops parted from us at Hominy Creek where they had joined us. The North Carolina troops then marched on and returned to the Yadkin at or near Wilkesboro where we were disbanded. From this service I received a written discharge from Capt. John Beverly which I kept for many years, but at length not deeming it of any use it was long since lost or destroyed. On this tour we marched a distance which we deemed about five hundred miles and back; and I served in it as a Private Mounted Rifleman (furnishing my own horse, arms, and equipment) at least four months, and I believe longer for I feel confident that I did not return home until after Christmas, and I know I returned home as soon as I was discharged. On this expedition I know I received no pay but to the best of my recollection the privates

were promised twenty Dollars per month each, and the same remarks will apply with truth to all my revolutionary services; for I received no pay for any of them.

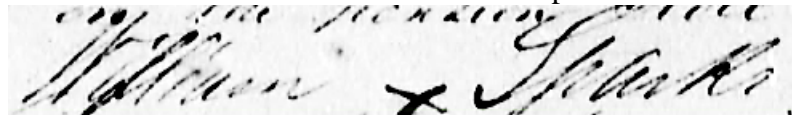
Upon my return from this campaign the militia company, in the bounds of which I resided, was organized into a company of mounted minute men under Andrew Baker as Captain and my Brother John Sparks as Lieutenant. In this company I served till the close of the War of the Revolution. We furnished our own horses, arms, and equipment. Our part of the country was almost constantly infested with robbing and murdering parties of Tories, British and Hessians, and I was constantly either out in pursuit of such parties, or, in obedience to the orders of my Captain, held myself in readiness to march at a moment's warning. Of the many and almost constant scouting parties, pursuits, and expeditions in which I was engaged during this period from my great age and infirmities I can recollect but one, so as to be able to state the particulars and that only from the personal interest of my family in it, will proceed to state it. In less than a year after my return from the campaign against the Cherokees above detailed, a party of Tories, about 150 in number, robbed my Father, taking a horse, saddle, and bridle, six guns, all our pewter (we had no delftware in those days) and whatever else they could carry. My company was immediately called out and others amounting in all to about one hundred and fifty mounted gunmen under the command of Colo. Benjamin Cleveland. We pursued the above named Tories a distance of between 60 and 70 miles and overtook them in Coxe's settlement near the Virginia line. They were feasting, frolicking and many of them drunk. We killed and wounded 25 or 30 of them in a fight, made prisoners of nearly all the rest, of whom hung five or six, the balance of the prisoners were discharged by Col. Cleveland upon their promise not to molest the patriots for the future. In this expedition I was engaged three weeks. I received no written discharge during the war except the one from Capt. Beverly above mentioned.

I have no documentary evidence of my service, and I know of no person whose testimony I can procure who can testify to my service.

This applicant further states on oath that by reason of old age and the consequent loss of memory he cannot swear positively as to the precise length of his service, but according to the best of his recollection he served not less than three years as a private volunteer mounted Rifleman, always furnishing his own horse, arms and equipment, and for service he claims a pension.

This applicant was born in Rowan County near Salisbury in the State of North Carolina on the 3rd day of April A.D. 1761. He has no record of his age, but he believes his brother Jesse Sparks residing in Hickman County in the State of Tennessee has a copy of the record of his age, the original having been lost. When called into service this applicant lived in Wilkes County North Carolina, and remained there till the close of the Revolutionary War when he removed with his father to what was then Franklin County, afterwards Jackson, and now Clark County in the state of Georgia and settled about four miles from Athens in that State. There this applicant resided till the year 1811 when he removed to Lawrence County, Mississippi, thence to Holmes County in that State, where he lived until March, 1836, when he removed to this County and vicinity where he has ever since resided. In his service he was at all times a volunteer. 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.

S/ William Sparks

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William Sparks", written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Sworn to & Subscribed before me this 14th September 1846

S/ R. Parmalee CDC

S/ By H. Nelson, Deputy [Clerk]

The Court then proceeded to propound the following interrogatories, according to law:

Inter. first: Where & in what year were you born?

Answer: I was born within one mile of the town of Salisbury in the County of Rowan, State of North Carolina on the 3rd day of April, in the year 1761.

Int. 2nd: Have you any record of your age & if you have where is it?

Answer: I have no record of my birth, but my brother has who lives in Hickman County Tennessee. He furnished me with a copy which I lost several years since with a trunk of papers near Natchez, Mississippi.

Int. 3rd: Where were you living when called into Service? Where have you lived since the Revolutionary War and where do you now live?

Answer: I was living in Wilkes County, North Carolina. My father emigrated from Wilkes County to Georgia Shortly after the Revolutionary War, and Settled in what was then Franklin County, now Clark County, near Athens, where I resided till about A.D.1811 when I moved to the Territory of Mississippi on Pearl River, now Lawrence County. I remained there a number of years then removed to Holmes County where I remained until I moved to the then Republic of Texas. I stopped in Nacogdoches County where I have lived ever since.

Inter 4th: How were you called into Service , were you drafted, did you volunteer, or were you Substitute, if a Substitute for whom?

Answer: I volunteered and regret that I am not able to do so again. I was not a Substitute, nor was I drafted.

Inter 5th: State the name of some of the Regular Officers who were with the troops when you served. State Continental & Militia Regiments as you can recollect and the general circumstances of your service.

Answer: I served under Capt. John Cleveland, son of old Col. Ben Cleveland. Capt. Cleveland was called home and I served the rest of the time under Capt. John Beverly. Col. Benjamin Hearn was our Col. commanding and General Chas. McDowell was the General in Command. Col. Joseph McDowell was out at the same time in command of another regiment. During this tour we were engaged against the Cherokee Indians. After I returned from this tour I was frequently engaged as a scout under the command of Col. Ben Cleveland, Joseph Baker and Lt. John Sparks, who was my older brother. The Tories came into the neighborhood and committed depredations. Col. Ben Cleveland came over with a company, we followed the Tories about 60 miles, overtook them and we wounded several - took some prisoners. I was in the service with Col. Cleveland.

Inter 6th: Did you ever receive a discharge from service, and if so, what has become of it?

Answer: I did receive a discharge from Capt. John Beverly for my first tour against the Cherokees, which I have lost years and years ago. I never received any other discharge.

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

Answer: Genl. Thomas J. Rusk, Major David S. Kaufman, Rev. William Harrington, and any others of my acquaintance.

I certify that the answers to the foregoing seven interrogatories were made on Oath by the said William Sparks in open Court before me on this 14th day of September, AD, 1846.

S/ W. B. Ochiltree, Judge of the 6th Jud. Dist. State of Texas

[Sampson Shepherd, a clergyman, David S. Kaufman, and Thomas J Rusk gave the standard supporting affidavit.]