

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

Pension Application of Royal Jennings S1541

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Tennessee }

Grainger County }

On this 21<sup>st</sup> day of May 1833 personally appeared in open Court before the Court of Pleas and quarter Sessions for Grainger County in the State of Tennessee now sitting Royal Jennings a resident of the County of Grainger and State of Tennessee aged seventy one 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 7<sup>th</sup> 1832. That he entered the service of the United States under the following named Officers and served as herein stated That he went as a substituted for Joseph Holt under Capt Dudley Basdel in the latter part of the Spring to the best of his recollection in the year 1779. Col Flemming [possibly William Fleming] commanded the Regiment He states that he was born in the county of Henrico in the State of Virginia in the year 1762 but he has long since lost the Record of this age. He states that his father removed from Henrico to Prince Edward County and from thence to Charlotte. He states that he was living in the county of Charlotte in the State of Virginia when he entered the service for Joseph Holt and served two months to the best of his knowledge that from Charlotte we marched to Petersburg from thence to Cabbin Point [Cabin Point in Surry County]. We then continued down to Prides Old fields when we heard the British fleet [under Commodore George Collier and Gen Edward Mathew, 9 - 24 May 1779] had dispersed and we then were discharged by our Officers. We were called into service to prevent the British fleet from landing but before we arrived at the Sea board we heard the British had put to sea and we were discharged

He states that he was then drafted for a three month tour under Capt William Mortno [sic: William Morton] in the regiment commanded by Genl [Robert] Lawson that he was living in Charlotte from thence we crossed James River at Carters Ferry [at present Cartersville in Cumberland County] as well as he recollects and then down towards the seaboard after being stationed in different places to Old Jamestown from thence to Long Bridge [Great Bridge] near Portsmouth and continued in the neighbourhood of Norfolk Portsmouth and Suffolk until his time of service expired and he was discharged.

He states that he was again drafted in the County of Charlotte for a three month tour in the month of June 1780 as near as he can recollect under Capt Thomas Williams Major [Nathaniel Garsden] Morris, Col. [James] Lucas, Lieutenant [John] Harvey, Ensign Austin Hulotte[?]. He states that Lieutenant Harvey was arrested and broke and ordered to be driven through the company twice in dirty clothes and to go home He states that he resided in the County of Charlotte when he was drafted. He states that he was in the Battle of Gates' [Gen. Horatio Gates's] defeat near Camden South Carolina [16 Aug 1780] He states that from Charlotte we marched to Hillsboro [sic: Hillsborough] North Carolina then we waited nearly a month for the northern county Virginia militia. After the two Regiments had got together Gen'l Gates from the main army arrived about the first of August and reviewed the army and ordered the Officers of our Regiment to meet him at Rougeleys Mills [sic: Rugeley's Mill in SC] by such a time (meaning the time) within six miles of Campden and the time was so short that we were allowed to get to Rougeleys Mills that we were compelled to march until twelve oclock every night the weather being both rainy and hot and we were supported upon half and quarter rations. He states that when we arrived at Rougeleys Mills Gen'l Gates took command of the army and we joined the Baron De Kalb with his regulars and the North Carolina Militia. We arrived about twelve oclock in the day [15 Aug] at Rougeleys Mills and were ordered to wash and fix ourselves and be ready to march by eight oclock that night to Campden to attack Lord Cornwallis. We did so. We marched about half way to Campden as was supposed when the advanced Infantry met the advanced Infantry of the British [at about 2 AM] and the advanced Infantry of the British fired upon the advanced Infantry of the Americans and a pretty smart scermishing was kept up until day. About sunrise our army was put in order of Battle. We were ordered not to fire until we could see the whites of their eyes. The Virginia troops were formed

on the left wing towards Campden along the side of the road about 90 or 100 yards from the road. The British had to extend their files six or eight feet in order to flank with us. While we were standing waiting for the British to advance on us and for orders to fire we heard the British Officers give the command to their army to wheel about and fire on us. They did so and our soldiers could not stand that but immediately fired upon them without orders. Then the British began and the whole army was engaged. My Capt Thomas Williams was wounded in the shoulder. The British charged upon us and we gave way, but kept up a constant firing until we retreated to a Swamp that was near us when Tarlton [Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton's Legion] charged upon us with his horse and we were compelled to make the best way we could through the swamp. The Battle lasted about two hours and we sustained a complete defeat. At this Battle the Baron De Kalb was mortally wounded and died in a few [three] days after as I understood. At this Battle Gen'l Gates behaved most shamefully betaking himself to flight in the first of the fighting and left the Baron De Kalb to fight the Battle. The arm[y] was completely put to route and fled in consternation and confusion in every direction. I went to Hillsboro and about a hundred men where we staid until we had collected some clothes. We were commanded to meet at New Garden [W of present Greensboro] by Col Fortner [sic: Lt. Col. Ralph Faulkner] I think in Guilford County in North Carolina where we were under the command of Col Fortner. Then we were marched to Pointy fork on James River [sic: Point of Fork at the junction with Rivanna River] in Virginia from thence we marched to Richmond from thence to Old Williamsburg where we continued until our time of service expired and we were discharged.

He states that he again entered the service and served a three months tour of service under Capt Gaines from Charlotte County, Lieutenant Richard Davenport, Gen'l Robert Lawson commanded the militia to whom I belonged. He cannot recollect the precise time when but it was in the spring of the year 1781. He states that he was stationed at Prides Old fields when the news of the Battle of Guilford reached us [Battle of Guilford Courthouse NC, 15 Mar 1781]. At this time of service our principle duty was to guard the sea ports and eastern part of Virginia. He states that he was discharged at Suffolk on Nansemond river in Virginia. He states that he served another three month tour under Capt Wm Morton of Charlotte County and marched to Swanns Point on James River [opposite Jamestown] from thence we marched to the Morbin Hills [sic: Malvern Hill in Henrico County] where we were stationed from for three to four weeks. Thence we had orders to march down towards the sea coast. We were stationed a while at Old Williamsburg from thence to old Jamestown. We then crossed the Chickahominy swamps and joined Gen'l Lafayette about twelve miles from Jamestown. We continued there expecting the British fleet to land until our term of service had nearly expired when we were marched to Richmond and discharged.

He further states that he entered the service for another three months tour under Capt Gaines about the 24 or 25 of July 1781 from Charlotte County in Virginia from Charlotte we marched to Chesterfield Courthouse thence we beat down James River and were stationed for short times at different places until we were commanded to join Gen'l Washington and Gen'l Lafayette at Little York. We arrived there at the commencement of the Siege [28 Sep] just before the building of the Poplar tree fort which was a little place of security to shelter us when they were firing upon us. From that fort we commenced out entrenchments for several days before we could mount any pieces they still firing on us until we got so far that we raised some field pieces and Bomb Batteries. We then began to fire on them and drove them into their forts. We then worked night and day until we got the entrenchments finished. We surrounded them in the form of a half moon. The French fleet prevented them from excaping down the river. We stormed the British redoubts that were about the British forts before they surrendered. Then we continued to get stronger until we surrounded them with our heavy mettle[?]. We advanced so near them that if we could see a small opening we could through [fire?] a rifle ball into the fort. The guard was not more than fifty yards apart before they surrendered. Lord Cornwallis surrendered to Gen'l Washington on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of October 1781 [sic: signaled for negotiations on 17 Oct; surrendered on 19 Oct]. The capitulation was such that they continued in the fort that night. The capitulation was that they were to march out with their colours with all their arms in such a position as though they were going to march through the County. The French and American army paraded in rank and file and we were ordered to treat them civilly but look at them as

conquered Brothers. They marched in front of our army The British grounded their arms after they had marched in front of our army we then took them into our possession and the 19<sup>th</sup> [British 19<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot] marched them to Winchester. I marched a few days with the army when my time of service expired and I was discharged

He states that he served in the service of the United States for fourteen months. He states that he has long since lost his discharges He states that he has no documentary evidence and knows of no person whose testimony he can procure whose can testify to his service. 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 any state.

Royal hisXmark Jennings  
Interogatories propounded by the court to Royal Jennings an applicant for a pension

1 Where and in what year were you born

answer I was born in Henrico County in the State of Virginia in the year 1762.

2 Have your any record of your age and if so where is it

Answer I have no record of my age

3 Where were you living when called into service where have you lived since the Revolution and where do you live now

Answer I was living in Charlotte county Virginia when called into service I also lived in the State of North Carolina after the Revolution and I now live in the County of Grainger and State of Tennessee for thirty seven or eight years.

4 How were you called into service: were you drafted did you volunteer or were you a substitute and if a substitute for whom

Answer The first tour of duty I served as a substitute for Joseph Holt and the rest of my services I was drafted.

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 you service

Answer. I served with Gen'l Gates. The Baron De Kalb. Gen'l George Washington Gen'l Lafayette Gen'l Anthony Wayne and as to the general circumstances of my service I refer to my declaration for a detailed statement

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

Answer. Rev'd Charles McAnally Major Gen'l. John Cocke Col Thomas Whitesides Doct'r Wm E Cocke. Doct'r James R Cocke

Personally appeared in open court before the justices of our court of pleas and quarter sessions for Grainger County now sitting Royal Jennings and made oath that by reason of old age and the consequent loss of memory he cannot state the particular day of the month and year that he entered in the service of the United States in some of his tours of service nor the particular day and year that he left the service but according to the best of his recollection he served fourteen months and for such service he claims a pension. Sworn to in open court.

[No date]

Royal hisXmark Jennings

NOTE: A Treasury Department document states that the children of Royal Jennings received his final pension payment up to his death on 1 Feb 1839.