

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of John Vest S15692

VA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 3 Oct 2014.

State of Virginia County of Bedford S.S.

On this 25th day of February 1833 personally appeared in open Court before Lodowick McDaniel George Steptoe William Leftwich Jr and William King Gentleman Justices, the Court of Bedford County now sitting the same being a Court of record, John Vest a resident of the parish of Russel in the County aforesaid and State aforesaid aged Eighty two years who being first duly sworn doth on his oath make the following Declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress passed June the 7th 1832. That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated. His register which he has seen and recollects but which is now mislaid states that he was born in the county of Powhatan in the State of Virginia in the year 1750. In the ninth year of his age his father moved with him into the County of Buckingham in said state where he lived about eleven years from thence he moved into the County now [since 1782] called Campbell then a part of the County of Bedford in said state where he resided till he became of age and lived there through the whole of the Revolutionary war In 1789 he became a citizen of Bedford County in that part of of which now retains that name and has ever since & does now reside there by his calculation is now about Eighty two years six months and some days old. The first call of Militia from the said County of Campbell then a part of Bedford as aforesaid was to a tour of duty to the lead mines in Virginia [near Fort Chiswell] to protect and guard the works from the Tories, Indians and a number of negroes that were taken in attempting to escape to Governor Dunmore from their masters who after they were so taken were sent to the lead mines and employed in digging of ore to make lead to carry on the war, but who had to be closely watched either the tories, Indians or negroes set fire to the furnace house and burnt four rafters on the roof before the fire could be extinguished but with great difficulty this declarant and others saved the house and utensils. The same night a ferry boat and a large canoe which was used in bringing the ore from the other side [of New River] was loosed from the landing set adrift and was no more found. In this Tour of duty he enlisted as a volunteer and thinks it was on the first day of August 1774 but if he is mistaken as to the date of the year he is quite certain it was same year that the battle was fought at the falls of the Ohio against the Indians [see endnote]. He served in the company commanded by Captain Wallace, Leftwich and Lieutenant Jonathan Richardson [Jonathan Richeson] from the said County of Bedford now Campbell. From the rendezvous they marched through the County now called Franklin to the County in which the lead mines are situated then called Fincastle now Wythe. In their march through the mountains they were divided and a part sent to the salt petre [salt peter] works and he was one of them he is at a loss to tell how long they remained at at the salt petre works but thinks it was about a month. from thence they were called to the lead mines under the circumstances above stated where they served the balance of the tour. He ever did and does now believe they served three months fully and not less than that period & he is and old man and ere long will stand before the judge of quick and dead to answer for the deeds done in the body and therefore cannot swear to a punctilio to gain a day if he were to lose a month they were regularly relieved by another march of men. On returning home he remembers to have met Cap. Thomas Buford and his company from Bedford, then on his way out to the falls of Ohio to the Indians and that they lay at the Big Lick in the now County of Botetourt [now Roanoke City] on the same night. This was in the month of October or November the same month in which he was discharged and returned home. The second time he was called to go into service he was discharged as were the rest of the Company also without marching from the place of Rendezvous where they had met with all things proposed to march and were told that they had or would have credit for a full tour of duty of three months he supposes as if they had actually served it and such was the common understanding in those days. this call was to go to the Eastern shores of Virginia. He remembers that Williston Talbot, the forage master, bought a load of flour for the use of the army, and the whole was condemned on his hands by Colonal Jeremiah Early and

Cap. John Clayton. It seems the enemy had left the place and the company after being from home three days at the Rendezvous as aforesaid were discharged. He was occasionally called out against the Tories in the neighbourhood and remembers being on one tour of five days in hunting them at one time three days at another in guarding them and three days in waiting the call of Gen'l Green [sic: Nathanael Greene].

He then again in the year 1778 judging from all the circumstances he can recollect while Patrick Henry was Governor of Virginia [6 Jul 1776 - 1 Jun 1779] in the latter part of the year but the month or day he cannot tell, he marched from Campbell County, then Bedford as aforesaid, under the command of Capt John Talbot, Lieutenant Thomas Helms who was afterwards killed in the battle of Guilford [sic: Thomas Helm, Guilford Courthouse NC, 15 Mar 1781] and Ensign Arthur Moseley. The Company met at Hunter Tavern passed Charlotte Cumberland &c. The said Talbot was at that time a member of the Legislature and went after his company was discharged from the army into the house of Burgesses which was then sitting at Williamsburg. In this tour of duty he entered the service as a volunteer and marched under the aforesaid officers first to Williamsburg in Va. crossing James River at Richmond near Manchester passed through Henrico, New Kent, Hanover & returned to Williamsburg about six weeks as well as he can now remember Colo. Mason then had the command of the Regiment to which he was attached. From Williamsburg he was marched to York Town where his company was attached to the Regiment under the command of Colo. Lightfoot as well as he can remember at this distant day. He is unable to say how long he remained here but is satisfied it was until he was regularly discharged and feels assured that the tour was one of not less than three months duration. He remembers that some of the men were tried at Williamsburg while he was there for burning and otherwise injuring the inclosure around park of Governor Henry. In this tour he was at York Town when the British vessels came in sight within the capes and cannonaded the American Row Gallies from about 9 O'clock in the morning till near one hour by sun in the evening. It was said one of the enemies vessels was very much damaged. The land troops were drawn up in a line on the shore in view of the enemy, with as much display as possible having the Colours unfurled drums beating &c when after having anchored there for several days the enemy disappeared without endeavouring to effect a landing There was no doubt at the time that they would have landed but for the troops stationed at the place. For this tour of duty he received a written discharge but has lost or mislaid it and in fact he never expected after receiving it to want it again. He thinks the discharge was obtained by his father for him from Cap. Talbot some time after he returned from the Legislature of which he was a member as aforesaid. He recollects it was said that the discharge would have been obtained at the expiration of the service but for the hurry of the Captain to take his seat in the Legislature. In about a year after the expiration of this tour he was preparing to march again upon another to York Town, had all things ready for actual service knapsack baggage &c. and had left home in the said County of Campbell then Bedford as a militia man regularly drafted, when at the rendezvous of the militia at the head of Mallies Creek [sic: Mollys Creek] he got into conversation with Colo. James Callaway the commandant of the regiment and was told by him that if he would go and catch one William Carver a deserter from Colo. Washingtons core of horse [William Washington's 3rd Regiment of Continental Light Dragoons] and withal a noted Tory he would receive a discharge from the whole tour for which he had been drafted Colo. Washington had sent officers to Prince Edward Courthouse in Virginia authorised to advertise in the public Gazette the names of all deserters from his Core and that if would come and deliver themselves up they should be pardoned for the offence of desertion which most if not all accepted but this celebrated Carver. This deponent understanding the proposition of the Colonel thus made to him he accepted it and did so with the assurance that if he caught Carver, delivered him to the officers at Prince Edward Courthouse aforesaid obtained a receipt for him and got Captain Heaths discharge who was Cap. of this deponents company he would be released from the full Tour. He accepted the proposition at the time the more readily as he was in such a situation with his family that he could not readily leave home. Accordingly he went in pursuit of the said Carver as he had been requested and was fortunate enough to apprehend him. Then in pursuance of the instructions received delivered him to the proper officers in Prince Edward County forty miles (he thinks) from where he apprehended him, obtained a receipt for him and then afterwards a discharge for the full time (from Captain Heath) which

he has also lost. on his return homeward he met the company of Captain Heath on their way down at Cub Creek in the County of Charlotte. This was toward the fall of the year he thinks or in the first part of the fall, at least he remembers that the surrender of Cornwallis took place soon after this [on 19 Oct 1781] and he should have been there also had he not have been discharged in the manner aforesaid. He has no documentary evidence by which to prove his services but he refers to the affidavits of John Hunter [pension application S15897] of County of Campbell and John Turner of the County of Bedford to prove his services to the lead mines and the tour to Williamsburg, York Town &c. under Captain Talbot each of three months duration. He has no testimony by which to prove his other services and there is no one living to whom he can have access to prove the same. he perhaps could do it if he was not too old and infirm to ride so far as he must necessarily ascertain the facts. He has been unable to procure the certificate of a clergyman or the other individual as required by the act of congress simply because there is no one living in the neighbourhood that can testify to such a belief. this deponent having moved to Bedford in that part of it in which he now lives subsequent to any of his services as aforesaid renders it difficult to refer to any individual particularly as to the General belief in the neighbourhood. The distance is about 30 miles.

He makes the following answers to the interrogatories propounded by the war department

To the 1st Interrogatory, see body declaration for his answer

To the 2nd – The Same

To the 3^d – The Same

To the 4th – The Same

To the 5th – The names of many of the officers am familiar with but few if any of the regular officers were ever with me that I now remember.

To the 6th Interrogatory – I did receive discharges for my services in each case I believe and I think they were given by my captain except where we were all discharged in a body then I did not, they are now lost

To the 7th Interrogatory see the body of the declaration for the names The whole of his actual services will amount to not less than six months and eleven days and if he is paid for the other Tours where he was discharged as stated he would be entitled to pay for not less than 12 months. 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. Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid in open Court

John Vest

Bedford County to wit

This day [27 Nov 1832] John Turner a credible person whose statement is entitled to credit of the County of Bedford came before me a Justice of the peace for said county and after being first duly sworn deposeth and sayeth that at the time that Patrick Henry was Governor of Virginia but in what year he cannot recollect that he served a Tour of duty under Capt. Thomas Dooley who marched from Bedford County, and proceed to Williamsburg on marching from Bedford to Williamsburg, the first days march we fell in with Capt. John Tolberts company at Hunters Tavern and proceeded with said company to Williamsburg and I well recollect of John Vests being a member of Capt. Tolberts Company and were stationed at Williamsburg together during the stay of Tolberts Company, which was afterwards marched to York Town, previous to this Tour of duty I served a tour of duty with John Vest in Captain William Leftwichs company who were stationed their tour of service at the lead mines on New River from that and other circumstances he believes the said John Vest served in the war of the Revolution as he states

John Turner

The affidavit of John Arther [W5635] who now [25 Nov 1833] states that he is seventy seven years old, taken in the Clerks office in the County of Bedford. After being duly sworn sayeth that he was in part Superintendant of the lead Mines, then in Fincastle now wythe County on New River, in the year seventeen hundred and seventy six, under the direction of Colo. Harry Innis [sic: Henry Innes] and Colo. James Callaway and while this affiant was theare in the year aforesaid Capt. Wm. Leftwich come to the

mines with a Compay of Malitia and was stationed theare to Guard the place against the Torys and Indians that the said affiant acted in part as Commissary to the company and furnished them with provisions, during the station of said Compay the Furnis House was sit on fire. He this affiant is not acquainted with John Vest and has no recollection that he was in the Company. But from the History he give me in the burning of the Furnis as above stated, He must have been thear and I am induced to believe that he was theare and served that tour under Capt. Leftwich as afore said

John hisXmark Arthur

Bedford County State of Virginia To Wit

The supplemental declaration of John Vest made this [blank] day of January in the year 1834 before me Lodowick McDaniel a Justice of the Peace for the County aforesaid. The said John Vest being first sworn doth on his oath state, that in the declaration heretofore made by him in order to intitle himself to the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June the 7th 1832 he stated that the tour served by him to the lead mines in Virginia was [not?] (as he then thought) in the year 1774 and that it was in the same year that the battle was fought at the Falls of the Ohio against the Indians. Subsequent reflection and actual proof of the fact has satisfied him that the said tour was served in the year 1776 and for proof of the fact he refers to the affidavit of John Arthur herewith filed & exhibited. The said affidavit is express that Captain Leftwich's company in which this affiant was at the time was there in the year 1776 and the affidavit of John Turner heretofore filed in his previous declaration proves that this declarant served in the said company

By reason of old age and the consequent loss of memory he was then unable and is still unable of his own knowledge to speak with certainty as to the dates of the years in which he served his several tours he therefore had to rely upon his own imperfect memory aided by the recollection of some of the circumstances of the times which appear now but in the dimness of a far distant prospect. When he stated that the tour aforesaid was in the same year that the battle at the falls of the Ohio was fought he was impressed with the belief most strongly because he remembers that about the time he served the tour a song which had been composed on the occasion of the battle was very often sung among his acquaintances and in his hearing hence he supposes he received the impression that the tour was served in the year of the battle. Conversation with others also lately has satisfied him that Captain Thomas Buford was not the man whom he mentioned in his previous declaration as having met on his return from the tour aforesaid but that it was, George Buford. He now feels assured that from these circumstances the tour mentioned as aforesaid was in the year 1776 and not in the year 1774 as he had before stated, he therefore prays the Department to reconsider the decision rejecting his claim for services under the Act of June 7th 1832 because it did not appear by "satisfactory evidence that the claimant performed after April 1775 actual military service to the amount of six months" and to reinstate his declaration which on that account was rejected and place upon the files in the War Office as will appear by the letter of J. L. Edwards Esq. of the 20th June 1833. He prays that this his amended declaration be received in connexion with that heretofore made

Subscribed and sworn to before me this day and year aforesaid.

John hisXmark Vest

L McDaniel J.P.

NOTE: As explained in Vest's supplemental declaration above, his first application was rejected because he stated that his first tour occurred in 1774, before the beginning of the Revolutionary War on 19 April 1775, thus making his actual service in the war less than the six months required for a pension. If Vest's recollection of runaway slaves was correct, the tour must have been after 7 Nov 1775 when Lord Dunmore promised freedom to those who enlisted in the British army. Vest states that the tour occurred in the year of a battle at the Falls of the Ohio, at the present site of Louisville KY, but there is no record of a battle there during the Revolutionary War. The pension applications of James Arther (S6527) and others indicate that this tour actually occurred between July and October 1776.