

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of Laton Smith S1778

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Tennessee }
Bledsoe County, County court } S.S.

On this eleventh day of February in the year 1833 personally appeared in open court, before the worshipful justices of the county court of Bledsoe county, now sitting, Laton Smith a resident of the said county of Bledsoe and State of Tennessee aged seventy seven 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 7th 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated. – In the spring of the year 1775 he volunteered and entered the service in Washington County, State of Virginia under the command of Captain William Cocke who marched against the Cherokee Indians under Captain Cocke he was marched to Eaton’s fort about four or five miles from the Long Island of Holston [at present Kingsport TN] where he was stationed at least one month. While he was at Eaton’s fort the forces stationed there had a skirmish with the Indians between the fort & the Long Island in which several Indians were killed, and one white man shot in the knee. From this fort he returned to Washington County and found his relations whom he had left in Washington, fortified at Jo. Blacks [Joseph Black’s] in Washington county. There declarant remained guarding the fort until he thinks in August [early Oct] of the same year when he went with Col. Christy [William Christian] on an expedition against the Cherokee towns on Tennessee river. After he reached the Indian towns the Indians came in for peace, he remained there until in the winter – he thinks after Christmas, and returned then to Washington County Va. He states that previous to this expedition & while stationed at the fort at Jo. Black’s the spies who were out from the fort, brought news one evening just at dark that a company of Indians was in the neighbourhood. The forces started out from the fort, declarant being along, travelled all night, and came upon a company of about 24 Indians camped in a bend of the South fork of Holston river, between daylight and sunrise – fired on them and killed seven on the ground. Declarant understood afterwards that but one of this company of Indians ever returned to his people. From declarant’s best recollection, Andrew Colvin (or Colville) [Andrew Colville or Andrew Colvill] commanded Black’s fort at the time of this skirmish.

In the spring after declarant returned from the expedition with Col. Christy – say 1776 [1777?] – from the accounts of Indian hostilities – the citizens of Washington county considered themselves insecure and declarant went to Captain William Cocke’s where he assisted in erecting a fort, at which he staid through the summer. In the latter part of the summer or in the fall he quit the fort, the people generally returning to their homes. Declarant was then classed to take his turn in guarding the frontiers. He was repeatedly called out & sent over on Clinch river to guard the forts & frontiers there for one month at a time. He had brothers and often went in their place. He recollects being there at different times under the command of Col. [Evan] Shelby – his brother Captain Jno. Shelby [John Shelby] – a Captain Lewis [probably Aaron Lewis] & Captain Colville. He was under other officers but cannot specify their names. His tours were of a month each. Declarant’s best recollection is that from the fall of the year 1776 to the spring of 1779 during which time he was thus employed he served more, but is perfectly satisfied that it was not less than twenty months. In the early part of the year, declarant thinks about the 1st of January, 1779 He went under Col. Shelby in his expedition against the Indians to Chickamauga on Tennessee river. He was then in the company commanded by Captain James Montgomery & Lieutenant John Blackburn. There was in this expedition no fighting with the Indians except a few flying shots. They had deserted their vilages & fled. Shelby destroyed their property [10 - 20 Apr 1779] – took their cattle, horses &c &

made use of them and returned to Washington county in April or May & declarant with him. This except a very little afterwards, terminated declarants services which were altogether against the Indians – & performed as a private soldier. Declarant was in the service most of the time from the spring of 1775 to the time he returned with Shelby from Chickamauga in 1779 – but under so many various engagements & in an irregular Indian war that he cannot state the precise length of his service; he is satisfied & believes from the best of his recollection that it was not short of three years but to be specific he can state positively that it was at least two years. He states that he has no documentary evidence of his service, nor does he know of any person whose testimony he can procure who can testify to it.

He was born in the year 1756 in the United States in the County of Kent or Sussex not a great way from the Sea shore, but in what state, he is unable to say – He has no record of his age, but has the account given him by his mother and believes it true. He was living in Washington county State of Virginia when called into the service and continued to live there during the war. Six or seven years thereafter he moved from Washington county V.a. to Greene [sic: Green] County Tennessee where he lived about four or five years – from there he moved back to Washington County V.a. where he lived about six or seven years, from there he moved to Knox county Tennessee where he lived one year or perhaps longer. Knox County was divided & he fell into what is now Anderson County where he lived for about fifteen or sixteen years – from there he moved to this, Bledsoe County where he has lived about twenty four years, and where he still lives. He was a volunteer, except when he was classed to go over on Clinch river to defend the frontiers – He has given the names of his officers as well as he can recollect & the general circumstances of his service. He does not recollect ever receiving a written discharge from the service. He states that he is known in his present neighbourhood to John Dalton a clergyman, Eli Thurman esquire sheriff of Bledsoe County. Philip Thurman and Elisha Kirklin a merchant of Pikeville who can testify as to his character for veracity and their belief of his services as a soldier of the revolution.

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. Laton hisXmark Smith

NOTE: A Treasury-Department document shows that the children of Laton Smith received his final pension payment up to the date of his death, 12 Dec 1840.