

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

Pension Application of William French S37943

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Kentucky}

Shelby County} S.S. On this 20th day of January 1834. personally appeared before me Jesse Metcalf a Justice of the peace in and for Shelby County and one of the Judges of the County Court for said County William French aged 73 years who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of an act of Congress passed the 7th of June 1832

This declarant states that he was residing in Henry County State of Virginia when he entered the service of the United States and served as herein stated and under the following named officers that in the year of 1779- in the month of May in accordance with a proclamation from Coln Patrick Henry he volunteered for a tour of three months under Capt James Shelton. his Lieutant he states was by the name of [Daniel] Ross - Ensign by the name of Wells and from the great lapse of time he has forgotten the given names of the two latter officers. after this volunteer compay was organised he states under the authority of Coln Archelous Hughs [sic: Archelaus Hughes] that Capt. Shelton's company was called into the service; he states that he did rendezvous with the ballance of Capt Sheltons Company at the house of James Spencer in said County of Henry and then under the Command of Capt James Shelton marched from said place of rendezvous to the House of Coln [James] Lyon where the company encamped till Coln Hughs came up. Coln Hughs then said that the Company should march to Flour Gap in the Blue Ridge [sic: Flower Gap in present Carroll County] accordingly he states that they did march to flour Gap and was there stationed for the purpose of protecting the inhabitants from encroachments by the tories; he states that during their stay at flour Gap that they employed in scouting and spying the country in order to overawe the tories and render that section of the country secure. he states that he did remain at said encampment until the said term of three months expired when Capt. Shelton march his company back in said County of Henry when he was verbally discharged by Capt Shelton in the month of August 1779— He further states that in the month of Oct 1779. that Coln Penn received intelligence by an express that the tories in North Carolina were about to overrun the State and was requested to afford such assistance as was in his power accordingly Coln Penn informed all of the Captains belonging to his regiment to raise as many volunteers as they could to aid the army and Whigs in North Carolina, when he the said declarant did volunteer for a tour of three months under Capt John Dillard and rendezvoused at The house of Henry Francis on the South Mayho [sic: Mayo] river he states as it was an emergent expedition they were all request to attend on horses from the place of rendezvous he states that under the Command of Coln Abraham Penn and Major Price [sic: Brice] Martin they mached to the Moravian town [probably near Winston-Salem] in North Carolina on arriving at the Moravian town he states that they encamped for a short time, then they went up the Yadkin River and crossed at the Shallow ford and went to the House of a wealthy old tory where we stayed about one week. Whilst Coln Penn's regiment was here stationed it seemed to give much security to the Whigs and had a tendency to Quell the tories in that Quarter. he states that thence proceeded up the yadkin River in pursuit of tories as high as the Blue ridge where the tories usually resorted for safety. he states that they scoured the mountains in search of tories and after an unsuccessful excursion in said mountains he states that they went to Salsbury [sic: Salisbury NC] where they stayed a few days thence to the Lower Moravian towns where they remained a few days. thence they under the Command of Coln Penn marched to Henry County in Virginia where we were discharged after having served out his three months in the month of January 1780. He further states that in the month of April 1780 [sic] that a draft was ordered in said County of Henry when he the said declarant was drafted into the service of the United States for a tour of three months and rendezvoused at Henry Francis in said County of Henry and was Comanded by Capt Jonathan Hanby of said County of Henry and Major [John] Ward of Bedford Cty and Major [Charles] Rose of Amherst County, and from said place of Rendezvous he states that under the Command of the aforesaid officers he

marched to Salem in North Carolina thence they marched to Salsbury and after remaining there a few days he states that they marched to the siege of 96 [Ninety-Six SC, 22 May - 19 June 1781] where he states that the regiment to which he belonged joined General Green [sic: Nathanael Greene] and after remaining there sixteen days at the siege Lord Rowden [sic: Francis Rawdon] came with his army to the relief of the siege where General Green who had the Command ordered that the siege should be raised and the American army under the Command of Gen Green retreated across the Saluda about fourteen miles thence they marched to the Fish dam ford on Broad River [Fishdam Ford near present Carlisle SC] he states that during their retreat that they were pursued by Lord Rowden as far as the Enoree Mills. after crossing the river at the fishdam ford he states that he and others of the militia was stationed at the bank of the river expecting that Rowden was still in pursuit. he states that the militia thus posted on the bank of the river were under the command of Col [Henry] Lee after ascertaining that Rowden had given up the pursuit he state that Coln Lee recrossed the river and marched down upon the Congaree river about four or five days march from the fish dam ford after taking up an encampment he states that he with twenty seven others was detailed as a guard over a bridge across a small creek that emptied into the Congaree [illegible word] he states that in a few hours after he was stationed at the Bridge that an engagement took place between the enemy and Coln Lee's infantry and after a spirited resistance many of Lee's infantry and they likely to be overpowered Coln Lee sent his adjutant to the Bridge and ordered a retreat he states that this was about midnight and the guard dispersed; he states that the next day his said three months expired. his Capt being absent he went to Campden [sic: Camden SC] and delivered up his arms took a receipt from the officer of the Guard and returned home to Henry County Va where he joined his Capt and other officers who had gotten home before him the time of his giving up his arms he states was in the month of July 1780 [sic: 1781] This declarant further states that in the month of October 1780 [sic] that he again entered the service of the United States as a volunteer for a tour of twelve months under Capt Martin from Henry County State of Virginia Shortly after he had volunteered Capt Martin's Company was called for and rendezvous at the house of Henry Francis in said County of Henry the names of the Major and Coln. he from the great lapse of time does not recollect as they did not belong to the County he states that he was marched from s'd Henry Francis into North Carolina to disperse the Tories that were constantly annoying the army and Whig settlers. he states that under the command of said Capt Martin that he did march through North Carolina into the State of South Carolina and went into the town of Charlestown and joined the army Commanded [by] General Sumpter [sic: see note below] thence they marched to the Congaree river thence they marched to the Eutaw Springs. he states that on arriving at the Battle ground that he was detailed as a guard to the baggage waggons consequently he was not in the engagement tho the Company to which he belonged was in the engagement after the Battle was over he states that General Green marched down to ~~Charles town~~ Charlotte town [sic] where his time for which he had volunteered expired he was discharged in the month of October 1781 - He further states that in the year of 1782 that Coln Wade Hampton of South Carolina was passing through Virginia with a brigade of Baggage Waggons loaded with Military stores for the use of the army of the United States and was very much annoyed by the enemy and Tories. to secure the Waggons and Stores he the said Hampton called upon Coln. Abraham Penn of Henry County for a guard to protect the waggons and loading[?]. Coln Penn then Issued an order for a guard when he the said William French did volunteer as a guard to said Brigade of Waggons and went with them from Henry County to Mcanallys ford on Dan river. here he states that Coln Hampton was informed that the Tories had embodied for the the purpose of taking the waggons and stores Coln Hampton then ordered a retreat and the waggon returned to Henry County Va. he states that he entered as a guard to said Waggons in the month of August after returning to said County of Henry Coln Penn Issued an order to increase the Guard after a guard sufficiently strong had be raised he states that they then proceeded on their way through Salem in North Carolina to Salsbury where the he was discharged by Coln Hampton having served one month as a guard to said waggons. He also states that in the month of October 1782 John Red [sic: Redd] a waggon master was transporting military supplies from Halifax old town in Virginia to a garison on the Catawba river and when crossing through Henry County Va he the said Red called upon Coln Penn for a

guard to protect the Baggage. Coln Penn Issued an order for a guard to said waggons when he the said William French did volunteer as a guard and started with said waggons from Henry County and passed through Moravian towns in North Carolina thence they crossed the Yadkin river at the Shallow ford. thence to the garison where the Baggage was deposited he states that in the capacity of a guard he continued until the waggons made four trips from said County of Halifax to the aforesaid garrison consuming a period of two months. when he was discharged by Capt Red in December 1782 when he returned home to Henry County Va

He states that from old age and bodily infirmity that he is unable to appear in open Court to make this declaration. He has no documentary evidence of his service and knows of no living witness by whom he can prove said 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 the agency of any state

Sworn and subscribed this date and year aforesaid

[signed] Wm. French

Questions put by the Justice}

Ques. Where and in what year were you Born

Ans. I was Born in Gouchland [sic: Goochland] County State of Virginia in the year of 1761-

Ques. Have you any record of your age and if so where is it? Ans) My name is recorded in my fathers family register

Ques Where were you living when called into the service, where have you lived since the revolutionary war, and where do you now live? Ans. When I entered the service I was living in Henry County State of Virginia where I remained until the year of 1807 I then moved to Botatout [sic: Botetourt] County Va where I remained until 1817- I then moved to Shelby County Kentucky where I have lived ever since.

Ques How were you called into the service were you drafted did you volunteer or were you a substitute and if a substitute for whom. Ans) The first time I entered the service I volunteered for three months. the second time he went into the service I volunteered for three months as a horseman. the third time I was drafted for three months. the fourth time I volunteered for twelve months the fifth and sixth times I volunteered as a guard to Baggage waggons making one month of my tour as a guard and two months the second time as guard

Ques State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops where you served and such continental and militia regiments as you can recollect. Ans)) on my first tour there were no regular officers and Coln Hughs had the command of the regiment on my second tour there were no regular officers. I belonged to Coln Penns regiment. on my third tour there were no regular officers until we reached 96 and there were General Green and Colns Lee and [William] Washington. on my fourth there Gen Green, Sumpter and Marian [sic: Francis Marion] at the Eutaw Springs. On my fifth and sixth tours I do not recollect of seeing any regular officers as my service was guarding Baggage waggons through the Country to the Garrisons.

Ques did you ever receive a discharge and by whom it given and what has become of it. Ans. I never received a written discharge for any tour of service tho I was verbally discharge by my Captains from service every tour but one. I was then ordered Gen Lees adjutant to retreat We became Squandered [separated?] and my Capt and many of the soldier got home before me State the names of some 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 service as a solder of the revolution Ans. John Dale Clergyman, Benj. Bridges David White James L Russell & Jacob Baley

NOTES:

At the time of the Battle of Eutaw Springs SC on 8 Sep 1781, Gen. Thomas Sumter (often, as apparently here, misspelled "Sumpter") had resigned in a dispute over the treatment of Tories. He did not return to service until the following November. After the Battle of Eutaw Springs SC, Gen. Greene did not go to Charlotte NC, but began a prolonged campaign against the British in Charleston SC.

A document by Samuel C. French and William N. French, heirs of William French, states that William French died 14 Feb 1851, leaving a widow, Elizabeth French, who died in Shelby County on 27 Oct 1851.