

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of Michael Graham S8621

f45PA/VA

Transcribed by Will Graves

5/10/07 rev'd 9/21/15

[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. The word 'illegible' or 'indecipherable' appearing in brackets indicates that at the time I made the transcription, I was unable to decipher the word or phrase in question. 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 skills fail 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 material errors or omissions to my attention.]

State of Virginia, County of Bedford: Sct.

On this 24th day of December 1832 personally appeared in open Court before David Saunders, Samuel Hancock, Bowker Preston & George Steptoe the Justices of the County Court of Bedford now Sitting Michael Graham resident in said County of Bedford aged about 74 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 the Seventh day of September 1832.

That I was born in the State of Pennsylvania Lancaster County (now Daupin [sic, Dauphin]) Paxton Township about five miles from Harriss's Ferry on the Susquehanna River now Harrisburg [Harrisburg] that I was Seventy-four years of age the Sixth day of April Last, there was a family register which I often saw but my father removed to the State of North Carolina and took it with him and I cannot now say what has become of it. At the time of my birth my parents were forced for fear of the Indians and a circumstance took place at the time which my mother often related to me that made Such a deep impression on my mind that I shall never forget the day nor the hour of the day on which she said I was born.

Having served nine months in the Revolutionary war, one tour of six months, and another of three, as a private and not knowing any person living by whom I can prove it: and having no documentary evidence on the Subject do make the following declaration. That about the last of May or first of June 1776 being then a little turned of Eighteen years of age – I turned out a volunteer in a Company commanded by Captain J. Collier (pronounced Colyer) we composed a part of the Corps denominated the flying camp. We marched by Lancaster, Philadelphia, Trenton, Princeton, Brunswick, Amboy, Elizabethtown and Newark to New York where we were Joined the main army, after continuing some time at New York we were taken to Long Island, and Stationed at Brooklyn. There is a high ridge running from the narrows across the Island; Below this ridge the British Army lay and the Americans above. There is a road leading across this ridge at Flatbush to Brooklyn, the day before the Battle eight men were taken from the Company to which I belonged on Picket Guard, and posted near this pass, and I was one of that number. On the next morning the Battle commenced about the break of day or perhaps a little before, at the Narrows where Lord Sterling [William Alexander, Lord Stirling] commanded there was a pretty heavy cannonading kept up and occasionally the firing of Small arms, and from the sound appeared to be moving slowly towards Brooklyn. This continued for hours. At length the firing commenced above us and kept Spreading until it became general almost in every direction. We continued at our post until I think about 12 o'clock when an officer came and told us to make our escape for we were Surrounded. We immediately retreated towards our Camp. We had went but a Small distance before we Saw the enemy paraded in the road before us, we turned to the left and posted ourselves behind a Stone fence, from the movements of the Enemy we had soon to move from this position, here we got parted and I neither saw officers or men belonging to our party (with the exception of one man) during the balance of that day. I had went back a small distance before I came

to a party of our men making a Bold Stand. I Stopt; and took one fire at the Enemy but they came on with such rapidity that I retreated back into the woods, here I met Colonel Miles a regular Officer from Pennsylvania, and Lieutenant Sloan a full cousin of my own, as soon as I had loaded my gun I left them (Colonel Miles was taken prisoner and Lieutenant Sloan Killed) as the firing had ceased where I had retreated from, I returned to near the same place. I had not been at this place I think more than one minute before the British came in a different direction from where they were when I retreated firing platoons as they marched. I turned and took one fire at them and then made my escape as fast as I could, by this time our troops were routed in every direction. It is impossible for me to describe the confusion and horror of the scene that ensued. The artillery flying with the Chains over the horses' Backs, our men running in almost every direction, and run which way the [sic, they] would they were almost sure to meet the British or Hessians, and the Enemy Huzzahing when they took prisoners, made it truly a day of distress to the Americans. I escaped by getting behind the British that had been engaged with Lord Stirling, and entered a Swamp or marsh through which a great many of our men were retreating, some of them were mired and crying to their fellows for god's Sake to help them out but every man was intent on his own Safety and no assistance was rendered. At the side of the marsh there was a pond which I took to be a mill pond numbers as they came to this pond Jumped in and some were drowned soon after I entered the marsh a cannonading commenced from our Batteries on the British and they retreated and I got Safely into Camp, out of the eight men that were taken from the Company to which I belonged the day before the Battle on guard I only escaped the others were either killed or Taken prisoners. At the time I could not account for how it was that our troops were so completely surrounded, but have since understood there was another road across the ridge several miles above Flatbush that was kept unoccupied by our Troops, here the British passed and got betwixt them and Brooklyn unobserved, this accounts for the disasters of that day.¹ The night after the battle as well as recollect[ed] a heavy rain commenced, and rained incessantly nearly all the time we were on the Island, we were at length marched off in the night behind fires made along our entrenchments to the East River, here boats were ready to receive us and we were landed in New York a little before the Break of day. We continued but a Short time in New York we were then marched in the night over Kings bridge and encamped Several miles to the east or northeast of this Bridge, we continued here I think about two months or upwards while we lay at this place nothing important transpired in which we were engaged except some little Skirmishing with the Hessians. At length the British made their appearance near a place called West Chester, here some cannonading and skirmishing took place, we then retreated to the white plains [October 28, 1776], with the main army here we halted, threw up entrenchments and waited the approach of the enemy. Here an engagement took place betwixt part [of] our troops and the British and everything seemed to indicate a general engagement, but the British declined attacking us, from this place we retreated a few miles further up the Country here we continued some time. At length we were taken over the North River and encamped at a village called Spangtown, while we lay at this place, Fort Washington was taken [November 16, 1776], we could distinctly hear the firing. From Spangtown we commenced our retreat through the Jerseys, passing through Elizabethtown to Brunswick, soon after we crossed the Raritan [River] the British came in Sight, here some maneuvering and Cannonading took place but it is believed without effect on either side. This was the last sight I saw of the British that campaign; from Brunswick we marched through Princeton to Trenton, this as well as I recollect was about the first of December, our time had now expired we were discharged and I returned home. This was a Tour of Six months, during my absence my father sold his plantation with an intention of removing to the State of North Carolina and my oldest brother having removed to Virginia and Settled in Rockbridge County and was then Rector of Liberty Hall Academy, in the Spring of the year 1777 I came to Virginia and lived several years with him. In the month of July being then a resident of Rockbridge County I was drafted as a militia man

¹ The veteran appears to be describing his experiences in the Battle of Long Island fought August 27, 1776.

and went under the command of Captain James Gilmour the Subalterns were Samuel McCampbell and John Kilpatrick, our field officers were Colonel Samuel Lewis and Major Long. We were marched by way of Richmond and after many marches and Counter marches, Cornwallis at length Posted himself in near York, from this time to the arrival of General Washington we encamped betwixt Williamsburg and York. Soon after his arrival we were marched down to the investment of York and encamped below the town here we continued until about four or five days before the Surrender of Cornwallis [Cornwallis surrendered October 19, 1781] – our time had now expired and we were discharged. This was a three months Tour. In the month of February 1786 I married in Rockbridge County & the fall of the year 1787, I removed with my family to Bedford County where I have resided from that time to the present. I rendered nine months actual Service to my Country during the Revolutionary war having never failed in a Single instance to perform the duties required as far as I can now recollect from Sickness or any other cause. The Secretary of war requires applicants to give the names of the field officers under whom they served. I would here observe that the Recollection of names was the first and is yet the principal thing in which I have found my memory to fail me, the field officers under whom I served in the year 1776 I have never seen before that Campaign nor have I Seen them since – as well as I can recollect the Colonel's name was Clendenan but cannot be positive – one thing I distinctly recollect that part of the time we were under command of Colonel or General Hand [Edward Hand] he was styled by the troops General. I hereby relinquish every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and declare that my name is not on the pension Roll of any agency of any State.

In answer to interrogatories propounded by the Court the said Michael Graham States:

1st That he was born in Pennsylvania Lancaster County Paxton Township on the 6th day of April 1758.

2nd That the record of his age was carried by his father to North Carolina when he removed to that State and that he cannot say what has become of it.

3rd That when he entered the Service in 1776 he resided in the State of Pennsylvania, Lancaster County, Paxton Township the place of his nativity. In the year 1777 he removed to Rockbridge County Virginia & resided in that County when called into service in the year 1781. He continued to reside there until the year 1787 when he removed to the County of Bedford and State of Virginia where he has resided ever since.

4th That he entered the service as a volunteer in 1776. He was drafted in the year 1781.

5th That the names of the officers with whom he served in 1776 are General Sullivan who commanded the troops between Brooklyn and Flatbush at the Battle of Long Island-- a Colonel Miles commanded a Regiment which Lay contiguous to ours when stationed in New York. He has no recollection of any Continental or Militia regiments with whom he Served. The general circumstances of the Campaign are Stated in the Body of the declaration. In the Campaign of 1781 He joined the Militia from other Counties in Virginia at Richmond – on the march the Officers were frequently changed. He remembers to have been under the command of Colonel St. George Tucker twice. The whole of the Militia were commanded by General Nelson until Cornwallis posted himself at York Town where the whole were commanded by General Washington. He has no distinct recollection of the Continental or Militia regiments with whom he served except as stated in the body of his declaration – and the general circumstances of his services in this tour of their also detailed.

6th He was regularly discharged but he does not now recollect by whom his discharges were signed. His services was a matter of public notoriety, and not having the least expectation of any pecuniary remuneration for his services, he set no value upon his discharges and they have long since been lost.

7th That he is extensively known in his neighborhood and County. He is Known to every member of the Court. He served for about 17 or 18 years as a Magistrate in the County. He has filled the office of High Sheriff and is now Escheator and commissioner of the revenue. These circumstances are detailed because the proof of his services must rest mainly upon the credit given to his own declaration – they are mentioned to show that when he is known confidence is reposed in him. He knows of no person now living by whom his services can be established.

S/ M. Graham²

Subscribed and Sworn to and Court by Michael Graham

[James Mitchell, a clergyman, and David Saunders gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

[Facts in file: Veteran died May 18, 1834, place not stated; there is no family data in this file other than the references made to family members contained in the declaration is transcribed above.]

[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$30 per annum commencing March 4th, 1831, for service as a private in the Pennsylvania and Virginia service.]

² Not the actual signature of the veteran