

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of Francis Cole W8615 Martha Cole VA
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Virginia } Ss:
County of Dinwiddie }

On this 17th day of September, 1832, personally appeared in open Court, before the Justices of the County Court of Dinwiddie County, now sitting Francis Cole a resident of the County & State aforesaid, aged 81 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 Officers, & served as herein stated, towit; That soon after hostilities commenced with Great Britain, but he does not recollect the precise date, and in the very first militia company which was called out from the County of Chesterfield, where he was born & lived until after the termination of the revolutionary war, he was drafted as a private under Capt. Ben. Branch [Benjamin Branch] of that County & performed a three month's tour of duty. His Lieut was Isham Cheatham, & his Ensign was ____ Wouldridge [sic: Wooldridge] – that the company was attached to a Reg't. commanded by Colo. [Robert] Goode & was marched first to Hampton – then to Portsmouth – subsequently to York, then to Williamsburg where the company remained until it was discharged. That the British during most of the time were in Hampton roads & other parts of the Bay & often sent parties up the rivers to plunder & harrass, which occasioned the frequent movements of the militia.

That the next tour was commenced in about two months after his return, in the company from the same C'y. commanded by Capt. Creed Haskins, that one of his subalterns was named Turpin but he does not recollect the other. this company was placed under command of Colo. [John] Bott, & marched to Williamsburg & a number of other positions up & down the James River from Richmond down to watch the enemy & endeavour to keep them from landing & prevent as much mischief as they could & after the three months service ended, was discharged at Portsmouth. That the third tour which (as was uniformly the case from his situation between the James & Appomatox Rivers) was commenced within ab't two months after his return from the second, (& indeed he frequently did not remain at home half that time together) he was called out under Capt John Hill whose Lieut. was ____ Elam – Ensign not recollected. This company was under command of the same Colo. Goode as on the first tour – served generally this the three months up & down James River. It was during this tour that the enemy under Philips & Arnold came up to Petersburg [Gen. William Phillips and Gen. Benedict Arnold, March 1781] & while they were there, his company with three others were stationed at Sudsbury's in Chesterfield on James River [Sudbury's 3 mi NW of Chesterfield], & some tory having guided a large party of British Cavalry to the place they came on the militia entirely unexpected [23 May] – their Colo. was about at the time at home (residing [illegible word] & expecting no danger), & Maj'r. Scott the next in command immediately retreated. It was a rainy day & not one gun in fifty would fire. The British took about fifty prisoners among whom was his cousin Hamelin Cole & about fifteen others of his company but he himself escaped.

The fourth tour he went under Capt. Arch'd. Baugh [Archibald Baugh] – does not remember either subaltern. The Colo. was Bott – the same as on the second tour they were marched & kept principally on the North side of the upper part of James River from Richmond above – in the Counties of Henrico & Goochland – this was while parties of the British were going thro' the country – particularly Tarlton's corps of Cavalry [sic: Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton's Legion] – were penetrated to Prince Edward.

(*here belongs what is written on page 3.)

(*This belongs at the asterisk on pa. 2)

and a party went as far as Charlottesville [6 Jun 1781]. The object of the militia was to watch the motions

of some of these parties & counteract them as far as possible. He served is three months out on this occasion & was finally discharged below Richmond at old Jamestown whither they had gone by land watching a party of the enemy that descended by water & often attempted to land – spoil the inhabitants &c.

5. The next three months tour of duty was performed under the same Capt. Branch (as on the first tour) – does not recollect positively who were his subalterns on this occasion – having served so often, under different officers, he finds some confusion in his memory from the length of time in distinguishing those who command on one tour from other tours. This company was not under any Colonels immediate command but with a party commanded by Major Frank Goode [Francis Goode] and was not stationed long at any one position – but at Williamsburg – Portsmouth – Norfolk & other places up & down the River, in which parties of the enemy from their ships still lying in the Bay were very troublesome. His company was discharged at Portsmouth.

6. The next three months tour of duty was under Capt. Creed Haskins again – his Ensign was Trabue, does not remember certainly the Lieutenant. The company constituted part of the Reg't. commanded by Colo. Flournoy, & served principally in various position on both sides of the River in the neighbourhood of Richmond & was ultimately discharged on the North side of the James between Richmond & the Chickahominy River.

7. The next three months tour of duty was performed under Capt. Hill again, Lieut. Isham Cheatham again – Ensign not recollected – attached to Colo. Goode's Reg't who was there again in service himself. This Regiment was engaged during its whole tour pretty much as has been before described – at Williamsburg, Portsmouth & up & down James River watching parties of the enemy & was ultimately discharged just above James Town.

8. The next three months tour of duty was discharged under Capt. Sam'l. Elam [Samuel Elam] Lieut. Turpin – Ensign not remembered The Colo. was Bott again & the service performed was precisely similar to the former – in the neighbourhood of Norfolk Williamsburg &c on lower James River. That during the progress of this tour the British ships left our waters & the militia lay idle at Williamsburg about five weeks believing that the British had gone around to the North – on the end of the three months was discharged at Williamsburg, & in about a fortnight after, the British returned to our waters.

9. That he soon after performed another three months tour under Capt. Baugh again – was marched from Chesterfield Ct. H. through Petersburg – thence down south side of Appomatox to its junction with the James – thence down south side below Jamestown thence to Portsmouth – were stationed there some time the British again went off & staid some time – his company was marched to a place called “the burnt mills” [Mackie's Mills] where the enemy had destroyed some valuable manufacturing mills in Isle of Wight County where they were ultimately discharged.

10. That soon after he was called out again under Capt. Haskins (having served three tours under Haskins & three under Branch & four under Hill he thinks in all). The three months were expended principally in marching up & down James River. The crossed the James at Bermuda hundred over to the north side – from intelligence brought that the enemy were about to land opposite Williamsburg – hurried down to that place – it turned out that they did not land – staid some time at Wmsbg – went to Portsmouth where ultimately discharged.

11. The next tour of the same duration was performed under Capt. Hill again in similar services which were of very harrassing character up & down James River. Our Cavalry were always in sight of those parties of the enemy which were running up & down the River & which frequently landed & did much mischief – & very often expresses from the Cavalry who supposed the observed evidences of an intention on the part of the enemy to land, would cause forced marches on the part of the militia often unavailing, as the enemy would alter their plans & go off elsewhere – the company was discharged that time below Petersburg at City Point.

That he thinks he served one more tour before that in which he went to N. Carolina, but is not

distinct in his recollection especially as he cannot recal any of the incidents of it.

12 Some time after, but he finds it impossible from memory to indicate the particular year in which any particular tour was performed, having retained no written memorandums, he was called out on a tour under Capt. Branch – with a Reg't. commanded by Colo. Bott, that they marched thro' Petersburg & thence on to Guilford in N. Carolina, where he was in the engagement which took place there with the British having arrived about two days before it [Battle of Guilford Courthouse, 15 Mar 1781]. In the confusion of the flight he got separated from his company – in the woods – about 15 or 20 miles from Guilford was taken by a party of Tories who confined him about four weeks – on no food but bread, & insufficiency of that. That they then after many threats & great sufferings on his part they branded him on both hands the marks of which he now exhibits to the court & turned him loose, & he wandered about a fortnight on foot before he got home, so weak that he was scarcely able to walk.

13. In about three weeks after his return, & after getting recruited in strength, he was again called out under Capt. Hill & Colo. Flounoy – marched thro' Petersb'g, thence down the River to Portsmouth & other positions on the river & was discharged at the end of the three months at Hampton.

14. That he performed one other tour after this previously to the one in which he attended the siege of York, at points up & down James River, but is unable to recollect under what officers he went on that occasion, having so frequently been called out, & altho' he feels conscious that he has not recited as many tours in number as he actually served up to this point of time, for that he was almost constantly out during the whole war – living with a few miles of James River, he is unable to state even this last with any thing like precision, or satisfaction to his own mind.

15. The last tour he performed was under Capt. Wouldrige & Colo. Goode under whom he marched to York where they arrived three or four days after the siege had commenced [28 Sep 1781] where he assisted in the works & in the siege until its termination [19 Oct]. Had the gratification of seeing Gen'l. Washington every day as his Marque was very near the Declarants tent – saw Lord Cornwallis, but not when the British marched out on their surrender, but when he crossed York River to go with that part of the prisoners who were carried up to Winchester. That when the enemy marched out of York he was one of the party who received their arms & assisted in storing them away in an old barn around[?] which the British had been compelled to stack them. That he was then detailed as one of the party who guarded the prisoners up to Winchester where he was discharged on their arrival.

[End of insertion]

The declarant states that he was in actual service in the militia in the revolutionary war altogether he thinks as much as four years altho' he cannot recollect distinct tours quite to that amount That he was in no engagement other than those enumerated in this Declaration heretofore & rec'd. no wound. That he rec'd. written discharges he thinks on each occasion which were subsequently burnt as previously stated, & he possesses not documentary evidence of his services. That he has no written register of his age the Bible in which there was one, together with his discharges which he preserved having been burnt, when his house was burnt down about ten years ago, but does not doubt from information always given to him, that it is what he has above represented. That he was born, & resided in the County of Chesterfield until after the war, & performed the services he rendered under requisitions on the militia from that County & that about 4 years after the war he removed to the County of Prince Edward & lived there until he removed to Dinwiddie in the year 1819 or 1820 where he has ever since resided. That most of these with whom he served & all the officers have long since died but he refers the Court to the written affidavits (filed herewith) of Nathan Anderson [pension application W5626] & Hamlin Cole [S39342], taken before a Magistrate of Chesterfield, where they reside, as they could not from their age and infirmities attend this Court with any convenience, and also to the certificate of the Rev'd. Henry C. Thweatt, who knows that he has always been reputed & believed to have been a revolutionary soldier.

He the said Francis Cole hereby relinquishes his every claim whatever to a pension, or annuity, except the present, & declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state.

Sworn to & subscribed the day & year aforesaid. Francis hisXmark Cole
[Nathan Anderson certified that Francis Cole served a tour under Col. Goode and was discharged at McKays Mills in Nansemond County. Hamlin Cole certified that Francis Cole was at the skirmish at Sudbury's and the siege of Yorktown.]

State of Virginia; Dinwiddie County Sct.

On this 20th day of May 1833 personally appeared in open Court before the Justices of the County Court of Dinwiddie now sitting Francis Cole, who being first duly sworn, states in addition to the Declaration heretofore made by him, in order to obtain a pension & which is appended hereto that by reason of old age and the consequent loss of memory, he cannot positively swear to the precise period of time, months days &c in which he was engaged in service during the revolutionary war, with any more particularity than he has heretofore done – nor can he from the same cause state the names of any Regular officers, who were with the troops where he served, or what continental or militia regiments served with him, other or further than he has already done – having to the very best of his remaining recollection stated the names of every officer and other requisite pointed out in the interrogatories to him which he can.

As to the names of persons to whom he is known in his present neighbourhood, who can testify as to his character for veracity, & their belief of his revolutionary services, he refers to the Rev'd. Henry C. Thweatt and Drury Moore, whose certificates have been already taken by the Court.

Sworn to and subscribed the day & year aforesaid Francis hisXmark Cole

NOTE: On 17 Feb 1853 Martha Cole, 88, of the City of Petersburg, applied for a pension stating that as Martha Cliborn she was married on 25 Dec 1802 by Rev. Abner Watkins to Francis Cole, who died 17 Aug 1834. The file includes a certificate of the marriage from Prince Edward County VA. On an application for bounty land dated 31 Jan 1856 her age was said to be 94.