

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of John Wheeler W8999

Susanna Wheeler f53NC

Transcribed by Will Graves

revised 5/26/10 & 8/22/21

[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' or 'undeciphered' 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. Researchers should not rely solely on the transcripts but should review the originals for themselves. These transcripts are intended as an aid to research, not to be used in lieu thereof.]

State of Kentucky, Livingston County SS:

On this Sixth day of May 1833 personally appeared in open Court before P. J. Brown, C. Haynes, James Ray & James Duvall Esquires justices of the County Court of said County and state, now sitting, John Wheeler, resident of said County in, aged about Seventy six 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 1776 the Cherokee Indians began to show signs of hostility towards the frontiers of the Carolinas and Georgia, and on the Holston River. At this time I moved from Surry County, North Carolina out to Holston [River] with my brother & his family – my object being to aid him in making a settlement. We reached the Holston in the spring of the year (1776) and found the inhabitants busily preparing for the expected troubles from the Indians. They were forting up all on the frontiers and the men were organized into Companies under various officers. In June of that year I volunteered in this service under Captain Bohannon. The Indians were now daily expected – Some of the families had then removed up into the interior. All the force of the frontier was now about 170 men under Captains Bohannon, Cocke [perhaps Capt. William Cocke, then of the Virginia militia, later under Col. Evan Shelby, Sr. and Col. Isaac Shelby], Campbell¹ & McFarland as well as I remember. In a short time the Indians appeared about 300 strong under a chief called Draggon Canoe [sic, Dragging Canoe]. We met them near the long Islands of Holston (where we built a fort) on the Long Islands flats where a severe battle was fought and the Indians defeated with a loss of about 100 warriors as they afterwards confessed and their chief severely wounded. These Indians had mustered a considerable force and intended a simultaneous attack on several of the forts along the frontier, and for this purpose had divided themselves into two divisions, one of which was commanded by Dragging Canoe and was directed against Long Islands fort as before stated; and the other was directed against the Watauga fort. Learning this to be the plan of the Indians, as soon as the battle just related was over, Captain Bohannon's Company marched immediately to the relief of the Watauga fort; but the party that went against this fort had heard of the defeat at the Long Islands & immediately fled. After this battle and expulsion of the Indians, we returned to the fort at Long Islands which

¹ Captains John Campbell, Patrick Campbell and William Campbell all served in the Washington County NC militia with John Campbell being the most likely candidate since he commenced service as a captain as early as 1776 under Col. Evan Shelby, Sr.

was built on the bank near the head of the Islands. Here we remained guarding this fort and surrounding Country until the arrival of Colonel Christie [sic, William Christian] with a considerable force to our relief and for the protection of the Country. Christie was from Virginia and immediately upon his arrival I and a good many others joined him as a volunteer private. I think he arrived at the fort in the month of October 1776. I well remember it was in the fall. The whole of my old company and the Captain himself (Bohannon) joined the forces of Christie. I still belonged to his company and remained so while we were under Christie. In a few days after Christie's arrival, we marched into the Indian Country and burnt and destroyed their towns, corn and provisions, but we had no engagement with them as they fled. After over running the Country, we returned to the fort and were discharged in the latter part of December following. Having thus been in constant and laborious service from the month of June to the latter part of December, being at least as much as six months. In one of the towns destroyed by of us we found six cannon [left] there some years before in what was called Byrd's campaign.² Myself and 29 others were selected to transport these cannon by canoes to the Fort which we did with great labor and great danger to ourselves, and were but poorly paid, though liberal pay was promised. On the day of my discharge as above mentioned, I again volunteered as a private under Captain Joseph Martin (Known as Colonel Martin) from Virginia, who had arrived for the purpose of guarding the frontiers against the Indians as hostilities were still carried on. As well as I remember Martin commanded volunteer company. We marched to a place called the Rye Coves of Clynch [sic, Clinch River], which was a frontier station and remained there on constant duty until the month of June following (1777) when a treaty was held with the Indians by Colonel Christie which was expected to restore peace to the frontiers; but a part of the Indians broke off and refused to treat for peace – this party still continued hostilities and was known as the Dragging Canoe party with whom we had fought at the Long Islands the year before; since which time they had built a fort down on the Tennessee River, and they kept up a constant warfare with the frontiers and were sometimes bold and daring in their incursions. This required a constant force and diligent watch on the frontier. Our station was still at the Rye Cove where we [sic] our service was most required and most available. Indeed we pretty well protected the Country from the depredations by keeping out spies, guards &c. We remained at this place and on this service until the month of March 1779 as well as I remember, when Colonel Evan Shelby (the father of Colonel Isaac Shelby afterwards Governor of Kentucky) raised a volunteer force to go against these Indians. The troops under Shelby assembled in March 1779 and in the same month I joined them, under Captain Henry Clark (afterwards Col. Clark and whose daughter is now my wife) and under Ben Clark [Benjamin Clark], Lieutenant of the company. We marched down the Tennessee River to a place called the Suck [? could be "Lick"],³ and from thence to an Indian town called Chickamauga which we destroyed, and also several Indians. This put a stop to hostilities for a while. This expedition lasted two months in which I served as a volunteer private. On our return to the fort we were discharged. After this expedition we had an interval of peace and relaxation of duty, for the spirit of the Indians seemed subdued. But this did not

² Perhaps a reference to William Byrd III (1728-1777) who served as commanding officer of the 2nd Virginia Regiment during the French and Indian War and then succeeded George Washington as head of the 1st Virginia Regiment.

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last a great while, for in the fall of the next year (1780) the Indians on the Hiwassee became exceedingly troublesome and to suppress them Colonels Sevier [John Sevier] and Clark each raised a volunteer Regiment and I again volunteered in this service, and was commissioned Lieutenant of the company commanded by Captain Ben Clark (then my brother-in-law). This company was attached to Colonel Clark's Regiment, which was a Regiment of horse. My recollection is (and I feel quite certain of it) that I entered this service in the month of November 1780. We arrived at the Hiwassee towns on Christmas Eve, and immediately destroyed them, and killed and took many of the Indians, and indeed almost totally destroyed the Country. This was deemed necessary as they had waged an unceasing war against the frontiers and theretofore nothing could sooth them, although terms of peace had been offered them and every exertion used to conciliate them. But this expedition answered the purpose. In this expedition I served one month as Lieutenant aforesaid.

Again in the fall of the year 1781 (but the month I cannot remember) I again entered the service as a volunteer, and was appointed Lieutenant of the company to which I belonged commanded by Captain Cavits [probably Moses Cavett of the Sullivan County NC militia under Col. Isaac Shelby] and the Regiment was commanded by the same Colonel Henry Clark (Colonel Sevier also commanded a Regiment at the same[]), both of which had been drafted to subdue the Tories about Cross Creek against whom was the object of this expedition. On our way intelligence was brought us that these Tories had been defeated already. We continued however our march to Charlottetown, and there for the first time we learned of the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown [October 19, 1781]. We spent one day in rejoicing with our friends, and on the next proceeded to join General Green [sic, Nathanael Greene], then at the high hills of Santee. On arriving there Greene informed our Colonel that it would be more advantageous then to join his forces to Marion [Francis Marion], then low down on the Santee, near the swamps. Accordingly we proceeded to join him at that place. At this time the British lay at Ferguson's Swamp, but shortly afterwards broke off their camp and moved towards Charleston. A detachment under Colonels Clark and Sevier was ordered out by Marion to watch the enemies movements. My company comprised a part of this detachment – and our orders were to come to no engagement, but to cut off as many of the enemy as possible. We followed on their rear and flanks and succeeded in taking a Sergeant Major prisoner, who informed us that we were then near the enemy's picket guard. Upon this we took a circuit and came to a large brick house which had been set on fire – some of our men dismounted and saved some articles from the flames. Not far from this place we intercepted a party of the enemy consisting of ninety men, who we took prisoners, and we returned immediately to Marion's camp. We made these prisoners near a place called Monks Corner [sic, Moncks Corner]. Among them was one Tory who was killed by one of our light horse. Soon after this we were discharged I think in February 1782, having served in this last expedition three months. This was the last of my Revolutionary Services that I shall mention, though I was several expeditions afterwards against the Tories, who continued troublesome until the early part of 1783. I cannot now detail the circumstances and time of these expeditions so distinctly as required, and they may therefore go for nothing. Indeed from June 1776 to the beginning of 1783 I was almost constantly on service having various respites from duty, but not of long duration. The services for which I claim, and those for which I do think myself entitled, are the six months service under Captain Bohannon, and Colonel Christie, and for the 15 months I was under Captain Martin at the Rye Cove; and two months under Colonel Shelby and one month in the Hiwassee campaign as a Lieutenant and for the expedition of three months to Carolina as Lieutenant as aforesaid. For these surely I am

entitled, making in all as much as ___ months service, four of which I was the commissioned Lieutenant of the company. Before I was commissioned Lieutenant, I had been elected by my company, and my commission was brought from Hillsborough by Col. Clark, on his return as a member of the Legislature. I declare that I have no documentary evidence in my possession (having lost my commission within the last two or three years) which would prove my service, either as a private or officer, but I have written to North Carolina for a copy of my commission, which will be sent on if it can be obtained. My memory being now very frail, I cannot say positively who signed my commission, but I think it was Governor Caswell [Richard Caswell]. My commission has often been seen by my family among my old papers, but it cannot be now found although careful search has been made. One of my sons thinks he threw it away about two years ago as useless paper – this is my misfortune, if no other proof will answer the department as my declaration has once been returned for want of proof, of having acted as an officer. I know of no person living by whom I can prove I acted as such and only one living by whom I could prove my part of any service and that is Isaac [illegible last named, looks like “Pitworth”]⁴ who moved to Arkansas about 13 years ago, then a very old man, and whether now living I do not know, and I have no means of procuring his evidence. All others who knew anything of my services are dead as far as I know. I moved to this Country many years ago, and if any are living in the South I do not know of them. I hereby relinquish every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present, and I declare that my name is not on the pension roll of the Agency of any state or Territory. And the said court propounded to the said applicant the following interrogatories as prescribed by the War Department, to which he made the subjoined answers, to wit:

1st: Where and in what year were you born?

Answer: I was born in the County of Prince Edward Virginia but the precise time I do not know, but from the tradition of my family and the best information I have received, I am now about 76 years of age, and perhaps a little more.

2nd Have you any record of you age and if so, where is it?

Answer. I have none. The family record was lost in the Revolution.

3rd Where were you living when called into service? Where have you lived since the Revolutionary War and where do you now live?

Answer. As stated by me before, early in 1776 I came out to the frontier on the Holston with a brother and his family from the County of Sussex [sic, Surry?], state of North Carolina and in June following I entered service while on the frontiers near the Long Islands. After the War I lived a few years in North Carolina and moved to South Carolina on the Saluda River and remained there about 11 years. From there I moved to Shelby County Kentucky and lived there about two years, when I moved to the County (Livingston) where I have lived ever since.

4th How were you called into service; were you drafted; did you volunteer, or were you a substitute and if so for whom did you substitute?

Answer. I was a volunteer in all my service.

5th State the names of some of the Regular Officers who were with the troops where you served, such Continental and Militia Regiments as you can recollect and the general circumstances of your service.

Isaac Pitworth

Answer. I served altogether with militia, except when in the expedition into South Carolina to serve under Greene as before mentioned. We remained so short a time with him that I do not recollect the names of any regular officers but Greene himself. I have mentioned the militia regiments with which I was acquainted.

6th Did you ever receive a commission; and if so by whom was it given; and what has become of it?

Answer: I did receive a commission as Lieutenant, signed by Governor Caswell, if I am not mistaken, but of this I am not positive – it may have been Burke. It was brought over by Col. Clark from Hillsborough. This commission was a printed one, and I kept it among my old papers until within two or three years past – but it cannot now be found for I have made diligent search. It is thought one of my sons carelessly destroyed it, supposing it useless. I also received some discharges from the service as a private and they are also long since lost.

7th State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighborhood, and who can testify to your character for veracity and good behavior and your services as a Soldier of the Revolution.

Answer. I am known to many – amongst them are Reverend John Travis, Robert Phillips, William Thompson, George Elder, Isaac S. Coffield, William Stewart Esq., James Cruce Esq., Colonel Joseph Hughes, General Elder and many others.

S/ John Wheeler, X his mark

[William H. Bradley, a clergyman, William Stewart & James Cruce gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

I Isaac Wheeler resident of said County of Livingston, and State aforesaid aged 32 years do declare, that about five years ago my mother and myself had occasion to look over the papers of my father, John Wheeler, who is the above applicant for a pension (for the purpose of finding a receipt) and in that search I came across a very ancient commission, appointing my said father a Lieutenant, which commission had a large seal to it under which was a ribbon. I do not remember whose name was signed to it, nor what date it, but it was very ancient and much worn. After reading it, my mother told me it was my father's Revolutionary Commission, and was now of no use to him and to throw it amongst his old papers. What I done with it I do not now remember, although I have lately reflected much on it. I have an impression that I started with [it] to my own house, and in handling it tore off the seal. What has become of it, I know not, nor do I remember of seeing it since. This is all I remember about it, and I will not be more positive.

Sworn to and subscribed in open Court the day and year aforesaid.

S/ Isaac Wheeler

[p 13: On May 1, 1844 in Crittenden County, Kentucky, Mrs. Nancy Wheeler, aged 82 on the 21st day of July 1843 having been born on July 21, 1761, filed for her widow's pension under the 1836 I stating that she is the widow of John Wheeler, a pensioner of the revolution; that "she had a brother, a lad like by the name of Benjamin Clark, who would go with the men, scouting & guarding the Settlements & frontier And about this time, He was at the little Fort near the Island receiving & taking care of the men's provisions & she desiring to see him & to take him some clothes did go down herself, all the way to the Fort & there bound him. The men were then mostly out on duty. She very well recollects that time Colonel Christie came along & took the men from the Fort into the Indian Country on duty. Mr. Wheeler & my father & brother went with him, they were gone some time & returned in the winter, to the best of my recollection.

Some of the men, that went out with Colonel Christie, came back, quite unwell, one man a Mr. Williams died about a mile or such as matter from her father's. She saw him buried. He died at Mr. Hoozers. After this Captain or Colonel Joseph Martin from Virginia, who she knew wanted volunteers. And Mr. Wheeler, her husband again volunteered, they were at this time still single & unmarried, ... That her father Henry Clark & Brother Benjamin Clark & Mr. Wheeler again volunteered, under Colonel Shelby. Her father went as Captain & her Brother Benjamin as Lieutenant & Mr. Wheeler as a soldier -- they were at this time still single & unmarried. That when they returned she heard her father, brother & Mr. Wheeler talk of being at a place called the "Lusk" & of what was done & there hardships, that she thinks they destroyed on this duty a town of the Indians called Chief a muanger or some such name."; that she married her husband at her father's house in North Carolina she thinks in Greene County; that they were married on December 15, 1779; that she has no record of their marriage and she arrives at the date by the age of her eldest child his name is Henry Wheeler and who was born on November 16, 1780 just 11 months lacking one day after her marriage, Henry Wheeler his birth date being set down in a Bible now in possession of her son Isaac Wheeler; that her husband died November 24, 1838 in Chittenden County Kentucky when it was Livingston County; that she had 13 children by her husband and raised 10 of them.]

[p 21: family record]

Deaths

John Wheeler Departed this life the 24th day of November 1838 aged about 86 years

Births

Henry Wheeler was born November 16 1780

James Wheeler was born October 16th 1782

John Wheeler was born December the 9th 1784

Maryann Wheeler was born December 25th 1786

Sally Wheeler was born May 10th, 1789

Benjamin was born March 22nd 1791

Polly Wheeler was born July 28th 1793

Matilda Wheeler was born June 25th 1798

Isaac Wheeler was born June 25th 1800

Susan Wheeler was born March 11th 1804

Susannah Clark was born July 21st 1762

Henry Clark Senior was born October 8th 1732

Sarah Jones was born July the 26 1737

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Susannah Leland Wheeler was
 born July 21st 1762

Henry Curtis Sr.
 was born Sept 8th
 1732

Sarah Jones
 was born July the
 26th 1737

[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$80 per annum commencing March 4th, 1831 for 2 years service as a private in the revolution. His widow was pensioned at a like amount.]