

[Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements](#)

Pension Application of James Kelly: S1544: transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

Declaration

In order to obtain benefit of the act of Congress of the 7th of June 1832

State of Tennessee} Circuit Court April Term

Maury County} AD. 1835 April 2d[?] 1835

On this day personally appeared before John W. Cook Judge of said court presiding James Kelly a resident of Maury County in the State of Tennessee aged about Seventy five years who having been 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 and served as hereinafter stated (to wit) He was born in Pittsylvania County in the State of Virginia he thinks in the year 1760 from his best recollection - he had a record of his age in a Bible of his father's but the Bible he lost more than twenty years ago in the State of South Carolina so that he has no written record of his age, nor has he had one for a long time - His father with Declarant lived in said Pittsylvania county until a short time before the commencement of the Revolutionary War, when his father moved to Greenbrier County , Virginia. Declarant was with his father in said Greenbrier county but a short time until his father was killed by the [page torn] ...ians his father having before that [illegible word] his family (Declarant among the rest) to Arbuckle's Fort [sic: Arbuckle's Fort, erected by Cap. William Arbuckle on Muddy Creek in Greenbrier County now WV in 1774] but remaining himself at home, where he was killed by the indians - after the death of Declarants father Declarant with his mother & family moved back to Pittsylvania county and shortly after the commencement of the war his mother & family moved to South Carolina Curshaw [sic: Kershaw] county or District Camden District. Declarant was living in said Curshaw county when he went into service. Declarant lived in said Curshaw county until some years after the Revolutionary war- the precise length of time he cannot recollect - he married shortly after the war & was there until he had seven children, which he thinks was about 14 years - he then moved to the State of Tennessee Green [sic: Greene] County and lived there 3 or 4 years - then moved to Williamson County Tennessee and staid there 2 or 3 years, then he moved to Maury county Tennessee, he lived a good many years in said Maury county but cannot recollect how many years - he moved to Hickman count Tennessee about 12 years ago & lived there until March 1834 when he moved back to Maury county. He now lives in Maury county in the State of Tennessee- Declarant in his first tour was drafted in all other tours Declarant volunteered- He saw Gen'l Morgan Col. Washington [sic: Lt. Col. William Washington] Col. Howard & Col. Pickens at the Battle of the Cowpens- these he understood to be regular officers - He saw Gen'l Moultrie, Gen'l Sumpter [sic: Gen. Thomas Sumter], Gen'l Marion, Col. Armstrong[?], Major Simmons[?] and many other regular officers - He was drafted the first time early in the spring, the year he cannot recollect, under Capt. Creighton Liut. Grimes or Graham & Col. or Major Simmons commanded the regiment- [word illegible] at Camden South Carolina remained near two weeks there - They then crossed the Wateree & marched towards Savanah [sic: Savannah] River to a place called the Black Swamp near a place on Savanah called Two Sisters [sic: in present Hampton County SC] - but some distance from the Two Sisters before Declarant in Simmons Regiment arrived there they met Gen'l. Moultrie with a good many men- he thinks when they all got together there was about 1800[?]. We stayed at the Two Sisters to keep the British from crossing- but the British crossed the river below which made Moultrie retreat up the country - Moultrie retreated to Pacatelego [sic: Pocatigo River in present Sumter and Clarendon counties in SC] a small river & crossed it upon a Bridge - there were two bridges across this stream about a mile apart- The army crossed at the upper bridge- & sent a detachment part regulars & part volunteers to guard the lower bridge in all he think 211[?] men - he cannot recollect who commanded the detachment - the British came up and attacked this detachment and killed a great many- Declarant in this detachment in this detachment the British [word illegible] this detachment and crossed the river the remnant of the detachment joined Moultrie - Moultrie marched us on day & night for three or four days until they came to a Bridge called Bacon's bridge he cannot recollect the name of the river- The British went back

towards Charlestown [sic: now spelled Charleston]- Moultrie stayed at Bacon's Bridge a few days & Governor Rutledge [sic: Rutledge] joined him with his army in a day or two and he was discharged. he got a written discharge signed by Thomas Creighton except he has lost said discharge - after this discharge he returned home to Cashaw [sic: Kershaw] county - in a very short time [sic: see note below] he volunteered under Col. Washington. they did not rendezvous at any particular place - there was but 2 or 3 volunteered when he did - Washington had[?] about 200[?] horse at that time - Declarant wasn't a horseman & found his own horse - he cannot recollect the name of his captain - those [word illegible] with Washington Col. Howard & Col. Pickens - all the men he thinks amounted to 300[?] He marched to a garrison called Rugeley's [sic: Rugeley's Mill SC] occupied by Tories and some British- we got a pine log & blacked it to look as much like a cannon as possible & put it on an old [word illegible] of waggon wheels & drew it up near to the post & sent in a Flag & Col. Rugeley (a Tory) surrendered the garrison- there were two or three hundred in the garrison - most of them Tories & a few British. we took all prisoners & the whole detachment marched with the prisoners up to Salisbury- we there delivered up the prisoners to whom he can not recollect. we then marched on to then join Gen'l Morgan & did join him at the place where the battle of the Cowpens was fought & but a few days before said battle - Declarant fought under Col. Washington in said battle - the battle ground was part in the woods & part an old field - the militia were in front & the regulars in the rear Washington & his men on the wing - they hardly got formed before Tarlton [sic: Tarleton] made his charge - the militia soon run - the British began to cut down the militia very fast & Washington & Howards men charged into them & with the regulars of Morgan soon routed the British & Col. Washington & two of his men pursued Tarlton 10 or 15 miles & he [one to three words illegible] that closing this chase Washington would have been killed by one of the British but that one of Washingtons men shot the fellows arm off- & Washington made a hack at Tarlton & disabled Tarltons fingers - & glanced his head with his sword- we took a good many prisoners, Morgan took the prisoners on toward Virginia - soon after the battle Morgan marched north & Washington south towards Camden - on not far from the Eutaw Springs we met with Gen'ls Green [sic: Greene] & Marion & Sumpter - We fought the British at the Eutaw springs & whipped them - we took a good many prisoners- but they took Col. Washington prisoner- he was under Capt. Gee who was badly wounded in the head- but he recovered- We started home then & was discharged by Sumpter - he went home and stayed but a short time- & then volunteered under Capt Arbuckle - hearing that Arbuckle wanted men to keep the Indians of & protect the country. Declarant & two or three more went to join him. he joined Arbuckle in the edge of Virginia - he wished to fight the people that killed his father - When he joined Capt. Arbuckle he marched on to Greenbrier to Arbuckles fort - he stayed there some time making occasional excursions after the Indians - after being there some time - he got liberty to go over to a fort [sic: Fort Donnelly in the Greenbrier Valley] about 2[?] miles off[f] commanded by Col. Donnelly - in the night the fort was attacked by Indians - the Indians got one of the gates open but we beat them back & whipped them - the second day afterwards he returned to Fort Arbuckle - shortly after this Arbuckle discharged men & I went home - I served in this tour two years, during which time we were engaged in a great many scouting parties. He served this time two years under Arbuckle. He served three months under Genl Moultrie & six months months [sic] under Col. Washington making in all two years & nine months - He got discharged every time, but has lost them long since - he served as a private -the affidavit here with submitted will show his character - owing to old age & consequent loss of memory he cannot tell the dates of his said several services but believes that he has correctly stated the periods for which he served - He applied for a pension in 1833 while he lived in Hickman county but his declaration was sent back for further proof & some imperfections - but Mr. Nixon the lawyer he employed to act upon the papers was [word illegible] & died about the time the papers came back. He has applied to Nixon's family for the papers frequently but they told him these are lost & he believes they are - [see note below]

He hereby relinquishes all claim to a pension or an annuity but the present & he declares that his name is not on the Pension roll of the agency of any state.

James his mark Kelly

Sworn to & subscribed the day & year aforesaid in open Court
George M. Martin clerk of Cirt. Court

NOTES:

Since Kelly was discharged after Prevost's aborted siege of Charleston SC in May 1779, he must have been drafted early in that year. Rugeley and his 112 Tories were tricked into surrendering on 4 Dec 1780, so if Kelly was present he must have enlisted before then, but probably after the southern army was defeated at Camden SC on 16 Aug of that year. If he was discharged after the Battle of Eutaw Springs on 8 Sep 1781, he would have served at least nine rather than the six months he claimed for that tour.

A voucher in the file indicates that contrary to what Kelly declared, he had been awarded a pension in Hickman County TN in 1833. It is not clear whether he ever collected the money.