

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of Giles Kelly (Kelley) S31788

fn39SC

Transcribed by Will Graves

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State of Georgia Meriwether County

On this 20th day of June 1835, personally appeared in open Court, before the Inferior Court of Meriwether County, State of Georgia and now sitting, Giles Kelley, a resident of Meriwether County, State of Georgia, aged seventy years nine months & five days 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, & served as herein stated: --

He was born in Edgecombe County State of North Carolina on the 15th September 1764; he cannot write but can read it imperfectly when written; -- has no original record now of his age; -- his parents had it in a small old family Bible which was lost or destroyed during the Revolution; -- from this he distinctly recollects his age. -- He resided in the same place until shortly after the commencement of the Revolution when he removed with his father to Edgefield district South Carolina & settled ten miles above Granby Town & about three miles from Saluda River. He entered service whilst residing at this place.

He entered service first as a volunteer private, Militia Infantry, State authority of South Carolina, which was in January in the year 1781 as near as he can recollect from particular circumstances. He knows he was turned of sixteen years old when he first joined the Army: -- He entered the service under Captain Turner his Christian name he has now forgotten, the company consisted of 35 men, rendezvoused at Leigh's Ferry on Saluda River Edgefield district South Carolina, this was the place of public notoriety as a Military encampment & station the station was known as "Leigh's ferry," he remained there encamped & as an embodied corps one month & 15 days: -- the object of the duty to protect & reconnoiter the Country from that point & especially to guard & notice the passings at that ferry. There was only his Company there at the time; -- his Lieutenant's name was Joseph Ledbetter -- his Ensign's John Willis, & his Company was ordered there as he thinks by orders of Colonel Purvis under whose general orders he understood his Company to be, & whose Christian name he does not now recollect. -- Left "Leigh's ferry" station & marched 25 miles down upon the Edisto River & its waters scouting the Country for Tories, preventing their collecting & plundering & protecting the inhabitants, marched thence around through the immediate settlements to the "old Ridge" Edgefield district South Carolina & joined Colonel Purvis who was stationed there with a considerable body of men, from his present recollection he thinks the number must have been from 500 to 1000 & which place the "old Ridge" was a considerable place also as a military station & depot from which to defend the surrounding Country. -- In the last mentioned scout & reconnaissance he

was engaged 7 days. -- He remained encamped & embodied at the "old Ridge" one month & 15 days where he was discharged in the month of April 1781 by Captain Turner without any written discharge. Length of this service 3 months & 7 days.

2nd Before leaving the "old Ridge" he immediately again, to wit, in April 1781, joined & entered service in the same capacity as before, to wit, volunteer private, Militia Infantry, under State authority South Carolina his Captain was Joseph Culpepper his Lieutenant & Ensign the same as before, to wit, Joseph Ledbetter & John Willis, his Company consisted of 25 men, marched thence to "Little Saluda Old Town" where there was also an advantageous station & which was commanded by Captain Shelton whose Christian name he does not now recollect. Captain Shelton gave up his men & the command then to Captain Culpepper whose company was thus increased to 53, 4 or 55 men. At this latter place he was stationed & served in an embodied Corps 2 months during this time was often in scouting the country for a considerable distance around for several days absence at a time. During one of these scouts to Tories were detected & captured & hung, they were recognized satisfactorily by some of the Company as such, were known as Tories & plunderers they were taken in the fork of the Big & Little Saluda River. At the end of 2 months, whilst encamped & embodied at "Little Saluda Old Town," subject as may be to the calls & exigencies of the Country, orders came to his Captain, Culpepper, to join General Greene [Nathanael Greene] then at Ninety Six about 25 miles off, they marched accordingly & joined General Greene before that place in June 1781 where he was stationed & embodied in the Army under the command of General Greene 15 days. -- It was during this service he witnessed the advance of Lord Rawdon to relieve the Fort at Ninety Six then garrisoned by the British & besieged by the Americans, he advanced from the direction of the Congaree & Fort Granby. Lord Rawdon had his cannon fired just before sunrise at the distance of 4 miles from the Fort which was understood to be a sign to the British to hold out. Had he not come to their relief so speedily it was thought the Fort would have surrendered that day even as provisions were becoming scarce with the besieged. -- General Greene had sent out spies by which he was enabled to judge of the approach of Lord Rawdon in time to retreat safely, which he done, his Company retreating with General Greene, they passed over into the Fork of Saluda which they crossed at the Shallow Ford, there the Army stopped & encamped at a private house & place 18 to 20 miles from Ninety Six & safe from Lord Rawdon's pursuit whilst at Ninety Six his Colonel's name was Reliford or Williford or some name like that not now distinctly recollected; -- his Major's name not recollected. After serving one week encamped at the fork of Saluda where the Army had halted to rest & recruit, & as being out of danger, he left there being detached under his same Company officers, to wit, Culpepper, Ledbetter & Willis, on a scouting expedition against the Tories an express coming to the Army that a parcel of Tories had gathered & were doing mischief, report said 40 or 50 in number low down upon Edisto River, the distance from camp was 30 miles or upwards, the Company marched all day & all night reaching their place of destination about daylight; the detachment consisted of 25 men, being about the usual number for scout & observation. On reaching the Tory house, the widow Postens, no Tories were to be found, a little girl informed them that Colonel Black known as the Tory leader & who they were aiming for had left that night before their arrival, with some others, probably having had some intimation or fear of surprise. -- The house just bordered an extensive & almost impenetrable swamp of the Edisto River, said to be one & a half to 2 miles wide -- The Company turned about, & he marched & scouted with them through the Dutch settlement where there were many Tories, through the creeks, swamps & country of Lightwood, Knot & Hellhole Creeks, Edgefield district, 25 miles to "Water's ferry" across Saluda River. Detected no Tories in

bodies. Was 7 days in this service scouting from the time of leaving General Greene's encampment to reaching "Waters ferry" on Saluda River. "Water's ferry" was also an advantageous military position & was kept as a station to rally the people & defend the Country upon any & all emergencies. At this place he remained & served with & under his same officers in any embodied Corps for 2 months & 15 days, during the months of July, August & September 1781, his Colonel there was Philip Waters, there were 5 to 600 men stationed there under Captain Waters during that time, his Major's name forgotten, the concentration of Troops there were subject to strict discipline & were constantly exercised. He was discharged there without any written discharge September 1781 by his Captain Culpepper -- Length of this service 5 months & 10 days.

3rd -- After leaving above service went home to his fathers who he searched out & found living in [word obliterated by an ink blot] now Edgefield district, South Carolina 1 mile below Scott's ferry, staid there & there about 3 weeks, the family called moved to an uncle's in Wilkes County Georgia where after staying a few days he, his father John Kelley, & 3 others William Bentley, Solomon Bentley & John Graves all went down to Head Quarters & joined General Wayne's Army at Ebenezer, Effingham County Georgia above Savannah. -- He entered this service as a Volunteer Private, Militia Infantry, State authority of Georgia rendezvoused & entered as above stated at Ebenezer in the State of Georgia, they passed through Augusta & through Burke County in going to Head Quarters, his Captain's name was Carr -- called Paddy Carr, he was an Irishman. He believes his Christian name was John, the other officers names not now recollected. There was a large Army there; -- he entered this service in November 1781, -- served with an embodied Corps there one month & 15 days. Whilst stationed there Captain Carr with 25 men made a scout one night, reconnoitered & advanced on the Savannah road, getting out 3 or 4 miles from Camp he perceived British Dragoons following, and it was moon light he was one of the 25 men, the Dragoons were apparently 200 in number & was heard at a considerable distance from the noise of their horses & seen too, Captain Carr had his men placed in ambuscade at the head of 2 branches divided into 2 parties & ordered one party to fire on their front advance & the other to reserve & fire on the last of the enemy -- this was done, all wheeled about rushed ahead & passed through or near the outskirts of the Army at Ebenezer -- with equal surprise to both, the British expecting capture & the Americans an attack. Seven [?] horses were shot & got by his Company & two men were wounded & taken -- to understand this it must be recollected that a scouting party was going towards Savannah, so too where the British Dragoons having come in behind them & between them & the American Army, on the firing the British wheeled about, & rushed rapidly past & near the outskirts of the Americans at Ebenezer, there being several directions of the road there & thus escaped. His Company shot badly, as both parties shot, the wheeling of the British it ought to have done more injury. -- he understood the British had possession of Savannah whilst he was stationed & served at Ebenezer. He was discharged at Ebenezer in December 1781 by his Captain, Carr, without any written discharge. -- Length of service one month & 15 days.

4th In the Spring of 1782, in the month of May, he entered service as a volunteer private, Militia Infantry, under State authority of Georgia, he rendezvoused at the Town or place of Washington Wilkes County Georgia, marched up into what is now Oglethorpe County, reconnoitered & scouted the Country for 25 miles above Washington & within 10 miles of the oak on the River, built & occupied Knox's Fort, his Captain was George Grisham, his Lieutenant was James Milligan, his Ensign forgotten, the scouting & defense was against the Creek nation of Indians, served & was embodied with this Corps one month commencing in May & ending in

June leaving a Guard in the Fort returned to Washington Wilkes County Georgia where he was discharged by his Captain, Grisham, without any written discharge. His company consisted of 25 men, 15 or 16 of whom were left to guard the Fort & women & children in emergency who would retreat to it from the scattered settlements; seven men additionally of adjacent settlers were of the guard. -- people had tried often before to settle about there but could not until this Fort was built. -- Length of this service one month. --

5th Entered again into service as a volunteer private, Militia Infantry, State authority of Georgia, had remained at home only one week from the preceding service, rendezvoused in the month of June 1782 at Washington Wilkes County Georgia, his Captain was George Grisham, James Milligan Lieutenant, Ensign not now recollected, his Colonel Micajah Williamson, head with him a detachment of 105 men, marched & served on an extensive scout against the Creek nation of Indians, scouting into their country some 70 or 80 miles, at least over Little River, the Oconee River, over the Apalachy [Apalachee] River around the head waters of Jack's Creek which nearly interlocks with the head waters of the Okmulgee River scouting & traversing all the intermediate country, saw no Indians, did not penetrate their settlements but probably overawed their depredations. Was engaged in this service 11 days, returned & was discharged at Washington Wilkes County Georgia without any written discharge by Captain Grisham in June 1782. -- the cause of this scout was on account of the Indians coming in & killing a woman & three children up towards the head of Little River in now Oglethorpe County through which neighborhood the Scout passed in pursuit of the Indians who had committed the murders. In this trip was 2 days without anything to eat except one drink of Meal poached [?] -- Length of this service 11 days --

He cannot be more particular than he has been as to dates, & the us as here stated are mostly recollected as consistent & corroborating with his age which was known & also with his knowledge of the general lengths of time of his tours of duty, with some further light in his recollections of the seasons of the year.

The close of the War found him living in Wilkes County Georgia, removed thence to Edgefield district South Carolina where he resided 10 or 12 years removed thence to Hancock County State of Georgia where he resided 12 or 14 years; -- removed thence to Crawford County where he resided 4 years & from thence removed to Meriwether County where he now resides & has been residing for 5 years past.

And the said Giles Kelly doth also declare that he has no documentary evidence & that he knows of no person whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his service. --

And the said Giles Kelly doth further declare that in the time he states in the foregoing Declaration serving in the Revolutionary War as therein detailed he was not engaged in any civil pursuit, & during the whole of said time served in an embodied Corps of Troops called into service, both in the Camp & the Field, by public & competent authority. --

And the said Giles Kelly doth further declare that from old age & infirmity & consequent loss of memory, & the lapse of time since his services were rendered, he is unable to state more definitely the times, lengths & circumstances of his services, but that he did not serve less than the following periods & under the following named officers: --

1 months & 22 days under Captain Turner -- private Infantry -- January & February 1781

1 " & 15 " Colonel Purvis "" March & April 1781

Making in these tours of 3 months & 7 days

2 months -- under Captain Culpepper -- Private Infantry -- April May & June 1781

22 days under Colonel Williford General Greene -- private Infantry June 1781

7 days under Captain Culpepper -- private Infantry July 1781
2 months & 15 days under Colonel Waters -- private Infantry July, August & September 1781
Making in these tours 5 months & 14 days. --
one months & 15 days under Captain Carr & General Wayne -- Private Infantry -- November &
December 1781

Making in this tour one month & 15 days.

One month under Captain Grisham -- Private Infantry -- may & June 1782

Making in this tour one month

11 days under Captain Grisham Colonel Wmson Private Cavalry -- June 1782

Making in this tour he 11 days

Summary of service in the whole being Eleven (11) months & twenty sever (27) days. --

And the said Giles Kelly doth further declare that there is no Clergyman residing in his vicinity who can testify from their acquaintance with him that they believe he is the age he represents & that he is reputed & believed in the neighborhood to have been a Revolutionary Soldier. -- There was such a person residing there, Doctor Adam Clements last year whose concurring testimony he procured in a Declaration he had executed & forwarded to the Pension office last Fall & which the Commissioner has informed him never reached there. Doctor Clements has since removed to the County of Muscogee in this State & his testimony could be readily procured again if necessary though inconvenient now to do so. Another one of his neighborhood has since settled, since Christmas, who has not known him before & at home as a stranger this subject has not been mentioned. They reside 7 miles apart & of course or known Lytle to each other, his name is__ Eves & except him there is none residing within double the distance further & of course others could not conscientiously, if at all, no his "reputation" as a "Revolutionary Soldier."

He is acquainted & known by James A. Perdue & John M. Moncrief in his present neighborhood, who can testify as to his character for veracity, & their belief of his services as a soldier of the Revolution --

He hereby relinquishes 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.

S/ W. B. Ector, JIC

S/ Giles Kelley, X his mark

[James A. Perdue & John M. Moncrief gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

[there are several references in the file to a Mrs. Nancy Kelly, widow of the veteran. No details as to her age, date of marriage or children are given.]