

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of William Viars S9512

f15NC

Transcribed by Will Graves

rev'd 2/13/14

[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.]

North Carolina, Wilkes County

On this 4th day of November 1834 personally appeared in open Court before the Court of Pleas & Quarter Sessions for the County & State aforesaid, now sitting, William Viars, a resident of the County of Wilkes & State of North Carolina, aged seventy seven years, who being first duly sworn according to law, doth on his oath, make the following declaration, in which 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: That about the last of May or first of June 1776 this declarant volunteered himself to go against the Cherokee Indians who at that time were committing great depredation upon the whites on the waters of New River on the North Western side of the Blue Ridge [Mountains] in that section of country now principally embraced within the boundaries of Ashe County NC. That he joined a company of Volunteer Militia commanded by Captain Robert Cleveland & Lieutenant Burnett Owens & Ensign Nathaniel Vannoy; that the company rendezvoused at Wilkes Court House and thence marched to the north western side of the Blue Ridge to a station known by the name of Baker's Station, where a number of white families had collected together to protect themselves against the depredations of the Indians. From this point they made excursions through the country in various directions in search of the Indians occasionally crossing the Blue Ridge to the South side also visiting a station on the waters of the Yadkin [River] at Herndon's Mill, but did not succeed in meeting with any of the Indians. This declarant was employed in this service until the fourth day of July 1776, making not less than One Month.

Soon after the declaration of Independence as this declarant believes some time in the latter part of July preparations were made for a general expedition against the Cherokee Indians. He again volunteered his services and was attached to the company of Capt Benjamin Cleveland which met at Wilkes Court House preparatory to their unfinished campaign. In the organization of the company and making the necessary preparations, this declarant having a good horse, was detached by Captain Cleveland to take charge of a portion of the baggage, it being necessary to transport it by means of pack horses. He accordingly set out with the troops and proceeded with them to the Pleasant Gardens in the County of Burke where they joined the main army and under Genl. Rutherford [Griffith Rutherford]. After joining Genl. Rutherford, this declarant was continued in the pack horse service, and marched with the army by the most direct route to the Cherokee Nation. Upon arriving at the Middle Towns of the Cherokee Indians, they found themselves entirely

abandoned, the Indians having all fled. At that place, Genl. Rutherford divided the troops, leaving a small portion together with all the baggage & provisions (except a few days' rations, which the troops who proceeded took with them) at that place, while he advanced with the main body of the army to the Valley Towns. This declarant was left of course at the Middle Town ^{with the baggage} and there remained until the return of the troops to that place, after which, and after destroying the Towns and such other property of the Indians as they could find, they set out upon their return to North Carolina, and having advanced on their return as far as Wilkes C.H. This declarant was discharged by Captain Cleveland or Col Armstrong, he does not recollect which, and returned to his home having served in this expedition not less than three months.

From the time of the return of this declarant in the fall of 1776 until the summer of 1780 this declarant performed several short tours of duty against the Tories but as he cannot recollect the length of each nor the particular circumstances under which they were performed he declines setting up any claim on their account.

About the month of August 1780, preparations were made by Col Benjamin Cleveland and other active and distinguished Whigs in Wilkes County for raising volunteer troops to defend the south western section of the State against the invasion of the British and Tories from South Carolina. This declarant again turned out as a volunteer and joined the company of Captain Jesse Franklin at Wilkes C.H. where they remained some time making the necessary preparations for their extended expedition. In the final organization of the troops Captain Franklin was promoted to the appointment of Major and David Viars, the brother of this declarant, was appointed Captain in his stead. As soon as they were fully organized they set out upon their march toward the upper part of South Carolina, where having advanced some distance into Burke County they were joined by a regiment of Militia from Virginia under Col Campbell [William Campbell], and some troops from that section of Country now called East Tennessee under Col Sevier [John Sevier]. The whole then moved forward until they reached a point not now recollected by this declarant, when intelligence was received that Major Ferguson [Patrick Ferguson] was advancing from South Carolina with a large body of British and Tories and that he was about occupying a favorable position on King's Mountain. A preparation was immediately made for all the troops who had horses or who could procure them to advance with all possible speed to meet him. This declarant having no horse was unable to proceed, and was consequently left behind with a large number of the troops who were similarly situated. They proceeded however with as much expedition as possible, but did not reach the battle ground in time, the engagement [October 7, 1780] being over, and the Americans with their prisoners being on their return some distance, when they met with them. Upon rejoining the Army this declarant assisted in guarding the prisoners until they marched back as far as Wilkes C.H., where other troops were ordered out to take charge of the prisoners and this declarant was discharged having served in this expedition not less than two and a half months.

In the spring of the year following this declarant believes about the last of January or first of February intelligence was received of the approach of Lord Cornwallis from South Carolina, and a call was immediately made for volunteers to reinforce Genl Green [sic, Nathanael Greene] who was then known to be in advance of Lord Cornwallis. This declarant again turned out under Captain Benjamin Herndon, and rendezvoused at Major Lewis' on the Yadkin [River] in the lower end of Wilkes County where they joined several other companies, the whole being placed under the command of Major Richard Allen. They set out

upon their march to join Genl Greene whom they expected to meet somewhere in the County of Guilford, but upon advancing as far as Salem in Stokes County, they discovered that Lord Cornwallis' army was between them and Genl Greene, and that a considerable body of the British Light Horse had been dispatched to intercept them. Upon meeting the Light Horse, they dispersed and retreated to Hauser [?] Town, where they rallied and had a slight engagement with them in which they killed one man, but escaped without loss or injury on their part. The detachment then made various efforts to join Genl Greene by making circular marches but found themselves intercepted at every point, so that they were compelled finally to abandon the attempt, but remained in the country watching the first favorable opportunity of cooperating with Genl Greene until after the battle of Guilford was fought [March 15, 1781], and the British marched off towards Wilmington where they returned home and was discharged. In this expedition, this declarant is satisfied he served not less than five weeks.

This declarant was born in the county of King & Queen in the State of Virginia in the year 1756, as he is informed, but has no record of his age. He was living in Surry County, N.C. now Wilkes when he entered the service of the United States, and has lived in the same County ever since. All the services performed by this declarant was performed as a volunteer. His answer to the fifth interrogatory is contained generally in the body of this declaration as well as he can now recollect. He never received any written discharge from the service, nor has he any documentary evidence of any kind to prove it but refers to the testimony of John Yates hereunto annexed who served with him during two of the tours mentioned in the foregoing declaration. He also refers to the Rev'd Thomas Fletcher & Joseph McNeal as persons to whom he is well acquainted in his present neighborhood, and who can testify as to his character for veracity, and their belief of his services as a soldier of the revolution, as he knows of no person living whose testimony he could procure who can testify as to that portion not proven by Mr. Yates.

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

Sworn to & Subscribed the day & year aforesaid.

S/ William Viars, X his mark

S/ Wm Mastin, C. C. C.

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On the day and year aforesaid personally appeared in open Court before the Court aforesaid, John Yates¹ and after having been duly sworn according to law deposeth and saith that he served with William Viars the above applicant during two of the tours of duty mentioned in the foregoing declaration, to wit; the 3 months tour performed under General Rutherford to the Cherokee Nation, and the tour of 2 ½ months performed under Colonel Cleveland to Kings Mountain, and that the said 2 tours of duty as set forth & specified in the above declaration as having been performed by the said William Viars during the revolutionary war were performed by him.

Sworn to & subscribed the day & year aforesaid.

S/ Wm Mastin, CCC

S/ John Yates, X his mark

[Thomas Fletcher, a clergyman, and Joseph McNeil gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

¹ [John Yates W20142](#)

[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$25.55 per annum commencing March 4th, 1831, for service as a private for 7 months and 20 days in the North Carolina militia.]