

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of William Lesley (Leslie) S31821

f19NC

Transcribed by Will Graves

2/29/08; rev'd 5/19/16

[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.]

[p 4]

Georgia, Oglethorpe County: SS

On this the third day of September 1832 personally appeared in open Court before the justices of the Inferior Court while sitting for ordinary purposes, William Leslie [sic], a resident of the County & State aforesaid, aged sixty-nine years & eight months, 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 on the 7th of June of the present year entitled an act supplementary to the act for the relief of certain surviving officers & soldiers of the Revolution. That he entered the service of the United States against England in the war of the Revolution under the following named officers & served as hereinafter stated.

That he was born in Guilford County North Carolina on the twenty fifth day of November 1762 -- has a transcript of his age which he took from the family Bible -- was living in Guilford when he was drafted to serve in the revolutionary war between England & America -- he entered the service in the militia of North Carolina under General Davidson [William Lee Davidson] in the year 1780 -- does not recollect the day but it was in the month of August in that year, as he marched from Guilford to Charlotte he met General Gates' [Horatio Gates'] men returning from their defeat near Camden [Battle of Camden, August 15-16, 1780] -- marched on from Charlotte to Bushy Camps toward Ninety Six. After arriving here Generals Greene [Nathanael Greene] & Morgan [Daniel Morgan] took command of the southern army & applicant's commanding officers were Colonel Pacely [sic, John Paisley], Major Moore & Captain Forbes [sic, Arthur Forbis]. He belonged to the third regiment of North Carolina militia. Was acquainted with the Maryland line who were the first regular troops of infantry that joined them there, were commanded by one Howard [John Eager Howard] who was said to be a Virginian -- an officer by the name of William Washington (he thinks) & another by the name of Lee [Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee] commanded the cavalry & overtook the southern army on Sloane's ferry on the Yadkin [River] as they were advancing toward Charlotte. This tour was of three months duration & its duties as it happened consisted principally in marching from point to point -- there was not so much as a skirmish during the whole tour. He was discharged from this tour at McCoppin's Creek in North Carolina -- his step-father drew his discharge & kept it so that applicant never got it, indeed his step-father claimed it as a matter of right in as much as applicant was not twenty one years old, contending that he was entitled to the proceeds of applicant's labor until he was of age. In a very few days after his discharge from the first tour, he volunteered in the militia army in the same regiment & under the same officers, Greene the commanding General. A circumstance which assists his mind in arriving at the fact that the time between his discharge & his volunteering was only a few days is this, before he was discharged Howard & Washington went on to the Cowpens [January 17, 1781] in So. Carolina where they defeated Tarlton [sic,

Banastre Tarleton] & he recollects while acting as a volunteer that he guarded some prisoners taken by them at the Cowpens from near Salisbury to fifteen miles below Guilford courthouse & there gave them up to another party. He recollects that it was a cold wet day & that the guard called at the home of Colonel Paisley where they had plenty of liquor & a good fire -- among the prisoners was a Colonel Burks, a Tory, who thrust himself in to get the benefit of the fire -- Paisley asked him what he came in for -- Burks replied to warm himself -- Paisley showed him the door & as he retreated took a chair & knocked him out of the door into the lane. From this place the detachment went back & joined the main army again at Sloane's ferry. By this time Cornwallis was said to be at Charlotte & our Colonel beat up for volunteers to go & stop a party of Tories who they heard were about to go & join him -- he mustered about 300 of whom deponent was one. They set out & struck for the fork of the Yadkin, crossed over into it & went up to a place called the Crossroads about a mile from Shallow Ford and there while they were preparing for breakfast the Tories came up on horseback shouting praises to King George & gave some appearance of being intoxicated. The detachment fired on them & killed sixteen, the rest fled rapidly through the woods. One man belonging to the detachment was mortally wounded but deponent does not know whether he received his wound from the Tories or whether he was shot by carelessness in his own ranks. They moved from there to Shallow Ford & encamped near the river -- next day they went on to Salem or Moravian Town where the staid & dried their clothes & that night deponent stood centinal [sentinel] four hours in an old field -- thinks this was some time in December. Marched from that place to the main army at Sloane's ferry -- not many days after this Greene commenced his retreat to Virginia -- on the retreat march they passed through Guilford, crossed Haw River at High rock ford & went on by the red house, crossed Dan river at Boyd's ferry, waded Staunton & crossed Bannister on a bridge & after passing some short distance beyond the old courthouse in Mecklenburg County Virginia they stopped some days, took rest & got provisions. During this whole route Cornwallis was close in pursuit & the forces of the Americans he thinks were not more than 2000 men. Having got a few days rest Washington & Lee with the cavalry went back in to North Carolina to keep the British from pillaging, plundering & getting provision & the Infantry also went back leaving Greene to recruit in Virginia. On their return march they scoured the country in every direction until Greene returned when they joined him & marched on to Guilford to wait for Cornwallis. The night before the battle of Guilford Cornwallis laid at a place called New Garden meeting house & a detachment under the command of Lee & Washington & some riflemen commanded by a Colonel Cleveland went out there & gave the British a smart skirmish before breakfast¹ -- Cornwallis arrived at Guilford courthouse [March 15, 1781]² between twelve & one o'clock on the 15th March 1781 -- just before the battle commenced Colonel Lee rode up to the lines where deponent stood & read something like these words, "My brave boys, your lands, your lives & your country depend on your conduct this day -- I have given Tarleton hell this morning & I will give him more of it before night." & speaking of the roaring of the British canon he said "You hear damnation roaring over all these woods & after all they are no more than we." & we went on to flank the left of the American army -- this deponent's place in that battle was on the left of the artillery not far from it -- the 33rd & 71st British regiments breasted [?]³ the 4th regiment of militia to which deponent then belonged -- their object seemed to be to take the artillery -- the battle was commenced by the militia & two lines of them fought before the regulars came up. Deponent believes that this tour of volunteer service exceeded three months in duration but for

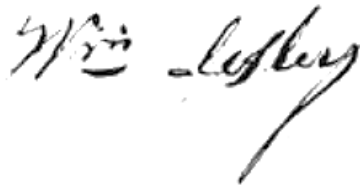
¹ March 15, 1781 http://www.carolana.com/NC/Revolution/revolution_new_garden_meetinghouse.html

² http://www.carolana.com/NC/Revolution/revolution_battle_of_guilford_courthouse.html

³ *breasted*

the purpose of being entirely safe in his statement he is willing to place it at three months which together with the three months tour heretofore described make six months service performed by this deponent in the Revolutionary war. He got no discharge from this last service -- his captain was mortally wounded at the battle just mentioned & died in about a week. Both before & after the services above mentioned deponent was engaged in several scouting expeditions but he cannot recollect any time with certainty & does not ask compensation for any more than the six months to which he has particularly alluded. Deponent does not know of any man living by whom he can establish his services. He had a brother two years older than himself who was said to be alive four years ago & who would be a good witness -- but deponent knows not where to find him. This deponent hereby relinquished every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present & declares that his name is not on the pension roll of any State in the Union.

S/ Wm. Lesley



Sworn to & subscribed the day & year aforesaid.

S/ William H. Smith, Clerk

[Benjamin Blanton, a clergyman, and John Moore gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

Supplementary Statement

And at the same term of the court came William Lesley & on oath says that on reflection he has remembered the following officers who were with him & whose names he failed to recollect when he furnished the above statement, to wit: Major John Donald, Adjutant Robert Rolstin [Lt. Col. Robert Ralston], who was sick & left the Army & his place was supplied by John Harvey, Captains Wilson,⁴ Sparks & Pierce – William Rankin foraging master who was taken prisoner by the British near Ninety Six – & Chaplin Hall a Presbyterian Clergyman.

Sworn to the day & year aforesaid in open court.

S/ William H Smith, Clerk

S/ Wm Lesley

[Applicant died December 23, 1832.]

[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$20 per annum commencing March 4th, 1831, for service as a private for 6 months in the North Carolina militia.]

⁴ Perhaps reference to either Captain Andrew Wilson or Captain William Wilson, both of the Guilford County militia and both present at the battle of Guilford courthouse