Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of David McNeely (McNeeley) W1051 Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

Alabama

In the Circuit Court of Madison County held at Huntsville on the first Monday after the fourth Monday in October 1832 His Honor William I Adair presiding — Then personally appeared in open Court David McNeely resident of said County aged Seventy four 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 the 7th 1832, That he was born on the 15th Octr 1758 in the State of Virginia in County of Augusta that at about the age of Eighteen years affiant enlisted in the united states service under George Matthews Captain and Samuel Bell Lieutenant This affiant believes it was the 14th Regement to which he was attached the line not recollected Some considerable time elapsed after the inlistment of affiant before they joined Head quarters, but when they did join affiant was put under the command of Col [Daniel] Morgan. Some time after affiant was placed under Col Morgan they went into winter quarters on Whitley Creek, in Pennsylvania, the first important action in which affiant was ingaged was the Battle of Brandywine [11 Sep 1777] in which he participated, affiant inlisted for three years but was not discharged for four months after the expiration of the three years on account of the new recruits not comeing in. Affiant lay eighteen months in the Hospital near Brandywine on account of an attact of Rheumatism occasioned by exposures. Shortly after his recovery this affiant was Honorably discharged, which discharge amongst other things mentioned that affiant was intitled to two hundred acres of land which he has never obtained. His discharge was signed by Gen'l. [Robert] Lawson and has been lost or mislayed so that affiant is intirely deprived of the benefit of it. Immediately after his discharge from the Regular Service of the United States he returned to his native state. In a few months after his return, this affiant volunteered in the militia service to repell the British & tories who had passed successfully through South Carolina North Carolina & had entered virginia. Affiant voluntier under Captain David May & Lieutnat John Mitchell and was joined to the command of Major Thomas Rowland, Cols. W. Campbell & Wm. Preston and others at Staunton River From thence they marched against the British & tories who retreated before them into Guilford County [see endnote] Near which place the army to which affiant was attached united with that of Genl Green [sic: Nathanael Greene] Shortly after the union with Genl Green, affiant was ordered with others to bring on an attack with the British & Tories at Alamance Creek [Skirmish at Clapp's Mill, 2 Mar 1781] The officer who commanded in this ingagement was Major Thomas Roulin [sic: Thomas Rowland, actually under Lt. Col. Henry Lee] The Americans in this attact were unsuccessful & had to retreat with the loss of seventy or 80 lives. four days after this a part of Genl. Greens Army Commanded by Cols. [William] Campbell & [William] Preston [under Col. Otho Holland Williams] and others had a sharp ingagement with the British & Tories on the Reedy fork of Haw river [Skirmish at Wetzel's Mill, 6 Mar] in which the British & tories were again successful. In a few days after this affair these skirmishing parties in all of which this affiant bore his part were again united to the main Army under Genl Green [see endnote] when the ever memorable Battle of Guilford was fought in which this affiant bore his full share. affiant further states that shortly after this last named battle Lieutenant Mitchell left the Company & went home and one Wallace Estell [sic: Wallis Estill, pension application \$1759] succeeded him. After the Battle of Guilford, Genl. Greens Army meandered[?] about through parts of North Carolina & Virginia manoevering with the British & Tories to Richmond [sic: see endnote], from thence to Hotwater [Hot Water Plantation 6 mi NW of Williamsburg, site of a battle on 26 June], from thence to James Town, and from thence to Yourk where the Siege commenced [28 Sep], in all the labors & duties of which this affiant was ingaged. after the Surrender of the British at York [19 Oct] affiant aided in guarding the prisoners to Winchester at which place he was discharged & served as a militia volunteer about nine months Affiants discharge as a Volunteer Militia is herewith filed marked A [not found] as well also as the affidavit of Wallis Estell marked B both of which are prayed to be made a part of this declaration

Affiant 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 in this union Sworn to & subscribed this 30th day of October 1832

David hisXmark McNeeley

State of Tennessee Franklin County

This day personally appeared before me John M Holder a Justice of the peace, and a Justice of the Count Court of Franklin County in the state aforesaid Wallis Estill Sen'r who being duly sworn on the Holy Evangelist of Almighty GOD deposeth and saith that he was acquainted with David McNeely a soldier in Capt David May's Company of Botetourt Militia in the year 1781; that deponent was first Lieutenant in Capt May's Company and had the command thereof during the siege of York in the absence of Capt May; - that David McNeeley the present applicant was a soldier in said company during the said siege, serving through the tour of duty, and was discharged by this deponent on the 8th day of November 1781 he being then the first Lieut commanding said company; That the discharge now produced signed by this deponent as Lieut and now marked A he verily believes is the one then given him by this deponent. This deponent states that the said McNeely was (to his knowledge) in the militia service from shortly after the battle of Guldford Court until the date of his discharge. This deponent has not seen the said McNeely for several years, and had heard he was dead nor did he know otherwise until two days ago when said McNeely came to his house; That he did not know him at first, but soon recognized him - and knows he is the same man mentioned in the discharge herewith enclosed. Deponent knew said McNeely well, when he was under deponent's command, and knows he was a brave and faithful soldier. - Deponent had understood that said McNeely had served in the army before he came under the command of deponent - that he had been in several engagements, particularly that of Guildford, but what precise service he had performed this deponent knows not, other than is herein before stated;

And further this deponent saith not [signed] Wallis Estill Sen'r Sworn to and subscribed before me this 8th October 1832

Amended declaration of David McNeely

On this 22nd day of April 1833 personally appeared before me State of Alabama Anderson county SS. } Horatio G Perry Judge of the circuit court now sitting in said County David McNeely who being duly sworn deposeth & saith that by reason of old age & the consequent loss of memory, he cannot swear positively as to the precise time when he entered the service of the United States, nor can he state positively as to the precise length of his service, but according to the best of his recollection he served not less than the periods mentioned below, & in the following grades: "That in the month of May 1775 to the best of my recollection I enlisted in a regular company commanded by Capt. George Mathews, & served for Three years & four months as a private in said company - On the first day of February 1781 I joined a volunteer company commanded by Capt. David May & served as a private in said company for nine months & seven days & was discharged on the eighth day of November 1781; & for such service I claim a pension." the applicant further states that he was born on the 15th day of October 1758 in the county of Augusta in the state of Virginia as he has before stated in his original declaration, that his age is recorded in a bible which is now in the possession of the applicant & which was taken about thirty years ago from the bible of his father in which his age was recorded, he states he has no written discharge of his service as a regular soldier he once had one but that it is now lost or mislaid nor does he know of any living witness by whom he can prove his regular service, he has a written discharge for his volenteer militia service which is attached to his original declaration hereto appended. sworn & subscribed to in open court this 22nd day of April 1833. David hisXmark McNeely

NOTES:

In his militia tour in North Carolina, McNeely appears to have been in the Botetourt Riflemen. For details of this corps see http://southerncampaign.org/newsletter/v4n123.pdf
The British could not properly be said to have retreated before the Americans to Guilford

NC. After chasing the Americans across the Dan River in Pittsylvania VA on 14 Feb 1781, Cornwallis took his troops briefly to Hillsborough to gather provisions and Loyalists. Afterwards Cornwallis pursued Greene hoping to bring on an engagement, which occurred on 15 Mar at Guilford Courthouse.

According to John Tate's pension application (S6191), after the Skirmish at Wetzel's Mill "Captain May and all his officers of his company and all his men, except myself and thirteen others, left the field of Battle and came home."

After the Battle of Guilford Courthouse Greene did not "meander" anywhere and did not return to Virginia at all. He pursued Cornwallis as far as Ramsey's Mill on Deep River, then returned to South Carolina. Few militiamen continued with him, since their normal three-months tours of duty were about to expire.

On 18 Sep 1854 Nancy Barnett, 64, of Madison County TN, applied for a pension jointly with Martha Culver, George McNeely, and William McNeely, children of David and Rebecca McNeely, who were married in Madison County KY on 23 Feb 1789. She stated that her father died in Madison County Alabama on 19 July 1836, and her mother died on 19 Sep 1852. The file contains an original family register of her family which records the deaths of her father and of her mother at age 85 or 86. There is also a record of the marriage of David McNeely to Rebecca Dickey dated 7 May 1789.