

Elihu Ayers Revolutionary Pension Request

Elihu Ayers was born in 1760 or 1761 in Pittsylvania Co, VA, the son of Thomas Ayers. In 1777, his father sent him to Surry Co, NC, to buy a tract of land. Elihu ended up staying in Surry County until 1791 when he moved back to Virginia and lived the rest of his life in Patrick County. During those 14 years, he served in the Revolutionary War and was a witness to several key battles. As an elderly man applying for his pension, he gave a detailed account of his experiences which included his time spent at the iron works on the Big Elkin Creek.

He submitted his account of his service during the war twice: once on 11/16/1832 and again on 10/29/1833. His file is #R335. Punctuation and spelling have been altered from the original record to make it easier to read.

State of Virginia

County of Patrick

On the 16th day of November 1832 personally appeared in open court before the justices of the county of court now sitting, Elihu Ayers, a resident of Patrick County aforesaid, aged seventy two years the 26th of January last past 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 entered service as a volunteer private soldier, or minute man (as they were then called), under Colonel Benjamin Cleveland of the county of Wilkes in the state of North Carolina. Was placed in a company of militia commanded by Captain Micajah Lewis. That he served in this company and under this captain twelve months and thirteen days. During this time he was not in any engagement with the foreign enemy, it being in that section of the country entirely a war of Whig and Tory, he was kept constantly in service such as hunting up the Tories, outliers, and disaffected, defending the Whigs and their property from the ravages of the Tories. He traversed the surrounding country from Allen's Iron Works on the Yadkin River to Mitchells River, Fishers River, Codies Creek, Roaring River, Lewis Fork, Reddies River to the head of the Yadkin, thence around by the Table Mountain crossing the Three Creeks of the Catawba River, thence to the main river, down the same to Greenlees Ford, thence to Burke courthouse. From there crossing the South Yadkin to the Shallow Ford of the main Yadkin River. From there through the Tory country to the Iron Works above mentioned. During this term of service, this applicant was present and assisted in half hanging William Combs whom they let off on promise of better behavior, hanging

William Koyle and Samuel Jarvis who was condemned by a court martial consisting of the following officers: Colonel Benjamin Cleveland, Captain Benjamin Herndon, Captain Gordon, and Lieutenant Baker Ayers. Nothing of importance more occurred during this tour of duty within the recollection of this applicant.

The applicant obtained from Colonel Cleveland a discharge for this term of service which discharge was some years afterwards burnt in his father's house. At the time this applicant performed this tour of service, his father lived in the county of Pittsylvania and state of Virginia from where he had sent this applicant to Surry County, North Carolina, to buy land which he did, but did not return to P____ his father until he served the above tour of duty believing his father would not move on account of the tory war raging in that country so violently at length he received a letter from his father and returned home in the year 1780 and his father immediately moved to the above mentioned land.

The next tour of duty this applicant performed was under Captain Salathiel Martin of Surry County, North Carolina, who gave him the appointment of orderly sergeant. He entered into this tour of duty on the 5th day of April 1780 in a regiment commanded by Col. Cleveland. He was for some time employed in the surrounding country to keep down the tories and bringing in outliers, retaking and restoring property to the Whigs taken by the tories. During this tour, this applicant states he was under various officers – sometimes under one, and then another. He served a short time under Capt. Underwood, Capts Harden, Hearndon, Lewis, and others, and various short tours of duty until August following when he marched towards Kings Mountain. Was stationed a while at Criders old fort during which time there was a false alarm, or a sham fight, brought on by our officers in order to try who of our men would fight.

From there, he was marched to Kings Mountain. There a battle ensued between the Americans commanded by Colonels Cleveland, Williams, and Campbell; and Ferguson which terminated in the defeat of Ferguson. Many killed and taken prisoners. This applicant saw Ferguson lying wounded when Colonel Campbell ordered him to surrender to which he replied that he was on Kings Hill and he meant to die in the King's cause. Campbell immediately hewed him to pieces with his sword and left Ferguson dead on the hill.

This applicant was ordered to assist in guarding the prisoners to Bethabara, known by the name of the Moravian town in Surry County, North Carolina, now Stokes County. They were then delivered to Colonel Lock from Rowan or Mecklenburg. This applicant here got a furlough to go home after clothing, but was not permitted to be idle long. He was shortly afterwards ordered out under Major Hearndon in a company commanded by Capt. Richard Allen from Wilkes County under

whom he served until he was marched to the battle of Guilford. They joined General Green about fourteen days before this battle at Summers Tavern he believes in Caswell County with who they remained until the battle of Guilford on the 15th of March 1781. And for seven days afterwards at the battle of Guilford. This applicant was of the North Carolina militia who got panic struck and ran from the scene of action. On the 7th day of April, he together with the rest of the North Carolina militia was discharged by General Green not far from Hillsborough in N. Carolina. The N. Carolina militia discharged by Green was discharged by word of command. This applicant states that he acted as orderly sergeant six months and two days which was from the commencement of the last mentioned term of service until the battle at Kings Mountain. This applicant states that he forgot to mention that he was also at the battle of the Shallow Ford of the Yadkin. He further states that he was in a Whig and Tory fight called the battle at Com__s. He has resided in Surry County, N. Carolina, till 1791 or 1792, since which he has resided in the county of Patrick where he now resides.

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 of the United States. Sworn to and subscribed this day and year aforesaid.

Elihu Ayers

We Martin Cloud and Arch. Stuart, presiding in the county of Patrick and state of Virginia do hereby certify that we are well acquainted with Elihu Ayers who has subscribed and sworn to the above declaration, that we believe him to be 72 years of age, that he is reputed and believed in the neighborhood where he resides to have been a soldier of the revolution, and that we concur in that opinion.

Sworn and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.

Martin Cloud, Arch Stuart

State of Virginia

County of Patrick

On this 29th day of October 1833 personally appeared before the subscriber a Justice of the Peace of this county of Patrick and state of Virginia, Elihu Ayers, a resident of Patrick County, aged seventy three years on the 26th of January last past 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.

He says he was born in the county of Pittsylvania in the state of Virginia on the 26th day of January 1761 according to a transcript of his age in his possession taken from his father's register at which place he resided at the commencement of Revolutionary War.

He says that in the winter of 1777 he went to the county of Surry, North Carolina, to buy land for his father where he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated. He says he entered the service of the United States on the eighth day of January 1778 as a volunteer private soldier under Capt. Micajah Lewis of the county of Wilkes, state of North Carolina, in a regiment commanded by Col. Benjamin Cleveland; that he was stationed at David Allen's iron works in the county of Surry, North Carolina, to guard them and protect the surrounding neighborhood from the deprecation of the tories who much abounded in that section of the country and was frequently sent off in search of tories, outliers, and robbers, and would again return to the iron works, that place being the headquarters of the company called the Iron Works Company.

He was shortly after being stationed at this place sent off under Capt. William Underwood in search of Richard Murphey, a tory captain who had raised a tory company and was doing mischief in the country. Pursued him on Mitchells River, Fishers River, and Codies Creek in North Carolina. Was on the expedition about twenty six days and then returned to the iron works again.

A short time after this, he was sent under Lieutenant James Lewis in search of William Kail and Samuel Jarvis, tories whom they succeeded in taking near the Swan Ponds in Surry County, North Carolina, who was condemned by a court martial and hanged. They also took one Combs who was half hanged and let off on a promise of better behavior. He was engaged in this expedition about ten days, and then marched back to the iron works again where he was again stationed under Capt. Lewis for he had them that Capt. Daniel Carlan at the foot of Flower Gap (a gap of the mountain in the county of Henry, state of Virginia) was robbed by the tories. This declarant with others under the command of Capt. Hardin was immediately sent in pursuit of them. Pursued

them over the mountains in Virginia to Little River. From there to the Three Forks of New River. From there to the Three Top Mountain, and then to the Ball Mountain. Could not overtake them. Was marched back again to their garrison at the iron works after a march of about twenty days.

He was again stationed here a while and was marched under Capt. Lewis to Burke courthouse, NC, against Colonel Briant of the tories. Was stationed at this place about two weeks waiting for recruits. Not coming in contact with Briant at this place, he was marched to Salisbury, Rowan County, North Carolina, where he was stationed about three weeks, expecting an attack by Col. Briant. No attack having been made here, he was marched to the Shallow Ford of the Yadkin River where he remained a few days. He was then marched to the iron works again, visiting in their route the tory neighborhoods convenient on the way. He says he remained here until the tenth day of February 1779 when he was discharged by Colonel Benjamin Cleveland, which discharge ___ long ___ ___ days it is impossible for him to recollect precisely how long he was on the various expeditions mentioned above or how long to a day between them, but that he is certain he entered the service on the 18th day of January 1778 and was discharged on the tenth day of February 1779 during which time he was either in the field or in garrison.

He says he should not then have quit the service had he not received a letter from his father that he wished to move to the land this declarant had bought for him in Surry County, North Carolina, whose aid he wanted in remaining, for he had in the first place joined this company called the Iron Works Company for the term of twelve months with a promise to remain with them as long as he was needed if circumstances would permit him to do so, but having received the above mentioned letter from his father, he asked to be discharged which was accordingly done. He then returned to his father's in Pittsylvania County disjoined. And in the first of the year 1780, he moved his father to the land he had purchased in Surry County, North Carolina.

He further states that on the fifth day of April 1780, he again entered the service of the United States as a volunteer under Captain Salathiel Martin in the county of Surry, North Carolina, where he then resided, who gave him the appointment of orderly sergeant. He was again stationed at the iron works above mentioned where he remained guarding the iron works some length of time. He does not recollect how long, when he was marched to the Shallow Ford of the Yadkin River under Capt. Martin at which place they had an engagement with the tories. His captain on this occasion was taken prisoner by the tories, but on the next day was retaken. He was again marched back to the iron works, remained there a short time. Was again marched against a party of tories who had collected together at one co___ whom they succeeded in dislodging after a short but dangerous conflict.

He was then marched back to the iron works where he remained until August following when he marched under Capt. Martin to Wilkes courthouse where they joined several other companies under the command of Colonel Cleveland. Was stationed here about three weeks waiting for a sufficient number of recruits to go on to Kings Mountain. During our stay at this place, the commanding officers Colonel Cleveland and he believes Col. Williams, caused sham fights (one of the parties affecting to be the enemy) in order to try the valor of their officers and men. From this place, Cleveland marched his army up to Criders old fort, having first sent this declarant with 20 or 30 others to act as spies on the route who shaped their course up the Yadkin River, and joined Col. Cleveland at Criders fort, remained here waiting for more aid.

Was at this place joined by Col. Campbell from Virginia and some other companies, the names of the commanders not recollected. He was then with the army which at times consisted of several hundred, marched to Kings Mountain to attack Ferguson who was at that time stationed with his army on Kings Mountain. After reaching the foot of the mountain, a plan of attack was agreed on. They ascended the mountain, attacked the enemy. The whole or nearly 20 of whom was either killed or taken prisoner. This declarant says he saw Ferguson lying wounded when Col. Campbell ordered him to surrender, to whom he replied that 'He was on Kings Hill, and he meant to die in the king's cause'. Campbell immediately hewed him to pieces and left him dead on the mountain. This declarant states that he was ordered to assist in guarding the prisoners which he did.

He aided in bringing them on to the old Moravian town in Surry County, North Carolina, now Stokes County, where they were delivered to Colonel Lock from Rowan or Mecklenburg. This applicant says he here got a furlough to go home after clothing, and to return to his company again when called on. He remained idle eleven days when he was again called on to guard the iron works under Major Herndon in a company commanded by Capt. Richard Allen from Wilkes County, with whom he remained guarding the iron works until Lord Cornwallis made his appearance in North Carolina.

He says about the first of February 1781 he marched under Capt. Richard Allen against Cornwallis and joined Col. Lock from Rowan or Mecklenburg at Dobson Crossroads in Stokes County (then Surry). From there he was marched to the High Rock ford on Haw River. Remained there a short time expecting Cornwallis to attack them, they continued in that neighborhood until General Green from Virginia made his appearance on the border of North Carolina. He was then marched on ___ with him whom they joined at Simmons Tavern, he believes in Caswell County, North Carolina, between Dan and Haw Rivers. Remained with General Green until the Battle of Guilford.

This declarant says the first or second round, the North Carolina militia got panic struck, himself amongst the rest, and ran from the scene of action. That he never stopped until he reached Troublesome old iron works, a distance of 9 or 10 miles he heard. At which place he the next day joined General Green again. Marched with him in pursuit of Cornwallis near Hillsborough in North Carolina, where on the 7th day of April 1781, himself and rest of the North Carolina militia from his quarter were discharged by General Green by word of command. From which place he returned home and was not afterwards called into service, the Iron Works Company having nothing more to do.

He says during the year and thirteen days under Capt. Lewis and others, he was at one time on furlough eleven days and at another time four days which reduces the time of actual service to one year and two days in his second engagement under Capt. Salathiel Martin. He served six months and two days as orderly sergeant and twenty days as a guard in guarding the prisoners to the Moravian town from Kings Mountain. Then on furlough eleven days as stated above. Then four months and 27 days under Capt. Allen as a private soldier which makes his services as private soldier 17 months 19 days, as orderly sergeant 6 months and two days. The whole 23 months 21 days.

He says he has no documentary evidence of his services and that he knows of no living witness by whom he can prove his services. He says he is known to Major John Carter, the presiding member of the county court; to Archibald Stuart, attorney at law who was a member of the late convention of Virginia; to Col. Abram Staples, clerk of the county court and superior court of law and chancery; and to Col. Greenville Penn; to Major Clark Penn, all of the county of Patrick; and to Col. Martin Dickenson, clerk of the county court of Grayson; and also to Col. Samuel Hughs of the county of Patrick. That he remained a citizen of Surry County until the year 1791 when he moved to the county of Patrick, state of Virginia, where he has resided ever since and where he now resides.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity accept the present, and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state. He further states that since he made his declaration in court on the 16th day of November 1832, which was considered fective, he has by reason of bodily infirmity become unable to attend this court. Sworn to and subscribed before me the day and date first above written.

Martin Cloud, JP

Elihu Ayers