

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of John Godfrey R4083

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Virginia } SS

Lewis County }

On this 5th day of november 1833 personally appeared before me David W Sleeth a Justice of the peace in and for Lewis County in the said State of Virginia John Godfrey, a resident of Lewis County in the state of Virginia aged Eighty seven 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 7th 1832. that he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated.

That in the fall September 1776 he was drafted in Fauquier county Va. in the Va. M[ilitia]. for three months under Captain Smith (he thinks) he was marched to Richmond Va. there joined Col. Brooke's regiment of militia was marched to Petersburg - there tarried awhile and was march back to Richmond, where about Christmas 1776 he was discharged having served full three months as an orderly sergeant. Again in the spring of 1777 He volunteered for six months in the Virginia militia under captain Smith again (same captn) He was marched from Fauquier Courthouse to Fredericksburg there joined Col Mountjoy's regt. of Va. Militia. was kept there two months then marched down and across Stafford to Belle Plain in King George thence through King George to Matthias's Point [sic: Mathias Point] on the Potomac there we were stationed and kept a look out down the Potomac into Westmoreland county in Va. Here in October 1777 he was discharged having served this tour six months as a volunteer militia man but as an orderly sergeant in Captain Smiths company of Va. militia. Then in March 1778 he volunteered for three months to go down in Westmoreland County Va. to watch the enemy along the Bay he marched under Captain Ball down into Westmoreland There joined Col Ballards regt. was marched to different points along the bay to watch the enemy down into Northumberland County where in June he was discharged having served three months as an orderly sergeant in the Va. Ma. this tour. Again he forthwith volunteered for three months now under his same captain Ball and Col. Ballard He was stationed again along the Bay in Westmoreland a while thence down again into Northumberland. Thence down into Lancaster County to the lower end to Windmill Point here he acted this whole tour as an orderly sergeant for three month this tour when he was discharged in October 178 having served from the latter part of June 1778 till in October this last tour. Again in March 1779 He volunteered under Captain Taliafero for six months was marched down to through Stafford, King George, Westmoreland and Richmond into Lancaster there he joined a regiment of Va. Ma. commanded by Col. Henderson. was stationed at the same point he was before was an orderly sergeant in Captain Taliafero's company sometime in May 1779 The British came into Norfolk and burnt it [raid of Commodore George Collier and Gen Edward Mathew, 9-24 May] passed over to Portsmouth burnt it - passed up to Suffolk and burnt it. His Col. was ordered across the Rappahannock crossed into Middlesex thence into Gloucester. crossed at Gloucester York over into York County thence into Warwick and down to Hampton road or opposite there from thence to Hampton Town in Elizabeth city county. here he continued untill in Septr. his term was out. He again with his captain & Col and some of the other militia volunteered to stay three months longer which he did still was an orderly sergeant and continued here till in December about Christmas when he was discharged having served nine months this year of 1779 as an orderly sergeant and volunteer in the Va. Ma. in two tours one of six months and one of three months. Again in 1780 in May He volunteered in a company of Virginia Militia as an orderly sergeant under his former captain Smith. He was marched from Fauquier County Va. to Richmond city there he joined a regiment under Col. Campbell of the Va. Ma. was stationed at Richmond city to guard the Magazine did so till in August 1780 acted the whole time again as an orderly sergeant was discharged having served three months this tour He again volunteered forthwith for three months more under his same captain Smith as an orderly sergeant under Col Campbell who was still in command at Richmond He was continued there guarding the magazine till the first of December 1780 when he was again discharged having this tour acted three months as an orderly sergeant in the Va. Ma. He

returned home to Fauquier County. This was a hard winter, but sometime in this winter the British came up to Richmond and destroyed property to a large amount and burnt many houses [Gen. Benedict Arnold's invasion, 5-7 Jan 1781] He again volunteered under his same Captain Smith and marched in January 1781 as far as Fredericksburg but the severity of the weather and the bad cloathing they had prevented going further they returned home. And in March 1781 again set out under his captain Smith marched to Richmond was stationed there sometime had to retreat under Col [William] Darke up the country was joined by more troops General [Anthony] Wayne with Pennsylvania troops [10 June]. They returned to Richmond there the British & american generals maneouvred sometime the british lay in Manchester the americans in shocked hill and back. The british filed of much trial of shell[?] and concentration of troops and some skirmishing near New Kent. The British kept on to York and we followed at which place in October 1781 the americans captured the British He was then discharged having served more than six months this tour as an orderly sergeant a volunteer in the Va. Ma. He removed then to what is now Hardy County in Va. There He was drafted for three months under captain Neal & Col Vincent Williams to guard against the Indians and Tories was marched to different places in now Hardy & Pendleton caught several Tories. He too acted here as a sergeant and sometimes as such in commanding Indian spies He served from March 1782 till in June 1782 when he was discharged having served three months as a sergeant in the Va. Ma. this tour. He forthwith volunteered again for three months under the same captain Neal to act as a sergeant and Indian spy this he done from June 1782 till in October more than three months Col. Hutton commanded this tour he was discharged and this was his last service He acted during the revolutionary war three years and three months at least as sergeant in the Va. Ma. from 1776 till 1782 both years included. He has no documentary evidence he knows of no person whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his services. 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.

Subscribed and sworn to this day and year aforesaid. John hisXmark Godfrey
The several interrogatories prescribed by the war department were propounded to the applicant to which he answers as follows viz.

- 1st. That He was born in Fauquier County in Virginia in the year 1746 as he always heard from his parents.
- 2nd. That he has no record of his age.
- 3rd. That he was living in Fauquier County Va. from there to what is now Hardy in 1781. In 1800 he removed to Harrison county Va lived there till 1832 when he removed to his son in law in Lewis county whose name is George Duvall grand son of the distinguished John Pearce Duvall [John Pierre Duvall] who so long acted as a Col in western Va. He now lives in Lewis county Va.
- 4th. That he was first drafted was always after till 1782 a volunteer each tour. in 1782 he was again drafted and again the same year volunteered.
- 5th. He saw & knew Generals [George] Weedon Washington Lay Fayette [sic: Lafayette] Wayne [Benjamin] Lincoln [Peter] Muhlenberg. He some other French and American which he did not know. He saw regulars and Militia Pa. Va. & Maryland troops as well as French. The general circumstances of his service is set forth above as nearly as he can now recollect.
- 6th. He rec'd from each of his captains above named one and from some more written discharges He took no care of them after he got home. He became a cripple soon after the war closed and remained so wholly incapable of Physical exertions wholly dependant on his children for aid in every sense of the word and he rejoices that they are both able and willing to render it him.
- 7th. He is known in his present neighborhood to all the respectable members of it of whom he will mention George P Smith [pension application 18595] and George Fisher old men they as well as all others can testify to his charater for veracity and their belief of his services as a soldier of the revolution There is no clergyman residing near him. Sworn and subscribed this day and year aforesaid.

John hisXmark Godfrey

[The following report is by District Attorney Washington G. Singleton who investigated many pensioners and applicants from Lewis and other counties of present West Virginia. For details see pension application S6111 of David W. Sleeth and the endnote.]

Lewis County

John Godfrey aged 89 yrs. Serv'd. 3 yr & 3 mo.

Saw Godfrey July 1, 1834 when he made the following statement. - Said he never was much in the Revolutionary War. was out after the Tories a "while" this was in Hardy County. Cant say "exactly" how long. perhaps two or three weeks, not longer. his "trip was only a little sort of fun" "it was pass time" for him - this was all the service he done in the Revolutionary War. he was anxious to be a Soldier in the Revolutionary War & went from home to Fauquier Court house for that purpose. Col. Brook & Col Ashly of that County had him examined by a phision, who pronounced him unsound and incapable of bearing arms, haveing had his back broke. on meeting with this rebuff & disappointment his military ardour was completely cooled - he returned home to Hardy County and has been a peace man ever since.

Calvin Waldo hunted him out & persuaded him that he was entitled to a pension, though he did not believe it. Waldo however insisted on writeing his declaration, and done so. he thought it was all a peece of fun (he is a funny man) never thought of it since - Waldo had packed along with him somebody he called a Magistrate (did not look much like one) thinks his name was Sleeth. Sleeth took the paper written by Waldo and asked him (Godfrey) if it was all true. he replied that it was still thinking it a joke. Sleeth did not ask him to swear or affirm. - here the matter ended & they left him has heard nothing of them since. Respectfully Reported.

W. G Singleton Special Agent

NOTE: Since Godfrey could not sign his own name, it is unlikely he could have served as an Orderly Sergeant, whose duty it was to copy orders into a company books. (O'Kelley, Patrick. *Unwaried Patience and Fortitude: Francis Marion's Orderly Book*, 2006.) Calvin Waldo and David W. Sleeth were also associated with other fraudulent pension applications from Lewis County.