

[Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters](#)

Pension Application of James Tarrant R10395

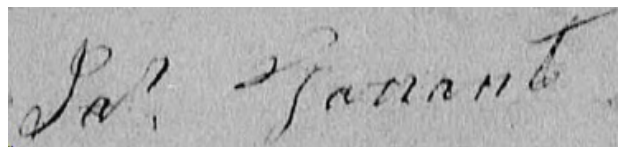
VA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 18 Aug 2015.

I James Tarrant depose & say that I was born in Pennsylvania [sic: Pittsylvania] County Virginia in the year AD 1753 on the last day of Nov, and when very young my Father moved into Amherst County in said State where we lived sixteen years, and removed to Henry County on the border of Virginia & North Carolina In the last named County I lived during and 3 or 4 years after the war closed. In the year 1787 I removed into South Carolina Greenville County In this State and County, I lived until the year AD 1820 when I removed into Jefferson County Alabama and here I have lived until the present day. While an Inhabtent of Henry County aforesaid I was recommended to the Executive of said Virginia as a suitable man to command a Company of minute militia men and [page torn] ...ter I received a Commission of Captain [page torn] Col. Abraham Penn [Abram Penn] of Henry County and was in the year eighty as will appear by my Commission [undeciphered word]. Soon after I receiv'd my commission I was ordered to march my men towards North Carolina to fight a Gang of Tories who had murdered and robbed a man by the name of Esquire Letcher (so called) [William Letcher, 2 Aug 1780] This murder was committed near a gap in the mountain called the Flower Gap [at present Ararat in Patrick County], to this place repaired with my Company. When the Tories heard of our approach they fled into the hills and mountains. we pursued them and scoured that region for a long time not far from six weeks to the best of my recollection. Thinking that we had cleared this part of the settlements from danger, we returned to Henry Co. It will be seen that this Henry County bordered upon North Carolina. the two bordering portions of this part of the two States were very mountainous and in many places almost inaccessible by any human beings excepting Tories who always fled to these places for security when pursued by the liberty men (so called) Our own neighborhood being also annoyed by the depredations of Savage & Tories we thought a large portion of our services were indispensible for their protection & security. I always made it a rule to return from a distant expedition as soon as the situation of the settlements for whose protection we were ordered to march was considered safe – and place myself and men in a more densely populated region where the Tories generally laid in ambush for the purpose of plundering and robbing when the inhabitants were least able to defend themselves In the year 1781 early in the Spring [sic: see endnote] I was again ordered into North Carolina to disperse a gang of Tories headed by one Bryant [Capt. James Bryan] that were committing depredations of the basest character upon the Boddies & property of the liberty men. In this expedition we were led by Col. Penn himself. we pursued them some 150 miles perhaps when they were suddenly & unexpectedly met and cut to pieces by a large body of men from the other side of the mountain (so called headed by Major Floyd & Capt Campbel [sic: Joseph Cloyd and Isaac Campbell] on their way down to reinforce Genl. Green at Gilford Court House [sic: Nathanael Greene; see endnote]. The Tories were met and conquered at the Shallow Ford of the Yadkin [14 Oct 1780]. My men & myself went on to the battle ground next day saw dead horses & men that belonged to the Tories. As this region was infested with Tories, Col. Penn ordered me to remain and scour the Country; And so we did, for a long time until no news of a Tory could be heard We again returned to Henry County Were engaged in this expedition about 11 or 12 wee[ks] to my best recollection. We remained in Henry Co. scouring the suspected places until November I think, when I again received orders to repair with all haste to North Carolina to receive some 300 hundred [sic] Prisoners Irtish volunteers that had been taken as I was informed at the Battle of Eutaw Springs in South Carolina [8 Sep 1781]. I received these Prisoners at the N.C. line from the North Carolina Officers & men with orders to convey them to Winchester Va. I proceded on my march towards Winchester as far as Augusta Co. (I think if my memory serves me) when there fell a Blocking snow so that to proceed farther with the most of the Prisoners bare footed would have been impossible at that season of the year. I however drew rations for all. And remained thir keeper some 4 or 5 weeks, when my services were needed at home, and by order of Col. Penn delivered the Prisoners to the Officers in the County of

Augusta where we had been blocked with snow, and marched immediately to Henry County, where we remained scouring our own Frontier until the war closed in 1783 when our services were no longer required in the defence of the Country. When I was conducting the prisoners to Winchester aforesaid I was informed by Col. Flemming [probably William Fleming of Botetourt County] for the first time of the capture of Cornwallace [sic: Cornwallis, 19 Oct 1781] and all his men at Little York. On account of bad roads & very little or no communication between Little York and the Country where we were engaged, are the reasons why I had not heard of this important Battle sooner. I think it took place the October previous I omitted in its proper place one expedition to the N. Carolina frontier when I was ordered to march in haste to disperse a gang of British & Tories who had been destroying some cattle hogs &c belonging to the liberty men. This was in the latter part of the winter in 81. I think the last of February or first of March, from this expedition we returned in about 3 weeks This last tour was before [sic] my orders to march in pursuit of Bryants Gang, which was soon afterwards) I have now related every thing of importance as near the truth as my memory serves me, which is tolerable good for a man of my age and affliction which my Physician will certify to. I have a Cancer on my face & nose that will soon deprive me of sight & will in all probability kill me in a few months. I have been unable to go from home a long time. Am confined to my room which accounts for the necessity of my sending for the Judge to administer the Oath in my own house instead of Open Court – you may think strange that I have neglected this application this long – and that this circumstance causes upon its face a doubt in my own mind that I am not entitled to compensation with those that have served their country in her hours of trial and need – that stronger evidence than a declaration upon Oath may be required on the account of the great delay. If stronger evidence is required than is herein & herewith enclosed I can never receive assistance from my Country for services rendered her exclusively for three long years. if not fighting her Enemies with my Gun & Bayonet every day & every hour & my family which was increasingly in events & in numbers were deprived of any physical assistance from a Father whose relation with the defence of the Country & its Inhabitants engrossed all his time & attention in her service These sacrifices, privations & hardships can now only be made evident by this declaration upon Oath Seven years ago when I was in prosperity and in health I could have obtained the evidence of one of my soldiers who served under me who lives in Green Co. [sic: Greene County] in the State of Ala but he has been gathered to his fellow Soldiers who all died before him, so there is not a person living that I know of that can render me the least assistance only as traditionary evidence Every body told me when they heard of the pension law that I was entitled to a pension if any man in the Country was. I invariably told them that I was satisfied that I was entitled and could claim a pension, but what services I had rendered my Country was only a duty that I owed & my Country was welcome to whatever I had benefitted her, that I was a Minister of the gospel, that I was not needy – that it would evince a hungry disposition in me after this worlds goods that would not be becoming in a person of my calling But circumstances have varied, Through the Course of cause & effect I have from plenty health usefulness & ease become needy diseased helpless troublesome to all around me All of which I respectfully submit to your consideration and hope that I shall find favor and relief from a patriotic and generous Government.

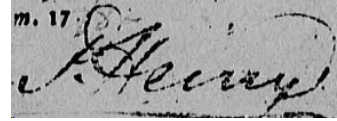
January 20th 1840

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jas. Tarrant". The ink is dark and the background is a light, textured paper.

The COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
TO James Tarrant Gent. GREETING:
KNOW you, that from the special Trust and Confidence which is reposed in your Patriotism, Fidelity, Courage, and good Conduct, you are, by these Presents, constituted and appointed first Lieutenant of Militia in the County of Henry. You are therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the Duty of first Lieutenant of the Militia, by doing and performing all Manner of Things thereunto belonging; and you are to pay a ready Obedience to all Orders and Instructions which from Time to Time you may receive

from the Governour, or executive Power of this State for the Time being, or any of your superior Officers, agreeable to the Rules and Regulations of the Convention or General Assembly. All Officers and soldiers under your Command are hereby strictly charged and required to be obedient to your Orders, and to aid you in the Execution of this Commission, according to the Intent and Purpose thereof.

Witness Patrick Henry, Esquire, Governour or Chief Magistrate of the Commonwealth aforesaid, at Williamsburg, this 16th Day of February in the second Year of the Commonwealth, Annoq. dom. 1778


A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P. Henry", with a date "m. 17" written in the upper left corner of the document fragment.

The Commonwealth of VIRGINIA

To James Tarrant Gentleman, greeting:

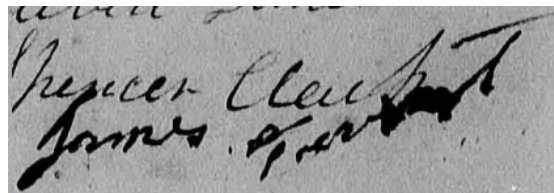
KNOW YOU that our GOVERNOUR, on Recommendation from the Court of the County of Henry hath constituted and appointed you Captain in a Company of Militia in the said County. In Testimony whereof, these our Letters are sealed, with the Seal of the Commonwealth, and made Patent.

Witness THOMAS JEFFERSON, Esquire, our said Governour, at Richmond, the twenty fourth day of June in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "T. Jefferson", written in dark ink on a light-colored document fragment.

State of Alabama } SS

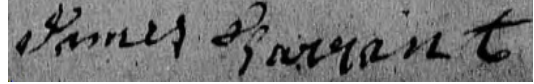
Jefferson County } On this twenty fifth day of April AD 1840 personally appeared before me J F Forrest Judge of the County Court of said Jefferson County James Tarrant a resident as set forth in the commencement of his declaration subscribed and sworn to on the 20th day of January last – to which this is an amendment is attached, & forms a part) aged 86 years on the last day of November last who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his Oath make the following declaration as an amendment forming a part of his declaration to which this is attached in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June 7th 1832 I have a record of my age showing that I was born on the last day of Nov. 1753 and if I live to see next November (last day) I shall be 87 years old. I have no documentary evidence of my services other than is herewith transmitted designating my rank. I know of no person living who can testify to my services I entered the service immediately upon receiving my Commission as a volunteer and during the remainder of the war I was engaged in no civil pursuit the country being overrun with unfriendly Indians, Tories & British. the lives and property of the liberty people were constantly in danger of being destroyed so that the Inhabitants could not feel in any degree safe without an organized force for their protection & defence I was solicited by the principal Citizenry of Henry Co. Va to abandon every civil avocation, take the command of a company of Drafted men or volunteers and embark for the defence of the Citizens of our Country. I did so and thus continued until the war ended in 1783 for which services I claim a Pension under the Act of June 7th 1832. And I do hereby relinquish every claim whatever to a Pension or annuity except the present and Hereby declare that my name is not on the Pension roll of the Agency of any State My Lieutenants name was Reuben Daniel My Commissary's name was Spencer Clark

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James Tarrant", with "Spencer Clark" written above it, on a document fragment.

NOTES:

Tarrant confused the skirmish at Shallow Ford on 14 Oct 1780 with the skirmish that occurred there on 8 Feb 1781 during Gen. Greene's flight toward Guilford Courthouse.

A slightly different copy of Tarrant's application is in the file, signed as shown below. With this application it was certified that Tarrant was a minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Tarrant". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

On 7 Feb 1842 Samuel A. Tarrant stated that his grandfather, James Tarrant, Sr., died 5 July 1840. He also stated that he and James Tarrant, Jr. had been born in the same neighborhood of South Carolina, were about the same age, and had known each other for 25 or 30 years. On 26 Sep 1840 in Jefferson County James Tarrant, Jr., Executor of James Tarrant, Sr., presented in court the latter's will dated 12 May 1840, a copy of which is in the file. In it he named the following children: John B. Tarrant, Susannah Burdine, Rebecca Tarrant, Sally Tarrant, Lydia Siltan (or Sitton), Polly Garner, Benjamin Tarrant, Jane Gurley, Nancy Dacus, Eleander Hewitt, and Drusilla Hemphill. The bulk of the estate, including a plantation, "my negro man Adam," and the pension if it had been granted, was devised to James Tarrant, Jr. and his wife Mary.

Tarrant's application was rejected because it did not specify at least six months of active service.. On 15 Aug 1842 James Tarrant, Jr wrote to the Pension Commissioner as follows: "I can say that if it is not [shown], there was a great mistake made by Dr. Sanborn, the Gentleman who coppied his statement, for I have the original statement made out by father of the diferent towers of duty that he preformed as a Capt and it make when added over seven months, and I well recollect that the day he was qualified to the declaration sent to your department, that he stated that he seved more that seven months actual service." James Tarrant, Jr. persisted in trying to obtain the pension until at least 1852.

Not all 118 pages in the file are transcribed here.