

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of William McWilliams R1410

Dorothea B. Buckner¹ f47VA

Transcribed by Will Graves

5/17/13

[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. 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 fails 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 errors or omissions to my attention.]

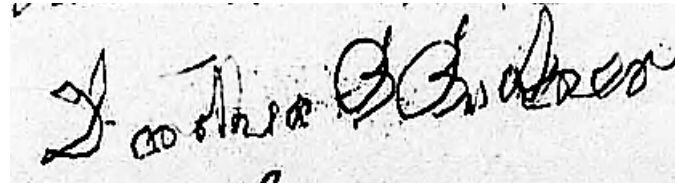
State of Virginia Caroline County: SS

On this the 10th day of September 1838 personally appeared before the subscriber a justice of the peace in and for said County and State, Dorothea B Buckner a resident of said County, aged seventy-three years on the first day of March last who being first duly sworn according to law doth on her oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the act of Congress passed July the 7th 1838 entitled "an act granting half pay and pensions to certain widows" – That she is now the widow of the late George Buckner of Caroline County Virginia – That he the said George Buckner died on the 18th day of November 1828 – That prior to the said marriage to the said Buckner, she was the widow of the late William McWilliams of Spotsylvania County in the State aforesaid; who was an officer in the Continental Army in the war of the Revolution, and held the rank of Major in the same – That as informed by said William McWilliams he entered said service in the month of May 1776 first as adjutant to the Brigade or Regiment under the command of General Hugh Mercer. After acting in that capacity for some time, the period she cannot state, he was by invitation from General Washington transferred to his Staff in the main Army where he remained six months as well as her memory now enables her to state, when he was transferred to the Staff of General Lord Stirling [William Alexander] in the capacity and rank of Major he being aide-de-camp to said Lord Stirling. Her memory does not at this time enable her to say how long he remained in this last mentioned service – and she relies on the history of the transactions of that period, and documents and such proof as may be obtained from his acquaintances in said service to show the extent of his services. She has frequently heard conversations between her said husband and certain Officers who had taken part in the Revolutionary Struggle. Of those Officers the chief part were General Weedon [George Weedon], General Spotswood, Major Day and Captain Forsyth, all of whom lived in or adjacent to Fredericksburg in Virginia, at which place the said McWilliams resided. She has heard her said husband say he was at the battle of Princeton where General Mercer was and assisted in taking him from the field of battle. That he was at the battles of Brandywine and Trenton, and she is unsure the impression at that of Germantown, but of this she is not positive. She is also under the impression that she has heard him speak of being at the siege of York in Virginia. After he left the Regular Army he was commissioned as she believes a Colonel of militia of Spotsylvania County. This was about the close of the War. She further declares that she was married to the said William McWilliams on the 6th day of April in the year 1782. That her husband the aforesaid William McWilliams died on the 17th day of April 1801 – That she was not married to him prior to his leaving the service, but the marriage took place

¹ former widow

previous to the first of January 1794, to wit at the time above stated.

S/Dorothea B Buckner

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dorothea B Buckner". The ink is dark and the paper is aged and slightly textured.

[p 7: in a letter it is stated that Mrs. Buckner died in 1839]

[p. 9: Power of attorney dated July 27, 1852 given by Robert D Minor claiming to be one of the heirs of Dorothea B Buckner.]

[p. 10: Document dated June 15, 1780 referring to Dorothy Brayne Benger, daughter and co-heir of John Benger late of Spotsylvania County; she is referred to as being above the age of 14 and selected George Frinch, Doctor of Physick, as her Guardian.]

[p 44]

State of Virginia Caroline County: Sct.

I Festus Dickinson Administrator with the will annexed of Dorothea B Buckner deceased whose petition for a pension, as the widow of Major William McWilliams, was rejected on account of her second marriage; am advised, that she was entitled to a pension, and that I as her legal representative am entitled to it. I now claim it, and state, that from evidence upon which I implicitly rely, Major William McWilliams was a Captain in the 3rd Virginia Regiment, with which he marched to New York, and was by a general order dated Harlem Heights 7th of October 1776 announced as Brigade Major and was on the 19th of March 1777 reported an aide-de-camp to Lord Stirling all which will more fully appear by reference to the order book of the Commander in Chief now in the Department of State.

S/ F. Dickenson, Administrator

[attested August 14, 1843 in Caroline County Virginia]

[p 35]

I Richard Steers² of Spotsylvania County Virginia a soldier of the revolution and now enjoying the benefit of a pension from Government aged seventy-two years do hereby depose and state that I was well acquainted with the late Colonel William McWilliams, he and I always living in same County. The said McWilliams entered the service as an officer early in the war, and went to the northward. I myself did not go with him for I went South. I saw Colonel McWilliams at the siege of York commanding a Regiment and I believe and recollect that he commanded the militia of Spotsylvania at the end of the war – and I believe in state that he was in the war at the beginning and ending of it. Witness my hand this 17th day of April 1834

S/ Richard Steers

[Copy]

[p 35]

I John Steers³ a soldier of the revolution having now a pension from Government aged seventy-

² [Richard Steers S6163](#)

³ [John Steers S6168](#)

seven and living in Spotsylvania County do hereby depose that I was well acquainted with Colonel William McWilliams who was an officer in the Army. Sometime in the year 1781 I went as a soldier under Colonel William McWilliams to the orders of York River. When below Hanover court house we returned by forced marches to Fredericksburg and removed the stores up the Rappahannock. We went to Raccoon Ford & to Pogue's mill where we met Marquis Lafayette and thence advanced towards the British Army. The said McWilliams was in actual command of the militia of Spotsylvania County as a Colonel at the end of the war. Witness my hand this 17th day of April 1834

S/ John Steers

[Copy]

[p 36]

I James Bullock⁴ a soldier of the revolution aged seventy-four years and now enjoying a pension from Government, do hereby depose and state that I was well acquainted with the late Colonel William McWilliams of Spotsylvania County. He and I always living in same County. The said McWilliams entered the service early in the war and went to the northward and there acted as aide-de-camp to Lord Stirling. He continued in active service the whole war, and I myself know well that he was in command in the year 1779 and 1780 being then called Major and afterwards Colonel. At the end of the war he was Colonel of the Spotsylvania militia. I know full well that Colonel McWilliams never did resign or quit the Army, for he was in the whole war, at its commencement, during it, and at its end by the peace. I myself was his near neighbor and well knew all Colonel McWilliams' services in the war of the revolution. He was an officer of high character and had a great reputation for military acts. Given under my hand this 24th April 1824.

S/ James Bullock

[Copy]

[p 37]

I Larkin Stanard⁵ aged seventy-three years living in the County of Spotsylvania do hereby depose and state; that I was well acquainted with Colonel William McWilliams of the Revolutionary Army. I resided in the same house with him for 2 or 3 years previous to his joining the Army and I know that he entered the Army at an early period of the war, and was appointed an aide-de-camp to General Lord Stirling, he resided in Fredericksburg and I lived in its immediate vicinity, and we were upon terms of intimacy and friendship when he entered the Army – from the time he entered the Army until his return was upwards of 3 years – the precise dates of entering & returning I do not at present recollect, but his return was not long previous to the siege of York. He was appointed a Field Officer in the Militia of Spotsylvania I believe a Lieutenant Colonel and in that capacity went to the siege of York this I know certainly as an accident happened to Colonel McWilliams' horse and a very fine gelding of mine was in pressed for his use. I will further depose that Colonel William McWilliams was in actual command of the militia of Spotsylvania at the termination of the war. Given under my hand and seal this 18th day of March 1834

S/ Larkin Stanard

[Copy]

[p 46]

I Thomas Minor⁶ of the County of Spotsylvania & State of Virginia being now eighty-one years

⁴ [James Bullock S8121](#)

⁵ [Larkin Stanard S7607](#)

⁶ [Thomas Minor W5374](#)

of age, do testify that I was a Captain of Infantry in the war of the revolution, that I was well acquainted with William McWilliams of said County & state that I know he entered into the Army at an early period of the war, that he was aid to General Lord Stirling, but how long he continued in the Army, I cannot at this time recollect, but think to the best of my recollection he must have served fully 3 years. Given under my hand this 15th of March 1834

S/ Thos. Minor

[Copy]

I John Pierce⁷ of the County of Spotsylvania aged eighty one years and now enjoying the benefit of a pension do hereby depose and state that I was well acquainted with Colonel William McWilliams of the Revolutionary Army. I served with him on a military tour to the orders of York River, when below Hanover court house we were ordered back to Fredericksburg we performed this order by forced marches, Colonel McWilliams then removed the stores from Fredericksburg up to the Rappahannock River. I saw him no more of Colonel McWilliams until the close of the war at which time he was in command of the militia of Spotsylvania as a Colonel. Witness my hand this 18th day of April 1834.

S/ Jno. Pierce

[Copy]

I William Jackson a native of the County of Spotsylvania aged seventy-eight years do hereby depose and state that I was well acquainted with Colonel William McWilliams of the Revolutionary Army having served with him in several military tours, he was an officer of the Militia at the time I served with him late in the year 1780 or early in the year 1781 Colonel Williams was ordered by General Weedon [George Weedon] (who had the command in Fredericksburg) with a detachment of militia to the waters of York River, I was in this service; when below Hanover court house, an express was sent by Colonel McWilliams and we returned by forced marches to Fredericksburg. We assisted in removing the stores from Fredericksburg up to the Rappahannock River. After which we proceeded to the Raccoon Ford from thence to Pogue's mill in Orange County where we were reinforced by General Wayne and the Marquis Lafayette; after embodying we advanced towards the British Army which retreated from the County of Hanover; I left Colonel William McWilliams with the Army then in pursuit of the British – After the surrender of Cornwallis at York, I sold Colonel McWilliams and it is my belief that he was in actual command of the militia of Spotsylvania at the termination of the war. Given under my hand this 22nd day of March 1834.

S/ William Jackson

[copy]

⁷ [John Pierce S5933](#)

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

Addendum to William McWilliams R1410

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. 12 Sep 2020.

[From [rejected claims in the Library of Virginia](#). The bulk of the file consists of original supporting documents that were copied in the federal file.]

Extract

“I am to inform you that XXXXXX on his way to Congress in the month of October last fell in with Lord Sterling at Reading and note in confidence that I [undeciphered word] understood informed his aide de camp Major McWilliams that General [Thomas] Conway had written to you &c.

The enclosed was communicated by XXXXXXXXX to Major McWilliams.”

Vide Letr. Gen Washington to Major Gen [Horatio] Gates dated Valley Forge Jan. 4, 1778 and printed in Marsh: Life Washington [sic: John Marshall, *The Life of George Washington*] Vol 3 in the Appendix page 10. (first Edition)

In Wilkinson’s Memoirs [James Wilkinson *Memoirs of My Own Times*] Vol 1. 386. Vide Letter from Gen Gates to Gen Wilkinson – containing an allusion to Major McWilliams – and an extract from Gen Washington’s Letter.

Same Vol. 396

Same vol 405

Same vol. 409

This certifies that I was well acquainted with Col. Wm McWilliams, that he entered the army at a very early period of the war of the revolution as an officer in the continental service, that he continued in the service some years, how many I cannot say, but I believe at least three years, if not more. He also was a Col. of the Militia of Spotsylvania County at a late period of the war, or about the time of the Peace.

Given under my hand this 17th day of March 1834

Law. Battaile

I hereby further certify that I was a neighbour of Col McWilliams’s family, & intimately acquainted with them That I never heard that he had resigned his comission in the continental army of the revolution.

Given under my hand this 23^d day of April 1834

Law. Battaile

NOTES:

The file of the rejected claim by the heirs also includes a report dated 22 May 1834 by Commissioner John H. Smith summarizing the testimony and concluding as follows: “There is no evidence of record, or public documents, showing that Wm. McWilliams bore any Commission, of any grade, in the Regular army. His name is not any of the Rolls of Officers, or Returns, or Reports, of Boards of Officers – nor on the army Register.”

According to E. M. Sanchez-Saavedra, *A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations in the American Revolution*, William McWilliams began service as a Captain in the Third Virginia Regiment of Foot in February 1776. According to J. T. McAllister *Virginia Militia in the Revolutionary War*, William McWilliams was sworn as Lt. Col. of the Spotsylvania Militia on 16 August 1781. Further details of his service may be found by searching the pension applications for the name William McWilliams.