

## Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of William Spencer<sup>1</sup> R18076

f79VA

Transcribed by Will Graves

3/27/12

[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 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1786." Please call errors or omissions to my attention.]

[NOTE: I think there is a substantial likelihood that the papers in this file relate to at least two different officers by the name of William Spencer, both or all of whom served in the Virginia service either in the Continental Line or State Troops. I have not tried to resolve which documents relate to which officer.]

[f p. 2]

Rec'd 21 February 1833

Auditors Office of Virginia

February 18, 1833

Sir

I have had under consideration the cases of Gideon and William Spencer, and whilst I am strongly inclined to think that the latter is the officer reported in Nelson's Corps of Cavalry I am free to confess that the subject is not without difficulty.

I have ascertained at the land office that the No. of the land warrant which issued to William Spencer on the 11th of February 1784 for 2666 2/3 acres was 2451. It does not appear that more than one Land warrant came to Lieutenant William Spencer of the state line, and therefore I presume that the officer of that name referred to in the certificate of Thomas Meriwether is the same who is referred to in the Certificate of Colonel Heth. It appears from the Records of the Land Office that to Land warrants one for 1,333 1/3 acres and another for 888 8/9 acres issued on the 26 February 1824 to Lieutenant William Spencer of the Continental line, or rather to his Representatives. I cannot find however that Lieutenant William Spencer of the State line ever drew depreciation – but there is evidence (& I have sent a certificate to that effect) that Cornet Williams Spencer of the State line drew Certificates for one and two years advance pay under the Act of 1781.

With respect to Gideon Spencer, there is no trace of any officer of that name on the Army Rolls. It is certain that no such officer drew his depreciation. I'll forward you the evidence upon which the Executive allowed Land bounty to his Representatives on the 26 December last. The order of the Executive recites that he was the same Spencer who was recorded by the Board of officers in 1782 and 1784, but I cannot conceive upon what evidence that opinion is founded. It is true that the affidavit of William Hamlett a soldier (a copy of which is also set) states that he was an officer in the company of Cavalry commanded by Captain Read, and Captain Read you will find it recorded as an officer in Nelson's Cavalry. On the other hand the respectable certificates of Colonel Heth, states that William Spencer was an officer in Nelson's Cavalry.

As these cases however present opposing testimony – and as I believe that I have the

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<sup>1</sup> VA. Half Pay. See N. A. Acc. No. 874 050 167 Half Pay William Spencer

means of arriving at the truth, I would respectfully suggest the propriety of suspending your decision. There are 2 offices of Nelson's Corps now living – one of them near this City. I will write to them immediately to state who was the Spencer in that Corps – William old Gideon – and I will communicate to you there answers.

I am Sir  
very respectfully your &c  
Jas. E. Heath,

The Hon. Louis McLane

[f p. 5: Power of attorney dated February 12, 1813 given by Margaret Spencer and John Spencer, both of the County of Spencer, Kentucky and as executors of the last will and testament of John Spencer, deceased, to pursue the claim of William Spencer as an officer of the revolutionary war.]

[f p. 7: copy of the last will and testament dated May 4, 1820 of John Spencer of Shelby County Kentucky naming his beloved wife Margaret Spencer and his children "William Spencer, Thomas Spencer, John and James Spencer, Spear and Eliza, Harvey and Harrison, Emerind & Ritchard McSperes." and naming his wife and his son John Spencer as the executors of his will.]

[f p. 9]

The affidavit of Samuel Tinsley<sup>2</sup> of the County of Hanover aged seventy-two years taken to be read in evidence in support of Lieutenant William Spencer's representatives' claim upon the State of Virginia for his five years commutation pay as an officer of the State Legion of the Revolutionary War. This affiant states that he was a Cornet in Captain Armand Troop of Dragoons under the command of Major John Nelson, in which company William Spencer was Lieutenant and was well known by him & was with him in guarding the British prisoners taken at Yorktown. That said Spencer remained in command with the Army until the State Legion was disbanded and said Spencer was always considered a meritorious officer. Signed by said Tinsley at his residence in Hanover this 4th of December 1831 being disabled from attending in Richmond at the request of Mr. Jno. Dickinson agent of the Representatives.

S/ Saml Tinsly [sic]  
State LLL

Answer to Question 1st,

I entered the service in Major Nelson's Cavalry in the year 1780 or 81.

2 = I think Spencer entered the service before I did.

3 = I served with Spencer after the siege of York at Winchester in guarding the British prisoners: all our troop of Cavalry were there.

4. The State Legion was disbanded after the close of the War.

Answer to the questions 5, 6, and 7

I have received by act of assembly my commutation of 5 years full pay.

S/ Saml. Tinsley

[f p. 12: Testimony given by James Cox on May 22, 1833 in Spencer County Kentucky in which he states he is the cousin of William and John Spencer; that William Spencer, an officer in the revolution, died shortly after the close of the war, he thinks sometime prior to the year 1787; that

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<sup>2</sup> [Samuel Tinsley S6243](#)

John Spencer was the oldest brother of William Spencer; that John Spencer died many years ago in Kentucky.]

[f p. 14]

State of Kentucky Shelby Circuit Sct.: June Term 1818

Upon motion of John Spencer, George Bruce, and James Cox, were sworn as witnesses to prove his heir ship to his brother William Spencer Deceased. The said George Bruce deposeth and saith that he has been acquainted with the said John Spencer ever since the year 1770 and also well knew the elder brother of the said John whose name was William Spencer during the whole of the revolutionary War in which the said William served, the said William was a citizen of Virginia and lived near Richmond and died in the year 1783. Thomas Spencer was the father of both William and John and the said Thomas was alive at the death of William, but have since departed this life many years: but how long this deponent does not know, and whether the said John Spencer is the only heir at law of the said William he does not know: but does know that he was his elder brother –. The said James Cox deposeth and saith that he has been acquainted with John Spencer about forty years ago, and knows that he is the elder brother of William Spencer mentioned by the said George Bruce in his deposition & that their father Thomas Spencer died between 10 & 15 years ago – which depositions so made in open court all ordered to be entered of Were record & certified which is accordingly done.

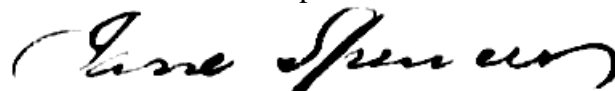
[Attested by the clerk of court August 7, 1818]

[f p. 15]

State of Indiana Sct.

Be it remembered that on this day Jane Spencer personally came before me and being of mature age and first duly sworn deposeth and saith that William Spencer oldest son of the said Jane and Thomas Spencer her husband was born in the year 1757 that during the revolutionary war he entered the service of the United States of America that at the taking of Stony point [July 16, 1779] he was wounded and for his gallantry was promoted to a Cornet of the Troop of Cavalry that he served as this deponent has been informed and believes during the War and that at the close of the War he married a daughter of a widow moredock [sic, Jane Murdock] in Virginia and that shortly after his marriage he was murdered by a malicious neighbor, that he enlisted with Colonel John Neville his rank not known at that time; and William Spencer enlisted near Pittsburgh and served as this deponent believes in the Virginia State Line and that John Spencer now residing in Shelby County Kentucky is the oldest brother of William Spencer deceased that she has reason to believe that no application has ever been made by any of his relations for any premium or bounty in lands which may have been due to him this deponent further states that she heard of the death of her son William sometime in the year 1785 as she believes & further saith not.

S/ Jane Spencer

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jane Spencer". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name "S/ Jane Spencer".

[Attested July 3rd, 1818.]

[Transcriber's Note: Since there is very little in this file regarding the military service of the veteran, I have decided to suspend transcribing any further documents in the file other than a summary letter dated July 10, 1935 responding to a request for information regarding this

veteran. That letter reads in relevant part as follows

*Dear Sir:*

*Reference is made to your letter in which you request the Revolutionary War record of William Spencer on account of whose services as Lieutenant in the Virginia State line warrant #2451 was issued February 11, 1784 for 2333 2/3 acres of bounty land, which land was located in Clark County, Kentucky.*

*The data which follow were obtained from the papers on file in pension claim, R. 18076, based upon service of William Spencer as Lieutenant in the Revolutionary War.*

*William Spencer was born in 1757. He was the oldest son of Thomas Spencer and his wife Jane. Said Thomas Spencer died about 1803 or 1808 in Virginia. His widow Jane was living in July 1818 and was then of Indiana, the County not stated nor her age and date of birth.*

*William Spencer lived near Richmond, Virginia. He entered the service in 1776; he served as cornet and Lieutenant of dragoons; he served under Colonel John Neville and under Major John Nelson in the Virginia cavalry and in Armand's Corps of dragoons; he was in the battle at Brandywine where he was severely wounded in his hip and was compelled to return home for a time, and was in the battle of Stony Point; he served until the close of the war and was considered a meritorious officer.*

*During the revolutionary War, or at its close, William Spencer married in King George County, Virginia, James Murdock, the daughter of a widow Murdock. They resided in said County until he, William Spencer was murdered about October 1, 1784 by a thalicious neighbor."His widow Jane died in King George County, Virginia, at the home of William Murdock, shortly before 1811 or in that year.*

*William Spencer and his wife Jane had no children. John Dickinson was administrator of the estate of his widow, Jane Spencer.*

*Jane Murdock, who married William Spencer, the soldier, was the sister of William Murdock and of Joanna Murdock who married William Stark Jett of Westmoreland County, Virginia. In 1844, Joanna Murdock Jett was deceased, as were her children, also, their names not given. In that year, it was stated that when Joanna and Henry Ashton, her only living grandchildren, were last heard of they were living in King George County, Virginia. William Murdock, at whose home his sister, Jane Spencer, died, married Elizabeth, her maiden name not given. They were married in 1801 in King George County, Virginia. They moved to Kentucky in 1811 and resided near Lexington until 1829, thence to Boone County Kentucky. William Murdock had been previously married, name of that wife is not given, nor date of marriage and death.*

*William Murdock died in 1835, in Boone County, Kentucky. He was survived by two children by his former wife, namely: Joseph H Murdock and Mariah wife of Benjamin Mosely or Mosby, name not clearly written, and by seven children by his wife, Elizabeth, namely: John T, Thomas I (or J), George W., Katharine M Murdock, Elleanor L., wife of William Dickinson, Sarah Ann, wife of David H Pollard, Elizabeth, wife of David Reece; in 1844 all those children were residents in Kentucky except George W who was then living in Ia."(There is no*

*note to show whether this abbreviation was for Indiana or Iowa). Elizabeth the widow of William Murdock was then of Boone County, Kentucky. Her age and date of her death on not shown.*

*It was stated that William Spencer was an Englishman and that when he died he left no blood relations in America, nevertheless, Jane Spencer, the mother of William Spencer, stated in Indiana in 1818, that John Spencer, the oldest brother of her son, William, was then living in Shelby County, Kentucky. One James Cox was a resident of Shelby County, Kentucky, in 1818; he made affidavit in 1833, in Spencer County, Kentucky, then aged sixty-four years, that he was a cousin of William of Spencer and knew his (William's) the eldest brother John Spencer.*

*The papers show that John Spencer above named, was living in 1820 in Shelby County, Kentucky, and that his will was recorded in that County in that year, and that he was living in Virginia also, that he, John, was deceased in 1833 having died in Shelby County, Kentucky, and that his widow, Margaret and her son, John Spencer, were executors of his will in Taylorsville, Spencer County, Kentucky. It is shown further that witnesses to his will were Jane Spencer and Edward and Mary Dulin, no relationship stated, and that John Spencer, the senior, named as his children in his will: William Spencer, Thomas Spencer, John and James Spencer, Spear and Eliza, Harvey and Harrison, Emerind and Ritchard McSpheres."*

*A claim for money that was due on account of the service of William Spencer, Lieutenant of the Virginia line, was made under the Act of July 5, 1832 by the representative of William Murdock and William Stark Jett, brother and brother-in-law, respectively, and only heirs of James Spencer, disease widow of Lieutenant William Spencer and another claim was made by the representative of Margaret Spencer and John Spencer, widow and son and heirs of John Spencer, the eldest brother and heir of Lieutenant William Spencer of the Virginia line.*

*The records show that Virginia half pay was allowed and commutation pay also, by the United States, which was due on account of service of the above named officer. It is shown further in a record from the Virginia records that bounty land warrant #2451 for 2666 2/3 acres was issued February 11, 1794 by that state on account of service of Lieutenant William Spencer of the Virginia line and that to warrants for bounty land were issued on account of service of Lieutenant William Spencer of the Continental line, namely, one for 1333 1/3 acres and the other for 888 8/9 acres, on July 26, 1824.*

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The [Virginia State Library](#) online digital collection has the following documents relating to a Lieutenant William Spencer. These documents may or may not relate to the officer or officers referred to above.

It appears by the Books of this office that a Certificate of 92 pounds 4 shillings issued on the 11th of June 1783 in the name of William Spencer and Ensign in the Virginia line on Continental establishment for the balance of his full pay.

S/ Spotswood Lipscomb, chief Clerk

Auditors Office 3 March 1808

Received from Lieutenant William Spencer his Military land Warrant No. 2451 for two thousand six hundred sixty-six & two thirds acres of land to be located for said Spencer in the lands given by law to the officers & soldiers of the Virginia line also received eight shillings in [indecipherable word] of the surveying fees & one shilling for entry.

For George R Clark [probably George Rogers Clark]  
S/ W. Croghan

I do Hereby Certify it appears from papers Lodged in the Council Chamber that Lieutenant William Spencer was promoted from a cornet to a Lieutenant sometime in June 1781.

Council Chamber

[signature cut off and illegible]

The Late Lieutenant William Spencer enlisted as a private in a Company commanded by Captain John Neville, raised by and on the establishment of the State in January 1776 – in the month of December following that Company was made a part of the 12th Virginia Regiment on Continental establishment, then under my command – in July 1779 he was promoted to the rank of Ensign in consequence of his Bravery at the storming of Stony Point, where he received a wound which fractured his thigh bone. After great suffering for nearly a year at the Hospital, and finding that he would never be fit for duty in a marching Regiment, I recommended him to Mr. Jefferson then Governor of Virginia, who gave him an appointment of cornet in the Cavalry of the State, in January 1781, when he resigned his commission in the Continental Army. In June 1781 he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and continued to act as such, until nearly the close of the war, when, upon a reduction of the State Troops he became a supernumerary.

Given under my hand at Richmond this 10th February 1808

S/ James Wood, formerly  
B. Genl. Contl Army

*Given under my hand at Richmond  
this 10<sup>th</sup> February 1808. James Wood, formerly  
B. Genl. Contl Army.*

The file contains a copy of the commission given William Spencer as Cornet of a Troop of Cavalry. It is in very poor condition but appears to be dated January 17th 1781 & by Thomas Jefferson.

[Note: in a separate file posted by the Virginia State Library]

I do Certify that Lieutenant William Spencer entered into the service of the State on Continental establishment in January 's 76 and continued therein until promoted into the State Cavalry under Major Nelson in January 81 in which Corps he continued that the arrangement which took place when that core was reduced and consolidated into a Legion under command of Colonel Dabney.

S/ Will Heth  
Colo.

I do certify that <sup>William</sup> Lincoln Spencer entered into  
the service of this State as Continental  
Establishment in Jan'y. 78. and continued  
therein til (Promoted into the State  
Cavalry) under Major Nelson in  
Jan'y. 81 in which Corps he continued  
til the arrangement which took  
place, when that Corps was ~~consolidated~~  
~~at that~~ reduced and consolidated  
into a Legion under Command of  
Colo. DeLong.

Wm. DeLong  
Colo.