

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of Ambrose Cayce R1821

VA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

[Letters from the Pension Office indicate that Cayce's pension application was sent to U.S. Senator Franklin Pierce on 25 May 1840, and that it had not been returned by 13 Dec 1852. The following sketch is the only account of Cayce's service in the file.]

A sketch of my service in the old war

I was bred and born in the State of Virginia Chesterfield County April 1765 and lived there till February 1781 then took a mans place and went into the Militia service three months under Colonel Moseley Capt'n John Hill was in the battle in Petersburg [Battle of Blandford Hill near Petersburg, 25 Apr 1781] in the time served out my time and returned home in May when I got home my oldest Brother Archy [Archibald Cayce] was there had just come on from the Battle at Guilford Courthouse [15 Mar 1781] on his way to Goochland Court House to join Col Dabneys Regiment persuaded me to go with him we got there the 1st of June 1781 he persuaded me to enlist in the war with him in Col Dabneys Regimt under Major Brown and Capt'n Man which I did and there staid till some time in September [see endnote] then we all went down to Little York and there staid in the old field till after the surrender of Corn Wallace [sic: Cornwallis, 19 Oct 1781] then the Regmt had orders to go down the River to Portsmouth we went and there staid I don't know how long then got orders to go to Richmond and went up to Richmond and there staid till we were all discharged by Col Dabney

[signed] Ambros Cayce

NOTES:

Cayce's sketch appears to be somewhat confused regarding his enlistment with his brother. On 1 June 1781 Lt.-Col. Charles Dabney was in the 2nd Regiment of the Virginia State Line. On 18 Jan 1782 Dabney was chosen to command a newly created Virginia State Legion, with Captain Windsor Brown as Commandant (essentially Major). Lt. David Mann recruited soldiers into the Legion to serve as guards of military stores at Point of Fork and Richmond. Dabney was absent from the Legion after late 1782, and the Legion was disbanded on 24 Apr 1783.

On 21 Apr 1840 William Cockrum, who claimed to be a revolutionary pensioner, certified that Cayce had been in Capt. Mann's company at the Siege of Yorktown. I could not identify this pension as a pension applicant.

A 25 May 1840 letter from the pension office explains that Cayce's claim was denied "because his name is not borne on the rolls of the Va. State Troops in which he alleges he rendered the service." The letter then introduces further confusion by stating that "There were no troops at Richmond in '82, in nov. of which year he alleges he was discharge from Col. Dabney's Reg't." The letter continues, "the presumption raised against his claim by the silence of the records is met by the testimony of a witness [Cockrum] whose allegation of service in the same regt is in like manner discredited by the record. It is also believed that the witness has never applied for a pension or if he did he must be the individual of that name who alleged service in the N. Ca. Line." I could find no applicant for service in the North Carolina line with that or similar name.

On 9 Aug 1852 James Smith, 61, son-in-law of Ambrose Cayce, applied on behalf of the heirs for any pension owed for his services. Smith stated that Cayce died in Davidson County TN on or about 10 May 1843 leaving no widow but the following children: Elijah Cayce, who had since died leaving children; Levi Cayce; Matthew Cayce; Betsey Porter; Louisiana Castleman; and Phebe Smith, his wife.