

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of William Griffis R4320

Cortney [Courtney] Griffis f84SC

Transcribed by Will Graves

9/28/08 rev'd 11/14/14

[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. The word 'illegible' or 'indecipherable' appearing in brackets indicates that at the time I made the transcription, I was unable to decipher the word or phrase in question. 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 skills fail 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 material errors or omissions to my attention.]

State of Tennessee, Carroll County

On this 29th day of August personally appeared William Griffis before me James D. Duke one of the Acting Justices of the peace in and for Carroll County in State of Tennessee the said William Griffis a resident of Carroll County and State aforesaid aged eighty-four years the 19th day of last March who being first duly sworn according to law on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June the 7th 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated Colonel Francis Marion – Jonas Orie [Lt. Col. Jonas Horry] Second Colonel Major Peter Horry and Captain Edward Gwyn's company in the spring of the year 1776. He entered the service as a volunteer and a private soldier at which time he resided in Marlborough District in the State of South Carolina he volunteered for the term of six months at the End of which time he volunteered during the War as a private in which capacity he served for he was and is entirely an unlettered man and continued in the service until the year 1781 in which Year he left it. The first place to which he marched was from Gardeners Bluffs¹ to Lynches Creek from thence to Hadley's Point [sic, Haddrell's Point] on Cooper River from there to Sullivan's Island afterwards called Fort Moultrie [sic, Fort Moultrie] at which place he was in an engagement or battle² with Sir Peter Parker. From thence he was marched towards Pedee River to the Piney woods from thence to Bluford [sic, Beaufort] at which place he was in another battle with Colonel Watson a British Colonel from thence the varis [sic ?] Country he cannot say to any important place but was marched from Snow's Island and back again and was sent by order of Colonel Marion then General Marion from various places and returned again with small scouting parties till 1779 when we marched from Santee River in the State of South Carolina to Savannah in the State of Georgia by the way of Purrysburg at which we stayed some days awaiting the arrival of Count d'Estaing as I was told by our officers and General Lincoln

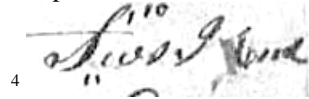
¹ "Gardner's Bluff marks the site of an early ferry on the Pee Dee River, near the original Marlborough Court House. The derivation of the name is obscure. Fossilly[sic?] it came from William Gardner, who received a grant of 100 acres near the bluff November 4, 1762,~~ It could have been named for Stephen Gardner. He purchased from Thomas Powe a large tract of land there in 1790.~~ In that year Gardner was residing in Guilford County, North Carolina, The bluff was for a long time an important port on the river, Until 1884 all Marlboro freight was transported to Gardner's Bluff, where it was hauled by wagon teams six miles to Bennettsville over roads which were impassable in rainy weather." Taken 9/28/08 from

<http://src1.cas.sc.edu/dept2/iss/SCNames/index.php?action=showPage&book=2&volume=16&page=15>.

² June 28-19, 1776, <http://gaz.jrshelby.com/moultrie.htm>

[Benjamin Lincoln] whose brigade we had joined at Savannah at which place we were engaged in a siege [September 16-October 18, 1779] for near three weeks at the end of said siege an assault was made and the American Army defeated³ and from thence he was marched back into the State of South Carolina to a place or neighborhood called the Waccamaw Settlement -- he says after Colonel Horry had served a while he resigned and then he was under Colonel Canty [John Cantey?] but cannot say At What period but he thinks in seventeen seventy-eight or nine he took the Commission of Colonel and he then served under him until After Cornwallis was taken [October 19, 1781] which he thinks was in 1781 and from the Waccamaw to Charleston At Which place General Marion got his Acle [sic, ankle] broken and he returned with him to his plantation on Goose Creek in St. John's Parish. The next Battle in which he says he was in was at Lynches Creek where Captain Edward Gwynn was made prisoner and then he served in Captain William Snipes [William Clay Snipes] until he was permitted to return home in 1781 from Lynches Creek to [one or more indecipherable words]⁴ from at which place Marion left us and Colonel Jonas Orie and then we was ordered to join General Gates [Horatio Gates] but before he was marched to Gates Army, he was taken as a detached company with Marion, Horry and Snipes to destroy the boats on the waters of Santee from which place we were marched in haste by Order of his Colonel and General to a settlement between Black River and Black Mingo As his officers informed him that Gates was defeated⁵ and South Carolina in the hands of the British from thence we was ordered to march to Nelson's Ferry⁶ between Charlestown in Camden at which place we had another little battle with the enemy and rescued several American prisoners from that place he thinks he was marched to Cooper River and crossed Santee and thence to a place called Briton's neck⁷ on Pedee River from thence the next day he thinks he was marched up the Pedee about 60 or 70 miles at least he was marched all night and part of the next day to attack Captain Barfield⁸ and his Company of Tories which was attacked⁹ and some killed and some taken prisoners and the balance dispersed from which place he was marched back to Briton's neck from thence he was marched towards North Carolina and not far from the line as his officers informed him he was ordered to march back again and pursued the Tories in turn which they done in overtook them at Black Mingo Bridge¹⁰ where he was in a severe battle with the Tories from thence he was marched back to the Waccamaw Settlement on Pedee or near it. From which we were marched to attack another parcel of Tories commanded by Colonel Miles

³ September 24-October 19, 1779, <http://gaz.jrshelby.com/savannah.htm>



⁴ Sullivan's Island (abbreviated)

⁵ August 15-16, 1780, <http://gaz.jrshelby.com/camdenmarker.htm>

⁶ August 25, 1780, <http://gaz.jrshelby.com/nelson.htm>

⁷ Britton's Neck is the tongue of land in Marion County that extends some twenty-five miles to the confluence of Peedee River and Little Peedee River. It was named for the Britten brothers Daniel, Francis, Joseph, Moses, and Timothy, who in 1735- 1737 settled on a succession of sand ridges in projected Queensborough Township. Queensborough failed to form, but the Brittons, relatives, and friends built a flourishing community. So well known did the settlement become that on August 27, 1780, Lieutenant Colonel Francis Marion wrote Major Peter Horry; "You will without delay retreat with what men you can get to Britton's Neck where I have encamped." Viewed 9/28/08 <http://src1.cas.sc.edu/dept2/iss/SCNames/index.php?action=showPage&book=3&volume=24&page=19>.

⁸ Either Jesse or Miles Barfield.

⁹ This MAY be a reference to the engagement at the Blue Savannah on September 4, 1780 between Marion and Major Micajah Ganey.

¹⁰ September 28, 1780, <http://gaz.jrshelby.com/blackmingo.htm>

Barfield¹¹ of Pedee from which place he was marched back to Waccamaw from thence to Black River from thence up Black River between Black River in a small River called Sand pit [? Sampit?] at where he was in a skirmish with Colonel Tynes a Tory Colonel. Shortly afterwards he states that General Marion and General Lee united their forces and attacked George Town in which battle he was engaged and from that he was marched back to Pedee and then returned to Georgetown from thence he was marched to Scots lake [sic, Scott's Lake] at Fort Watson¹² sometimes called pine Log Fort -- where he was in another Action from thence he was marched to Fort Motte¹³ at which place he was in another severe battle which was he thinks the last battle in which he was present but continued in the scouting parties till the British left Charleston At which time he was permitted to return home.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension except the present and declares that his name is not on any Pension roll of the Agency of any State in the United States.

Sworn to and subscribed to the day and year aforesaid

S/ James D. Duke, Justice of the peace of Carroll County

S/ William Griffis, X his mark

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State of Tennessee, Carroll County

Personally appeared William Griffis before me the undersigned a justice of the peace for Carroll County and after being duly sworn According to law doth on his oath depose and say that by reason of old age and consequent loss of memory he cannot swear precisely or positively to the precise time of his service but according to the best of his recollection he served not less than the periods mentioned in the capacity of a private soldier from the spring of the year 1776 six months and from the fall of 1776 till the spring of the year 1780, that he was born in South Carolina State and on Pedee as he is informed by his parents and he does not know anything about his discharge or whether he ever received one At all as he was then told it would do no good Sworn to and subscribed to before me this day and Year above Written.

S/ William Griffis, X his mark

I hereby certify that William Griffis was duly sworn in subscribed to the above the day and Year above written.

S/ James D. Duke JP

[8]

State of Tennessee, Carroll County

On this first day of August 1836 personally appeared in Open Court before the County court of said Carroll County -- now sitting William Griffis a resident of said County of Carroll and State of Tennessee aged 74 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 the 7th 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States Under the Following Named Officers and Served As Herein Stated:

¹¹ This MAY be a reference to an engagement at White's Plantation and Ashton's [or Allston's] Plantation on November 15, 1780, between Marion and Captain James Lewis at which the Tory Capt. Miles Barfield is said to have been killed and his brother Capt. Jesse Barfield wounded. <http://gaz.jrshelby.com/allston.htm>

¹² March 1, 1781, <http://gaz.jrshelby.com/watson.htm>

¹³ May 8-12, 1781, <http://gaz.jrshelby.com/motte.htm>

This declarant states that he volunteered under Captain Edward Gwin in Marlborough District South Carolina some time in the year 1776 (day, nor month, not now recollected) but previous to the Attack by the British Squadron, upon Fort Moultrie, Situate on Sullivan's Island near the City of Charleston, which Battle this declarant was in, and was present at the time when the flag Staff of the American flag was cut down by a shot from the enemy's ships and seemed the brave Jasper restore it to its place again, This declarant further States that he served in said Company under Captain Gwin about five months and a half and until said Captain Gwin was taken prisoner by the Tories at Lynches Creek in the State of South Carolina and as he believes in Darlington District. After Captain Gwin was taken prisoner William Snipes was elected Captain he was from Georgetown District State of South Carolina, under whom this declarant served four years namely from Some time in the fall of 1776 to the close of the War, which may have been longer than four years but this declarant is very certain that he continued in the Service of the United States until Peace was concluded, when he was discharged from the Service and received a discharge but what has become of it, this declarant at this time knows not. This Declarant further states that after Captain Snipes took command of the Company he was in the following Battles namely in an engagement with the Tories at the mouth of Catfish Creek¹⁴ on Pedee River, State of South Carolina, under General Francis Marion, shortly afterwards this declarant was at a skirmish with a Party of British between Georgetown & Black River in the State of South Carolina commanded by Colonel P. Horry, General Marion being absent, at which skirmish Captain Snipes was thrown from his mare and in his descent he grasped from his holster one Pistol which was the only weapon he had during the balance of the Action to defend himself with, from this place we marched up Black River to a place called Black Mingo to White's plantation after a party of Tories that was in that neighborhood and in endeavoring to attack them we spread our blankets and clothes on Black Mingo Bridge and crossed over our horses over in that manner to keep them from hearing our horses feet and after crossing the bridge we attacked this party and took several Prisoners on this Occasion we were commanded by General Marion from thence we marched to the blue House on the South side of Santee River where we took a small party of British Prisoners every one to a man -- the Captain of said British we found hid up the chimney, thence we marched to Cooper River where we remained Stationed at a Church near Mitchell's just below Moncks Corner from there we marched to Punkin Hill¹⁵ where we fortified in a Fort Commanded by General Putman,

¹⁴ As to the location of Catfish Creek, see <http://gaz.jrshelby.com/catfishcreek.htm>. The date of the engagement there is unknown to me.

¹⁵ *The first chapel at Pompion Hill was erected soon after the arrival of the Rev. Samuel Thomas, first missionary to Carolina from the newly organized Church of England Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Created in 1701, they sent the Rev. Mr. Thomas to Carolina in 1702. He was the third missionary sent to America and served the people of the Cooper River from Goose Creek to Pompion Hill, making his home at Silk Hope, the plantation of the Governor, Sir Nathaniel Johnson. Writing from "Sir N, Johnson's Study" in 1705 to the Society in London, Mr. Thomas said, "Here is one church already erected since my arrival by the peculiar direction and religious care of Sir Nathaniel Johnson and at the charge of the parish." Pompion Hill Chapel on the eastern side of the east branch of the Cooper River took its name from the plantation on the river which it adjoined. The local pronunciation is Punkin, or as Judge H. A. M. Smith wrote "the contemporaneous spelling of Pumpkin is Pompion." The plantation was written as Ponkin Hill or Ponkinhill Plantation in some deeds before the name was extended to cover the larger tract of plantation which was aggregated by the Rev. Thomas Hasell. He was the first rector of St. Thomas' Parish, appointed in 1709 after the creation of the Parish in 1706. He married Elizabeth Ashby, daughter of John Ashby, the Second Cassique of nearby Quinby Barony. When the Rev. Mr. Hasell died in 1744, he had served the parish of St. Thomas' and Pompion Hill Chapels of Ease for thirty-five years. Pompion Hill Plantation of 1540 acres was inherited by his eldest son, Thomas Hasell, In 1750 it was purchased by Samuel Thomas, grandson of the*

where we were attacked by a Party of British, here, General Marion gave the command to General Putman who ordered us not to touch a Trigger until we could see the white of the eyes of our enemies, the first fire repulsed the enemy, but they returned to the attack a second time and we were a second time ordered to reserve our fire as before after which the enemy retreated, from there General Marion marched his forces to Snow's Island on Pedee River where we rested for a short time. The next engagement this declarant was in was with a party of Tories at the Byne Swamp near Bruinton's [? or Pruinton's]¹⁶ Lake thence we marched to Lynches Creek nearly to the State line, in pursuit of John Fanning [sic, probably David Fanning] a Tory Colonel but we could not overtake him, and we returned to Camden or near to that place about the time General Gates came into South Carolina and we were in hearing of their firing during the engagement between General Gates forces and the British; and the night before Gates defeat we fell in with, and captured Lord Cornwallis's Baggage Wagons amounting to 40 in number from thence we marched up into Britton's neck where we had a sort of head quarters but frequently sallied out in Scouting Parties both against British and Tories when we removed from this place we went to Nelson's ferry on Santee River there we made a stand and scoured the Country around from here we gave Colonel Fanning another chase this time we follow him as far as a place called cross creek [Cross Creek] in North Carolina, but as before, we were unsuccessful and we returned into South Carolina to a place known as the pine log fort, where we concealed ourselves and watched the road about that place for some time day & night during our stay in that neighborhood we made some 30 or 40 prisoners, the detachment to which this declarant belonged then marched up the country to some miles 6 miles above Camden on the Wateree River where we stayed some time reconnoitering and making prisoners of all the Tories or other enemies we could come across, then we went down the Country again near to Charleston, after leaving the last neighborhood we marched under General Marion to Guilford Court house North Carolina where we were defeated in conjunction with General Sumpter [sic, Thomas Sumter] by the British under Lord Cornwallis in this engagement this declarant was badly wounded in the right leg and taken prisoner by the enemy having received two balls through his leg. This Declarant being taken by a small party of men, composed of a Sergeant and four men, and on our march to join the Main Army, the party who had taken a prisoner stopped at a branch to drank and set down their guns against a tree, and while they were in the act of drinking, this declarant seized two of their guns, leveled and fired them as near as the same time as he could, he then snatched the other two and made off and soon lost sight of them, and this declarant does not know that he ever saw either of them afterward, and in about four hours he got safe to his own Army again, then we returned to South Carolina again between Cooper and Ashley Rivers, and

first SPG missionary of that name, and who was the son-in-law of Rev. Thomas Hasell, since Samuel Thomas, II, had married Elizaibeth Ashby, IL Before 1784, Pompion Hill Plantation became the property of the Parish, either through purchase or gift from Samuel Thomas. In later years after 1823 Pompion Hill Plantation was owned by Alfred Huger and its name was changed to Longwood, and the name Pompion Hill restricted to the bluff above the river of ten or twelve acres on which the fine old Chapel stands. In 1763 St. Thomas merged with the nearby St. Denis French Huguenots and has since been known as St. Thomas and St. Denis Parish. Viewed 9/28/08 at <http://src1.cas.sc.edu/dept2/iss/SCNames/index.php?action=showPage&book=2&volume=15&page=52>.

¹⁶ John Allison suggests (and I think correctly) this is probably a reference to "Bruvington's Lake on the north side of the Pocotaligo River in the far eastern edge of Sumter District in Mills Atlas (almost in Williamsburg Dist). Location is at about the confluence of Pocotaligo and Black Rivers, and is about 23 miles due south of Lynches Creek and certainly in the area where Marion roamed." Jack Parker points out that 'Bruvington Lake' as shown on the Miles 1825 map is 'Brewington Lake' as shown on modern maps of the region. Jack also notes that there is extensive swamp land both above and below the Lake along the Pocotaligo River where it leaves the Black River. This swampy area probably is the area this applicant called the 'Byne Swamp.'

this declarant was not in any engagements of a general nature, until the battle of the Eutaw Springs where General Greene, General Sumter, and General Marion engaged the British under Lord Rodney [sic] where we were successful in defeating the Enemy and making a good many prisoners, and this declarant was slightly wounded by a bullet searing [?] the lower part of his right ear from his head and a wound on his head, with a sword or a piece of timber (which he is not certain), in this engagement, this was the last general engagement this declarant was in but our detachment continued to scout and reconnoitering through the State of South Carolina mostly after the Tories until the close of the war. Captain Gwin's Company which this declarant first volunteered in, belonged to a Regiment of Infantry commanded by Colonel George Hicks and after Captain Gwin was taken Prisoner, Captain Snipes was elected to the command of said Company, and some time after Captain Gwin was taken prisoner Colonel Hicks resigned & was succeeded by Colonel P. Horry and our General was Francis Marion.

Question by the Court When and in what year were you born?

Answer by Declarant: I was born in Darlington District State of South Carolina, but in what year I do not positively know.

Question 2nd by the same Have you any record of your age and if so where is it?

Answer by Declarant I have no record whatever of my age

Question 3rd by the same Where were you living when called into service: where have you lived since the Revolutionary War and where do you now live?

Answer by The declarant: I was living in Marlborough District South Carolina when called into the service and I continued to live in South Carolina until I came to the State of Tennessee about 20 years ago and I'm now live in Carroll County State of Tennessee

Question 4th by the same How were you called into service; were you drafted; did you volunteer or were you a substitute, and if in substitute, for whom?

Answer by Declarant, I volunteered

Question 5th by the same State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops when you served, such Continental and militia regiments as you can recollect and the general circumstances of your service.

Answer by Declarant I was not acquainted with the names of any regular Officers nor any others Except the Officers of our own Detachment, General Francis Marion, Colonel P. Horry, Colonel Peter Orea [sic, Horry] & Colonel Jonas Orea the declarant served under General Marion from the commencement of his Service until the close of the war and was for the most part engaged against the Tories in South Carolina

Question 6th by the same Did you ever receive a discharge from the service, and if so, by whom was it given and what has become of it?

Answer by Declarant, I received a discharge from Captain William Snipes I believe, but it is lost, I know nothing of it at this time.

Question 7th by the same State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighborhood and who can testify as to your character for veracity and their belief in your services as a soldier in the revolution.

Answer by Declarant, Samuel Ingram Esquire & Wilson Lightfoot Esquire

This declarant 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 or Territory of the United States

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid

S/ William Griffis, X his mark

[William Hern, a clergyman, Samuel Ingram & Wilson Lightfoot gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

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State of Tennessee Carroll County

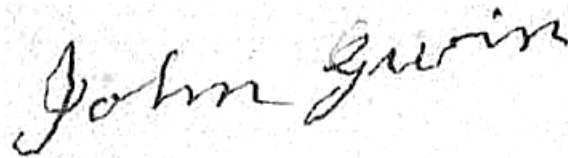
Be it remembered that on the 12th day of September 1837 before me Nathan Williams a Justice of the peace in and for said County, personally appeared John Gwin¹⁷ and made and subscribed the following Statement in relation to the claim of William Griffis for a pension from the United States under the Act of Congress of the 7th of June 1832.

I John Gwin a pensioner of the United States became acquainted with William Griffis while he was a member or soldier in Captain Snipes' Company belonging to General Marion's Brigade and from the Accuracy with which said Griffis described crossing a bridge to attack the enemy, & a skirmish with Tories at Black River, or Black Mingo I do not now recollect which, I have no doubt he was at both places at said times, and I left him in the service in Captain Snipes' Company when I left Marion's Brigade to Joined General Caswell's Brigade and have always understood that he continued in the service until the close of the war but do not know this of my own knowledge, and Mr Griffis has always spoken of as a good Soldier, which I have frequently heard from others.

And further this deponent saith not.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 12th day of September 1837

S/ John Gwin

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Gwin". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and somewhat slanted to the right.

S/ Nathan Williams, JP

[Veteran was granted a pension at the rate of \$42.44/annum]

[Transcriber's Note: Anyone interested in this family needs to read the file on microfilm or at Fold3.com for details of what appears a complex family situation from a quick look at the records included in the files. A few 'facts' are set out below.]

[p 50, Stephen Eason, administrator of the estate of Mrs. Courtney Griffis, mother of Nancy Cato, from a prior marriage filed an affidavit to those facts in Carroll County, Tenn. August 2, 1854. He says both William and Courtney Griffis were illiterate.]

[Eason was also administrator of the estate of William Griffis; Eason says in a filing dated September 9, 1852, in Carroll County, Tenn., that William Griffis died April 7, 1847 in Carroll County survived by his widow, Cortney Griffis (now dead also).]

[On November 7, 1854, Benjamin H. Nesbitt, JP, gave an affidavit that he personally knew William and Courtney Griffis and their children; that their oldest child was Thomas Griffis who is at least between 56 and 59 years of age; that Thomas was recognized in a legal proceeding as

¹⁷ [John Gwin S3393](#)

the lawful heir of William and Courtney Griffis and that Nancy Cato was not so recognized; that Thomas' younger brother and sister, James Griffis and Mary Hall were also recognized as lawful heirs of William and Courtney.]

[Courtney Griffis died September 13, 1851.]

[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$42.44 per annum commencing March 4th, 1831 for service as a private for 12 months and 22 days in the South Carolina militia.]