

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Pension Application of William Sawyer R9240

VA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 16 July 2015.

North Carolina }
County of Wilkes } SS.

On this 5th day of Febuary 1833 personally appeared before the County Court of Wilkes and State of North Carolina William Sawyer a resident of Wilkes in the State aforesaid aged eighty three 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 provisions made by the Act of Congress passed June 7th 1832. – That he entered or enlisted as some called it, in the service of the United States, in the Company of Infantry Commanded by Captain Nathaniel Terry in Hallifax [sic: Halifax] County Virginia in September 1778 and in the Regiment Commanded by Col. William Terry in the Virginia State Legion [see endnote] – and that by reason of old age and the consequent loss of memory he cannot swear positively as to all the officers he served under, nor to all the places he was marched to or stationed at, but according to the best of his recollection it was as follows, after being at several places he was marched to Stony Point on the Hudson River about forty miles North of New York and was in the battle at that place on the 15th July 1779 [sic: storming of Stony Point fort, 16 Jul 1779]. Gen'l. Wayne [sic: Anthony Wayne] commanded there, he does not recollect the different places he was at that fall and spring, but was marched to the South and was in the battle [sic: siege] at Charleston South Carolina in May 1780, Gen'l. [Benjamin] Lincoln commanded the American Army in this battle Charleston surrendered [12 May 1780], – He was also in the battle of Gates defeat near Camden South Carolina in August 1780 [defeat of Gen. Horatio Gates, Battle of Camden, 16 Aug 1780], Count Decalb commanded the French forces [sic: Baron De Kalb, Maryland and Delaware Continental troops]. the British was commanded by Lord Rawdon and Cornwallis. After the defeat of Gen'l. Gates he remained with the Virginia Militia untill Genl. [Nathanael] Greene was appointed to the command [3 Dec 1780]. Genl [Daniel] Morgan was under Genl. Greene he was also at the battle of the Cowpens [17 Jan 1781], where the British under Col. Tarlton [sic: Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton] was defeated by Genl. Morgan in January 1781. – He was then marched into North Carolina. Genl. Green joined him at Guilford Court house North Carolina he having narrowly escaped being taken by the army under Cornwallis while crossing Deep River [sic], he was then marched a cross Dan River and entered Virginia closely pursued by the British [14 Feb 1781]. In Febuary he was march under Genl. Green across Dan into North Carolina Genl. [Andrew] Pickens and Genl. Lee [sic: Lt. Col. Henry Lee] was with Greene, about this time Genl. Greene was re-enforced, he was then marched to Guilford Courthouse and was in the battle at that place in March [the 15th] 1781, between the Americans, and British under Cornwallis and Tarlton, which terminated in favour of the British. – After this battle he was marched back to Virginia, and joined the troops under Marquis de la Fayette does not recollect his company officers. he was then march under LaFayette to the head of Elk River in Mariland [present Elkton MD, 8 Apr 1781], from there he was marched back to Virginia to oppose the British, he crossed at a place called Chickahomany [sic: Chickahominy] Swamp in Virginia while on his march LaFayette found his forces too small to fight Cornwallis. he having as was said effected a junction with Genl. Phillips at Petersburg [Gen. William Phillips in May 1781]. LaFayette retreated and joined Genl. Wayne who commanded the Pennsylvania Militia. [sic: Gen. Anthony Wayne's Pennsylvania Continentals joined Lafayette 10 Jun 1781]. finding his forces still too weak, he retreated to Williamsburg in Virginia [sic: see endnote], where Genl. Washington joined him in September [the 14th] 1781, he was sent under the command of Captain Clay after the Tories under Captains Bell and Inmon[?]. he overtook them near Boyds ferry on Dan River and killed five of them. he then returned back to the army and arrived there the day after Cornwallis surrendered in October [the 19th] 1781 at Yorktown. He was then discharged by order of General Washington having served three years in the Virginia Legion, the time he entered the service for. He further states that his discharge was burnt when Leonard Bowman

of Virginia got his house burnt. He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity, except the present, and he declares that his name is not on the pension Roll of any agency in any state.

William hisXmark Sawyer

William Jinkins [William Jenkins S7070] 73 years old appeared in open Court as aforesaid and after being duly sworn, deposed and saith that he was a Revolutionary Soldier, and recollects well, of seeing William Sawyer the above applicant in the service of the United States, in the State of Virginia at a place called Chickahomony Swamp, and at the Rackoon ford [sic: Raccoon Ford, June 1781] in Virginia and at Williamsburg with the Marquis de laFayette and Genl Wayne in the state of Virginia.

Sworn to and subscribed on this 5th day of Febuary 1833 William hisXmark Jinkins

On this 5th day of August 1835 William Sawyer the within applicant personally appeared before and made oath in due form of Law that since his declaration was returned he has made considerable search to find some person who knew him in the army, but can find none, his acquaintances are all dead or removed where he cannot find them except a Mr. Bloom in Salisbury N.C. and he is so old and infirm that he cannot recollect so as to state his services correctly. he therefore has to submit his case to the department with the foregoing circumstantial proof.

Sworn and subscribed before me the day and date above written William hisXmark Sawyer

North Carolina }
Wilkes County } SS

On this 24th day of October 1843 personally appeared before me James Martin one of the acting justices for said, William Sawyer resident in said County aged ninety seven years who being first duly sworn according to law, doth on his Oath make the following declaration, (in addition to one he made some year past) in order to obtain the provisions made by the Acts of Congress of the 18th March 1818 and the 1st of May 1820 [see endnote]; that he the said William Sawyer enlisted in Hallifax County Virginia for the term of three years but in consequence of old age and the loss of memory he can not state all the particulars relative to his service, but to the best of his knowledge it was as follows. he enlisted in the month of September under Captain Nathaniel Terry about 1778 or 79, and was in the battle at Charleston in 1780 when it surrendered and was there taken prisoner with others. he was exchanged for after a while, he was also in the battle of monmouth [Monmouth NJ, 28 Jun 1778], and in Gates's defeat near Camden South Carolina; he was in the battle at Guilford N Carolina from there he was in the pursuit after Cornwallis, and crossed Dan River at Boids ferry and followed on and was near when Cornwallis surrendered but did not arrive till after the surrender, and for further evidence he refers to his former declaration now on file in the pension Office of the United States; he further states that in said declaration he should have stated that Col. William Terry was Col. at home in Virginia and he was under him while at home, and Col Terry was not in the army with him in no part of his services, but only commanded at home, and that he understood and believes the Corps he belonged to was called the Virginia State Legion he knows no other name for it, but as to that he may be mistaken, does not know that it was mustered into service by that name.

Sworn to and subscribed before me the day and year above written
William hisXmark Sawyer

NOTES:

The 1st and 2nd Virginia State Legions were not created until March 1781, and neither was commanded by a Col. William Terry. There was a Capt. Nathaniel Terry of Halifax County VA who stated in his pension application (W3054) that he was in the 10th VA Reg. of the Continental Line. There were, however, a Lt. Col. William Terry and a Capt. Nathaniel Terry in the Halifax County VA Militia. Regardless of whether Sawyer was in the Continental Line, State Line, or Militia, it is unlikely that he was in all the battles claimed if he was captured at Charleston. Continental soldiers were not exchanged

until the summer of 1781. Militiamen captured at the surrender of Charleston on 12 May 1780 were paroled and with rare exceptions did not serve afterwards. In addition, militia tours were seldom longer than six months.

After Lafayette and Wayne combined forces, they actually pursued – not retreated from – Cornwallis.

Neither the Virginia State Legion nor the Militia was covered under the pension acts of 18 Mar 1818 and 1 May 1820.

On 2 Mar 1852 Dolly Sawyer applied for a pension as the widow of William Sawyer, who died while his application was pending. In the file is an affidavit dated 18 Mar 1852 by Constant Gray, a Justice of the Peace, that he married William Sawyer and Dolly Johnson about 12 years before.