

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of William Gabriel Pickens (Pikins) S1244

f22SC

Transcribed by Will Graves

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[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 Kentucky, Livingston County

On this 4th day of February 1833 personally appeared in open court, before John Berry, Isham Clement, and Vernon B. Simpson, Esqrs., Justices of the county court for the county aforesaid, now sitting, William G. Pickens, resident of said county aged seventy two (72) years, the 18th of October last, who being duly sworn according to law, doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefits of the act of Congress passed June 7, 1832. That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers, and served as herein stated: About the first of October 1775 I first entered the service as a private in the District of Abbeville (formerly Ninety Six) and as a volunteer under Captain Robert Anderson (afterwards general). About the 2nd of July preceding my entering the service, the inhabitants along the frontiers and back settlements of Georgia and Carolinas, had generally fortified up, in consequence of the Cherokee Indians, who were extremely troublesome at this time; having been instigated by the British. To protect themselves from Indian warfare, and to defend the country as much as possible, the frontier inhabitants had constructed a line of forts along the Savannah River and had mustered themselves into companies, stationed principally at these forts. As soon as I joined the service, which was to aid in guarding the frontiers and in repelling the Indians, Captain Anderson, stationed himself at one of these forts called Fort Independence, situated on the Savannah [River], where we remained fourteen months in constant service against these Indians in scouring the country and protecting the inhabitants. In the latter part of the year 1777 (I think in December) General Williamson [Andrew Williamson] made a campaign into the Indian country and defeated the Indians first at Seneca and next at Tomassee, or some such name; which gave the frontier inhabitants an interval of peace, as the Indians were driven off. A fort was built at Seneca called Rutledge, which was afterwards left under the care of Captain John Moore, with a company of Independents, as they were called. I was not in this campaign, having been left with others under Captain John Pickens (my brother) to guard the fort. But the most of my company, under Captain Anderson was in this expedition. After the return of General Williamson, which I think was some time in January or February 1778, I was discharged by Captain Anderson as our services was not required any longer on the frontier. I think quiet certain that we were discharged in January 1778 - having served from the month of October 1776 to January 1778, at least fifteen months. After my discharge, I immediately returned home (Abbeville) and engaged in waggoning for the American Army, and continued it until sometime in 1780, after the fall of Charleston [May 12, 1780], and the capitulation of Genl Lincoln [Benjamin Lincoln]; but I am advised that this service (waggoning) gives no claim to a pension,

and I pass over it. After the British entered Charleston, they soon established forts throughout the country and seemed to have subjected it to the British Crown. Resistance almost ceased, for the Tories and British together overran the county. Indeed many of the Whigs founded it necessary to take protection, it was called under the British - this was a matter of necessity and many of the most devoted Whigs done so and particularly after the defeat of Gates at Camden in August of that year. Thus thing remained until the arrival of Genl. Greene [spelled "Green" throughout, Nathanael Greene] from the North. This gave encouragement to the Whigs, and they again began to take up arms under their several leaders, in defense of their country. If I am not mistaken, Greene arrived late in 1780 or the first of 1781. Early in the spring of 1781 (I think in April) I, with many others, volunteered under Capt. Caruthers, Major Alexander Noble, and Col. Robert Anderson (the same who was formerly my Captain) and joined General Greene in May, then before Ninety Six. We continued here with Greene, during the siege of this place, and until he was repulsed. Our regiment was actively employed during this siege, the particulars of which I could relate if necessary, but will only mention, that it was Greene's first objective to approach cautiously and take the place by a regular siege, of which he had no doubt if time was allowed him. He pushed the siege rigorously until sometime in June, when he learned that a reinforcement under Rawdon was hastily advancing to the relief of the place, (under Co. Cruger). This induced Genl Greene to hazard an assault, as it would be impossible to succeed by a regular siege before the arrival of Rawdon. The troops were immediately disposed for the assault. Col. Lee succeeded in forcing the works assigned to him, but in other parts our troops were repulsed, after much hard fighting and considerable loss, Genl Greene called off his troops. The next day he raised the siege, crossed the Saluda and encamped on Little River. In this siege, my brother in law, Captain Joseph Pickens (who was also a cousin) was killed. I served as a soldier in this siege, and remember the most of the particulars, but it is not necessary to relate them. On the retreat of Genl Greene the most of the militia dispersed for a few days, but re-assembled about fifteen miles above Ninety Six, and there joined Genl Pickens (another cousin to myself, being brothers' children, and with whom I had been raised.) After joining Genl Pickens, we marched toward North Carolina; crossed Broad River at Hamilton's Ford, and proceeded down towards the Congaree. Here I, with others, were sent out as spies to ascertain the situation of the enemy when on their march toward Charleston. We (the spy company) came up with the enemy's rear guard, and attacked it, in which we killed five. But we could do no more than harass their rear and flanks, to embarrass them in their march as much as possible, which we continued to do for ten miles. We were on horse, as were all now under the command of Genl Pickens. After this we marched up towards the Dutch fork, into a settlement almost entirely Tories, and who had embodied in considerable numbers near the line. After marching for sometime in search of them, I came to the determination of quitting the service for a while, as the support of an aged mother and widowed sister (the wife of Capt. Joseph Pickens, killed at Ninety Six) now evolved upon me and required my attention. But at this Captain Norwood called on me, and earnestly pressed me to join his company, and fill the place of one of his spies, who had been lately killed by Tories. Although it was almost absolutely necessary for me to quit the service at this time, and attend to the support of mother and sister, who were left quiet destitute, yet as my service as a spy was thought to be of considerable importance, I determined to forego the duty I owed at home, and immediately joined Captain Norwood as a spy, and continued in this service for the term of six months. Captain Norwood was principally stationed on the frontier, between the white settlements and Indian Nation. As well as I now remember, I joined Capt Norwood in the month of October 1781, having principally been under Capt Caruthers as before stated from

April 1781 until October of the same year. I served full six months under Norwood as spy, and was discharged sometime in April or May 1782 as well as my memory serves me, and since my papers were sent back for want of dates, I have reflected much on the subject, and I do not think I am wrong in any of the dates I have mentioned. The length of the tours of duty mentioned, I have put down at least as short as they really were, as I do not desire to receive for more than I deserve.

There is another circumstance which I omitted to mention in its right place. While I served under Colonel Anderson in 1781, we made an expedition to the frontiers of Georgia in search of the celebrated Bill Cunningham, who commanded a party of Tories and Indians, and who had done much mischief. After arriving towards the frontier, Capt. Robt. Maxwell and myself were sent forward to spy out the position & strength of the party. We discovered them encamped on Cane Creek on Tugaloo River. We immediately returned to our main body and gave the information. Colonel Anderson immediately planned the attack by dividing his force into three divisions, the right, left and Centre. The right and left were committed to the command of Maxwell and myself, and the centre he commanded himself. In this form we advanced, with the sanguine hope of surprising them, but unfortunately, just before reaching their camp, one of [the] divisions accidentally met a party driving some cattle to the river, and fired upon them. This gave the alarm to the camp and they instantly fled. Thus our project was defeated, after we supposed they were within our power. In the year 1782 the Indians still continued troublesome on the Georgia frontiers. The inhabitants being weak and unable to defend [?] themselves, dispatched messengers into South Carolina for assistance. I again volunteered to aid these people, and with a company of volunteers, marched to the Oconee River, and there had a battle with the Indians across the river—they were defeated and we took several prisoners. We were only about three weeks in this service, and I only mention it as a continuation of events in which I was concerned, not as a part of my service for which I claim a pension, as the term was so short as not to be worth mentioning. There are many other circumstances I could mention, but perhaps it is not necessary to mention them. Indeed my memory is a little impaired, and I cannot fix the time, nor describe particularly, all the circumstances of my service; and particularly so at one time. In consequence of over exertions in my younger days, exposure &c, I became blind, at an early age, and can now scarcely distinguish any object. My claim to a pension is now submitted, and if granted, well, and if not, I can make out no better case, nor produce further proof than that annexed; and I would rather live without it than in my old age and helpless condition, to be applying to the court from time to time to listen to my tale. I have endeavored to supply the defects mentioned by the Department, as well as my recollection would enable me.

I have no documentary evidence in my possession which would prove my service, nor do I know of any living witnesses by whom I can prove any portion of it, except Patrick Cain¹ and one John Drennon—the former of whom is so old and infirm that his attendance at court cannot be procured, and Drennon lives in another county (Caldwell) but the evidence of one or both of them I will endeavor to procure before this Declaration is sent in. I never received a written discharge for the service that I have any recollection of, nor any pay, except an Indent of my claim against the Government amounting to £ 208 sterling, which I sold to one Capt. Swift for a trifle as the claim was thought of little value.

I hereby relinquish every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present, and I declare that my name is not on the pension roll of the Agency of any State or territory whatever.

¹ [Patrick Cain S1185](#)

And the said court propounded to said applicant the following interrogations as prescribed by the War Department, to which he made the subjoined answers in open court.

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

I was born in the District of Camden, State of South Carolina, the 18th day of October 1760.

Question by the Court 2: Have you a record of your age and if so where is it?

Answer: I have the family record of my age at my house.

Question by the Court 3: Where were you living when called to service, where have you lived since, the revolutionary war, and where do you live now?

Answer: When I entered the service I was living in Abbeville District, formerly Ninety Six, whither I had moved at an early age. I remained in that country until the year ____ [blank in the original] when I removed to this country where I have lived ever since.

Question by the Court 4: How were you called into service, Volunteered, drafted, or substituted?

Answer: All my service was as a volunteer.

Question by the Court 5: State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops where you served, such continental and militia regiments as you can recollect, and the general circumstances of your service.

Answer: While at the siege of Ninety Six I became acquainted with several regular officers, to Wit: Col. Lee (who commanded a legion of infantry), and Col. Campbell & Col. Duvall, and their Regiments. The balance of my service was with militia, and I have already mentioned all the militia regiments which I knew as also the general circumstances of my service.

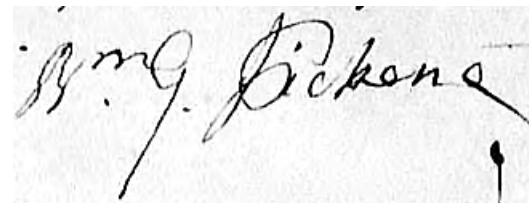
Question by the Court 6: Did you ever receive a discharge from the service and if so, by whom was it given, and what has become of it?

Answer: I did not that I recollect of My services was amongst volunteer troops wher it was not usual. I received an Indent as it was called specifying the pay due me, but no formal written discharge.

Question by the Court 7: State the names of person to whom you are known in your present neighborhood who can testify to your character for veracity, and their belief of your services as a soldier of the Revolution.

Answer: I am known of a great many. I will name William Thompson, Christopher Hayne, Esqr., William Gray, Robt Hodge, James Cruce, Esqr., Genl. James Elder, and Joseph Hughes.

S/ Wm. G. Pickens

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wm. G. Pickens". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.

[James Johnson, a clergyman, James McCawley and James A. Whyte gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

State of Kentucky Livingston County: This day Patrick Cain resident of said County and who is known to me to be a person of honesty and good character came personally before me a justice of the peace in and for said County, and one of the justices of the County Court for said County, and being first duly sworn by me according to law, doth on his oath, declare that he is now 91 years of age That he knew William G. Pickens when he Pickens was a boy that he knew of said Pickens being in the Service of the United States in the War of the Revolution. That he served under Captain Robert Anderson and was with said Anderson while he was stationed at Fort Independence. That he also knows that he was under Captain Carithers & that he was with him at the Siege of Ninety Six and that he believes that said Pickens was engaged in the Service of the United States during the greater part of the Revolutionary war.

Sworn to & subscribed this 23rd day of February 1833

Attest: S/ Jos. Watts, JPLC

S/ Patrick Cain, A his mark

[p 20: The veteran was still alive as of December 5, 1838 when he filed in Livingston County Kentucky for a replacement certificate saying he is pension certificate had been lost or destroyed.]

[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$80 per annum commencing March 4th, 1831, for service as a private for 2 years in the South Carolina militia.]