

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of William H. Mathers S45846

f20GA

Transcribed by Will Graves

6/7/09: rev'd 7/8/16 & 12/31/21

[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' or 'undeciphered' 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. Researchers should not rely solely on the transcripts but should review the originals for themselves. These transcripts are intended as an aid to research, not to be used in lieu thereof.]

[p 3]

Territory of Florida Jefferson County} In Superior Court May Term 1833

On this the 29th day of May 1833 personally appeared in open Court before the Honorable Thomas Randall Judge of the Superior Court Middle District of Florida now sitting William H. Mathers a resident of said County and Territory aged Seventy-one years on the Second day of August last, who being 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 7th 1832.

That he is a native of the City of Savannah in the State of Georgia and was born on the Second day of August 1760 –was enrolled in the Militia in the month of September in the year 1777 and continued in the service until the British took Savannah he thinks in the year 1778,¹ the precise time of the Capture of Savannah he cannot distinctly State = Prior to this time he was drafted and went on the expedition against St. Augustine in East Florida² -- the Company in which he served was commanded by Captain McCure [?], and after crossing the St. Mary's River the Expedition was abandoned and he returned to Savannah after being in Service about four months, and after his return he continued in Service until the capture of Charleston [Charleston South Carolina fell to the British on May 12, 1780] with Exception of a few months, he was altogether in service in Georgia & South Carolina about four years during the revolutionary war with occasional short intermissions he served as a private under different captains in the regiments of Colonel Gardnier [?] & Colonel Burgome [sic, Burgamy?] & under General Lincoln [Benjamin Lincoln] during the Siege at Savannah³ & Charleston and until the battle at Stono ferry in South Carolina [June 20, 1779], during his Service the following incidents all recollected -- the British fleet arrived at five fathom two miles below Savannah, landed and marched up to Brewington's Hill, and from thence went to Governor Wright's⁴ Middle Plantation, one mile below Savannah -- as well as I recollect in 2 or 3 days after landing they moved on to storm the Town -- The Continental Army commanded I think by General Howe [Robert Howe] at that time and encamped at Governor Tatnall's [Josiah Tatnall's] Father's old field, about half way from town to where the British head quarters were. The British Army

¹ Savannah Georgia fell to the British on December 29, 1778.

<http://www.myrevolutionarywar.com/battles/781229-savannah/>

² Veteran is probably referring to the Second Florida expedition: Spring 1777

<http://www.ourgeorgiahistory.com/wars/Revolution/revolution11.html>

³ Battle of Savannah September 16-October 9, 1779 <http://www.myrevolutionarywar.com/battles/790916-savannah/>

⁴ James Wright (May 8, 1716-November 20, 1785) was the last Royal Governor of Georgia

marched around the Continentals and came on the back of the Town where we the militia with one brass piece were placed we gave them three rounds with some small arms Spiked the Gun & made our retreat for the road leading up the River, our Continentals in full flight between us and the town about one half of the Continentals were taken prisoner as I understood afterwards, the balance of them with the militia made our retreat to Purrysburg in South Carolina, I do not recollect how long we remained there in camp before some of the Georgians with myself were marched off as a guard to the wagons that carried the powder, which was saved from Savannah, to Prince Williams Parish, and deposited the powder in Sheldon Bull's Church, and remained there as a guard, how long I do not recollect -- I then left the Army for a short time until General Prevost [Augustine Prevost] commander of the British Army, marched from Savannah towards Charlestown -- we the militia were then ordered to headquarters at July finner Hill [?], and marched from there to Charlestown under Colonel Gardner and Bourguoine -- General Provost [sic] did not appear before Charleston, but made his headquarters at Stono ferry -- General Lincoln arriving somewhere in the neighborhood of Charleston, we were marched out and joined his Army, headquarters at Sumner's plantation, I think that was the name, and there remained until the lice had like to have eaten us up, having by this time, but one ragged suit, I was compelled to hunt and kill the lousy invaders every day or 2 & I am impressed to believe 2 of my comrades Smith and Patterson, carried scars perhaps to their graves. Some few Georgians with myself, through Colonel Richard Whigley [?] from Savannah, obtained a passport to return to our native State with the intention of joining our own people, but one of our number being sick we did not set out until the morning of that bloody battle at Stono ferry, when we returned to our different places of abode, and not long after the battle as stated above -- was ordered into camp, commanded by Captain John Heyward Son of Mr Thomas Heyward living at July finner Hill [?], Scouting in that section of country lying between Bus Creek, hill, Euhaw, Purrysburg and Savannah -- General Lincoln's Army marched for Savannah to join the French Army under Count d'Estaing, who Jointly besieged the Town. I was in Storm upon the Town and after the slaughter, we marched for the South State, and I remained at home on Coosawhatchie Bridge, till the Main British Army came on and besieged Charleston -- when we were marched to Charleston and placed under the command of General Lackland Mackintosh [sic, Lachlan McIntosh], and at the fall of Charleston I was taken prisoner, the prisoners were sent home on parole to their different Parishes, which was the limits of their paroles, & remained so till after the fall of Cornwallace [Cornwallis], when the prisoners in our section of the country were ordered to take up arms in favor of the British our old heads concluded best to do I rather than be sent to Charleston then in the possession of the British, as we should be footloose. The British then built a Fort at Pocotaligo, where we the prisoners with some British Dragoons and some Tory militia, were crammed into the Fort with one piece of cannon with a Store in the Fort, and to the best of my recollection completely surrounded by marsh about this time 60 or 70 of our people commanded by Colonel William Hardin came down from their places of retreat, when two of the principal officers of the Fort were invited to dine at old Mr. Vanbibber's [?], who lived on the fork leading from the Fort over the Salt Catchers [sic, Saltketcher River] but in sight of the Fort, They the officers carried a Sergeant and Six Dragoons as a guard, and put out their sentries while at dinner Colonel Hardin's men now rushed out of the woods and took the whole party. Colonel Hardin then sent a flag and demanded the Fort, but he could never have taken it with the number under his command had it not been for us the prisoners being the most, the officers in the Fort after making the Second trial to see who would defend it, when the Second flag was sent, gave it up. The prisoners, among the rest myself, Joined Colonel Hardin, kept the Country and never

again was beaten off. At the time we joined Colonel Hardin the British Army said to be Six hundred Strong, from Charleston made their headquarters at Cumbee ferry [Combahee ferry] at Garrett's Plantation, as was Supposed to collect provisions for a Siege, as Lord Cornwallis had now Surrendered with the British Army to General Washington [October 19, 1781, Battle of Yorktown], during their remaining in that section of the country Colonel Hardin's Camp where I was never slept in a house but one night and part of another I think for at least Two Months, no doubt for fear of a surprise -- When the British moved from Charleston we ambuscaded them at Parkers ferry [August 31, 1781], Sixteen Strides from the road, killed and wounded about one hundred, then we were ordered to the Siege of Brown's Fort at Augusta and remained there until the night before he surrendered⁵ -- and in consequence of the arrival of an express of the burning, plundering & killing in our Section of the Country, Colonel Stafford who now commanded us was ordered down for the protection of the Inhabitants -- after some time I do not recollect how long, I went over the Great Ogeechee & joined Colonel Baker's camp in my native state -- General Wayne [Anthony Wayne] had head quarters about five miles from Savannah, the British being about to evacuate, and Wayne ordered out three detachments to cut off the retreat of the Indians from the nation, I went on the Expedition, during the route I was sent express, and was fired on by about forty British soldiers in ambuscade, and on this route my sheepskin from under my saddle was my bed, my clothes my only covering -- I was in the battle at the Siege of Savannah, and in the battle at Parkers ferry and also in a skirmish at Oakaty [?] River, my head was a target for a younger man from the British entrenchments at the siege of Charleston, and raising my head from the crop hole at the Siege of Augusta, at Brown's Fort my right-hand man filling my place that instant received the ball under his left eye -- at the Siege of Savannah I worked Sundays and every day, and many other things I could say, but let this suffice to entitle an old Revolutionary Soldier who served about four years with occasional short intermissions to the benefit of the Act.

All this I declare to be the truth without any intention or design of defrauding the Government, I will only said that some minor circumstances may be misplaced, as many years have elapsed since I have passed through the Scenes.

The length of time I have stated to be four years with occasional short intermissions, and I know of no living witness to prove the length of time or the services performed, nor any documentary Evidence -- nor have I remaining my record evidence of my age.

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

Sworn to and subscribed the day & year aforesaid.

I do further declare that when called into the Service I was living in Savannah Georgia since the Revolutionary war living three or four years in South Carolina -- afterwards returned Georgia, where I resided until the year 1822 when I removed to Florida & am now living in Jefferson County of that Territory.

I further state that I do not recollect to have received a regular discharge in writing from the service.

Finally I refer to Adam Wyrick a clergyman & George G. Warner, as persons to whom I am known in my present neighborhood who can testify on my behalf.

S/ W. H. Mathers

⁵ Siege of Augusta (second/Clarke) [May 22-June 6, 1781] <http://www.myrevolutionarywar.com/battles/810522-augusta/>

W. H. Mathers

Sworn to and subscribed in open court.

S/ W. H. Mathers, Jr. Clerk

W. H. Mathers, Jr. Clerk

[Adam Wirick [sic, he clearly signed his name spelled in this manner], a clergyman, and George G. Warner gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

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

[Note: Any help in identifying the people and places mentioned by the veteran in his application for a pension will be heartedly welcomed.]