

[Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters](#)

Pension Application of James Wamsley S6323

VA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 30 June 2013.

[Documents in the file are almost all in the same handwriting, probably copied in the pension office after the originals were sent to US District Attorney Washington G. Singleton, who investigated many pension applicants from present West Virginia. For details see my appendix to the pension application of David W. Sleeth S61111. One of the major perpetrators of pension fraud was Jonathan Wamsley, who was James Wamsley's agent and nephew.]

State of Virginia } SS.

County of Lewis }

On this 2^d day of October 1833, personally appeared in open Court before the Court of Lewis county now setting James Wamsley a resident of Buckhannon in the said county of Lewis and State of Virginia aged 68 years last March 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 7, 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated. That he entered the service of the United States in 1781 as a substitute for a certain Peter Sygaphoos in a company of Virginia militia which were drafted to perform a tour of six months. He started from home on the first of March 1781 from that part of Virginia which is now Pendleton county at that time he thinks it was Rockingham. The company was commanded by Captain Hamilton. He thinks his first name was Thomas. Marched by way of Albemarle to Richmond, there attached to a regiment commanded by Colonel Robert Gamble, was stationed at the Magazine to guard it, was driven from there by the British forces under Earle Cornwallis, retreated up the country until joined by General Anthony Wayne with other troops, he thinks Pennsylvania troops [10 Jun 1781]. The Americans then became pursuers back to Richmond thence to Williamsburg, he was under the command of General _____ Nelson [Thomas Nelson]. There he was discharged by his Captain about the 25th of September 1781 having performed his whole tour he returned home, reached there about the middle of October 1781, having been not less than seven months gone in the service. Saw General LaFayette, Gen. Muhlenburg [sic: Peter Muhlenberg], Gen. Wayne, and his own Gen'l. Nelson. He was on November 1781 drafted to go a tour of six months as a private militia man against the Indians and Tories to that part of Virginia which is now Greenbrier county, started from home some time in November 1781 under Captain Peter Hull [see endnote], marched to the Little Levels so called. Captain Hulls company was stationed at the place where Lewisburg now stands and kept spying in the tract of country now Nicholas, Randolph and Greenbrier counties in Virginia sometimes as an Indian Spie and sometimes in quest of Tories, he acted as a private soldier under his Captain Hull and Col. Matthews [Sampson Mathews] until the month of June 1782 when he was discharged does not recollect that he saw any field officers this tour except Col Matthews. He returned home in June 1782 having been not less than six months in the service this tour. He then removed to that part of Virginia which is now Randolph county in Tygert [sic: Tygart] Valley. There he was ordered out as an Indian Spie by Capt Cornelius Bogard in the month of July 1782 and continued to spie in what is now Randolph, Nicholas, Lewis and Harrison counties until Christmas 1782 was discharged. Then in March 1783 about the latter part of that month was ordered out again by the same Captain Bogard to spie in the same country, and so continued until November 1783. the termination of the war with England did not end his services as a spie. He spied every year more or less down to the year 1794. But he expressly states that he did not serve a less period during the Revolution than twenty months as a private soldier in the Virginia militia and as an Indian Spie. He has no documentary evidence and he knows of no person whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his service. He 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. Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.

(signed) James Wamsley

The Court proceeded to propound to the applicant the seven several interrogatories propounded by the War Department to which he gave the following answers viz.

To the first

1st That he was born in Augusta County in what is now Rockingham in the year 1764 in the month of March according to the account of his parents. He believes his brother William [pension application S7806] has a transcript from the family register. He is a frail old man and lives in another county

2^d He has no record of his age or knows of none unless his brother above named has one.

3^d He was living on the North Fork river in that part of Virginia which is now Pendleton county when he first entered the service. He removed to what is now Randolph after his second tour, he lived there until 1817 when he moved to Harrison county in Virginia and from thence in 1820 to Lewis county in which he still resides.

4th He first went into the service as a substitute for a certain Peter Sygaphoos. He was drafted the second time and the third and fourth (during the Revolution) he was ordered out as an Indian Spie as was then the practice.

5th He knew General Nelson, Genl. Muhlenburg, Genl. La Fayette and Genl Wayne. He saw there (first tour) a great many field officers whose names he then heard but has forgotten. Saw Col Matthews his second tour. He has already stated the general circumstances of his service.

6th He received several discharges, the first by his Captain Hamilton signed also by Col Gamble. One from Capt Peter Hull, and he thinks three different ones from Captain Bogard, some of them given by said Bogard after he was promoted to a Col. He has lost them all many years ago.

7 There are no clergymen residing near me, but I am known in my present neighborhood to Jesse Cunningham and John Hagle [S8669] they can testify to my character for veracity and their belief of my revolutionary services as a soldier of the Revolution. (Signed) James Wamsley

Weston, Va. 21st Jany. 1833

The Depart. will please examine and decide on this application of James Wamsley and advise me of the determination send me his certificate if allowed.

Very respectfully(signed)

Jonathan Wamsley

Lewis

James Wamsly aged 68. Served 2 yrs.

John Reger of Lewis county (a man of character and brother in law of James Wamsly's) has been intimately acquainted with James Wamsly for twenty four years. had frequent conversations with said Wamsly about their respective ages. has often compared ages with him. in all which conversations and comparisons of ages, he Wamsly always made himself two years younger than himself, Reger. [See note below.] Reger has often talked with Wamsley about the Indian Wars that were in the western part of Virginia after the Revo war was over, never heard Wamsly say anything about being in the Revo War. Reger is perfectly satisfied from his acquaintance with Wamsly and all about him that he Wamsly cannot be entitled to a pension

Respectfully Reported

W. G. Singleton Special Agent. July 1834

[The following is in the file of William Wamsley (S7806).]

Harrison County to wit Before me this day came Wiliam Wamsley Jedadiah Waldo a Justice of the peace for said County and Made oath that he Searved Six Months as a Soldier with James Wamsley a Soldier in the State of Virginia in the year 1782 Captain Hamilton Company Sworn to before me the thirtyeth day of December 1834

Jdh Waldo

State of Virginia } SS
Lewis County }

Personally Appeared before me the Subscriber one of the Acting Justices of the peace in and for said County, Joseph Wamsley and made Oath according to Law, that he is well acquainted with James Wamsley, who is at this Time an applicant for a pension and further made oath That that the said James Wamsley served one Tower of Duty in the Militia of six month in the year 1781 and that he does not know of any other James Wamsley who did serve in he Revolution. Sworn to before me this 25 day of August 1838
John Reger J.P

Lewis County Virg To wit

Personally appeared before me one of the Justices of the peace in & for s'd. County John Cunningham a citizen of s'd County & made that he is will acquainted with James Wamsley. That the said Wamsley served a tour of duty in the Revolutionary war, that the said Wamsley served said tour in the year 1780 or 1781. That after said Wamsley returned he substituted in the room of Thomas Bland and served another tour. That the said Wamsley, then resided on the North fork of the south Branch of Potomac in that part of the state now Pendleton County but then either Augusta or Rockingham that affiant understood said Wamsley served[?] the army at Richmond That the said wamsley now resides in this County (Lewis) That the Captains name under whom he first served was Hambleton & the one under whom he served the second term was of the name of Slaughter. That he marched from the place or county in which he lived or resided which was then either Augusta or Rockingham That the said Wamsley Searved at Richmond and at Portsmouth. 5th July 1839
J Cunningham JP

State of Virginia } SS
Lewis County }

On this 30 Day of April 1840 Personally appeared before the judge of the Circuit Superiour Court of Law & Chancery for the County of Lewis (in open Court) James Wamsley a Resident of said County & State afore said Aged 78 years who being first duly sworn according to Law doth on his Oath make the following Declaration in Order to obtain the Benifit of the provision made by the Act of Congress passed June the 7 1832 That he was drafted for a Tower of Duty for the Term of six months, in the year 1781 commencing in Febuary and placed under the Command of Capt ___ Hamilton that the Company Marched first to Richmond & thence to Norfolk, or what was then call'd. Portsmouth [sic], that he was marched to various places, was employed Part of the Time in guarding of Negrows & Prisoners Captured from the British, that after having faithfully served his said Tower of six months, he was discharged and return'd home that in the year 1782 he again entered the Service as a substitute for Thomas Bland and Placed under the Command of Capt. Slaughter & was again marched to Richmond and Remained There about two months and was then sent to the South Branch of Potomac with Letters To Col Peter Hull, the Reason of this Transfer was owing to Express from the Back settlements to the governor of Virginia informing him of the Depredations of the Indians on the Settlements, when affiant with many others was ordered to that service and was by the order of Col Hull Station[ed] at Various forts part of the Time on the Greenbriar River & part of the time at the upper settlements of the Tigart Valey – that having fully Searved out his Last Mentioned Tower of six months Duty he Returned home having faith fully served his Country. Twelve months

He hereby Relinquishes Every Claim what Ever to a pension or Annuity Except the Present that his name is on the Pension Roll of the united States; Having Been fraudulently placed there by one Jonathan Wamsley [son of his brother William] Who once applied to affiant to know if he was not one of the Revolutionary Soldiers and affiant gave him a True statement of his services, which said Jonathan wrote Down and Read to affiant and to which affiant made oath, but this affiant most Positively Denies Ever having made or seen the Paper purporting to be his Declaration which was sent to the Pension Office in

his name, that he has never Received a pention certifficate to this day, that he did Execute to Jonathan Wamsley a power of Attorney To Draw what ever money was due affiant But affiant Declares that he never knew from Wamsley or from any other source that said Wamsley was drawing more than affiant was justly entitled to until affiant was Informed of the fact by Mr. Singleton the united states Agent — Affiant Is an unlettered man and cannot write or read writing and was entirely inposed upon By said Jonathan Wamsley who was a man in whom affiant Relied much he being a Lawyer. And Occupying a high standing in society Being Prosecuting attorney for the County Affiant Refers to the Affidavits of Joseph Wamsley, William Wamsley & John Cunningham to prove his services Sworn & subscribed this day & year first above written
James hisXmark Wamsley

Question 1 Where and what year were you born

An— I was born in Augusta County in the year 1762

2. Have you any Record of your age & where is it

Ans There is a Record of my age in the Family Bible, & the Bible is in the Possession of my Brother William's Family

Q. 3. Where were you Living when call'd into service, where have you lived since the Revolutionary War & where do you now Live

Ans I was living in the County of Augusta in Virginia when call'd. into service. from Augusta I Removed to Randolph County and from thence to Lewis County, where I have Resided for the Last 15 years

Q. 4. How were you call'd into the service

A. I was Drafted for the first Tower of six months, and substituted for Thomas Bland for the Last Tower of six months

Q. 5. State the names of some of the Regular officers under whom you served and such Continental Regiments of which you can Recollect &c.

A. I Cannot Recollect the names of any other officers under whom I served Except those of Capt Hambleton, Capt Slaughter & Col Hull—

Q. 6 Did you ever Receive a Discharge. if so what has become of it—

A I Received Discharges from Capt. Hamilton & Col Hull but Thought them of no use & therefore did not preserve them—

Q. 7. State the names of some of the Persons in your Neighbourhood who can testify to your Character & Verassity and their Belief of your Services—

A I Refer to the affidavits filed to prove my services

Harrison County Virginia

This day James Dilworth personally appeared before me William R Callihan a Justice of the peace in & for the County aforesaid and made oath that he has been well acquainted with a certain James Wamsly for the Last 24 years or there abouts having Transacted business for him at Various time and that he never knew him the said James Wamsley to write his name or that he could read it when written but that he always make his mark by a cross a the like [29 Dec 1841] James Dilworth

Lewis County To wit

This the 24th day of January 1842 Mary Hesling[?] Personally appeared Before the Subscriber a acting Justice for this Commonwealth Being of lawful age at the house of Simon Rohrbaugh and after Being duly sworn deposed and saith

question By James Wamsly Sen

did you not here me say something a Bout Me Being in the Revolution war Before there was any thing said about pensions

Answer Something upwards of twenty a go I heard James Wamsly say when he was a Soldier in the

Revolution War that he found a ear of Corn and he was starved so Long he took it and eat it and he thought that it was the Best eating that he ever eat in all his Live and further this deponent saith not Taken and Signed in the presance of the Subscriber the day and year above written
Simon Rohrbaugh JP
Mary herXmark Hesling

Lewis County to wit
This the 24th of January 1842 Isaac Wamsley personally appeared before me the Subscribing Justice of the peace for this commonwealth being of Lawfull age and at the house of Simon Rorhbaugh and after being duly sworne deposeh and saith
question by James Wamsley did you Ever heare me say that I had served as a soldier in the Revolutionary war if you did state what that was and when
Answer I have heard James Wamsley say he had served two towers and that he suffered veary much from cold and Hunger and sd James Wamsley stated he had starved seaverel days and found some corne or Ears of corne which he Eate Raw at that time he thought is must be a better kind of corne than he had Ever before tasted that afterwards found out that his hunger had accatianed him to belife of it tasting better this I have heard said James Wamsley state more than twenty years ago
Test Simon Rohrbaugh Jr
Isaac Wamsley

January the 29 1842
this day came Isaac Booth and Jacob the subscriber Before me Joseph Teter a Justice of the peace for Randolph County and made oath that they belive from the best information that they can get and from their own knowledge that James Wamsley of Lewis County Va was of sufficient age in the year of 1781 to serve as a soldier in the United States Army. Swone to and subscribed to before me Joseph Teter JP
Booth
Jacob Teter

[The following letter is in the file of Thomas Cottrel (or Cottrell, pension application S8242), evidently by mistake:]

Washington City Jan. 21st 1846
Dr Sir I have been requested by the friends of James (not Jonathan) Wamsley, as well as those of John Cottrell, both of whom were Pensioners under the act of 1832, and stricken from the list by Mr Singleton, to bring their cases before Congress Before I do so, will you please examine their cases and see if they cannot be reinstated If they cannot, let me know the whys and wherefore
Respectfully Yours &c.
J. L. Edwards Com. Pensions
Jos Johnson [Joseph Johnson, Member of Congress]

NOTES:

James Wamsley was dropped from the pension roll on 16 Mar 1836, because Singleton concluded that his service was not authorized by competent authority.

According to J. T. McAllister's *Virginia Militia in the Revolutionary War*, Peter Hull was sworn as a Captain in the Augusta County Militia on 20 June 1781. Hull was evidently a Captain previous to that date, as shown by a 1779 muster roll kept by Lt. Nicholas Seybert and copied in Oren Frederic Morton's *A History of Highland County, Virginia*. (Morton: Monterey VA, 1911. p 194. The roll is copied by McAllister with several errors.) That muster roll includes the name of James Wamsley, with the note that he was under age 18 at the time. Also on that roll are the names John Wamsley and William Wamsley.

If any of the conflicting statements of James Wamsley's age was correct, then Singleton was mistaken in thinking he was too young to have served in 1781. Even if Wamsley was born in 1765, as first stated, he would have been eligible for militia service in 1781. In Singleton's investigation of the pension application (S7383) of Philip Reger on 7 Nov 1834, John Reger stated that he was 66 years old. Wamsley

would therefore have been older rather than younger than John Reger.

On 1 Jul 1854 Effe Wamsley, widow of James Wamsley, assigned power of attorney to reclaim the pension her late husband had been denied.