

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

Pension Application of Sterling Cooper S6776

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of North Carolina } Court of Pleas & Quarter Sessions
Randolph County } February Term 1833

On this fourth day of February A.D 1833 personally appeared before the Justices of the Court of Pleas & Quarter Sessions now sitting Sterling Cooper, a resident of Randolph County & State of North Carolina aged 69 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 7 1832. That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers, & served as herein stated.

He states that he was born in Bute County [sic: formed from Granville County in 1764] (now [since 1779] Franklin & Warren Counties) State of North Carolina, February 1st 1763: & has a record of his age in a Bible: that he was residing in said County [sic] when he substituted on the 4th June 1780, in the place of one William Jackson, who had volunteered under Capt'n. Henry Macon, & served five months; two months in North Carolina & three in South Carolina. He states that from Bute County he was marched by Col. Benjamin Seawell to Smithfield in Johnston County, thence to Cross Creek [now Fayetteville] in Cumberland Cty, where they joined Genl. [Richard] Caswell's brigade, at which place Col. Seawell left them, & he was placed in the 2nd regiment under the command of Col. Benjamin Axum [Benjamin Exum]: he thinks Col. Nixon commanded the 1st. From Cross Creek they marched up Cape Fear river & crossed at Sprawl's ferry; thence along the Sand-hill [Sandhill] road to within a short distance of Cheraw on the Pee-Dee So. Carolina - then wheeled to the right about [see note below] & marched north to Deep river in Randolph Cty. North Carolina & lay in Bell's Old fields on s'd. river 4 or 5 days - thence to the Yadkin, crossing it at More's (now Fisher's) ferry; thence down the west side of said river to Cheraw where they staid two days; thence to Roger's Mills, where they joined Genl. [Griffith] Rutherford's army — there Capt. Macon's company was dispatched to join the regiments commanded by Colonels [Martin] Armstrong & [Charles] Porterfield, which they did at a place called, he thinks, Stewart's houses, on the road from Haley's ferry, on the Pee dee, to Camden — from that place they marched to Little Linch's Creek [Little Lynches River], where lay a detachment of the British army, principally as he understood cavalry: there they halted ten or twelve days thence they retraced their steps to a road cut by Genl. [Horatio] Gates; followed said road, & passed Gates army, when Capt. Macon withdrew his company from Armstrong & Porterfields Regiments, & joined Col. Axum's regiment in Caswell's Brigade, which in the mean time had joined Genl. Gates' army

This he states was about the 12th Aug't. 1780. The same day the army took up its line of march towards Camden, & the next day he was detached on picket guard, & attached to the van guard, commanded by Colonels Porterfield & Armstrong, & lay at Rugeley's Mills [Rugeley's Mill] two or three days, thence to Camden where the battle was fought the last [sic: the 16th] of August 1780 between the American & British armies under Genl. Gates & Lord Cornwallis in which the American Army was defeated, & entirely dispersed. He states that he fled to Hillsboro [sic: Hillsborough] where he received from Genl. [Isaac] Gregory a furlough for ten days: at the expiration of which he returned to Hillsboro, where he found only a few of Caswell's scattered troops, & he got another furlough for fifteen days from Genl. [John] Butler; & before the time expired he was ordered to join the new militia under Capt. Jenkins Devaney, which he did in Bute (now Franklin) County, & was marched to Wake Court House where he joined Genl Wiley Jones' army & attached to the regiment under the command of Col. John Branch This he thinks was in the latter part of Sept'r 1780. From Wake Co. House they marched to the Seven island ford on the Yadkin in Rowan Cty NC where the old militia were disbanded, whereupon he went to Hillsbo' & rec'd. his certificate of service & discharge from Capt'n. Asa Phillips: which he foolishly destroyed by applying the greater part of it to tighten the joints of an old flute. The discharge was dated November 12 1780.

He further states that February 1st 1781 he volunteered for three months, under Capt.

James Richards in Franklin County N.C., was marched by Col. Hunter to Harrisburg in Granville Cty [sic: probably Louisburg in Franklin County], thence to Hillsboro; there they were much alarmed by the firing of some artillery, apprehending that they belonged to the enemy but marching south of Hillsboro' the found the cause of the alarm proceeded from about 400 Virginia troops, whom they joined, & who were commanded by a Col. whose name he has forgotten, but recollects a Capt'n. Peterson who commanded one company. There a duel was fought with the broad sword between the two Captains from Franklin, Richards & Benjamin Evis [spelled Eve in the pension application of Moses Smith (S31376) and Eves in the pension application of Vincent Vaughan (W4366)] in which Richards lost his sword hand, it being cut entirely off. Both Captains were expelled from the service. thence they marched about two miles, & were joined by 450 Virginia troops commanded he thinks by Col. [William] Campbell; thence by a forced march to the high-rock ford on Haw river, there joining Genl. [Nathanael] Greene where the North Carolina militia companies were organized, & his company was commanded by Capt. Daniel Harris, under Col. Williams [probably Joseph Williams]: — thence North Westwardly to a place called the grub ground about eight miles N.W. of Guilford Court House thence to Guilford Old Court House, where the Guilford Battle, between Genl. Greene & Lord Cornwallis was fought on the 16th [sic: 15th] of March 1781.

He states that he was not immediately in the battle, having been detached on the prisoners guard about thirty minutes before the action commenced After the battle Genl. Greene retired to the Troublesome iron works [now] in Rockingham County; where the N.C. Militia were reorganized, & he fell under the command of Capt. Asel Briant, in Col. Williams regiment.

From the iron works, Genl. Greene went in pursuit of Cornwallis as far as Ramsay's Mills [sic: Ramsey's Mill] in Chatham County, where he remained about three weeks. Here 450 men including himself were placed under the command of Colonels Reed [James Read] & [Guilford] Dudley, who marched them to Camden S.C. - where he was detached with about sixty others, under Capt. Roland Harris, as a guard to convey provisions from the long Bluff to the army. In the mean time Genl. Greene's army had been surprised by Lord Rawdon at a place called Hobkirk hill, & defeated, in which engagement Col. Read was wounded, & Col. Dudley took command of the regiment: the provision guard joined the army at Rugely's Mills, to which Greene had retreated. This affair took place the latter part of the month of April [25 Apr 1781]. From Rugely's Mills Greene marched towards Camden, crossed the Wateree & halted two days at the Rocky-mount road - having fears of an attack by a superior British force, he retreated about four miles, pitched his camp & made preparations to receive the enemy. The enemy came in sight & some skirmishing took place. After the evacuation of Camden by the British under Lord Rawden [9 May], Col. Guilford Dudley (to whose regiment he Cooper, belonged) recrossed the Wateree, where he rece'd. his discharge, he thinks about the first of May 1781 which discharge is lost.

He further states that, July 20 1781 he substituted in the place of one James Kerr, in Franklin County, for three months, under Capt. Swan Trouton & Col. Hunter; that he was marched by Trouton to Halifax N.C. where he remained four (4) weeks; that at that place 250 men, including himself were armed & placed under the command of Captains Benj'n. Coleman & Peter Begevals (Continental officers) who marched them Kingston [sic: Kinston] on the Neuse, thence to Richland [Richlands] Chapel on New River in Onslow County - thence to the X roads in Duplin County - thence back to the Chapel - thence back to the X roads - thence to Duplin Court House - thence he was marched in Capt. Coleman's Company to Bladen County in pursuit of Tories - thence back to Duplin Co. House - thence to Richland Chapel - thence to Peacock's Bridge on Contentny [sic: Contentnea] River, where he was discharged. During this campaign he was stationed at the various places mentioned above for short periods. his captain being employed in watching & keeping down the tories. He was discharged by Capt. Coleman Oct. 20 1781 which discharge is lost.

He further states that about one week before the expiration of the above mentioned tour, he was drafted, & at the expiration of that term was permitted to go home for about twenty days; - at the end of which time he joined the company under Captain Nathan Turner, & was marching to join Col. Nixon, when at Richland Chapel they received the news that the British had evacuated Wilmington [18 Nov 1781], & they were discharged about Dec. 20 1781 by Capt.

Turner which discharge, together with the two above mentioned were placed in his father's pocket-book which was either lost or stolen. He states that he has no documentary evidence of his service, but has procured the affidavits of Robert Cooper & Jonathan Stone of Franklin County, testifying to a part of his service.

He states, that after the war, he lived in Franklin Cty until the year 1805, when he removed to this County (Randolph) where he has lived ever since. He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present, & declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any State.

Sterling hisXmark Cooper

State of North Carolina }
Franklin County }

This 19th day of September 1832 came before us William P. Taylor & William Forter Justices of the peace for the County of Franklin aforesaid Jonathan Stone, who after being sworn on the holy evangelist of almighty God saith that he was well acquainted with Sterling Cooper during the Revolutionary War - that in the year 1780 the said Cooper was with him in a volunteer company commanded by Cap. Harrison Macon [see note below], that we marched from Louisburg to the landing near Fayetteville on the Cape Fear from there we march towards Camden and on the way joined General Gates' army & were shortly after engaged in a Battle & were defeated, after which time I never saw the said Cooper until he returned home, but he has understood, & believes that the said Cooper served the tower of three months at that time & further this deponent saith not

[signed] Jonathan Stone

State of North Carolina }
Franklin County }

This day came before us William P. Taylor & William Forter - two Justices of the peace for the County of Franklin aforesaid Robert Cooper & after being duly sworn upon the Holy Evangelist of Almighty God, doth on his oath aforesaid say that Sterling Cooper, aged about seventy years, lived in his neighbourhood during the Revolutionary War. that in the year 1781 (as well as he recollects) the said Cooper turned out in a Volunteer Company commanded by Captain Richards. That we marched from Louisburg to a place called Mallard between Warrenton & Ronoak [sic: Roanoke River?] from there we went to Hillsborough, from there we went to Dan River, where Richards the Captain, lost his hand, when Dan'l. Hany[?] who was the Lieutenant or ensign took the Command of the Company. from there we went to Gilford Court House, where we were engaged in a Battle with the enemy I believe on the 15th day of March 1781, after which time I was releved from the service by getting a substitute & came Home & never saw the said Cooper any more during the Tour, but have always understood and believe that he served a three months tower at that time. The said Robert Cooper upon his oath aforesaid further states that shortly after the return of the said Sterling Cooper, he the said Sterling was substitute by a man in the same neighbourhood by the name of James Carr to serve a three months Tower and he said Robert went with the said Sterling to Halifax where he was to join the army to bring the Horse which he rode back, and that it was reported in the neighbourhood that the said Sterling served the three months tower as he had agreed to do, and that he was every reason to believe as true and further this affiant saith not.

Sworn to and subscribed before us }
this 19th day of September 1832 }

Robert hisXmark Cooper

NOTE:

The detour toward Salisbury on the way to Cheraw was probably necessitated by flooding of the Yadkin River.

In Jonathan Stone's own pension application (S9488), he gives the name of his Captain as Henry Macon rather than Harrison Macon. They may have been the same person. In other pension applications the Captain is referred to as John Macon.