

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

Pension Application of Thomas Tharp S7706

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Virginia County of Page

On this 24th day of September 1832 Personally appeared in open Court before, Dan Strickary, Jos. Botts, Jos. Strickar & A. Spitten Gentlemen Justices composing the County Court of Page now sitting, Thomas Tharp a resident in said County of Page and State of Virginia aged seventy 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 7th 1832

That he was a resident of the County of Spotsylvania 13 miles from Fredericksburg Virginia when he entered the service, which he believes was early in 1780 he thinks about 3 years before the close of the War, that he was Drafted in the Militia in said County for a term of six months, that he was about 17 years of age at the time, and was born as he has always been informed in 1762, but cannot be positive as to the year as he has no record now to refer to, but has counted his age from that time, indeed ever since he first went into the service, and cannot be far out of the time, the Commissioned officers that commanded the Company in which he went into the service were all from the County of Spotsylvania, namely Capt John Holliday (or Hollidy) Lieut. John Chew [pension application X145], and Ensign Benj. Allsop [Benjamin Alsop, S9269], and Col. George Stubblefield, after our Company was organized we Marched to Richmond under the above name Officers, thence to Petersburg, and thence to Hillsborough North Carolina. we then marched to the hanging Rock in South Carolina not far from Camden, we started for Camden on the night previous to the action, and during the night [16 Aug 1780] there was some skirmishing and fighting, before day we took a position several miles on this side of Camden, and formed a line as we expected the British would make a fresh attack in the morning, we were not disappointed for they came upon us in the morning and attacked our lines with great fury, in a short time after the action commenced the North and South Carolina Militia [sic: see note below], and part of the Virginia Militia began to give way and retreat in great disorder, our Company soon followed, and my Capt. John Holiday was killed, and John Chew the Lieut. lost his Arm, and was taken prisoner we were pursued by the British Cavalry under Tarlton [Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton's Legion] who scattered us into parties in various directions, many being killed and taken; we continued the retreat back to Hillsborough in North Carolina where a portion of the scattered troops finally made a stand. Gen'l. [Horatio] Gates commanded the American forces near Camden, and Gen'l. Stephens [sic: Edward Stevens] was at the head of the Virginia Militia, in the action; after breathing[?] some time at Hillsborough, I went with a portion of the Militia to Gilford [sic: Guilford] Courthouse, but the term of our service being about to expire, we were ordered back to Virginia, and I was discharged in Richmond, my term having expired and returned back to Spotsylvania, But what has become of my discharge I do not know — Some time after my return home there was a new levy of soldiers required to go from Spotsylvania, I agreed to go as a substitute in the place of a man who was drafted in the County, whose name was Thomas Ward, I was entered as a soldier in Captain [Francis] Coleman's Company of Militia from Spotsylvania in Ward's place and he marched us to Williamsburg, and our Company was placed under the command of Col Merreywither [sic: Meriwether] the Militia at this place was under the Command of Gen'l. Stephens and the Regulars, a number of which were french Artillery, were under Gen Marques Le Fayette [sic: Marquis de Lafayette]; it seems to me that in these tours of duty we were handed over to the Continentals or United States service and in this tour I remained upwards of six months — the British drove us from Williamsburg to the Racoonford [sic: Raccoon Ford on Rapidan River, 6 Jun 1781] in Orange County in which neighbourhood or on our return back to Williamsburg we were reinforced and joined by General Wayne [Anthony Wayne, 10 Jun]; Tarlton with his Cavalry, and Lord Cornwallis with their Troops began to retreat back, and we pursued them in turn, they retreated towards Williamsburg and York, when they reached little York they expected to take water, but the French fleet had Blockaded them, and so hemmed them that they could retreat no farther — close in sight of York Town our Army commenced throwing up breast works, we were much annoyed by a little

redoubt called Pidgeon hill, which our men stormed and carried; which enabled us to go on better with our works, and in our progress erecting breastworks; the British frequently let loose their Cannon upon us, after some time our works was so far progressed that there was no room for their escape, when we got ready for them the great cannonading commenced from the Batteries on both sides [9 Oct], which terminated in the surrender of the whole British force to Gen'l. Washington [19 Oct]; they knew Gen'l. Washington was determined to scale their breastworks unless they surrendered — Gen'l M. Le Fayette with a number of French was in this action, my time having expired I was discharged but what became of this discharge I don't know —

After the British surrendered at York, I returned to Williamsburg and enlisted in a Company commanded by Captain Charles Atwell (which they called the French Artillery) for one year, Capt Atwell was under Major Peas and Col. Allcut [possibly Alcock]; Captain Smith and Capt. Mangers companies were with us, and a number of French Soldiers — We left Williamsburg for the North, passing through Fredericksburg, Alexandria, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and on to the state of New York, we finally arrived within 6 or 7 miles of the City of N. York, the British were in possession of the City, and the French were anxious to attack them, but there was at this time a hope of Peace and that project was abandoned — Gen Washington had come on from York Town in Virg'a to his place, and that was the last time I ever saw him. The Artillery to which I belonged was ordered on to Boston and after arriving in Boston I was sent several miles in the Country with the Artillery horses in order to winter them. Peace was soon after declared at least the fighting had stoped and some time after that it was generally known to be settled. I was discharged after having served in this last tour Eleven months — I gave this discharge to my Brother John Tharp, who was a Soldier in the War, and rec'd a Pension — I tryed to obtain a Pension in 1827 or 1828, and employed a Mr Evans of Shenandoah (now Page) County to obtain it — I proved at that time before Judge Dade of Prince William County that my Brother had my discharge in this last tour, and that he mislaid it — I proved at that time that I was a Soldier in the Revolution, my papers I understood were sent on to Washington as will appear by the accompanying Certificate of Lewis Baker and I hope they will be found in the War Department, and my name should be on the Muster Roll in Washington — I removed from Spotsylvania to Stafford & thence to Shenandoah County and I have been a resident of Page County formerly Shenandoah County for two years

Sworn and subscribed to the day and year afforesaid

[signed] Thomas Tharp

NOTES:

At the Battle of Camden no organized corps of South Carolina militia was present.

A document in the file shows that the children of Thomas Tharp were given his final pension payment up to his death on 8 Apr 1841.