

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of Robert Watkins SC6¹

Transcribed by Will Graves

5/27/10: rev'd 6/14/20

[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 Indiana Delaware County

On this ___ day of October A.D. 1832 personally appeared in open court before the Delaware Circuit Court now sitting Robert Watkins a resident of Delaware County and State of Indiana aged seventy eight years who being first duly sworn makes the following Declaration to obtain the benefit of the provision of the act of Congress passed June 7th 1832. That he entered into the Militia of the State of South Carolina in Union County about the beginning of the year 1779 or the latter part of the year 1778 then in the service of the United States. The officers under whom he served were General Pickens [Andrew Pickens²] Colonel Thos Branden [sic, Colonel Thomas Brandon], Major Benj. Jolly [Benjamin Jolly] Captain George Avery, Leu. Goven Gorden [Lt. Gavin Gordon], Ensign Phillip Anderson at the time he entered the service he was a resident of Union District S. Carolina he marched from Union County to Gilbert Town retherford county [sic, Rutherford County] N. Carolina then to Greenville thence Ninety Six thence to near the Edestow River [sic, Edisto River] thence by Columbia up broad river [sic, Broad River] to Union County S. Carolina to Tiger River [sic, Tyger River] camp where he was employed for about the space of three months by Colonel Brandon as the bearer of Dispatches he generally remained under the command of the same officers with whom he entered the service the only exceptions were when he was sent on short excursions one of which was to rout a company of Tories on Broad River when he was in Captain Shadrach Wright's company of Georgia Militia in December a few days previous to Tarltons [sic, Banastre Tarleton's] defeat at the Battle of the Cowpens³ at which battle he did not engage though near & in hearing in Captain Avery's Company & under his command the highest officer present was Major Jolly⁴ he was not actually engaged in any battle during the two years that he was in the service. He was verbally discharged some time about ___ the time not exactly recollected the time that he was with the Army was about two years out of which time he continued at short intervals. about 3 or 4 months so that the whole time of actual service amounted to about one year and 8 or 9 months he does

¹ This application evidently was never filed with the War Department's Pension Office and has been found in the Court Records of Delaware County, Indiana.

² At the time the veteran says he entered the service, Andrew Pickens would have only been a Colonel in the South Carolina militia. He was not promoted to the rank of Brigadier General of the South Carolina militia until after the battle of Cowpens.

³ January 17, 1781. https://www.carolana.com/SC/Revolution/revolution_battle_of_cowpens.html

⁴ Could be either Benjamin Jolly or Joseph Jolly, both of whom served as Majors under Thomas Brandon

not recollect serving under any regular Officers. He does not know of any person whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his service.

He hereby relinquishes all 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.

[Transcriber's note: Ms. Betty Cummings drew my attention to this application. Betty is a direct descendant of the Veteran. She welcomes contact from anyone interested or with information to share regarding Robert Watkins. Her address is 676 W. 900 S., Hebron, IN 46341 In addition to the above, Betty also provided a transcript of a later and more complete version of this application. It is set forth below. That there are at least two versions of this application leads me to believe that there may well be additional documents in the actual court records relating to this Veteran. Since the Veteran's application never made it into the War Department's records in Washington, anyone finding additional documents is encouraged to transcribe them and submit them for posting here as well.]

[The following transcription of another application filed by this veteran was submitted by Betty Cummings.]

In the matter of the Application of Robert Watkins for a Pension
State of Indiana, Delaware County

On this 13th day of November A. D. 1832 personally appeared in open court before Samuel McCulloch and John Tomlinson Associate Judges of the Delaware Circuit Court and by virtue of their office judges of this Delaware Probate Court now sitting Robert Watkins a resident of Delaware county in the state of Indiana aged seventy eight years who being first duly sworn according to law makes the following Declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June 7th 1832.

That he lived with his father in Union county in South Carolina in the year 1780 in the month of August of that year he was taken prisoner by the tories and carried to Gilbert Town in Rutherford County [sic, Rutherford County] in North Carolina and delivered to Col. Furguson [sic, Patrick Ferguson] a British officer who detained him four weeks and then released him on parole on Thursday and Fergeson was defeated on the Saturday following on King's mountain. Immediately after Fergusons defeat Col. Levi Kersey [this is probably a reference to Colonel Levi Casey of the Little River Regiment of Whig militia] and Col. John Hampton went to Union county and were persued by the tories he then and there jointed them in the company of Captain George Avery Lieutenant Goven Gorden Ensign Phillip Anderson in the Regiment of Col. Thoos. Branden [sic, Thomas Brandon] and marched from thence to Green River about 2 miles from the mouth where we staid about a week from then e to the head of Reedy River so on across little River of Saluda across Bush River and on in various directions through the country in persuit of the tories. Our company was in hearing of the battle of the cowpens though not ingaged in the batter neither were we apprised of it until we heard the guns. He continued in the company of Avery until the next spring when he was employed by Col. Branden as the bearer of dispatches for about three months. Avery was the Captain that he regularly served under though he occasionally went on excursions in other companies one of which was in Captain Shadrach Wrights Company of Georgia Militia to roust a company of Tories on Broad River which was in

the winter after Tarltons defeat [Tarleton's Defeat, also referred to as the Battle of the Cowpens] the highest officer in company on that occasion was Maj. Benj. Jolly he did not serve under any regular officers almost the whole time of his service which lasted from the first of October in the year 1780 to about the first of July 1782 making a period of about one year and eight months when he was verbally discharged by Captain Avery. The country was infested by the Tories for several months after CornWallis 's [sic, Cornwallis] defeat [so that] he was not discharged until the next spring the exact time he does not recollect but he thinks it was about the first of July 1782 he freely of his own accord entered into the Militia company as aforesaid 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 any claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and declares that his name is not on the pension rolls of any agency of any state.

S/ Robert Watkins

Sworn and subscribed in open court the day and year aforesaid [illegible]

[2nd page]

Application of Robert Watkins for a pension

Question 1st: Where and in what year were you born.

Answer 1st: In the state of Maryland in the year 1754

Q. 2nd: Have you any record of your age

A. 2nd: I have no record of my age I do not know that there ever was any record of my age

Q. 3rd: Where were you living when called into service, where have you lived since the revolutionary war and where do you live now

A. 3rd: I lived 20 years in S. Carolina 4 years in Kentucky 1 year in Ohio and the remainder of the time in the state of Indiana and the two last years past in this county.

Q. 4th: How were you called into service

A. 4th: I entered into the service of my own accord into a company that was then called Militia.

Q. 5th: State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops where you served.

A. 5th: I was not with any regular troops

Q. 6th: Did you ever receive a discharge from the service.

A. 6th: I received a verbal discharge from Captain Avery

Q. 7th: State the names of persons in your present neighborhood and who can testify as to your character for veracity and their belief of your services as a soldier of the revolution.

A. 7th: Robert Gorden & Jeremiah Stilwell & Henry Mossburg.

Henry Mossburgh a clergyman residing in the County of Delaware and Robert and Jeremiah Stilwell [sic] residing in the same county hereby certify that we are well acquainted with Robert Watkins who has sworn and subscribed the above declaration that we believe him to be 78 years of age; that he is reputed and believed in the neighborhood where he resides to have been a Soldier of the revolution and that we concur in that opinion. Sworn & Subscribed the day and year aforesaid Wm. VanMatre Clk [signed]

S/ Henry Mossburg

S/ Robert Gorden

S/ Jeremiah Stilwell

And the said court do hereby declare their opinion after the investigation of the matter and after putting the interrogatories prescribed by the War Department that the above

named applicant was a revolutionary soldier and served as he states. And the court further certifies that it appears to them that Henry Mossburgh the clergyman who has signed the preceeding [sic] certificate is a clergyman resident in the neighborhood of the said Robert Watkins and that Robert Gorden and Jeremiah Stilwell who have also signed the same are residents [sic] in the neighborhood and are credible persons and that their statements are entitled to credit.

S/ Samuel McCulloch

S/ John Tomlinson Associate Judges of the Delaware Circuit
Court and by virtue of their office Judges
of this probate court.