

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

Pension Application of John Pearce W5527

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Georgia }
Lumpkin County } SS.

Be it remembered that on this 15th day of April 1847 before the Inferior Court of said County in open court, personally appeared Margaret Harvey of said County, and on oath made the following declaration, in order to obtain the benefit of the provisions of the act of Congress passed on the 4th day of July 1836 & all other acts for the benefit of the widows and heirs of Revolutionary soldiers, heretofore made and provided. That she is the lawful child of John Pearce deceased late of Iredell County North Carolina, that her father the said John enlisted near Bladensburg in the State of Maryland in the Maryland line (Regiment not recollected) in the year 1776 or 1777 and served five years. One of his officers of whom she often heard him speak and whom he esteemed very highly was named Bruce, whose given or christian name she does not now recollect. That he was in many battles under General Washington among which she distinctly recollects those of Monmouth [28 Jun 1778] and Brandywine [11 Sep 1777], and Yorktown [Siege of Yorktown VA, 28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781]. That at Monmouth and Brandywine he was wounded in the hip and arm, and that at one of those places he would have been left on the field of battle, as being beyond the hope of recovery had it not been for the officer (Bruce) above mentioned. [See note below.] that shortly after the expiration of the term for which he had enlisted he removed to Franklin County Virginia [sic: formed in 1786 from parts of Bedford and Henry counties], where he married Sarah Hennis the mother of this deponent, that at some time after the marriage aforesaid, he the said John volunteered in the service in the State of Virginia, but how long he continued in said service is unknown to this deponent. That at the expiration of said service he became a substitute for Mordecai Moseley and as such was in the battle of Yorktown and was present at the surrender of Lord Cornwallis. This deponent further states that she has frequently seen and read the certificate of discharge given to her father the said John but she does not recollect where or by whom they were given. The said discharges were printed, the blanks of which were filled out in writing on each of which discharge there was an eagle with extended wings. Said discharges were last seen in the possession of her mother Sarah Pearce, and since her death cannot be found, nor does this deponent know what has become of them. That her father the said John married her mother Sarah Hennis in the latter part of the year 1780 in Franklin County Virginia but she does not recollect by whom they were married. The banns of said marriage according to the statement of her mother the said Sarah were published three times in accordance with the requisition of the laws of Virginia, that the said John and Sarah lived together as man and wife from the time of their marriage as aforesaid untill the day of his death, which occured in Iredell County N.C. on the 24th day of February 1818. That the said John and Sarah had nine children born in lawful wedlock, the names and ages of which are as follows viz - Margaret Pearce now Harvey this deponent, who was born on the 27th day of November 1786, Rhody now Randolph, who was born on the 16th day of March 1799, Mary now Burnett, who was born on the 1st day of December 1801, Sarah now Shoemaker who was born on the 20th day of August 1804, William Elias and Elizabeth are dead, Catharine and Ezekiel have not been heard of for five years and are supposed to be dead. That the last will and testament of the said John was made in Iredell County N.C. That her mother the said Sarah removed after the death of her husband the said John to McMinn County Tenn. and remained there untill the time of her death, which occured on the 24th day of March 1843. That her mother was not married again after the death of said John but remained a widow up to the date of her death as aforesaid. that this deponent was born on the 27th day of November 1786 and married her present husband Allen Harvey on the 19th day of July 1807 in Iredell County N.C. and removed to McMinn County Tenn. in the year 1824, thence to Georgia in the County of Lumpkin in the year 1835.

[signed] Margret harvey

Land Office, Annapolis, 11th May, 1847.

Sir, Your letter of the 8th Inst. I have just received. I have made a carefull examination of the records of the Revolution in this office, and find the name of but one John Pearce, upon any of the rolls. It appears by a Muster roll, that John Pearce enlisted as a private in the 1st Maryland Regiment, for the term of three years and was discharged on the 7th day of ~~February~~ September, 1780, the date of his Enlistment being blank upon the roll. I do not find his name upon any of the pay rolls, nor do the roll show the officers under whom he Enlisted. About two weeks ago, I received a letter from Wm. M. Varnum, at Dahlonga, George, requesting to be furnished with a certificate of the service of John Pearce, and finding but the one of that name upon the roll, I sent him a certificate of the service as above stated. There was a William Bruce, who was a Captain in the 1st Regiment. Very respectfully, yr. ob't. Sv't. G. G. Brewer
J. L. Edwards, Esq'r. Comm. of Pensions
[See note below.]

Barrettsville Lumpkin Co Ga June 29th 1847

Sir, I have received through Col William M Varnum of Dahlonga my Attorney for prosecuting a pension claim for me in right of my mother Sarah Pearce dec'd. a letter from you containing certain objections as regards the fact of John Pearce being my father. You state that the John Pearce for whose services a certificate has been issued by the Register of the Land Office at Annapolis Md. was not discharged from service untill September 1780, during the latter part of which year my father and mother John and Sarah Pearce were married. You also state that that Pearce who was discharged at that time (unless I am mistaken) could not have been my father. How you have arrived at this conclusion from a comparison of the dates I am at a loss to conceive for from the month of September untill the close of the year there is a space of three months or more. My father therefore, doubtless, during that space of time could have gone even from the most remote part of Maryland after his discharge to Franklin County Va and married my mother before the close of the year Moreover I have frequently heard them say that they became engaged previous to his enlistment and kept up a regular correspondence with each other during that time. At the time they became engaged they resided in the same neighbourhood in Maryland, but during the term of my father's service, my mother removed to Franklin County Va whither he went immediately or very soon after his discharge and married her, that is during the latter part of that year (1780) You also state that the testimony of those who were in service with John Pearce my father will be required in order to identify him. I am confident that this cannot be procured, from the fact that, doubtless, many if not all of them are dead, but if they were alive I do not know the residence of any of them nor ever knew. I have frequently heard him speak of two of his messmates viz Jason Jenkins and Samuel Evans but as I before remarked I have never known their residences. My father esteemed the first mentioned person so much that he named one of his grand children after him. [See note below.] But to require proof of this kind when it is utterly impossible to procure it is certainly improper and I might say unjust, for the circumstances certainly are sufficient without proof of that character.

Respectfully &c [signed] Margret Harvey

Hon J L Edwards Commissioner Washington D.C.

[A letter dated 15 Aug 1847 from Benjamin Duvall referred Wm. M. Varnum to his "Brother living in Cherokee Georgia Archable Duvall about 25 miles from Dahlohnega he is some years older than what I am."]

State of Georgia }

Cherokee County }

Before me an acting Justice of the Peace in and for said County,
personally appeared Archibald Duval of said County, aged 72

years, who being duly sworn according to law, deposeth and saith, that he was well acquainted with with John Pearce and Sarah Hennis in Franklin County in the State of Virginia, the parents of Margaret Harvey, Mary Burnett and Rhody Randolph, and resided in the same neighborhood, in which they did. That he has frequently heard his father and the said Pearce say that he the said Pearce enlisted in the Revolutionary War near Bladensburg Maryland, in the Maryland Continental Line, and served his country faithfully for a long period of time.

He further declares that the said John Pearce & Sarah Hennis were married some sixty or more years since at this father's (Duval's) house in the County aforesaid, and believes that he witnessed the marriage ceremony, but cannot say positively as his memory has been somewhat impaired by age and the long lapse of time. That some time after the marriage aforesaid, he believes he performed a tour of service as he saw him return home in a uniform which was of a blue color, and trimmed with red.

He further declares that he frequently heard him the said Pearce speak of having been engaged at the Battles of Brandywine and Monmouth, and that he was present at the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, and that he saw the scar of a wound in the arm of said Pearce. He thinks he was also wounded in the hip at Monmouth.

He further declares that the said Pearce and his wife the said Sarah removed from Franklin County aforesaid to Campbell County Virginia, thence to Iredell County North Carolina, where the said Pearce died about 27 years ago.

He further declares that the said Sarah Pearce removed to McMinn County Tennessee, and according to report died there Archibald hisXmark Duval

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 13th day of October 1847

State of Virginia }

Franklin County }

On this the 13th day of February 1854 before the subscriber a Justice of the Peace in and for said County personally appeared

Sally Thornton aged 76 years a resident of said County a person whose statements are entitled to full credit and after being duly sworn according to law states that she is the daughter of Mordecai Moseley deceased that her father the said Mordecai Moseley was a soldier in the war of the Revolution that she well recollects her father went into the Army and while in service was taken sick and employed in his stead John Pearce as a substitute to serve the balance of his time out for which she allways heard that her father paid the said John Pearce 20 lbs for serving in his place that she has allways understood that John Pearce married Sarah Hennis who was related or who was a sister to Lewis Duvals wife that she well recollects the three oldest children of John Pearce namely William Elias & Elizabeth Pearce that said John and Sarah Pearce removed as she understood and has no doubt from Virginia to Iredell County North Carolina

She further declares that the accompanying Reccord is a reccord of her & her husbands age marriage &c. Sally Thornton

Starlin Thornton was born February 15th 1776

Salley Mosley was Born December 16th 1777

Starlin Thornton and Sally was married August 29th 1803

Rhoda Thornton was Born June 23th 1804

John Thornton was Born March 30th 1806

Starlin M Thornton was born April 19th 1808

Samuel J. Thornton was born may 25th 1811

Elizabeth Mariah Thornton was Born April 10th 1813

Page Thornton was born July 9th 1815

Burwell Thornton was Born feb 14th 1818

NOTES:

Pvt. John Pearce is listed on several muster rolls in the company commanded by Lt. William Bruce in the 1st Maryland Regiment. On the muster roll for Sep 1778 Pearce is said to be "Waiter on Lt Bruce," possibly on light duty while recovering from wounds received at the Battle of Monmouth. Corporal, later Sergeant, Jason Jenkins is also on these muster rolls. On 13 Jan 1848 the Registrar of the Maryland Land Office certified that "Jason Jenkins, enlisted as a Corporal, in the 1st Maryland Regiment, was promoted to the rank of Sergeant on the 1st day of March, 1779, and on the 27th day of December 1779 was discharged and paid, and that the date of his enlistment is blank on said roll."

The file includes additional depositions by other children that repeat the same information. There is also a deposition dated 12 Aug 1854 by grandson Ezekiel Pearce Harvey aged 16 or 17. Also in the file is a copy of John Pearce's will dated the 3rd Monday of Aug 1822

leaving his plantation and personal property to "Beloved wife Sally Pierce" and making other bequests to the children named above.