

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of Thomas Swearingen W6113

Peggy Swearingen f35SC

Transcribed by Will Graves

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[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 Mississippi Amite County: On the 15th day of July 1833, personally appeared in open Court, before the Court of Probate now sitting Thomas Swearingen, a resident of County of Amite, and State of Mississippi, aged seventy-two years, who first being 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. – Viz. –

That he entered the service of the United States as a volunteer in the month of April 1776 or 1777 for three months. His Captain's Name was Arthur Simpkins, John Swearingen, his brother, was Lieutenant of the company, and he was appointed a Sergeant. He does not recollect the number of the Regiment to which he belonged, but remembers that John Purvis, was his Colonel and that General Andrew Williamson commanded the Carolina Corps in chief. They rendezvoused at Augusta, Georgia, where the Troops from that State joined them, and he thinks they were about 2000 in all. He has forgotten who commanded the Georgia Troops, but remembers that Colonel McIntosh was with them, and commanded the Continentals. These Troops were embodied to repel the Tories who had fortified themselves on the St. Mary's River under the Tory Colonel Brown [Thomas "Burntfoot" Brown], and made frequent incursions into the settlements, much to the damage of the Inhabitants. The Tories evacuated the Fort and retreated to St. Augustine before they reached it, and they returned home. When the term for which they had engaged expired, the Company was discharged in a body, and marched home, into Edgefield District South Carolina, where he and most if not all of his comrades resided and dispersed to their several homes. He took no discharge, nor does he believe any of his comrades did. He supposes they were called into service by competent authority, as he received four Continental dollars from his Captain on account of this Tour, which was every cent he has ever received on account of his services during the Revolutionary war, and this was so much depreciated that he could not obtain one silver dollar for the four.

In the latter part of the year 1778, there was a call for the Militia, and about Christmas (a few days before or after, he does not recollect which), he joined the Army as a Volunteer for six months. He still belonged to the same Brigade and Regiment, but his Regiment was commanded by Colonel Leroy Hammond, Benjamin Hatcher was Captain and Van Swearingen, another of his Brothers, was Lieutenant of his company. He again received the appointment of Sergeant in the Corps to which he belonged were mounted. They rendezvoused at Liberty Hill opposite Augusta, in Georgia, where they remained until a short time after Ashe's defeat on Brier Creek. He with about 200 others were detailed to pursue the British who had evacuated Augusta. They were under the command of Colonel McIntosh. His own Colonel and a Major Cuthbert marched

with them. He remembers that they attacked the British picket in their divisions. Colonel McIntosh commanded the center, Colonel Hammond the right and Major Cuthbert under whose command he had been placed commanded the left. After a few minutes very brisk firing the British surrendered. They took an adjutant, a Lieutenant and eleven rank and file, and the prisoners reported that six or seven were killed. They also rescued three Whigs who were in irons, and he understood were to have been hung at 12 o'clock. On discovering the main body of the British advancing they retreated, and returned to the encampment opposite Augusta. They then broke up the encampment, crossed the River and marched down on the Georgia side to Matthews Bluff where they recrossed into Carolina. They were then marched into the lower settlements for the protection of the inhabitants against the Tories. After three or four weeks spent in this service they joined General Lincoln at Bacon's Bridge. In his dispositions for the attack on Stono, the General wished to place all the mounted troops under the Command of Pulaski, but his Officers refused to serve under him on account of his fondness for rash and desperate enterprises. He belonged to the detachment who were ordered to reconnoiter the British post and draw them out of their works as he understood, which they at length effected. He was in the Battle which followed, the particulars of which as it is a matter of History, he thinks it unnecessary to detail. In a few days after the Battle, his term expired, and he returned home. The Army was again discharged in a body and the men, individually took no discharges.

In the fall of the year he served a Tour of three months. They were stationed at the Sisters Ferry on the Savannah River, and employed in patrolling from Puresburg [sic, Purrysburg] to Parachickla [sic?]. They were under the command of Major Middleton, nothing remarkable happened during this Tour, and at the end of the tour for which the troop had been ordered out they were discharged and returned home as usual.

On or about the Month of ___ in the year 1780 in a call for the Militia to serve six months he again Volunteered, and joined the Army at Liberty Hill opposite Augusta. The infamous Tory Colonel Brown was then fortified in Augusta and Grayson [sic, Grierson] just above the Town. Some time was spent in preparing for attacking the enemy. At length it was determined to storm Grayson's Fort [sic, Grierson's Fort]. They prepared a movable Breast work composed of Beef Hides filled with sand mounted on wheels, which they moved with hand spikes. When they got near the wall, the Tories left the Fort, and endeavored to join Brown, but were most of them cut off by the Calvary, and killed. They then invested Brown's Fort. He belonged to the division that approached the works on the upper side. After an arduous and tedious siege, Brown surrendered. He had been wounded and was not present when the Fort was taken. The remainder of this Tour was spent in excursions against the Tories, mostly in Georgia. When this Tour expired, the Company was again discharged in a body, and the men individually took no discharges. He engaged as a horseman, but volunteered to serve in the trenches as a rifleman. His Regiment was commanded by Colonel Hammond and Benjamin Hatcher was still his Captain. During the Siege of Brown's Fort, the division to which he was attached was placed under the command of Colonel Lee of Virginia. The Georgia Troops were under General Clark [sic, Elijah Clarke], and he thinks he had the chief command of all the Troops. During this as well as his previous Tours he held the Rank of Sergeant.

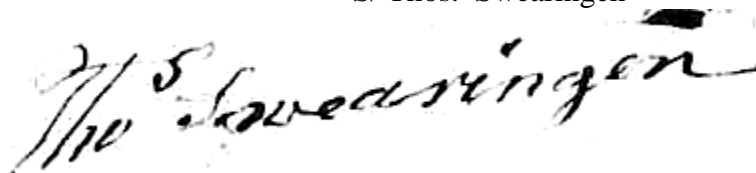
In the Spring of 1781, Captain John Ryan returned from Charleston, where he had been closely confined for two years by the British. He with Colonel John Carter, collected the Whigs in that part of the County where the Declarant resided, amounting at times to two hundred or upward. This operation was voluntary and mainly for their own security, and for the protection of the Country against the depredations of the Tories. He joined Captain Ryan's Company as a

Sergeant. They styled themselves "Rangers" and were truly so for although they had a station where they occasionally stopped as long as necessary to refresh themselves and Horses; they were generally on the scout as they toured [?] it. In this service he continued until the close of the War. During this period he had many encounters with the Tories and had many "Hair breadth escapes" from death. He frequently met those who had been reduced to poverty and made widows and orphans by the hands of the ruthless Plunderer and Murderer, and often saw neighbors fall by each other's hands, and those who had been playmates, shed one another's Blood.

He will only add that from the time he engaged in the service of his Country until the close of the war he never stated home long enough at one time to engage in any business for his own profit; and wishing rather to fall short of, than exceed the truth, he states the whole time that he served at two years, but is confident that he bore arms in his Countries defeat much longer. And for all his service has never received but for depreciated Continental dollars. He found his own clothes when he had any and his own horse, and he thinks that now, his Country is fine and prosperous with an overflowing Treasury, she will not refuse him a just compensation for services which he faithfully performed and for which he has so patiently waited.

He relinquishes all claim to a pension or annuity except the present, and declares that his name is not on the roll of the Agency of any State.

S/ Thos. Swearingen

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thos Swearingen". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Interrogatories propounded by the Probate Court of Amite County Mississippi to Thomas Swearingen, who is in Applicant for a Pension. –

Int. 1st Where and in what year were you born?

Ans. I have heard my Parents say that I was born in Edgecombe County North Carolina. By my Father's record I was born 13th May 1761.

Int. 2nd Have you any record of your age and if so where is it?

Ans. I have a record of my [age] at home as copied from my Father's Bible.

Int. 3rd Where were you living when called into service: where have you lived since the Revolutionary War and where do you now live?

Ans. I was living in Edgefield District South Carolina when called into service and continued to reside there until the year 1811, when I removed to the State (then Territory) of Mississippi. I stopped one year in Warren County, after which I settled in Amite County where I have resided ever since.

Int. 4th How were you called into service; were you drafted; did you volunteer or were you a substitute, and if in substitute, for whom?

Ans. In every instance I entered the Army as a Volunteer.

Int. 5th State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops when you served, such Continental and militia regiments as you can recollect and the general circumstances of your service.

Ans. I have no distinct recollection of any of the regular officers except Colonel McIntosh. There was an officer with the troops when I served my first tour of three months by the name of Elbert, but I do not recollect whether he belonged to the regulars or Militia. I think he was called

"General" but am not certain of his grade. I recollect the North Carolina Troops under General Ash [sic, John Ashe]. They reached liberty Hill opposite Augusta whilst our troops were encamped there. I recollect Lincoln, he was a Stout mild looking man, and was lame. I frequently saw Pulaski and his aide. Pulaski was a common sized man, fair complexioned and looked young for one of his age. His aide was a large dark complexioned man, and made a very Martial appearance. General Lincoln wished to place our Corps, being mounted men, under the command of Pulaski at the attack on Stono but our officers refused to serve under him on account of his rashness. We had a hot time of it at Stono and drew off and formed across an old field and expected the Battle to be renewed, But the British on reaching the edge of the old field, halted and retired to their works, and we returned to our encampment. When we took the British Picket at Brier Creek, we rescued three Whigs who were in Irons, and were to have been hung at 12 o'clock. I never saw men in such a [indecipherable word] as they were when they found themselves free; they begged for guns to kill the British prisoners which we had taken which I suppose they would have done if we had permitted them. After we had taken Grayson's Fort, I saw more Fish than I have ever seen in my life at one sight. The bodies of a number of Tories who had either been killed in the River or thrown in after they were killed, had lodged against a tree which had fallen into the River, and for a space larger than an acre of ground the fish seem to be literally jammed together, and were apparently fighting to get to the Bodies. When I was wounded at the Siege of Brown's Fort I was in the act of firing my rifle through a Post hole. The ball struck the steel of my gun and carried both it and the cock away I was deprived of my senses for some time and when I recovered I found that the fragments of the steel and cock of my own gun and the ball of my enemy's had made thirteen holes through my hat and had cut my face and head in nine places! Brown had some Indians with him who had to be guarded very closely, and escorted some distance from the Fort to prevent the exasperated soldiers from killing them. Some Tories were taken whilst we were besieging Brown, and three of them condemned to be hung. A Gallows was erected about a mile from the Fort, one of them was offered his pardon to hang the other two; and whilst he was in the act of tying the rope a Cannon Ball fired from the Fort struck him and literally tore him in pieces. This was thought the more remarkable as it was the only shot fired.

During one of the intervals between my Tours of service I was surprised by a party who had taken British protections and Tories under the command (if there was any command amongst them) of a man under whom I had served as a Lieutenant. They treated me very roughly; the Lieutenant said "the Boot was on 'tother leg now" and that I would be hung because I had refused to take a British protection. One of them who had been a playmate of mine shot me several times in the neck with powder. I happened to have a keg of brandy and by getting them drunk and affecting to be so myself I made my escape. Sometime after I got the fellow who shot me in the neck, in my power, I was at first determined to kill him and give him some severe wounds with a sword but at length softened by his cries for mercy, I spared his life, and I rejoice to know that through the goodness [of] Providence I have the consolation of knowing that I never deprived a human being of Life, unless I might have done so in fair Battle.

I will mention two other incidents as characteristic of the times when I served as a Ranger. We had followed some Tories who had stolen some horses into the settlement where we supposed they lived. Our party dispersed through the neighborhood to make discoveries. During the night as myself and one companion were watching a house a tremendous Thunder Storm came on and as we saw no men about the house we went in to avoid the Storm. In a short time as we were sitting silently by the door, we saw the muzzles of five guns thrust in. My comrade

without saying a word fired into the midst of them. Startled by such a reception, they fell back and we sprung out of the house and aided by the darkness of the night made our escape. On another occasion, we were informed by two small boys, at the house where we stopped, that two men had that morning taken from them some cotton yarn which they had spun themselves to make themselves clothes. Although we knew they were Tory Boys, we were so much exasperated at the outrage committed on these half naked, and half starved children, that we determined [to] search for the perpetrators and punish them whatever party they might belong to. They were found and identified by the children's cotton. They proved to be Tories and were immediately tucked up to the limb of a tree, one to each end of the horse halter.

Int. 6th Did you ever receive a discharge from the service, and if so, by whom was it given and what has become of it?

Ans. I never took any discharge. I suppose the officers took discharges for the company, and we generally marched home in a body and dispersed as we pleased. I never expected any pay, nor indeed was I ever inclined to enter the service by such a consideration. I thought if we gained our freedom, I could make out without it, and if we failed I might be hung, and it would do me no good.

S/ Thos. Swearingen

Sworn to in open before

S/ R. M. Nielson, Clk

[Jesse Young, a clergyman, and Edward Smith gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

[p 12: on March 17, 1851 in Amite County Mississippi, the clerk of the Probate Court certified that Thomas Swearingen late of Amite County was a revolutionary pensioner; that he died in Amite County on October three, 1837 leaving surviving him a widow, Peggy Swearingen; that Peggy Swearingen departed this life December 15, 1850 leaving the following persons her only surviving children to wit: Van F. Swearingen, Elwina Cotton wife of Willis Cotton [sic], and Maria Cunningham wife of Aaron P Cunningham; that take the Swearingen remained the widow of Thomas Swearingen until her death; and that Van F Swearingen has been qualified administrator of the estate of Peggy Swearingen.]

[p 13]

To the Commissioner of Pensions

State of Mississippi Amite County: The undersigned Administrator of the Estate of Peggy Swearingen late of the State and County aforesaid deceased represents that Thomas Swearingen, who was a Sergeant of Cavalry in the South Carolina line in the War of the Revolution was Pensioned October 31st 1833, in the County of Amite, Mississippi, at the rate of \$180 per annum as will appear by his Certificate of that date numbered 22,431, and that he died in said County and State on the third day of October 1837, leaving Peggy Swearingen his widow that said Peggy Swearingen was married to said Thomas Swearingen in the year 1788 or 1789 – in the State of South Carolina, and that by reason of said intermarriage at that date she became entitled to receive at the death of her said husband, under the act and resolution of July 1849 – to receive the same rate of Pension and under former laws of Congress, which her said husband received as aforesaid (to wit under the act of fourth of July 1836 and subsequent acts) but that the said Peggy Swearingen died on the 15th day of December 1850, without ever claiming the same, and indeed without being properly informed of her rights. That the undersigned in behalf and for the benefit of the surviving children of said Peggy Swearingen claims the arrears due her at her death, at the

rate of \$180 per year from the third day of October 1837, the day of the death of the said Thomas Swearingen to the 15th day of December 1850 the day of the death of the said Peggy Swearingen.

Sworn to before me 17th day of March 1851 – and I believe the statement to be true as above.

Van. F. Swearingen
Administrator of Peggy Swearingen Deceased

Van F Swearingen
Administrator of Peggy Swearingen Deceased

[p 26: On March 22, 1851 in Franklin County Mississippi, Luvisa Gattes gave testimony that she was well acquainted with Thomas Swearingen and his wife Peggy Swearingen; that she knew them well as early as 1788 in the state of South Carolina Edgefield District; that they were married as early as the year 1789 that Peggy Swearingen's name before her marriage was Peggy Battis; that they lived together as man and wife after their marriage

[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$180 per annum commencing March 4th, 1831, for two years service as a Sergeant in the South Carolina militia.]