

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of John Tankersley W63

Frances

f39VA

Transcribed by Will Graves

11/6/11

[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. 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 fails 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 errors or omissions to my attention.]

[f p 8]

State of Tennessee Lincoln County: On this 17th day of September 1833 personally appeared in open Court before the Judge of the Circuit Court of said County, now sitting personally appeared John Tankersley a resident of Lincoln County, State of Tennessee aged about seventy-six or seven 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. –

I was born in Caroline County Virginia sometime about the year 1757 or 1758 from the best of my recollection but I have no record of my age, and no certain information and therefore cannot speak positively as to the year. – I continued to live in Caroline County until I entered the service – Sometime in the month of October 1778 according to the best of my present recollection I enlisted in the service of the United States as a Marine, on board of the Man of War Ship called "the *Tartar*" under the command of Commodore Richard Taylor.¹ – The Ship was lying at Port Royal on the Rappahannock River at the time I entered her. About a week after I entered the service the *Tartar* left Port Royal & sailed to Fort Hampton on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. We then continued to cruise about the capes Henry & Charles for some considerable time during which time we had the company of a Brig named *Northampton*, commanded by Captain Saunders² and also a Man of War called "*Dragon*" under the command of Captain John

¹ TAYLOR, RICHARD: VA: Captain, Virginia Navy: Richard Taylor was born on 6 January 1749, the sixth son of George Taylor or Orange. [Stewart, 254] He was a resident of Caroline County, Virginia. He was commissioned on 14 March 1776 to command an armed vessel. He then commanded the cruiser *Liberty*. On 3 September 1776 he commanded the schooner *Hornet* on the Rappahannock River. [NOAR, 305] He died on 30 August 1825. [Stewart, 254] <http://www.awiatsea.com/Officers/Officers%20T.html>

² Ken Kellow lists several possible candidates for this officer on his wonderful site dedicated to the Naval history of the Revolution. See <http://www.awiatsea.com/Officers/Officers%20S.html> Those candidates are: SAUNDERS [SANDERS], CELERY [CILY]: VA: Captain, Virginia Navy

Celey Saunders was born about 1740 near Dumfries, Virginia. [Stewart, 244-245] [Cily Sanders] He was commissioned as a Captain in the Virginia Navy on 1 April 1776 and given command of a galley in the Rappahannock River (Virginia Navy Galley *Lewis*). On 12 September 1776 he was ordered to transport troops to New York, along with other Virginia commanders. John Hawkins was paid £9.12 for supplying whiskey for the galley. [NOAR, 271]

or

Lurtie [John Lurty]³. – The *Tartar* carried eighteen guns & the *Dragon* (I think) 16 – during the time that we were lying near Cape Charles, Commodore Taylor espied a small British Boat about the mouth of the Bay, when he took a tender a small boat belonging to the *Dragon* and made an attack on the British Boat, but failed in taking her. – During the engagement, Commodore Taylor received a wound in the thigh which caused him to leave the service about eight months after I had entered the service on his ship. After the Commodore left the *Tartar*, Lieutenant William Paine⁴ took the command and after a month afterwards he took her up the Chickahominy Boat Yard for the purpose of having her cut down to make a brig of her as the masts were so high as to render her almost unmanageable. I was then transferred to a ship called the *Tempest* under the command of Commodore Travis,⁵ we continued to cruise about Hampton Roads and in the

SAUNDERS, WILLIAM: VA: Captain, Virginia Navy: William Saunders was commissioned as a [First] Lieutenant in the Virginia Navy and assigned to a galley on the Rappahannock River (the *Lewis*), to be commanded by Captain CELERY SAUNDERS. [NOAR, 272] Virginia Navy Schooner *Adventure* was commissioned on 8 June 1776, when William Saunders was appointed as her master. [NDAR, V, 431] Saunders had previously served as First Lieutenant on a galley, from 1 April 1776. [NDAR, IV, 621] On 17 June RICHARD LIGHTBOURNE was appointed as Mate on the *Adventure*. [NDAR, V, 593-594 and 594 note] Both Saunders and Lightbourne were issued commissions on 20 July 1776, as Captain and Lieutenant, respectively, by the Virginia Council of Safety. [NDAR, V, 1164] On 27 July Saunders drew £77.3.0 for his schooner's payroll from date of enlistment to 25 July. [NDAR, V, 1249] *Adventure* was at Hobb's Hole on 19 August 1776, when Saunders was ordered to cruise about the Virginia Capes to annoy the enemy, and then return to York to refit when the schooner was foul. The Virginia Navy Board also wished to inspect the schooner. [NDAR, VI, 239] *Adventure* was apparently fitting out at York by 20 September 1776, when Saunders drew a speaking trumpet, hour glass, and bunting from the storekeeper. [NDAR, VI, 919-920] He drew cordage and slops on 12 October 1776. [NDAR, VI, 1242, 1242-1243] The Council of Safety now had more interesting employment for the *Adventure*. On 29 November 1776, the Council ordered the Virginia Navy Board to send the schooner to either St. Eustatia or Martinique, consigned to the agents (Van Bibber; Harrison) there. [NDAR, VII, 328] A cargo of flour was procured and a cover letter written on 30 November. [NDAR, VII, 338] Nothing is known of this voyage, whether it took place or not, or what happened to the *Adventure*. Saunders was in Virginia on 18 April 1777, when he was ordered to take command of the galley *Manley*. [NDAR, VII, 369. Misidentified in NOAR, 272, as the *Hanley*.]

³ Probably, <http://www.awiatsea.com/Officers/Officers%20L.html> LURTY, JOHN: VA: Captain of Marines, Virginia Marines: John Lurty was a native of England, born there in 1750. He was a resident of King George County, Virginia in 1775. [Stewart, 217-218] Lurty was commissioned as First Lieutenant of the galley *Page* on 20 July 1776. [NOAR, 190] He was still on the *Page* on 2 August 1776. [Stewart, 217-218] On 17 April 1777 he was appointed First Lieutenant of the *Dragon* (Callender). [NOAR, 190] On 17 April 1777 he was appointed to command the galley then under construction at Fredericksburg. He later commanded the Marines on the *Northampton*. After the war he commanded a revenue cutter and died in that service in 1795 at Hampton. [Stewart, 217-218]

⁴ I could no such officer listed on Ken Kellow's site. I found a William Payne listed as a lieutenant of Virginia marines to whom a land grant was made.

⁵ TRAVIS, EDWARD: VA: Captain, Virginia Navy: Edward Travis was appointed as a Captain in the Virginia Navy in April 1776 and assigned to the Virginia Navy Galley *Manley*, [Stewart, 259] then under construction on the James River. Travis was commissioned on 8 June 1776. [NOAR, 314] On 6 September 1776 he was ordered to join Commodore JOHN THOMAS BOUCHER at New Point Comfort, Virginia. [NOAR, 314; Stewart, 16] An escort mission to sea was performed by this squadron. [Stewart, 16] On 9 September George Gooseley was paid £48.13.13 for supplying rum to the *Manley*. On 24 October 1776 he was appointed to command the Virginia Navy Brig *Raleigh*. On 17 April 1777 Travis received sailing orders to annoy enemy shipping. The *Raleigh* was captured in May 1777 by HM Frigate *Thames*. [NOAR, 314] He later commanded the Virginia Navy Ships *Thetis* and *Tartar*. He later lived on Jamestown Island. He died in 1784 while en rout to Virginia Springs. [Stewart, 259]

<http://www.awiatsea.com/Officers/Officers%20T.html>

neighborhood of Norfolk until the time for which I had enlisted, which was twelve months had expired. I then was discharged by Commodore Travis & received a written discharge from him which is now lost: –

In the month of May 1780 if my recollection is correct, I became a substitute in the service of the United States in the place of William Parr, who had been drafted in the Virginia militia. I still lived in the same County & was in the company commanded by Captain John Tyler first Lieutenant Kelin Tyler in the Regiment commanded by Colonel Matthews but I cannot now recollect whether it was the first, 2nd, 3rd or 4th Regiment. We marched from Caroline County to Williamsburg Virginia and were there stationed until the end of the time for which I became a substitute which was three months: I then continued in the service in Williamsburg having been drafted for a three months [tour] to commence at the end of the three months above mentioned. I was in the same Regiment under the same Colonel, but in the company commanded by Captain William Jones – during this term of service, Colonel Matthews received news that the British and Lord Cornwallis had landed at James Town, and we left Williamsburg the same evening – After we had gone about fifteen miles news overtook us that Cornwallis had taken possession of a place near Williamsburg called the Grove, with only a small file of man. Major John Armstead [John Armistead] immediately took one hundred men of which I was one, and marched back to Williamsburg for the purpose of taking them by surprise in the night, but when we got there we found that we had been deceived – that there was a considerable force there, and after exchanging one or two shots about the break of day we had like to have been surrounded but we succeeded in securing our retreat. – We then marched to Richmond Virginia and passed to Petersburg Virginia and we remained there until my three months tour was out. I was then discharged & went home –

In May 1781 I again became a substitute in the place of my brother George Tankersley for a three month tour. I was in the company commanded by Captain John Jamison & Lieutenant Samuel Coleman in the Regiment commanded by Colonel Philip Johnson – we marched from Caroline County to Fredericksburg and afterwards marched through Spotsylvania, Hanover & Enoree Co. Counties being compelled to flee from a superior British force. We at last took a station at Richmond & remained there until the three months tour was out. I was then discharged & went home. I received a written discharge from my Colonel for each tour, but they are all now lost. I have no documentary evidence nor do I know of any person by whom I can prove my service. I hereby relinquish every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and declare that my name is not on the pension roll of any agency of any state. I continued to live in Caroline County Virginia until about twenty years since – I then moved to Bedford County Tennessee where I have lived till last November when I moved to this County where I now live.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid in open Court
S/ J. Bright, Clerk
S/ John Tankersley, X his mark

[f p 27: Isaac McCown, a clergyman, and John Vickers gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

[f p 13: On March 7, Davidson County middle Tennessee, Francis Tankersley aged between 85 and 86 years made application for a pension under the 1838 act as the widow of John Tankersley a pensioner of the United States for his service in the revolution; she states that her husband died March 14, 1840 in Marshall County Tennessee; that she married John Tankersley about 53 or 54 years ago but neither the precise day or year is now recollected by her; they were married in Caroline County Virginia. She signed her application with her mark.]

[Facts in file: the veteran and his wife had several children; their son John, in 1843 stated that he was then about 50 years old; in 1844 Elizabeth Locke, the daughter of the veteran and widow stated that she was about 57 years of age; no other children are named in the file

[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$70 per annum commencing March 4th, 1831, for 21 months service as a private in the Virginia Marines. Veteran's widow was pensioned for a like amount commencing March 4th, 1843.]