

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Pension Application of Thomas Massie W7403 Sally Massie VA Half Pay
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 23 May 2016.

[Punctuation and capitalization partly corrected]

State of Virginia

Nelson County to Wit,

On this 15th day of February one thousand eight hundred & thirty three, personally appeared before me the undersigned, a Justice of the Peace of the County of Nelson & State of Virginia, Thomas Massie a resident of said County & State, aged 85 years on the 22nd day of Last August (agreeable to his register) Who being first duly sworn according to law, doth on his Oath make the following declaration, in order to obtain the benefit of the provisions made by the Act of Congress passed June 7th, 1832. That in the Spring of 1776, he was chosen Captain of a large Company of volunteers to assist in protecting Williamsburg & the Country between York & James Rivers, and against the depredations of Lord Dunmore & his Myrmidons. Within the ensuing fall, he received a Captains commission to recruit a Company of Regular Soldiers to serve in the sixth Virginia Regiment of the Line on Continental establishment. His company being recruited at the commencement of the following spring, he marched it to Williamsburg & united with the said 6th Regiment, then under the command of Colo [Mordecai] Buckner & Elliot [sic: Lt. Col. Thomas Elliott] & Major [James] Hendricks. all the companies were nearly complete, some he believes quite so, Viz. Capt Samuel Cabell [Samuel Jordan Cabell], Lieutenants Barnet [sic: James Barnett] & [Benjamin] Taliaferro & Ensign [John] Jordan; Capt [Samuel] Hopkins, two Lieutenants & Ensign; Capt [James] Johnson, two Lieutenants & Ensign; Capt [Thomas] Ruffin, two Lieutenants & Ensign; Capt [Peter] Garland, D'o D'o D'o; Capt Cocke, D'o, D'o, D'o; Capt Oliver Towles (a celebrated Lawyer) & company officers; Capt [William] Gregory, D'o D'o D'o & he believes Capt Worsham or Dun [sic: Peter Dunn] & [William Haley] Avery. Also himself (Capt Massie), Lieutenants Hockaday, Epperson & Ensign Armistead. The companies were raised in different & distant parts of the state, & he had not ever a personal acquaintance with many of them, which together with the length of time, renders it difficult for him to remember every officers name. after the Regiment was equiped & armed, it marched out & incamped in the vicinity of Williamsburg where it entered into camp & military training. Whence the Regiment was ordered to march to the North, within the summer following. This was done under the command of Colo Buckner & Major [James] Hendricks (Lieutenant Colo Elliot having withdrawn) Capt Ruffin died [at Brandywine, 11 Sep 1777] & he believes another officer and several resigned or withdrew. The Regiment marched through Virginia by way of Fredericksburg & the Northern Neck, through the upper part of Maryland into Pennsylvania, by way of Lancaster, leaving Philadelphia to the right, crossed the Delaware River above Trenton & passed through Jersey to Perthamboy [Perth Amboy], where the Regiment was posted to defend that point & Country around until further orders.

Gen'l Washington at that time having the greater part of the main american army on Long & York [Manhattan] Islands soon after the Defeat of that army on those Islands [Battle of Long Island, 27 Aug 1776; Battle of Fort Washington, 16 Nov 1776], he with his said Regiment was to march up the sound by way of Newark. The storm & capture of Fort Montgomery taking place [sic: see endnote], he met with Gen'l [Israel] Putnam at Newark and marched up the North River as high as Fort Lee. The defeated American Army had crossed the Hudson, except a part that had marched upon the East side of that River under the command of Gen'l Chs [Charles] Lee. He the said Thos Massie fell in the rear of those retreating troops with the troops who had been appointed to cover their retreat and marched the upper road by Springfield, Scotch plains &c to Newbrunswick [New Brunswick] on the Raritan River, where the troops to which he was attached were attacked by the British van [1 Dec 1776], having destroyed a part of the Bridge. The said American troops kept up a hot fire (with their artillery & small arms with the British the whole day. This checked their progress so much as to enable Gen'l Washington to cross the Delaware

River with the retreating army, military stores &c [11 Dec]. The troops to which he was attached (being outnumbered) also had the good fortune to cross the Delaware without much loss. Genl Washington having refreshed the troops, & received reinforcements, recrossed the Delaware in the night of the 24th of December, (he thinks [sic: Christmas night]) surprised & defeated a large body of Hessians posted at Trenton [26 Dec 1776] captured about nine hundred of their number, & recrossed the River again with them; several days subsequent, Gen'l Washington having received additional reinforcements, again crossed the Delaware with his Army & took post at Trenton. He the s'd Massie was for the two succeeding years generally employed on detached, or partisan service, consequently was seldom with the s'd 6th Regiment or his Company, which company was by this time much reduced. On the 1st day of June 1777 he marched under the command of Gen'l [Charles] Scott (who headed a considerable body of troops) on, or about the Princetown [Princeton] road and encamped in the evening on the heights above Maidenhead. soon after the Van of an Army, under the command of Lord Cornwallace [sic: Cornwallis] appeared, followed by the main body, said to amount to 12,000 men, and encamped in the Place for the night. By the dawn of the next day the Enemy were in motion and filed off in collums to the American left, apparently to surround them. The Americans discharged two light field pieces of artillery at them (without a return) & retreated down the road to a creek, which they crossed over a bridge & destroyed the same, took possession of the ground on the Trenton side of the Creek, then covered with large forest trees. Genl Hand [sic: Col. Edward Hand] at that time being above with a large Corps of Western Pennsylvania Riflemen, the Americans kept the Enemy at bay for several hours (he believes) before he could effect the passage of the creek with his large & heavy train of artillery. The Americans retreated up & slowly along the road to the summit of a hill also covered with Forest Trees. Genl Washington, accompanied by Gen'l [Nathanael] Greene with reinforcements came up. here the Americans also skirmished (a considerable time) with the Enemy before they retreated, and ultimately retreated to a long hill perhaps a mile to the West of Trenton, in view of the main American Army. here they formed & awaited the attack of the Enemy, the day being now very far spent the Enemy appeared & approached the Americans in collumns. as They were displaying we gave them a fire in single file from right to left and retreated under a heavy fire of musketry & artillery, and formed under the protection of the main American Army in Trenton. A very heavy cannonade ensued directly between the two armies that continued until after dark and has been called the cannonade of Trenton. Genl Washington having fortunately gained a grand point in eluding Cornwallace's intention of bringing him into a general action, made up large fires in front & left those who had been in the van during the day to keep them up. He immediately marched with his army & taking the Princetown road, reached that place early the next morning, defeated Colo Mahood [sic: Col. Charles Mawhood; Battle of Princeton NJ, 3 Jan 1777], who Lord Cornwallace had left there with troops to defend the place & his stores. Gen'l Washington having taken off those stores &c, proceeded down the road by Kington [sic: Kingston] & Summerset [sic: Somerset] Courthouse to Morristown, where he established his head quarters & fortunately changed the seat of War. Gen'l How [sic: William Howe] having established his head quarters in New York, established Posts on the Raritan in Jersey, viz at Purthambo, Bonumtown [sic: Bonhamtown], & Brunswick. Genl Washington also established a line of Posts opposite to them with a view of preventing the British Garrisons from having intercourse with & merauding the Country. He the said Massie was placed on this duty at the middle post Matuchen [sic: Metuchen] under the command of Colo Hendricks & served on it near five months. This duty was extremely severe, by night as well as by day, constant patrolling, frequent skirmishes, some of them very bloody, nocturnal surprises, the cutting off of pickets &c, allways attended with loss of men and great fatigue. The British called in their Posts about the 1st of June, & the American posts were evacuated about the middle of June. He with the other officers &c who had been on the line duty joined the main army at Middlebrook. some time after he & five other officers were sent to Virginia with instructions. He on his return joined the army under Genl Washington at the White Marsh hills, shortly after Gen'l Morgan [Daniel Morgan, then Colonel] returned with Troops from the capture of Burgoyne's Army [at Saratoga, 17 Oct 1777]. Our Army then marched into winter quarters by way of the Gulph to Valley Forge. He was soon detailed on duty under Gen'l Morgan, who was to take post at Radnor, about halfway between

Valley Forge & the mouth of the Schuylkil [Schuylkill] river with a view to cutting off the communication of the Enemy from that part of the Country, which was Effected (about this time (Feb 1778) he was promoted to rank of Major) in the Spring he commanded a large Guard, low on the line, not far above Philadelphia, here he received Lord Cathcart, Aid of Gen'l Clinton, with a flag of truce & dispatches for Congress, agreeable to orders he Cathcart was not permitted to proceed farther, the dispatches were read & delivered to Gen'l Morgan. Immediately after Gen'l Clinton evacuated Philadelphia [18 June 1778], he marched under Gen'l Morgan through the City, proceeded up & crossed the River & united with the main army. He with Major Gibbs was detailed to attend Gen'l Morgan who was appointed to command the light troops &c to interrupt & endeavour to retard the march of the British army through Jersey to Sandy Hook. the first attempt to retard their march was made at Allentown. This stoped them a day, & some prisoners were gained. The second attempt was a complete surprise from thick shrubbery in the Pines, when 16 or 18 prisoners were brought off, and a few killed, with little loss to the Americans. several other attempts were made to alarm & retard their march, which succeeded so far as to enable Gen'l Washington to march with the main Army by English Town [Englishtown NJ] & obtain a position which gave him the power of binging Gen'l Clinton to a general engagement [Battle of Monmouth] in which it is believed he would have been entirely successfull except for the flagrant disobedience of orders by Gen'l Chs Lee, who commanded the Van of the American Army on that, the 28th day of June 1778 (an intense hot day). Gen'l Washington ordered Gen'l Lee to attack in full force. This he the said Massie knows to be the fact, the orders having been communicated verbally by Gen'l Washington, through him, the evening before. On Gen'l Lee's approach the British Army drew up in order of battle. Gen'l Lee ordered a retreat which was done under a slow retreating fire for some time. Gen'l Lee repeatedly sent orders to the Officers commanding the several flanking corps not to advance & engage; this state of things continued until Gen'l Washington came into the Field himself, took the command, & arrested Gen'l Lee and renewed the battle by bringing the Troops into action.

The battle at Monmouth Court House was a bloody & hard fought action. after sun set the British Army gave way, and it being too dark for pursuit, the American Army lay on the Field for the night, with a view to renew the battle the next morning, but the British Army in the night made a silent and rapid retreat, leaving their dead & wounded.

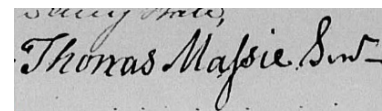
Gen'l Morgan under whose command he the s'd Massie stil acted, was ordered to pursue the British early the next morning, but they could not be overtaken, except two or three hundred straglers that were captured. pursuit was continued to Middletown Heights, immediately above Sandy Hook. after being there & thereabout for several days, the Troops marched up by Sporwood [sic: Spotswood] to Brunswick bridge on the Raritan River. Here we had a feudejoy [feu de joie] in honour of the victory of Monmouth. from thence he marched to Kings Ferry on the Hudson & crossed to the White plaines [sic: White Plains] in Newyork, here he remained several weeks. from there he with several other officers was ordered to Rhode Island to assist Gen'l [John] Sullivan at the siege of Newport [15-29 Aug 1778], then in possession of the British. a violent storm however with rain &c for several days having driven Count De Estaings [d'Estaing's] Fleet from the mouth of the harbour out to See rendered it impracticable for Gen'l Sullivan to proceed with the siege. He consequently retired from the Island, and the said Massie with the other Officers detached as above related returned & rejoined their respective Regiments, then encamped on the Hudson, some distance above West Point, & on the opposite side. soon after this the surprise & capture of Baylors newly raised Virginia Regiment of Cavalry [Lt. Col. George Baylor's 3rd Continental Dragoons] near Herringtown [sic: Harrington; actually at Old Tappan NJ, 28 Sep 1778] happened, when he with his Regiment marched under the command of Genls [William] Woodford & Morgan with their Troops to that Neighbourhood & took post on the strong Heights of Paramus. by this time a large British force (said to amount to 6,000) under the command of Lord Cornwallace had taken possession of the Town of Hackensack, with a view to foraging the Country, in which they did not succeed to much extent, owing to the vigilence of the American troops in attacking & repulsing their foraging Parties. In a few weeks the British Army returned to New york, & the said Massie with his Regiment under the Command of Colo [Christian] Febiger was called off, & the s'd Massie was left in the sole command of the Regiment. (This

was the 2nd Virginia Regiment on Continental establishment) The Officers were Captains [Alexander] Parker, Taylor, [Marquis] Calmes, Catlet [sic: Thomas Catlett], [John] Stokes, [John] Kennon, [Erasmus] Gill &c &c, as well as recollected at this distant date. He continued there until after the middle of December, when he with his command pursuant to orders marched a circuitous rout into Winter quarters at Boundbrook [Bound Brook NJ] on the North side of the Raritan River (under the command of Genl Lord Sterling [sic: William Alexander, Lord Stirling], who commanded that division of the Army) where he continued quietly for a considerable time. The British were confined to New York & its environs & employed in arranging & strengthening their Posts of defence. Their embarkation of Troops to our Southern States & other occurrences demonstrated the intention of moving the main seat of War there, with a view to attempt the subjugation of those States. Time progressing, it was known that Congress had determined to defend & save Charleston if possible, and that the eight old Virginia regular continental Regiments were doomed to that service [captured at Charleston, 12 May 1780]. Those Regiments were then so much reduced in number that they were consolidated into two Regiments. The Officers whose commissions bore the highest rank of course took the command. The said Massie was in consequence a supernumerary Officer, and with Genl Washington's permission returned to Virginia, holding his commission (which he at this time has) ready & subject to military duty with other supernumerary officers, whenever called for or required. [Sis: see endnote.]

He ranked as Major on the 20th February 1778 but did not take his commission from the War office (not having leisure to call for it) until the 20th of Mch 1779) his commission as Capt was literally worn or rubbed out in his pocket while on duty from the constant exposure to rain, hail, & snow day & night. He acted alternately under the commands of Gen'l Scott, [George] Weedon, Sullivan, Morgan, Woodford, & Gen'l Lord Sterling &c &c. He was afterwards under the Command of Genl [Thomas] Nelson as Aid De Camp, in the winter of 1780 & 1781, when [Benedict] Arnold invaded Virginia & destroyed the Public stores & houses at Richmond, & arsenal [arsenal?] & Foundry &c &c at Westham [5-7 Jan 1781], and was finally at the Siege of York Town [Yorktown, 28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781] & the surrender of that Post with the British Army in October 1781.

After the Ratification of the treaty of Peace [by Congress, 14 Jan 1784] he received five thousand three hundred & thirty three & a third acres of Land in the states of Ohio & Kentucky (the Patents for which he now has) in consideration of his services as Major aforesaid. He likewise received some three percent & six percent certificates, not worth much at the time, afterwards sold, amount not recollected.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or an annuity except the present (saving & excepting, however, his right to half pay or commutation up to the 15th of March 1831, the claim to which he intends prosecuting before Congress) [see endnote] & he declares that his name is not on the pension roll of any agency in any state.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas Massie, Sr." The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

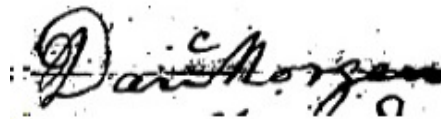
The Affidavit of Smith Thompson [pension application S38438], a citizen of Augusta County, Virg'a. and resident of Staunton taken on the 21st of July 1837 in the said Town of Staunton. He the said Smith Thompson being first duly sworn according to law deposes, that he is in his 89th year and that he was a revolutionary soldier from Virginia in the War of the Revolution and is now a pensioner. That he was in the Northern Service as a regular till the winter of 1780, and whilst there frequently saw Major Thomas Massie, late of Nelson County, Virg'a, more especially whilst he was attached to Gen'l. Scott's Brigade in the North. Affiant states that he marched to the South in 1780, and on the 12th May 1780 was taken prisoner at Chars Town - was sent with the prisoners to Haddell's point nine miles below Charls Town [sic: Haddrell Point across the Cooper River from Charleston], from which place he made his escape, and returned to Richmond Virg'a. Was afterwards with the Virginia Militia at the Battle of Guilford [Guilford Courthouse NC, 15 Mar 1781] and was again with the Virginia Militia from Augusta County at the Siege of York in Virg'a. and whilst there saw the same Major Thomas Massie then acting as Aid to Gen'l.

Nelson where he continued in same Capacity till after the seige of York and Capture of Lord Cornwallis. He states that said Massie was then a married man. His wife was a Miss Cocke. Given under my hand this 21st of Feby. 1837

[The following is from [bounty-land records in the Library of Virginia.](#)]

I do certify that Major Thomas Massie served upwards of three years in the Continental Virg'a line during w'ch time he was not superceded as Captain

Richmond June 20 1783 [Daniel Morgan Brigadier General]



NOTES:

Massie probably intended to say "Fort Washington" rather than "Fort Montgomery." Fort Montgomery did not fall until 6 Oct 1777.

Thomas Massie claimed half pay for life for serving to the end of the Revolutionary War as a supernumerary officer. His claim was rejected, because he was on record as having resigned on 25 June 1779. Andy Keller has brought to my attention a letter from George Washington to Massie confirming that Massie resigned. The letter is found at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mgwquery.html> by searching for "Thomas Massie."

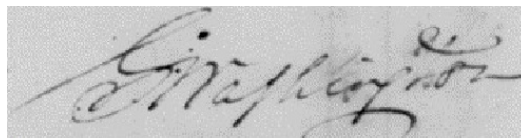
Headquarters New Windsor [now Kingston NY] June 25, 1779

Sir/ I have received your letter of the 11th Instant and I am extremely sorry to hear, that you have been so much afflicted with the Rheumatism. Your situation will not permit me to refuse your request to retire from the service, and I have only to regret the circumstance, which deprives the States of an Officer of your merit. You will be pleased to accept my wishes for your recovery.

I am Sir

with great esteem/

Yr Most Obed't Servt



The file contains a long letter from Thomas J. Massie of Lovingson VA dated 10 July 1852 concerning the rejection of Thomas Massie's claim for half pay.

The file includes a copy of Thomas Massie's will dated 1 Sep 1831 and probated in Nelson County Court on 24 Feb 1834. In it he states that he was born in New Kent County VA on 11 Aug 1747, Old Style. The will lists his wife and three son, Thomas, William, and Henry, as well as grandchildren.

On 17 Jan 1837 Sally Massie, 77, applied for a pension stating that she married Thomas Massie in Augusta County VA on 11 Apr 1781, and he died 2 Feb 1834. In the file is a family register written in a New Testament printed in 1776, transcribed below. The file contains letters by William Massie of Merchant Mills VA concerning the testimony of Smith Thompson in behalf of his mother's claim for a pension. Another document states that Sally Massie died 27 April 1838.

Thomas Massie and Sally Cocke were married April the 11th 1781

Thomas Son of Thomas and Sally Massie was born Octo 21st 1782

Henry, Son of Thomas and Sally Massie, was born Octo. 16th 1784

William Son of Thomas and Sally Massie was born March 3^d 1795