



## Finding Your North Carolina Revolutionary War Soldier or Patriot, Parts 1–4

by Terry Moore, CG

### Part 1

Gunshots at Lexington and Concord on 19 April 1775 alerted Americans that the Revolutionary War had begun. Although the British surrender at Yorktown occurred on 19 October 1781, the war was not officially over until September 1783—the war was long and hard won. Today, we honor those who participated in obtaining our freedom from Britain in lineage societies such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Sons of the American Revolution, and the Society of the Cincinnati. Most of us would be proud to know that one of our ancestors was a soldier or patriot in that grand war, and there lies the challenge ... knowing.

I like using lists. They jar my memory and prevent me from forgetting important things like a gallon of milk from the grocery store or records that may reveal evidence about Revolutionary War heroes. Below is my Rev War list of records pertaining to North Carolina soldiers and patriots. I usually begin with the records of the Continental Line.

#### Continental Line:

- *General Index to Compiled Service Records of Revolutionary War Soldiers from North Carolina* (Washington: The National Archives, microfilm publication M257) (2 rolls). Available at the National Archives, the North Carolina State Archives, Ancestry.com, and Fold3.com.
- *Compiled Service Records of Revolutionary War Soldiers from North Carolina* (Washington: The National Archives, Microfilm Publication M881, rolls 781-786). Available at the National Archives, the North Carolina State Archives, Ancestry.com and Fold3.com.
- William L. Saunders, Secretary of State, *The Colonial and State Records of North Carolina, Published Under the Supervision of the Trustees of the Public Libraries by Order of the General*

*Assembly, Series* (1890: reprint, Wilmington, North Carolina: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1993).

Comment: There are **many** Revolutionary War records indexed in these volumes, including a list of the North Carolina Continental Line. Search for your ancestor in the index. Finding the original records from these volumes is not always easy. Seek the help of the archivist to find where the originals have been filed. This series of books is available online at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/>. (Wilson Library, UNC)

- Virgil D. White, *Index to Revolutionary War Service Records, Volumes I, II, and III* (Waynesboro, Tennessee: The National Historical Publishing Company, 1995)
- Fred. M. Hintze Jr., M. Div., Ret, *North Carolina Continental Line of the American Revolutionary, an Alphabetic List of Enlisted Soldiers* (Richlands, NC: privately printed, no date).
- Daughters of the American Revolution, compiler, *Roster of Soldiers from North Carolina in the American Revolution* (Durham, NC: The North Carolina Daughters of the American Revolution, 1932). This book is available at Ancestry.com. Go to the card catalog and enter the name of the book.  
  
Comment: The above book includes a variety of North Carolina records relative to the Revolution. Always locate and look at the originals.
- Francis B. Heitman, *Officers of the Continental Army during the War of the Revolution, April, 1775 to December, 1783* (1914: reprint,

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Baltimore, Maryland, Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1973). Available free online at [www.googlebooks.com](http://www.googlebooks.com).

Comment: This book lists the officers for each military unit of the Continental Line and then gives an alphabetical list with a short description of continental line and militia officers.

Occasionally, there may be a descriptive list of enlistments or draftees. These are filed in the North Carolina, State Archives. Search the card catalog of original records under the county and then military or militia. These records are also listed in the North Carolina State Archives Military Finding Aid under "Revolutionary War, Draft and Enlistment."

The following is an example of an enlistment record from Granville County. These provide snapshots of the men in a day when there were no cameras.

"A Descriptive list of the 6 men raised under the present Act of Assembly in Cap<sup>m</sup> Samuel Walker's Company No. 5

George Woodlift, 17 years old, 5 feet 6 inches high, light complexion, a Planter.

David Hunt, a Blackman, 30 years of age, 5 feet 7 inches high, a Planter.

Gibson Harris, 17 years of age, 5 feet 6 inches high, a Blackman, a Planter.

David Hatcher, 16 years of age, an half Indian, 5 feet 7 inches high, well made, a Planter.

Tolbert Tucker, 40 years of age, 5 feet, 10 inches high, of a Sandy complexion, professes several Trades.

John Kennedy, about 25 years of age, 5 feet 10 inches high, thick made, a planter by Trade.

Resevd by me    Ralph Williams, Cap<sup>t</sup> 9. N. B"

Pension, military land records, militia, and army accounts among other records will be discussed in the next issue of NCGS News. Our source list will

get longer and each additional record provides hope that we will find evidence of our Revolutionary War hero.

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### Part 2

The militia brings to mind men in coonskin hats with rumpled clothing, long rifles held firmly in hand, hiding behind trees and bushes, alert and ready to shoot at the first flash of red. During the Revolutionary War the militia was organized at the county level with local men 16 to 50 or 60 years old. Each county regiment was commanded by a colonel and was composed of companies with a captain at the head of each unit, with most men serving and ready to defend North Carolina.

Militia records, like the men they represent, are difficult to find, most likely because the records were either not kept or did not survive. Below continues my search list of Revolutionary War records for continental soldiers and especially the more elusive militia.

#### Continental Line and Militia:

- *North Carolina Revolutionary War Army Accounts*. These accounts contain a record of payments to the militia and continental soldiers, as well as payments for sundries to support the troops. The account books kept track of North Carolina's expenditures during the war. The index is on microfiche at the North Carolina State Archives Search Room and in the archive's MARS catalog at <http://www.archives.ncdcr.gov/>.

An index entry such as V-46-4 means book V, page 46, folio 4. When an entry is found, backtrack through the book until a description of the record, or the military district, or the names of the district auditors is located. (Some books do not include a description.) From the names of the auditors you can determine which military district paid an individual. This often, but not

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always, corresponded with where the soldier lived. There are four series of account books. A list of military districts and names of auditors as well as a complete description of each account book can be found in Helen Leary's, *North Carolina Research*<sup>1</sup>, which is available for purchase at <http://www.ncgenealogy.org>. Some of the army account books have been abstracted by Weynette Parks Haun.<sup>2</sup>

To determine if a soldier could be your soldier it is important to know the names of the auditors, who made a payment or issued a voucher to him. The signatures of the auditors will be on the pay voucher. For example, if a soldier received pay for militia service and was paid by Francis Lucas, William Dickson, Thomas Sewell, John Spicer Jr., John King, or Thomas Routledge, who were from the Wilmington District (which included the counties of Bladen, Brunswick, Cumberland, Duplin, New Hanover, and Onslow), and your ancestor was from Caswell County, this account was probably not his.

- *Abstracts of Letters of Resignation of Militia Officers in North Carolina 1779-1840* by Tim Kearney.<sup>3</sup> The letters of resignations are found in the North Carolina General Assembly records.
- *The Colonial [and State] Records of North Carolina*. Some continental line and militia records are indexed in this series of book<sup>4</sup>, which is available online at <http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/>.
- Pay Vouchers. North Carolina did not have money to pay for all the services needed for the war, so they often issued pay vouchers, which were given for continental line or militia service and for sundries, such as corn, oats, bacon, wagons, horses, and other supplies. The pay vouchers are organized on microfilm at the state archives in alphabetical order.

- Troop returns. Search the North Carolina State Archives Military Finding Aid under Revolutionary War, Troop Returns, the year, and county or search the state archives card catalog of original records under the county name and then militia. Often the troop returns will only include the names of officers and statistics, but check for the random record that may include the name of your ancestor.
- Kings Mountain. A roster of those who fought at the Battle of King's Mountain can be found at <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~scyork/RevWar/KingsMtnRoster.html>. This list is not complete and it is unknown how reliable it is, but it is a good place to start searching. Note: these militia units came mostly from southwest Virginia, northwestern North Carolina, and eastern Tennessee.
- Legislative papers. Miss Marybell Delmar located and transcribed petitions concerning wartime service filed in the North Carolina General Assembly papers for the years 1778 to about 1833. The 943 pages of typescripts are referred to as the Delmar Transcripts. An index to these records can be found on the NCGS website at <http://www.ncgenealogy.org>. Click on "Resources" located at the top of the home page, then click on "Delmar Rev War Transcripts." The index is also available to researchers at the North Carolina State Archives Search Room desk along with the transcripts. Abstracts of the transcripts were published in the *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, volumes 1-6.

### Notes for Part 2:

<sup>1</sup> Helen F. M. Leary, CG, FASG, editor, *North Carolina Research, Genealogy and Local History* (Raleigh, North Carolina: North Carolina Genealogical Society, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Weynette Parks Haun, in *North Carolina Revolutionary War Army Accounts Secretary of State Treasurer's &*

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*Comptroller's Papers*.<sup>2</sup> (Durham, North Carolina, privately published, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> Timothy Kearney, *Abstracts of Letters of Resignation of Militia Officers in North Carolina 1779-1840* (Raleigh, North Carolina: Walworth Publishing Co. for the North Carolina Genealogical Society, 1992).

<sup>4</sup> William L. Saunders, Secretary of State, , *Published Under the Supervision of the Trustees of the Public Libraries by Order of the General Assembly, Series* (1890: reprint, Wilmington, North Carolina: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1993).

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### Part 3: Pensions

Captain Moses Moore applied for a pension under the US pension act of 1832; his application was returned to him for verification of service. Moses' wife, Nancy, tried to establish a claim for her husband's pension under the US Pension Act of July 1838; again, the application was returned to her because she did not submit a verification of service. In 1850, Moses' son, Aaron, after the death of both his parents, also applied for a pension that might have been due his father, on behalf of himself and his siblings. The captain's friends Abner Hull and Samuel Sullivan testified to his service during the Revolution, and the application contained a copy of the marriage bond of Moses Moore and Nancy Cox, dated 29 July 1785, Lincoln County, North Carolina. Aaron submitted a record kept by his father in a book of sermons, in which his father recorded the birth dates of himself, his wife, and their thirteen children. Aaron provided the death dates of his parents and Nancy Cox Moore's sister, Susannah Carpenter, was also mentioned in the file. Although the application was not approved because there was not sufficient proof of service, there was a plethora of information.<sup>1</sup>

Would you want to search a record group for a Revolutionary War soldier that might provide the soldier's date and place of birth, the maiden name of his wife, when and where they were married, the names of his children with their birth dates, possibly the names of his parents and brothers, who

also served, his neighbors, minister, the battles he fought in, and whether he served on the Continental Line or militia? Of course you would! While the above facts may not be found in every application, they are examples of some of the gems that could be found in the soldier's pension application. *The Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files* are genealogically rich records of the Revolution and they are now easily accessible.

The United States began issuing pensions in 1776 for those who were disabled. In 1818 and 1820 the pension laws changed to provide for those who were not only disabled but in "reduced circumstances." A number of pension acts were passed between 1776 and 1832. Although widows and orphans of commissioned officers who were killed or wounded received pensions early, in 1832 soldiers who served at least six months were eligible for a pension. It was not until 1836 that some widows were eligible to collect their husband's pension and 1838 when certain orphans were eligible for the pensions of their fathers. Christine Rose has published a book of the pension laws between 1776 and 1858.<sup>2</sup>

The pension files on microfilm can be found at the North Carolina State Library, the Family History Library, and the National Archives in Washington, DC. Digital images of selected papers of the pension files are available at HeritageQuest® Online (<http://www.heritagequestonline.com>). Access to this database is sometimes available through your public library and can often be accessed from home with a library card, user name, and password. Check with your local library. Because the HeritageQuest® database only contains selected papers, your research should not stop there; important information could be missed. Images of the complete pension files are online at Fold3 (<http://www.Fold3.com>). HeritageQuest® Online and Fold3 are also available to use at no cost at your nearest Family History Center.

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The war left many soldiers dead or disabled and no longer able to provide for their families. In 1784 North Carolina passed a pension act for disabled militia veterans and widows and orphans of those killed during the war. Only 97 pensions were granted and an index to the pensioners is found in the military finding aid at the North Carolina State Archives under “The War of the Revolution.”<sup>3</sup>

In 1976 the National Genealogical Society published the *Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives*, (Washington, DC: The Society, 1976).<sup>4</sup> This index is available at most genealogical libraries, but is currently out of print.

Virgil D. White published the *Index to Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives*<sup>5</sup> and the *General Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files*.<sup>6</sup> The index is helpful because names of individuals other than the petitioner are included and the abstracts are an efficient way to determine some of the information in the pension files. Mr. White used selected images of the pension files to create his index and abstract so don't stop searching here. Again, these volumes may be found in genealogical libraries.

A search for rejected pensions can be done on Ancestry.com in the book *Rejected or Suspended Applications for Revolutionary War Pensions*.<sup>7</sup> There are other pension records at the National Archives, including pension ledgers, payment vouchers, last and final payments, and others, but that is beyond the scope of this short article.

Perhaps your ancestor did not receive a pension, but maybe he did, so be sure to check for one. You wouldn't want to miss the information that may be scribbled on the pages. By the way, in 1877 the Pension Office was searching for descendants of Moses Moore because they wanted to return the book of sermons that had been submitted with his pension application. Hmm, a descendant was not found.

### Notes for Part 3:

<sup>1</sup> Moses Moore , 1849, R7350, Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files (Washington: National Archives), *Fold3*, digital image, <http://www.fold3.com>, accessed 17 June 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Christine Rose, CG, CGL, FASG, *Military Pension Laws 1776-1858 from the Journals of the Continental Congress and the United States Statues – at – Large* (San Jose, CA: Rose Family Association, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> *North Carolina State Revolutionary War Pensions for Invalids and Widows*, Military Finding Aid, North Carolina State Archives Search Room, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, North Carolina.

<sup>4</sup> National Genealogical Society, *Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives* (Washington, DC: The Society, 1976).

<sup>5</sup> Virgil D. White, *Index to Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives* (Arlington, Virginia: National Genealogical Society, 1976).

<sup>6</sup> Virgil D. White, *General Abstracts of Revolutionary War Pension Files* (Waynesboro, Tennessee: The National Historical Publishing Co., 1990).

<sup>7</sup> *Rejected or Suspended Applications for Revolutionary War Pensions* (Washington, D.C.: no publisher, 1852); <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed 18 June 2014.

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### Part 4: NC Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants

At the beginning of the Revolutionary War, North Carolina had much unsettled land in what is now Tennessee. As an incentive to sign up for Continental Line duty, men were promised military bounty land if they served at least two years. If a soldier served less than two years, he did not qualify to receive military bounty land. Also, bounty land grants were not available to militia soldiers or officers. North Carolina did not give any bounty land within its present day boundaries.

A private was entitled to 7.6 acres for each month; higher ranks were entitled to proportionately more. For 84 months (length of war) of service, private soldiers were entitled to 640 acres; noncommissioned officers, 1,000

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acres; subalterns (below the rank of captain), 2,560 acres; captains, 3,840; majors, 4,800 acres; lieutenant colonels, 5,760 acres; lieutenant-colonel commandants, 7,200 acres; colonels 7,200 acres; brigadiers, 12,000 acres; chaplains, 7,200 acres; surgeons, 4,600 acres, and surgeon's mates, 2,560 acres.<sup>1</sup>

Surveyors, and the guards who protected them, also qualified for grants in Tennessee; they were just not grants for Revolutionary War service on the Continental Line.<sup>2</sup>

A soldier provided proof of service and, if he qualified, was given a warrant for land in the North Carolina military district in what is now Tennessee. The soldier's name, rank, number of acres entitled to, date of the warrant, and the name of the person the warrant was issued to were recorded in the Register of Military Land Warrants (available at the North Carolina State Archives). Names of heirs were not recorded in the register. Once the soldier obtained the warrant, he went to Tennessee to find land or gave his warrant to a surveyor who located land for him. The surveyor surveyed the land and returned the warrant along with two copies of the survey to the North Carolina Secretary of State who kept the warrant and one copy of the survey. The grant and other copy of the survey were sent to the soldier or his heirs.

Not all soldiers who were eligible for land wanted to pack up and move to Tennessee, so they or their heirs were able to sell (assign) their warrants to someone else. Sometimes the warrants were sold a number of times, and it is not unusual to see several transfers recorded on the reverse side of a warrant. If the soldier's name is crossed out and the name of a different man is written in with the word "assignee" next to his name, the assignee bought the warrant from the soldier and did not receive it for his own military service.

If military service is not stated on the warrant it is not a Revolutionary War bounty land grant. Frequently the shuck (envelope) is stamped

"Military." The MARS indexing system on the North Carolina State Archives website, <http://mars.archives.ncdcr.gov>, includes the North Carolina Revolutionary War Bounty Land Warrants. Enter your ancestor's name in the basic search and if he received a grant it will come up in the search results. If it is a military grant, it will be so indicated in the description of the record.

An index to the North Carolina Revolutionary War Bounty Land Warrants is also on microfiche at the North Carolina State Archives Search Room. The microfilm number and frame of the film is given so the grant can be located. A card index to Tennessee land grants is available in the North Carolina State Archives Search Room, too. The card index provides the file number. The grants can be located using either the microfilm frame or the grant's file number.

A published index can be found in Lloyd Bockstruck's book, *Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants: Awarded by State Governments* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1996).

In the Secretary of State Revolutionary War Military Papers, there are 1,422 folders of depositions and proofs submitted by soldiers or their heirs for bounty claims. The card index to this collection includes a summary of the papers. The index is in the North Carolina State Archives Search Room. (This collection is mostly for land grants after 1800.)

If the grant was issued before 1803, look in North Carolina for the papers; after 1806 the grants were still issued by North Carolina but Tennessee officials located the land and the warrants were returned to them and will be found in Tennessee.

Dr. A. B. Pruitt, in a handout for his lecture at the 1999 NGS Conference in the States, discussed the abuses of the military bounty land process. He advised not basing proof of military service solely on a bounty land grant but to locate the soldier's

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name on the muster rolls <sup>3</sup> or the roster of Continental Line soldiers.

**Notes for Part 4:**

<sup>1</sup> Helen F. M. Leary, CG, FASG, editor, *North Carolina Research Genealogy and Local History* 2nd Edition (Raleigh, North Carolina: North Carolina Genealogical Society, 1996), p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. A. B. Pruitt, "Land Grants: Military Bounty Land Warrants," *1999 NGS Conference in the States*, p. 428-430.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. A. B. Pruitt, "Land Grants: Military Bounty Land Warrants," *1999 NGS Conference in the States*, p. 428-430.

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