

THOMAS NELSON

Revolutionary Pension...He applied for this Pension in 1845 in Pike County, Georgia...He died before the pension was completed and hence it was not allowed.

Thomas Nelson
Died 27 March 1846
Pike County, Ga.

Revolution Pension
No. R.7592
National Archives
Washington, D.C.

SERVICE

THOMAS NELSON stated that he enlisted in the year 1782 and served with the South Carolina Troop until Peace with England was declared...He took part in one engagement about 10 miles below Crangeburg, S.C. He served under these men

Capt. Thomas Parrott

Capt. John Pearson

Col. Hopkins

Capt. William Hughes

Capt. James Davis

RESIDENCE

He was born in North Carolina but as a child he removed to South Carolina where he lived until 1831 when he moved to Pike County, Georgia and was living there in 1845

FAMILY

THOMAS NELSON was born in North Carolina 25 Nov. 1745
He died in Pike County, Georgia 27 March 1846

Other names in his file of his family.

SUSANNAH NELSON died 17 October 1846...Relationship not stated.

→ HENRY NELSON...Relationship not stated.

LUVICY POWELL...Relationship not stated

→ WILLIAM D. NELSON...Son

LANCY...Daughter

MARY ANN wife of ALAN SIMMERLY...Daughter

Reference is made "To my several children"

Courtesy of

Mrs. M.J. Scott
R.F.D. No. 6
Bogalusa, Louisiana.

Revolutionary War soldier tells his own story in his pension deposition



By Sherri Ellington

Editor's note: this is the first of two articles in a series on Thomas "Century" Nelson.

The Pike community is planning the first few years' worth of beautification efforts, funded by a \$1.6 million trust bequeathed to Pike, Zebulon, Concord and Meansville by the descendant of a Revolutionary War veteran.

Efforts must honor the memory Thomas Nelson, the great-great-great-grandfather of Thaddeus Nelson Morris. In addition to deciding what to do with annual interest from the fund, there is another question — who was Thomas Nelson?

Thomas Nelson Jr. was born in Rutherfordton, N.C., Nov. 25, 1745 and died March 27, 1846 in Pike County at 100 years old. This earned him the posthumous nickname of "Century" Nelson, which helps distinguish him from numerous Thomas Nelsons of the Revolutionary era.

Most famous was the "other" Thomas Nelson Jr., who signed the Declaration of Independence on behalf of Virginia. A study of history quickly proves the signer and Century Nelson to be two separate people.

Thomas Nelson, born in North Carolina but serving in South Carolina, applied in Pike County for a Revolutionary War pension/bounty land Jan. 8, 1845 at the age of 99. He died before the pension was approved; some of his

children carried on the fight for more than a decade.

He must have been a hardy fellow, to have traveled from Meansville to Zebulon to give the testimony at age 99. In Morris' sketch in the *History of Pike County*, on his 100th birthday, he reportedly split 100 fence rails.

His deposition outlines the last four of his five tours of duty with the Third South Carolina Regiment, a militia unit. The first, which he did not mention, began in 1776 under Capt. Thomas Parrott and has been documented elsewhere.

The deposition, which begins in the formal, third-person style used for court depositions in the 19th century and quickly segues into first-person narrative that hints at the writer's efforts to keep up with Nelson's flow of words, offers a personal take on American history.

He was drafted in Fairfield District, S.C., again serving under Capt. Parrott. He marched from Fairfield to Cougaree Fort, commanded by one Waxfield, a British officer leading "a parcel of Tories in the neighborhood of the fort," Nelson recalled.

"We joined General Sumpter, and on our approach the British and Tories surrendered," Nelson testified. "We took them prisoner and got possession of the fort."

From there, the unit marched to a ferry on the Congaree River, but did not stay there long.

"We were kept constantly on the march and scouting for Tories until our three month tour expired," he told Pike County Inferior Court.

Nelson was discharged while still in the Congaree River area and returned to Fairfield. He was drafted again in late 1782, this

time under Capt. John Pearson.

"We marched...to near Orangeburg jail and joined Gen. Sumpter," he recalled. "The jail in Orangeburg was...occupied by the Tories and British as a fort."

As the militia approached, the enemy evacuated, leaving a few to be taken prisoner. The jail fort became company headquarters for a time.

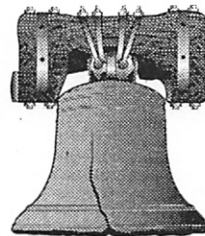
"We had an engagement about 10 miles below Orangeburg with the Tories under Cunningham," he said. "We were kept constantly scouting through the Orangeburg District in pursuit of Tories and sometimes, when too weak, in evading them."

Again, Nelson's tour of duty ended after three months and he returned home. He was drafted again in spring 1783 under Capt. William Hughes.

"From Fairfield District we marched to the fork of the Edista River, in South Carolina, where we were stationed and remained...and did very little active service. We kept a well-regulated station, which was thought to be an important point."

Again Nelson was discharged after three months. His fourth tour, in late 1783, also from Fairfield District, was under Capt. James Davis. The company marched to Manigault's Ferry on the Santee River, "where we were stationed until we heard that peace was made with England."

Nelson testified he had received \$60 a year for four years from South Carolina.



While he had no record of his advanced age, Nelson told clerk of inferior court Wiley A. Mangham that he was born on Nov. 25, 1746, "as I learned from my parents." He had lived in North Carolina as a child, "and the balance of my life in South Carolina until 1831, when I came to Pike County."

In addition to officers named in the course of his narrative, he added a Colonel Hopkins to the list of those under whom he served and knew personally. He then signed the document.

Hiram Brown and Thomas J. Allen then testified he was a

lican cause," and Mathews had fought with Nelson.

Three justices of inferior court, including James Eppinger, Hartford Green and Thomas Taylor, ruled Nelson should receive his pension on Feb. 12, 1845. The declaration was forwarded to the Department of War on March 25, 1845 by Allen W. Prior.

Prior was told May 19, 1945, that approval of the "alleged claim" was delayed due to lack of proof. If Nelson could not find a commander to vouch for him, cumulative proof or a certificate from the South Carolina comptroller general would do.

More than five years later, on Oct. 21, 1850, South Carolina replied that the required proof could not be found.

Nothing more was added until more than 10 years after Nelson's death. In February 1857, the South Carolina comptroller general's office verified Thomas Nelson was approved for a state pension in 1828; vouchers for his annual pay dated to 1833, followed by an application for withdrawal, apparently to allow Nelson to apply for the federal pension. His South Carolina claim was suspended in 1834.

State records show that on Feb. 6, 1846, a year after the federal government "delayed" his claim, Nelson was paid \$700 in back South Carolina pensions from March 1834 to March 1846.

On July 16, 1857 William D. Nelson and Nancy Nelson appointed attorney William B. Scott to pursue the pension claim.

They described him as, "Thomas Nelson, late a lieutenant and private in the Revolutionary War." William signed the document; Nancy placed her mark. A letter from William has faded to illegibility, save for his signature, while a third traces his attempts to find the South Carolina papers, found but misfiled before they could be sent to Washington.

In April 1859, Adam Simmerly of Griffin joined the pension collection effort. One letter noted Nelson never received his pension; the other asked for all information available from the pension office and noted his South Carolina pension ran through 1846.

"Is there is any arrearage, or is he entitled to bounty land pay? My wife Mary A. Nelson is his daughter," Simmerly wrote.

His efforts were followed up by a letter from J. Knox Walker of the South Carolina comptroller general's office noting the state had service records on Tho-

Letters

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country. The latest projection is that by 2025, 7,200 people per day, or 2.6 million annually, will ride the Macon train.

A Program Management appointed by Gov. Roy in 1999 estimates the anticipated cost of the Atlanta line at \$22.6 million, coming up 61% of the cost coming from the Macon line.

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for \$450; \$6 less than the actual cost to ride the train.

Despite its steep price tag the Heartland Flyer will take about 40 minutes longer than a similar line provided in the 1950s by the Santa Fe Railroad. The new rail line will cost taxpayers \$14 million over three years. The Macon line will cost taxpayers about \$27 million.

How do taxpayers keep getting saddled with boondoggles like these rail lines? Simple. State politicians want them because start-up funding is available from

declaration of independence half of Virginia. A study of why quickly proves the signer Century Nelson to be two rate people.

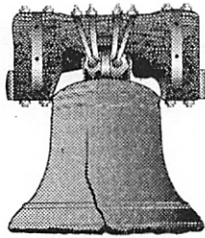
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Hiram Brown and Thomas J. Allen then testified he was a Revolutionary veteran and highly respected member of the Meansville community.

Also supplied was a Crawford County deposition from Phillip Mathews, dated Dec. 20, 1844. He testified Thomas Nelson of Pike County, originally of South Carolina, fought in Winn's Regiment "on the side of the Repub-

from March 1834 to March 1846.

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His efforts were followed up by a letter from J. Knox Walker of the South Carolina comptroller general's office noting the state had service records on Thomas Nelson. However, they are not part of the federal file.

Instead, there is reply from the U.S. pension office saying a (missing) letter from a Major Varnum, "throws no light on the claim of a pension set up by Thomas Nelson of Georgia in his lifetime," and repeats a request for his actual records.

Letters

from page 4

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Program Management appointed by Gov. Royes in 1999 estimates the operating cost of the Atlanta Macon line at \$22.6 million fares making up 61% of the and the rest coming from sources." The Macon line stined to become another ak, a government backed te company, that has cond \$20 billion in taxpayer dies, aka "other sources," its inception in 1970.

Typical of government backed systems is last year's an cement by Amtrak of a line een Oklahoma City and Fort h. A round-trip ticket is \$48 8 less than the actual \$456 to ride. You can rent a lime for a round-trip between homa City and Fort Worth

for \$450; \$6 less than the actual cost to ride the train.

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How do taxpayers keep getting saddled with boondoggles like these rail lines? Simple. State politicians want them because start-up funding is available from federal sources. Public officials, business people and chambers of commerce in towns served by the trains want them because their towns benefit from systems subsidized by federal and statewide taxes.

But the main reason is — it's your money they're spending.

Lloyd Gayton

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The grave of Revolutionary War soldier Thomas Nelson Jr., known after his death as "Century" Nelson because he lived to be 100 in April the Lamar-LaFayette Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, based in Barnesville placed a memorial wreath on the grave

Nothing more was added to the file until the 1920s, when a flurry of requests from descendants seeking to join the Daughters of the American Revolution was received.