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REPORT TO: File

SUBJECT: Watts: Initial Survey of Published Resources for Eighteenth-Century Bertie, Hertford

and Martin Counties, North Carolina

BACKGROUND: One John Watts served as a private in Capt. Walton's Company, 10th Regiment, of

North Carolina's Continental Line, from roughly 1 June 1782 to 1 January 1783. That service has long been attributed to a Rev. John Watts (also misindentified as John A. Watts) who lived in 1790 in Fairfield District, South Carolina; migrated from there to Washington County, GA (later Montgomery, Tattnall, and Telfair), and then died about 1820–23 in Covington County, MS. Under these details, John of SC, GA, and MS has been accepted by Daughters of the American Revolution as Ancestor no. 122826.

Those who claim this service state that Pvt. John Watts served from Anson County, North Carolina. However,

- John Watts of SC, GA, and MS cannot be placed in Anson County.
- None of his known neighbors and associates can be placed in Anson during the Revolution, from which a migration pattern might be established.

GOAL:

This brief survey of published resources on Bertie and Hertford Counties is designed to

- give an overview of the Watts families who resided in that part of North Carolina prior to and during the Revolution; and
- compare that information against the known data for the John Watts who served in Walton's Company and claimed payments for his military service between 1783 and 1792.

SEE ALSO:

- E. S. Mills, Watts: Initial Survey of Published South Carolina Resources for Old Craven County, Camden District, and the Counties Cut from Them," research report, 17 October 2014.
- E. S. Mills, "Watts: Legal Records of Fairfield and Kershaw Counties, South Carolina (Previously Camden District and Craven County), Pre-1830," research report, 27 October 2014.
- E. S. Mills, "Captain John Watts of Camden District, SC: Was He John Watts of Fairfield's Wateree Creek or John Watts of Kershaw's Lynches Creek?", report to file, 2 November 2014.
- E. S. Mills, "Watts: Initial Survey of Published Resources for Colonial and Revolutionary Bedford County (formerly Lunenburg and Brunswick), Virginia," report to file, 5 January 2015
- E. S. Mills, "Watts: Initial Survey of Published Resources for Colonial and Revolutionary Anson County, NC, and Its Parent and Daughter Counties: Lincoln, Mecklenburg, and Montgomery," report to file, 15 January 2015.

Summary of Findings

1.

The John Watts who served as a Revolutionary soldier in Walton's Company, 1781–82, cannot be connected to Anson County. His officer, Capt. William Walton, was from Bertie and Hertford County in extreme northeastern North Carolina—not Anson on the extreme-southern border of what was then Western North Carolina. Walton's promotion to captain occurred on 1 August 1781, in the wake of his April 1781 release from a Tory prison at Charleston and his return to his North Carolina home.

In the meanwhile, the North Carolina Assembly had just imposed upon the state's local militias a 1-year draft, as "punishment" for their poor performance in the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. Experienced officers of the line were appointed to head the new militia units.² The enlistment of John Watts coincides with this 1-year draft.

2.

The John Watts who served as a Revolutionary soldier in Walton's Company, 1781–82, and created paperwork through 1792, can be placed in upper North Carolina at times when Rev. John Watts was an established resident of (a) Camden District & Fairfield County, South Carolina and (b) Washington County, Georgia.

3.

The John Watts who performed this service was almost certainly a man from the Bertie-Hertford area (extreme Northeast North Carolina), not from Anson, which lies some 250 miles to the Southwest.

Research Notes

9 MAY 1732 BERTIE COUNTY, NC

Probate.

"Upon Petn. Of **Elizh. Watts**, relict of **Joseph Watts**, praying Admicon of <u>o</u>n [sic] the Estate of Joseph Watts deced the same is granted. Fees pd."³

1781–JUNE 1782 COUNTY UNKNOWN, NC

Military service.

"Roster of the Continental Line from North Carolina. 1783. Copy of a Register showing the names

¹ For Walton's identity and service, see Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army during the War of the Revolution; April, 1775, to December, 1783* (Washington, D.C.: Rare Book Shop Publishing Co., 1924), 417; and Sarah Walton pension application (Capt. William Walton, NC), application W1518, BLW 2445); accessed via *Fold3* (www.fold3.com: 2 June 2014). Also see Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Watts: Initial Survey of Published Resources for Colonial and RW Anson County, NC, and Its Parent and Daughter Counties: Lincoln, Mecklenburg, and Montgomery," report to file, 15 January 2015.

² Hugh F. Rankin, *The North Carolina Continental Line in the American Revolution* (Raleigh: N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1977), 65.

³ Wynette Parks Haun, *Bertie County, North Carolina, County Court Minutes, 1724 thru 1739, Book I* (Durham, N.C.: P.P., 1982), 27; citing County Court Minutes, 1724–1772 [Book 1], p. 51.

alphabetically, rank, dates of Commissions and enlistments, periods of service and occurrences, taken from the original muster and pay rolls of the North Carolina Line of the late Army of the United States. ...

10th Regiment: Watts, Jno., pt. Walton's Company. Enlistment 1781, "Time out 14 June '82."⁴

COMMENT:

Several DAR applications for the John Watts accepted as Ancestor 122826—all of which allege him to be the above man—identify Walton as "Capt. Ewman Walton."⁵

No such officer of the Continental Line has been found on record. The only Capt. Walton who has been identified for North Carolina is one William Walton who Heitman summarizes as follows:

"Walton, William (N.C.). 2d Lieutenant 7th North Carolina, 20th April 1777; transferred to 1st North Carolina, 1st June, 1778; 1st Lieutenant, 15th August, 1778; taken prisoner at Charleston, 12th May, 1780; exchanged, April 1781; Captain, 1st August, 1781; retired 1st January 1783."

Walton's widow Sarah and his brother Isaac, in the widow's pension application, tell us the following about Capt. William Walton:

- he entered at the commencement of the war, but place is not stated and no battles are named.
- he was discharged at Winton, Hertford Co., N.C.
- he married Sarah Jones at Winton, Hertford Co., in December 1783.

There is no affidavit by Walton himself, who died in 1816.⁷ An early history of Sumner County, Tennessee, where he settled (and where his brother Isaac was the first coroner), reports that he was **born in Bertie Co., adjacent to Hertford** where he married Sarah Jones.⁸

No records are known to identify the battles in which he served. However,

- His promotion to captain occurred on 1 August 1781, in the wake of his April 1781 release from a Tory prison at Charleston, after which he returned home.
- At the time of his promotion, the North Carolina Assembly had just imposed upon the state's local militias a 1-year draft, in the wake of the disastrous battle of Guilford

⁴ Walter Clark, State Records of North Carolina; Published under the Supervision of the Trustees of the Public Libraries, by Order of the General Assembly, vol. 16, 1782–'83 (Goldsboro, N.C.: Nash Brothers, 1899), 1002 (start of list), 1190 (for John Watts).

⁵ For example, see Application of Neva F. Thompson, National No. 429125, applied 7 May 1987, service on "John A. Watts," Ancestor 122826; accessible via "Ancestor Search," DAR: *Daughters of the American Revolution* (http://services.dar.org/public/dar_research/search/?Tab_ID=1: downloaded 1 December 2014). The database is free; a download fee applies for the actual application. (I have downloaded all 30 applications for this John Watts as of 1 January 2015.)

⁶ Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army during the War of the Revolution; April, 1775, to December, 1783* (Washington, D.C.: Rare Book Shop Publishing Co., 1924), 417.

⁷ Sarah Walton pension application (Capt. William Walton, NC), application W1518, BLW 2445); accessed via *Fold 3* (www.fold3.com: 2 June 2014).

⁸ For example, see Jay Guy Cisco, *Historic Sumner County, Tennessee: Genealogies of the Bledsoe, Cage and Douglass Families and Genealogical Notes of Other Sumner County Families* (Nashville: Folk-Keelin Printing Co., 1909), 303–4; also p. 100 for Isaac.

Courthouse. Experienced officers of the line were appointed to head the new militia units.⁹

- The enlistment of John Watts coincides with this 1-year draft.
- Together, these factors suggest that the John Watts who performed this service was a
 man from the Bertie-Hertford area (extreme NE North Carolina), not from Anson, which
 lies on middle North Carolina's extreme-southern border, near the middle of that long
 divide betwen the two Carolinas.

With regard to the alleged Tenth Regiment service: the Tenth existed only in 1777 and 1778—not in 1781, when John Watts was drafted. Government clerks in 1791, charged with compiling a roster of the N.C. line, *erroneously assigned to the tenth all soldiers for whom they could not identify a regiment.*¹⁰

25 JULY 1783 COUNTY UNKNOWN, NC

Military pay.

"Halifax, July 25, 1783. Journal of the proceedings of the Commissioners appointed by Act of Assembly passed in May, 1783, to liquidate and finally settle the accounts of the officers & soldiers of the Continental Line, of the State of North Carolina. ...

Compiler's comment: "NOTE ... No remarks to tell the status or service of the persons whose names are within the book. ... Vol. II. Book A.A.—Pages 1–44 Inclusive ... Page 25, ... {Folio Page 1} Moses Deen, Soldier; Thomas Smith, Soldier; Capt. Anthony Sharp; Lt. Jesse Steed; Mingo Stringer, Soldier; Ursell Goodson, Soldier; Jno. Messer, Soldier {Folio Page 2} Upshaw Roberson; Francis Williams, Soldier; Finehas Latham, Sergt.; Lt. Philip Jones; Warren Brown, Soldier; David Vance, Soldier; {Folio page 3} James Ives, Soldier; William Boon, Soldier; John Morgan, Soldier; William Powers, Soldier; John Watts, Soldier; Philip Jones, Soldier; Lt. John Carstaphen (resigned) {Folio page 4} David Love, Surgeon (resigned); William Fomes, Soldier; Mathew Creekman, Soldier; Richard Weaver, Soldier; William Drew, Soldier; James Amos, Soldier; Joel Davis, Soldier. ..."

COMMENT:

Note that no identification whatsoever is given for this John Watts. The entries appear to have been made in the register in the order in which claims were submitted; they are not grouped by military companies. I am showing the surrounding names in the event that someone develops methodology for identifying soldiers from their cluster.

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1783

NC

Military service.

"An Explanation of the Revolutionary Army Accounts in the N.C.S. Archives. S.115.38N Treasurer's and

⁹ Hugh F. Rankin, *The North Carolina Continental Line in the American Revolution* (Raleigh: N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, Division of Archives and History, 1977), 65.

¹⁰ Stephen A. Rails, "A Case Study of the Tenth Regiment, NC Continental Line," *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal* 18 (May 1991): 66–72.

¹¹ Roster of Soldiers from North Carolina in the American Revolution (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1977), 179 (for start of list), 186–87 (for the names extracted above).

Comptroller's Papers, RAA Volume II, Book I Heading: 'Journal of the precedings [sic] of the Commissioners appointed by Act of Assembly passed in May 1783 to Liquidate and finally Settle the accounts of the Officers and Soldiers of the Continental Line of the State of No. Carolina.'

"Officers and soldiers were to present their claims to the board, and for those claims approved by the board they were to receive one-fourth part in currency and the balance in specie certificates bearing six percent interest. No rules of evidence were laid down for determining what claims were to be allowed.

"... The board met at Halifax [in extreme northeastern North Carolina] on July 25, 1783, and elected John Craven as clerk. He then began the journal or proceedings. An entry was made in the journal as each claim was presented. ... The board reviewed claims from July 26, 1783 to April 29th. 1784. The journal ends on that date. ...

"Sept. 23rd. ... Allowed **John Watts** Soldier 6 Mo. pay to the 1 Jany. 1782 with Interest to August 1, 1783.... 17.11.9." ¹²

COMMENT:

- This John Watts was apparently still in N.C. in August—September 1783.
- He was apparently still in N.C. in May 1792, when he filed a subsequent claim for "Sundries and Cash." (See that date, below.)

1783 & LATER

NC

Military bounty land.

"List of Warrants for Lands Granted the Officers and Soldiers in the Continental Line out of the Secretary's Office [showing]

- To whom granted and rank
- No. acres
- Service in months
- Location and to whom deeded and date of warrant. Within the limits of the lands allotted the
 officers and soldiers of the Continental Line, by Law, 1783, Oct. 14."¹³

COMMENT:

No John Watts appears on this list.

1784-1786

NC

Military pay.

"Vol. XVII—1781-1785, Pages 189-263, inclusive. Abstract of the Army Account, of the N.C. Line. Settled by the Commissioners at Halifax, from 1st Sept,. 1784 to the 1st Feb. 1785, and at Warrenton in the year 1786, designating by whom the claims were receipted for respectively."

COMMENT:

No John Watts appears on this list.

¹² Weynette Parks Haun, *North Carolina Revolutionary Army Accounts, Secretary of State, Treasurer's & Comptroller's Papers, Vol. 1, Vol. II, Part II (Durham, N.C., P.p., n.d.), introduction and 267.*

¹³ Roster of Soldiers from North Carolina in the American Revolution (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1977), 233 (for start of list), 297, 303.

OCTOBER 1785 BERTIE COUNTY, NC

Associates.

Will of Jesse Jernigan, very sick and weak in body. Wife Jerusha Jernigan, sons James, Jesse Jernigan. Apparent daughters: Farribee Jernigan, Sarah Jernigan, Alce Jernigan, Elizebeth Carter. Executors: Thomas Bond, Benjamin Jernigan, Nathaniel Vezey. Witnesses: Jacob Jernigan, Lewis Jernigan, Rachel Watts (x her mark).¹⁴

JUNE 1787 MARTIN COUNTY, NC

Tax roll.

"To June Ct. 1787. ... District 3 ...

John Watts 1 white male 21–60 3 white females of all ages

2 white males under 21 and above 60 2 blacks 12–50¹⁵

3 JUNE 1790 BERTIE COUNTY, NC

Civic role.

Will of William Jones. Sons James, William. Daughters Mary, Sarah, Roda. No executor named. Witnesses: John Watts, Samuel Igin{?} (his mark). Proved August 1790 by John Watts. 16

MAY 1792

NC

RW claim.

"Book 2 Heading ... 'An Account of allowances made Officers and Soldiers of the late Continental line of this State for pay &c. by the Commissioners of Army Accounts at Hillsborough May 1792.' The legislature of 1785 apointed ... a board of commissioners to meet at Warrenton in 1786 and settle the claims of the officers and soldiers of the North Carolina Line. Some of these claims had been settled at Halifax [in 1783] but there remained many soldiers who had back service pay due them or who had claims for subsistance rations and clothing due them which they had never received in service. These were the claims settled at Warrenton. The settlement was no sooner closed than evidence of fraud began to appear. The General Assembly was forced to declare the Warrenton settlement void and all certificates issued by the board invalid. It was 1792 before the State was able to re-settle these claims ..."

1787

"The United States of America to the State of North Carolina DR: For Sundries furnished and Cash paid the Militia of North and South Carolina and Virginia as allowed by the Auditors of Hillsborough District as p:Report 84. ...

Entry 3436. To John Walls [Watts] No. 3636 6: 4: -"18

¹⁴ Sandra Lee Almasy, *Bertie County, North Carolina, Wills, 1781-1797* (Joliet, IL: Kensington Glen Publishing, 1991), 55; citing Will Book D: 37–39.

¹⁵ Register, Alvaretta Kenan, *State Census of North Carolina, 1784–1787,* 2d ed., rev.(Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1983), 91.

¹⁶ Sandra Lee Almasy, *Bertie County, North Carolina, Wills, 1781–1797* (Joliet, IL: Kensington Glen Publishing, 1991), 95–96; citing Will Book D: 133, 134.

¹⁷ Weynette Parks Haun, *North Carolina Revolutionary Army Accounts, Secretary of State, Treasurer's & Comptroller's Papers, Vol. 1, Vol. II, Part II (Durham, N.C., P.p., n.d.), introduction.*

¹⁸ Weynette Parks Haun, North Carolina Revolutionary Army Accounts; Accounts of the United States with North Carolina {Treasurer, State}, Book C, Part XIV (Durham, N.C., P.p., n.d.), 1935.

COMMENT:

This derivative source types the name as John "Walls" on p. 1935, as copied above; but indexes it as John "Watts." If this is the same John Watts who applied earlier, received part pay and vouchers for the rest, then it would appear that he was still in N.C. as late as 1792. By this time, John Watts of Fairfield was living in Washington County, Georgia.

14 AUGUST 1794

MARTIN COUNTY, NC

Associates.

Lewis Watts witnesses will of Elizabeth Williams, mother of Samuel, William, Winifred Hill; grandmother of Alex Lay Johnston, Samuel Williams Johnston. 19

22 MARCH 1795 **MARTIN COUNTY, NC**

Associates.

"Samuel Vigin [sic]. Wife: Mary Virgin; sons: James Virgin, Samuel Virgin; John Viergin; daugh: Sarah Virgin; exec. John Watts; wits: Thomas Brown. June 1795."20

MAY 1795

BERTIE COUNTY, NC

Associates

Will of Jacob Jarnagan. Sons Benjamin, Arthur. Daughter Rachel Watts. Grandson Josiah, son of Joseph. Witnesses: Noah Thompson, Jesse Averit, Thomas Pearce. Proved by Noah Thompson May 1795.²¹

12 MAY 1801

MARTIN COUNTY, NC

Associates.

"Mary Virgin [will]; 12 May 1801. Daugh: (?) Sally Virgin; (and her unnamed child); men. John Watts; exec: William McKenzie; wit: Richard Williams.²²

28 MARCH 1805

MARTIN COUNTY, NC

Associates.

Rachel Watts witnessed the will of Samuel Williams.²³

COMMENT:

By association, Rachel is now connected to Lewis Watts, above under date of 14 August 1794.

¹⁹ Library Committee, Martin County, North Carolina, Abstracts of Will Books 1 and 2, 1774-1868 (Williamston, N.C.: Martin Co. Hist. Soc., 1990), 46; citing 1: 206.

²⁰ Library Committee, Martin County, North Carolina, Abstracts of Will Books 1 and 2, 1774–1868 (Williamston, N.C.: Martin Co. Hist. Soc., 1990), 48; citing 1: 218.

²¹ Sandra Lee Almasy, Bertie County, North Carolina, Wills, 1781–1797 (Joliet, IL: Kensington Glen Publishing, 1991), 167; citing Will Book D:290, 291, 292.

²² Library Committee, Martin County, North Carolina, Abstracts of Will Books 1 and 2, 1774–1868 (Williamston, N.C.: Martin Co. Hist. Soc., 1990), 57; citing 1: 385.

²³ Library Committee, Martin County, North Carolina, Abstracts of Will Books 1 and 2, 1774–1868 (Williamston, N.C.: Martin Co. Hist. Soc., 1990), 62; citing 1: 426.

JUNE 1811

MARTIN COUNTY, NC

Associates.

Rachel Watts witnessed the will of Charity Alston Hall, formerly Williams.²⁴

20 DECEMBER 1811 MARTIN COUNTY, NC

Kinship.

Ann Watts is named as daughter in will of Watkins William Wynns (wife Ann; sons Daniel, John, Thomas, William Ward, Samuel, Henry; daughters Winifred Taylor, Mary Everitt, Sarah Bennett, Ann Watts, Peggy Bennett, Elizabeth Wynns.²⁵

4 OCTOBER 1818 MARTIN COUNTY, NC

Will

John Watts: mother unnamed; bros; unnamed; men[tioned] John D. Williams; "Negro: Watts: Robbin;" exec: Lewis A. Williams; wits: **William Watts;** Thomas Harrell; December 1818.²⁶

COMMENT:

This John appears to be too young to be the RW soldier who served under William Walton. If I pursue this set of Wattses, I should investigate the possibility that Lewis (on whom I've seen a fair amount that I've not copied) was the family head of this group and that he married Rachel Williams.

Other indexes show a Sarah there in the 1770s, but I have no time left before my flight out of Salt Lake City to take further notes.

SOURCE LIST

- Almasy, Sandra Lee. *Bertie County, North Carolina, Wills, 1761–1780.* Joliet, IL: Kensington Glen Publishing, 1990. No Watts.
- Almasy, Sandra Lee. *Bertie County, North Carolina, Wills, 1781–1797.* Joliet, IL: Kensington Glen Publishing, 1991.
- Almasy, Sandra Lee. *Bertie County, North Carolina Wills, 1797–1805.* Joliet, IL: Kensington Glen Publishing, 1993. **No Watts.**
- Almasy, Sandra Lee. *Bertie County, North Carolina, Wills, 1805–1816.* Middleton, Wisc.: Kensington Glen Publishing, 1996. **No Watts.**
- Bradley, Stephen E., *The Deeds of Bertie County, North Carolina, 1757–1772.* Keysville, Va.: P.p., 1992. **No Watts.**

²⁴ Library Committee, *Martin County, North Carolina, Abstracts of Will Books 1 and 2, 1774–1868* (Williamston, N.C.: Martin Co. Hist. Soc., 1990), 68; citing 2: 3.

²⁵ Library Committee, *Martin County, North Carolina, Abstracts of Will Books 1 and 2, 1774–1868* (Williamston, N.C.: Martin Co. Hist. Soc., 1990), 69; citing 2: 8.

²⁶ Library Committee, *Martin County, North Carolina, Abstracts of Will Books 1 and 2, 1774–1868* (Williamston, N.C.: Martin Co. Hist. Soc., 1990), 79; citing 2:59.

- Bradley, Stephen E., *The Deeds of Bertie County, North Carolina, 1772–1785*. Keysville, Va.: P.p., 1993. **No Watts.**
- Bradley, Stephen E., *The Deeds of Bertie County, North Carolina, 1785–1794* Keysville, Va.: P.p., 1994. **Index has 1 reference to Lewis Watts, but I don't find him on the cited page 72.**
- Bradley, Stephen E. Jr., *Edenton District, North Carolina, Loose Estates Papers, 1756–1806.* Vol. 1. Virginia Beach, Va.: P.p., 1995. **No Watts.**
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- Haun, Wynette Parks. Bertie County, North Carolina, County Court Minutes, 1724 thru 1739, Book I Durham, N.C.: P.P., 1976. **No Watts.**
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- Haun, Wynette Parks. *Bertie County, North Carolina, County Court Minutes, 1788 thru 1792, Book VI.* Durham, N.C.: P.P., 1984. **Only 1 reference to Watts: John's 1790 proof of William Jones's will.**
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