

THOMAS FERREL, ARTIFICER

SOUTH CAROLINA MILITIA, 1781-1782

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It began in November, 1982, in response to persistent rumors that a Revolutionary War Soldier was buried at Macedonia Cemetery, Newton County, Missouri. We did not know the name of the soldier nor the location of his grave within the cemetery. We decided that we would investigate and see if we could identify the soldier, locate the exact spot of his grave, prove his military service in the American Revolution, and mark his grave suitably in accord with the goals of the Sons of the American Revolution.

It was obvious that we would be searching for an elderly man, for Newton County was not formed until 1839; by that date any veteran of the Revolutionary War would be in his seventies or eighties. Possibly he would be a pensioner, so we began our search by looking for pensioners of the Revolutionary War living in Southwest Missouri in the 1830's. Two are listed in the 1840 census for Barry County from which Newton County was formed in 1839, Augustin Sims (S32520) and Thomas Walker (S6339). Since Macedonia Cemetery is only a few miles from Barry County, we thought that one of these might be the veteran we sought. To check out these possibilities we engaged the services of a professional genealogist Mrs. Marie Varrelman Melchiori, C. G. R. S., of Vienna, Virginia, a dedicated member of the DAR who frequently works on problems such as the one we faced. We wrote to her on the 21st of November and asked her to see what she could find re Augustin Sims and Thomas Walker. She responded in

early December that Augustin Sims removed to Illinois in 1848 which eliminated him from consideration. She found several Thomas Walkers with Revolutionary War service, but none seemed to be buried in Newton County, Missouri, so this possibility looked bleak.

During November we contacted Mr. John Vanslyke of Stella, Missouri, a long term resident of the area who told us that he could identify the position of the grave in Macedonia Cemetery. How did he know? When he was a boy, his father had taken him to the spot and said, "This is where the old soldier is buried". At that time, about 1930, the grave was marked and protected by an iron fence. By 1983 the fence was gone and all other identifying markers.

In December we picked up an important clue from Mr. Larry James of Neosho, Missouri, historian. He told us that the DAR had published something about the soldier buried at Macedonia Cemetery. After some searching we located the publication in the Public Library, Pineville, Missouri. It was difficult to locate because of a misprint. The reference is:

Houts, Mrs. Hale, Revolutionary War Soldiers Buried in Missouri, DAR (1966), p. 72.

This book is an alphabetic listing of Revolutionary War Soldiers known to be buried in Missouri. On page 72 there is a short biography of William Dilday of Lawrence County. But right in the middle of his biography appears "Ferrell or Ferrill who is buried in the Macedonia Cemetery north of Stella, in Newton County. Came with his family from Indiana about 1836, and first located on Shoal Creek and later moved to a place about a mile north of Stella where he died in 1841." Macedonia Cemetery is one mile north of Stella in Newton County, Missouri. We seemed to be making some progress; we had a surname, and we knew the spot in the cemetery

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where the grave was located. The next clue came from the 1840 census of Newton County, Missouri, where we found a ThomassFerril listed as a head of family. The numerical description of the family is:

Males: 0-2-0-0-0-1-0-0-0-0-1
 Females: 2-0-0-0-1

This family, then, included two adult men, one aged 30-40, the other aged 80-90. The latter would be the right age for military service during the Revolution, but which one was Thomas, and what was the name of the other?

The answer to this question came March 1, 1983, with the discovery of a deed in Newton County Court House (B:380-1). On February 26, 1850, William Ferrel and his wife Marget Ferrel, residents of Washington County, Arkansas, sold 4 acres of land in Newton County lying in Section 29, Twp. 26, Range 29. This indicated the probability that Thomas was the "Old Soldier" and William was his son

who cared for him during his last illness and buried him at Macedonia Cemetery.

We immediately initiated a search with Mrs. Melchiori for a Revolutionary War Soldier named Thomas Ferrel who served in any state and who died in Missouri. She replied on March 10th with negative results; she found no Thomas Ferrel who died in Missouri in either the National Archives nor the DAR records. A letter to NSSAR in Louisville likewise drew a negative response. Mrs. Melchiori did find William Ferrel in the 1850 census in Washington County, Arkansas, and this turned out to be a helpful clue:

					Approximate birth yr.
William Ferrill	54	M	Fmr	OH	(1796)
Marget Ferrill	46	F		OH	(1804)
John Ferrill	19	M	Fmr	IN	(1831)
William Ferrill	15	M	Fmr	IN	(1835)
Mary Ferrill	14	F		MO	(1836)
Marget Ferrill	11	F		MO	(1839)
Morgan Ferrill	6	M		MO	(1844)
Elizabeth Ferrill	4	F		MO	(1846)

Comparison with the 1840 census record and the information given by Mrs. Houts in her book make a perfect fit. It seemed fairly definite that we were on the right track, that we were pursuing a veteran who had never been claimed by anyone in either the SAR or the DAR, and that proof of military service would have to be found in a state source.

The next step was a systematic search of the 1790 census, all states, for a Thomas Ferrel, all spellings. Only one was found, Thomas Farrel of Chester County, South Carolina, head of a family consisting of man and wife, five sons and a daughter. Was this our hero? On April 5th a letter of inquiry was dispatched to the SC Dept. of Archives & History, Columbia, South Carolina.

Before a reply was received, we met with Mr. John Vanslyke and with Mr. James Miles, Caretaker of the beautifully maintained Macedonia Cemetery, on April 15th and staked the grave of Thomas Ferrel. This was done with reference to the plot map of the cemetery and the tombstones of the Vanslyke Family. After this had been done with great care, Compatriot Tucker got down on his hands and knees and felt the ground of the staked grave and the immediate surroundings. Something was found next to the staked grave; when dug up, it revealed a stone carrying the initials "M. A. F." Since F is somewhat unusual as the first letter of a surname, we accepted this as evidence that we were in the right place. M. A. F. is probably one of the grandchildren of Thomas, possibly either Mary, Marget, or Morgan as listed in the 1850 census or a sibling who died young. The SC Dept. of Archives & History responded April 29th with proof of Revolutionary Service for Thomas Ferrel (Comp. Gen. Accts. Audited for Revolutionary War Service, AA2366, Roll 44). The record shows that Thomas Ferrel, Artificer, served 105 days in the SC

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Militia in 1781 and 1782 for which he was paid £68 11sh 5p. However, he did not collect all of his pay until Sept. 13, 1785, and he was forced to use one John Fleming as agent to make the collection.

There remained to define the route of Thomas Ferrel from his native South Carolina to his final destination in Missouri. Mrs. Melchiori was able to do this in a short period of time. The 1850 census shows that William Ferrel was born in Ohio about 1796. But Ohio did not become a state until 1803; indeed the Ohio Territory was not organized until 1799. It would appear that Thomas left South Carolina around 1795 for whatever reason and settled in the Northwest Territory in the part which later became Youngstown, Ohio.

He appears in a number of official records:

- 1801 - Resident tax-payer in Trumbull Co., Ohio Territory
- 1806 - Resident tax-payer in 6th District, Trumbull Co., Ohio
- 1820 Census - Head of Family, age over 45, Youngstown, Trumbull Co., Ohio
- 1830 Census - Living alone, age 60-70, Youngstown, Trumbull Co., Ohio

Now we could write his biography. Born about 1760. Served in the SC Militia for 105 days in 1781-2. Head of family residing in Chester County, South Carolina, in 1790. Removed to Northwest Territory about 1795. Resident of the Youngstown, Ohio, area until after 1830. His unidentified wife must have died in Trumbull County shortly before the 1830 census was taken. About 1831 removed to someplace in Indiana to be with his son William. Thomas and William removed to Barry County, Missouri, about 1836 and were original residents of Newton County when it was formed in 1839. Thomas died in 1841, aged about 81, and was buried in Macedonia Cemetery.

A sufficient number of facts were now assembled. On June 13th

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an application was filed for an official government military stone for the grave of Thomas Ferrel. The stone was delivered on August 8th and emplaced at the grave by Compatriots Paul T. Butler, Joseph W. Jackson, James W. Lee, Sr., and the authors on Sept. 26th. Additionally, the grave was marked by the SAR bronze insignia on Georgia marble with dedication by the Sgt. Ariel Nims Chapter. Meanwhile, preparations were made for a Memorial Service at the cemetery for Veterans' Day, 1983. Invitations were mailed in the period Sept. 29 to Oct. 8. Grave registration was filed with both the SAR and the DAR. Unsuccessful attempts were made to locate descendants of Thomas Ferrel.

Veterans' Day dawned cold but dry. About 300 dedicated patriots assembled at Macedonia Cemetery to honor "the Old Soldier". The program began with a stirring concert of John Philip Sousa marches played by the East Newton High School Band under the direction of Mr. Rob Goade. Compatriot Charles W. Calef, President, MOSAR, bid all welcome. Colors were presented by SS Jack E. Hoover and men from the 203rd Engineering Battalion, Missouri National Guard.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was given followed by the SAR Pledge. The invocation was given by Chaplain Paul T. Butler. Compatriot Rudy presented a biographical sketch of Thomas Ferrel, Revolutionary Militiaman from South Carolina. Compatriot Augustus di Zerega, V, Genealogist General, extended greetings from the National Society, SAR. Other national officers present were Registrar General G. Arthur Luther and Past President General M. Graham Clark, Jr. State Representative Nolan G. McNeill addressed the assembly on the true meaning of Veterans' Day. Congressman Gene Taylor was scheduled to speak but was unable to at-

tend due to the failure of Congress to adjourn for Veterans' Day. Mr. Gary Nodler, Assistant to Congressman Taylor, gave a brief explanation.

The grave of Thomas Ferrel was decorated by Mrs. Raymond Guppy, Regent, Neosho Chapter, MODAR, and Mrs. Fredas L. Cook, Organizing Regent, Lake O' The Cherokee Chapter, Miami, OKDAR. At approximately 11:00 A.M. volleys were fired over the grave by National Guardsmen, and Taps was sounded by Miss Lisa Frazier. The Song of Fraise Chorus from the Ozark Bible College, Joplin, sang "America the Beautiful" and "Faith of Our Fathers", following which the Band played our National Anthem. Chaplain Butler pronounced the benediction, the National Guardsmen retired the Colors, and the Band played a recessional.

One-hundred and forty-two years after his death, Thomas Ferrel, artificer and militiaman of the American Revolution, had been memorialized appropriately.

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