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BAILEY ANDERSON: REVOLUTIONARY WAR VETERAN

by Max S. Lale

The Island of Skye, largest in the Inner Hebrides chain, lies off the northwest coast of Scotland, sheltered from Atlantic gales only by the smaller islands of the Outer Hebrides across The Sea of the Hebrides and the larger Isle of Lewis across The Little Munch. Scourged by wind and ice in the winter months, riven by lochs on its western coast, it is a stern and demanding land, from which its MacLeods and collateral kinsmen have migrated in troubled times to the ends of the earth. Its people reflect their native heath in the independence, ruggedness and self-reliance of their uncompromising character.

Such a man was John Anderson, a native of Skye and an immigrant to the American colonies who gave his life to the cause of American independence. Such, too, were his children. Three of his sons also shouldered arms against the British, and two of the three died, as their father had, before the Revolutionary War ended.

Bailey Anderson (1774-1840), the oldest of 12 children born to John and Sarah Carney Anderson, was more fortunate than his father and two brothers. He survived the conflict, though he participated in several of the more important campaigns and engagements in the southern theater of operations. Living on for more than half a century, he spent the last years of his life in East Texas and is one of two Revolutionary War veterans known to be buried in Harrison County.¹

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A native of Virginia, Bailey Anderson was born November 13, 1754, in Overwharton Parish, Stafford County, where two other children also were born: Scarlett, on June 10, 1756, and Sela, on March 1, 1758. Although the record is not clear, it appears that a fourth child, Joshua, also may have been born to the emigrant Scot and his wife during the period of their residence in Virginia. His name is listed in family records, without a birth date, between Scarlett and Sela.

The family moved some time between 1758 and the Revolutionary War to a home on the Pacelot River, in the Ninety Six district, near Spartanburg, South Carolina.² Here were born eight other children: William, John, Jr., "a daughter," Charles, Dorcas, Jane, Vincent and Delliah. Only for Dorcas is there any indication in family records of a birth date. It seems a reasonable assumption that one or more of these children may have died at birth or as infants, for census records reveal that Sarah Anderson, a widow, was living in Greenville, South Carolina, in 1790 with "one male sixteen or over, three under sixteen, and one other female."³

Scarlet Anderson and Joshua Anderson died in the service of their country in 1783, as the Revolutionary War was ended. In what year the father perished, and under what circumstances, is unknown, but his widow left no doubt that he was indeed a sacrifice to American independence. On November 26, 1807, Sarah Anderson petitioned the state of South Carolina for reinstatement of the pension to which she had been entitled as the widow of a Revolutionary War veteran and for a balance unpaid after "necessity compell'd me to follow my children from the state as nearly all of them was about to leave it." In her petition she declared that "she lost in the last (sic) Revolutionary War her husband, John Anderson,

and two Sons who were true friends to their country, and that immediately after the war the said Sarah was put on the pension list in this state . . .⁴

Detailing his own military service in a pension application in 1833, at Natchitoches, Louisiana, Bailey Anderson recalled a number of tours of duty totaling more than two years and spanning at least five years of the American Revolution. The first, in 1775 or 1776, occurred while he was living in the Ninety Six district. He volunteered and served six weeks in a militia company commanded by Capt. Thomas Gordon in a campaign against the Indians on Reedy (or Ready) River. The uncertainty about the exact year is now impossible to resolve. The fading memory of an old man could be no more precise after 58 years.⁵

The next period of service, which Anderson remembered "was the next year after the service above mentioned," lasted "about six months." He volunteered while living on what was called the "Long Island" of Holston River, an area claimed by Virginia but subsequently ceded to Tennessee. In a "company of spies" commanded by Capt. Thomas Price, he served under a Colonel Christian of Virginia. In his application for a pension, Anderson deposed that he "marched through the country against what was then called the Overhill Cherokees."

Back in the Ninety Six district of South Carolina, he rejoined his old company of volunteers under Captain Gordon and "went to Savannah River opposite Augusta in Georgia to what was called 'Black Swamp'." as a member of General Lincoln's forces. This service would appear to have been during the latter's operations against Augusta in January and February 1779, in which Lincoln sent part of his troops to the east bank of the Savannah opposite the city, another part to Black Swamp, and a third to Briar Creek south of Augusta. The campaign ended disastrously when, in a shattering British attack, the patriots suffered 400 casualties against 16 for the British, and 600 others "ran home."⁶

Later in his deposition, however, Anderson described another tour of service in a Captain Bridges' company in which his unit "went down and attacked the British at Augusta, which was called the first siege of Augusta." Remembering the year incorrectly as "the same year (1780) as King's Mountain," he recalled this period of service as lasting about two months, during which he "marched through the Cherokee wilderness to the frontier of Georgia" for the attack on Augusta. His deposition recounts that the campaign failed when the British received reinforcements, "which occasioned the Americans to raise the siege and fly to the wilderness."

From the evidence in his pension application, Anderson seemed to be describing the Augusta operation in two different campaigns. However, the question of two different company commanders, whom Anderson remembered by name, is unanswered by an assumption of confused memory on his part.

The old soldier was drafted for another tour of service, once again under Captain Gordon. He recalled that the company "went . . . to the frontier of Georgia, under General Williamson of said District of Ninety Six." Anderson was unable to remember the exact year of this service, but he recollected it as being "before the siege of Savannah."

Anderson served in 1780 as a volunteer under General McDowell of North Carolina. Subordinate to McDowell were a number of officers whose names Anderson still remembered in 1833, including his company commander, a man named Parsons, and Colonel Clark of Georgia, Colonel Shelby of Holston River and Colonel Williams of South Carolina. Anderson recalled that he "marched

from the frontier or line of North Carolina to Musgrove's Mill on what was called Congaree River," where the formation engaged "a party of British and Tories and had a fight which was called the Battle of Musgrove's Mill." According to the old soldier, "The Americans defeated the British, but at the finish of the action an express came with information that Genls. Gates and Sumpter had been defeated, and the detachment to which he belonged retreated as fast as possible to the North Carolina line."

This action occurred in August 1780, two days after the Battle of Camden, much as Anderson remembered it. General McDowell had sent Colonels Shelby, Clark and Williams to break up a camp of 600 Tories. The Americans galloped all night and at daylight drove in the Tory pickets. They then learned that a Royal regiment of 600 men from New York under a Colonel Innes had joined the Tories. Too weak to attack the combined force, and their mounts too fatigued to retreat, the Americans drew back a short distance and threw up hasty breastworks. In the attack which followed, every British officer fell to the American riflemen, among 63 killed and 160 wounded or captured. On learning of Gates' defeat at Camden, where Baron de Kalb was killed and Gates disgraced himself by mounting a thoroughbred and fleeing the 75 miles to Charlotte without drawing rein, Shelby sent his prisoners to Virginia, and McDowell's forces withdrew from South Carolina.⁷

This tour of service lasted about two months, and in this instance Anderson was correct in remembering it as occurring the same year as King's Mountain, the decisive American victory on October 7, 1780, in which Shelby and Campbell annihilated a force of Tories.

Later in the same year, Anderson was serving once again under General Sumpter and was in a party which captured one of Colonel Banaster Tarleton's dreaded cavalymen. The party "carried him to Genl. Sumpter as fast as possible. General Sumpter retreated all night. The next evening, however, Colonel Tarleton overtook him and a battle was fought that was called the Battle of Black Stocks," he recalled.

Blackstocks was a notable victory for the patriots. During the battle, the highly professional Tarleton suffered ten casualties to every one suffered by Sumpter but nevertheless claimed a victory for British arms, a claim which Lord Cornwallis accepted. Along with the American victory at King's Mountain in October, however, the two successes in fact forced a turn of the tide in the southern theater of operations.⁸

Recollected in his final years, Anderson's next service would seem to have been among his proudest moments, though it lasted only a month. For this tour he volunteered to serve in Captain Farrar's company "and marched to join General Green (sic) at the Siege of Ninety Six." Anderson recalled that during this expedition the general asked Captain Farrar to select two men in whom he reposed special confidence for a particularly important reconnaissance mission. "The captain selected a man named 'King Chitty' and this deponent." No doubt Anderson's long residence in the district made him an especially suitable candidate for the mission. In any case, he and King Chitty "went, returned and reported to General Green that Lord Cornwallis was coming and not far off." Acting on this intelligence, Anderson asserted, Greene "attempted to storm the fort but could not succeed & had to raise the siege and retreat."

This operation occurred in the spring of 1781, when British outposts between Camden and Charleston were beginning to fall to the largely partisan forces of Lee, Marion and Greene. Orangeburg was taken on May 11 and

Augusta on May 22, the same day Greene invested Ninety Six. A relief column from Charleston under Lord Rawdon saved the day for the British garrison temporarily, but when Georgetown fell to Francis Marion, the British abandoned Ninety Six on July 3.⁹

After his service at Ninety Six, Anderson recalled that he was "out on several occasions against the Indians and '_____ 'tories."¹⁰

In his deposition for a pension, Anderson made the *pro forma* declaration that he relinquished "every claim to a pension or annuity except for the present, and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the Agency of any state," and swore and "subscribed by making his mark before Frederick Williams, a justice of the peace in Natchitoches, Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana.

This same official also took the statements of I. B. Blane, "a clergyman," and Henry Leavenworth, "residing in the same parish," certifying that they were acquainted with Bailey Anderson, that they "believe him to be seventy nine years of age," and that they concurred in the opinion that he had indeed been a soldier in the revolution.

Further establishing Anderson's claim to a pension, the same justice of the peace took the statement of Samuel Thompson, who "personally appeared in open court, before the Parish Court, Parish of Natchitoches, now sitting," and declared that "in the year 1786 or 1787" he had known and was well acquainted with Bailey Anderson and "then knew that he had served as militia man in the revolutionary war." Thompson testified that he had known Anderson "ever since, and has always understood and known that he so served."¹¹ Further, he acknowledged that he "had heard read the declaration of said Anderson which he has this day made in order to obtain a pension under the Act of Congress passed June 7, 1832, and has good reason to believe that Anderson is true and correct." Thompson made the additional comment that Anderson had been a member of the legislature of the state of Kentucky and that "This deponent believes his statement entitled to entire confidence & belief."

In answer to a set of interrogatories prescribed by the War Department for attachment to the deposition of pension claimants, Anderson placed on record his personal statement of the pertinent facts of both his life and his war service. In acknowledging the accuracy of Anderson's statements, Justice of the Peace Williams recorded that the old soldier's memory had been impaired by age, but that "to the best of his recollection, he served not less than the periods mentioned in his Declaration, hereunto attached, and in the following grades: To wit in the grade of private soldier and no other grade or rank and that for more than two years, during which period he was not employed in any civil pursuit."

Responding to the interrogatories, Anderson testified that he had been born "in the year One Thousand and seven hundred and fifty four, on the 13th day of November," but had no record available to him in confirmation "that I can obtain at this time."¹² He stated further that in addition to South Carolina, where he lived when he entered the service of his country, he also had lived in Kentucky, Indiana, Arkansas and Texas.

As the final document in the Anderson file, the parish judge in whose court Anderson made his claim (the judge's name unfortunately is indecipherable) declared it his opinion that "the above named applicant was a Revolutionary War Soldier, and served as he states. And the court further certifies that it appears to them that I. B. Blane, who has signed the preceding Certificate, is a Clergyman, resident in the Parish of Natchitoches, that Henry Leavenworth, who has also signed the same is a resident in the Parish of Natchitoches, and is a

credible person, and that their statement is entitled to credit."

Justice of the Peace Williams completed the legal formalities by certifying that the series of documents accurately reported the court's proceedings.

The travels by which Anderson moved from his native Virginia, then to South Carolina, and finally to a resting place near Elysian Fields in the southeastern corner of Harrison County, Texas, is a classic exposition of the western movement. It is recorded that he "went to Kentucky about 1795, and fifteen years later moved to Indiana." It is a commentary on the times, too, that a man who later would sign his pension application with his mark should have been elected to a term in the Kentucky legislature, in which he served from 1800 to 1802.¹³ After eight years in Indiana, Anderson migrated to East Texas in 1818. Although the matter was in dispute, Americans then considered this area to be a part of the Louisiana Purchase. This was the reason Anderson filed his pension application in Louisiana, though he was living across the line which later would become an international boundary. In 1820, when Spanish military forces from Mexico entered the area to evict American citizens then living in East Texas, Anderson and his family went to Arkansas Territory (now Oklahoma) but returned about 1821 as permanent settlers in the Ayish Bayou district, near the old Joseph Burleson home.¹⁴

It seems certain that Bailey Anderson was accompanied in these moves by Bailey Anderson, Jr., who was born in South Carolina in 1788. True to his heritage, the younger Anderson commanded a Texas company at the "battle" of Nacogdoches in August 1832 and another which was dispatched in the effort to capture San Antonio from the Mexicans during the Siege of Bexar, December 5 to 10, 1835. Afterward he moved to Harrison County, where he was one of the trustees of Marshall University, and still later to McLennan County, where he died in 1865 at the age of 77.

In a series of letters on the subject of the Anderson family, Boon Anderson wrote to M. A. Johnson of San Augustine on October 12, 1921, that "my father (Bailey Anderson, Jr.) was raised in San Augustine, going there in 1818 . . . In 1837 he and his father, Bailey Anderson, left San Augustine and settled in Harrison County, Texas."¹⁵ By this time, the elder Anderson would have been 83 years old and obviously was accompanying his son, in a reversal of their previous roles.

A survey dated December 9, 1839, of 12½ labors of land belonging to Bailey Anderson, Jr., located on the waters of Sabine River 93 miles north of Nacogdoches, apparently described a grant for his service during the Texas Revolution.¹⁶ This land was designated, and still is identified as, the Bailey Anderson Survey, lying partially in Harrison County and partially in the present Panola County. It was in this survey, on a tract now owned by B. H. Timmins of Elysian Fields, a great-great-grandson, that the old Revolutionary War soldier found his final resting place.

A deed signed February 27, 1845, and acknowledged on March 29 by L. H. Dillard, chief justice of Harrison County, was filed for record on April 21 by E. C. Beasley, the Harrison County clerk. In it, Bailey Anderson, Jr., conveyed to Hampton Anderson a track of 270 acres in the Bailey Anderson Survey.¹⁷ As was customary at the time, the land was described by its previous ownerships. Earlier, Bailey Anderson, Jr., had sold a tract of 320 acres, of which the 270 acres was a part, to Isaac Van Zandt, who first settled on the property near Elysian Fields before moving to Marshall.¹⁸ Bailey Anderson, Jr., subsequently repurchased or otherwise reacquired the land after it had been sold by Van Zandt

to James A. Williams. It was from the administrator of Williams' estate that the land returned to Anderson's ownership. In the deed to Hampton Anderson, the tract was described as "excluding fifty acres including the improvements set apart for the widow and children of said James A. Williams" — an exclusion which does not fit the popular notion of the traditional Scot character. It further described the land as "being and lying in said county west and north of the town of Greensboro (one of the prior seats of Harrison County) on Sabine River.

In his landmark history of Harrison County written in 1930, James Curtis Armstrong asserts that Bailey Anderson donated the land for Greensboro (also spelled Greensborough) at the Robinson's Ferry crossing on Sabine River.¹⁹ It seems likely that the donation was by Bailey Anderson, Jr., rather than the father, but the deed records of neither Harrison County nor Panola County, of which the Sabine River is the common boundary, offer any confirmation. Either the deed for the county seat was never recorded in either county, or the land was given by oral contract and reverted to its original owner when Greensboro was abandoned.

Bailey Anderson died of old age in August 1840, nearing his 86th birthday.²⁰ Regrettably, in light of the abundance of material bearing on his Revolutionary War service, little is known of the man himself, as opposed to the historical figure. That he was the rugged son of a Scot father is apparent. His fierce independence shines through his extended war service and his many westward moves. The fact of his illiteracy obviously did not impugn the native intelligence of a man his Kentucky neighbors trusted as their lawmaker.

It is no surprise that the Anderson family's journey to Texas in 1818 was made by raft down the Mississippi and by draw boat up the Red River, poling themselves upstream in what must have been a fatiguing and lengthy passage. Family history has it that Mrs. Anderson died on the Mississippi leg of the journey and was buried on the river bank in a cottonwood log coffin. Undoubtedly the old soldier bore his loss with a stoicism rooted in the Island of Skye granite of his heritage.

Bailey Anderson's grave is marked by no monument, only by the native rock placed on it at the time of his death, and its location would have been lost to memory but for a great-great-grandson and his pride in an ancestor who helped to make America free.

An official Texas Historical Commission marker honoring Bailey Anderson was dedicated June 1, 1975, as one of the features of Harrison County's bicentennial observance. It stands in the small community of Elysian Fields, from which the old soldier's grave is distant about a mile on the great-great-grandson's land.

NOTES

¹The other is William Delafield, who died at an advanced age while living in the LaGrone's Chapel community in northwestern Harrison County. The precise location of his grave is lost to record.

²The Anderson family history is from information compiled by Walter Weston Folger of Chattanooga and published in "Historical Southern Families," Vol. 8, by John Boddie, and from "Information on the Anderson Family of Shelby County," by Dorothy Renick Luttrell, Rockville Centre, Long Island, N. Y. Extracts pertinent to the Anderson family are contained in family records in the possession of B. H. Timmins of Elysian Fields, Texas, a great-great-grandson of Bailey Anderson.

³John Boddie, "Historical Southern Families."

⁴John Boddie, "Historical Southern Families."

⁵The details of this and subsequent periods of service are recorded in a deposition made by Bailey Anderson on August 27, 1833, in connection with his claim for a pension. The deposition and associated instruments supporting it, are filed in the Natchitoches Parish Court, Natchitoches, Louisiana. Copies of these documents were obtained from the Military Service Records section of the National Archives, Washington, D. C., where they are filed under No. S.30,826. In addition to the deposition and related documents, the file also contains copies of correspondence from interested individuals, along with answers made to the inquiries, dating from 1927 to 1937.

⁶"The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six, The Story of the American Revolution as Told by Participants," edited by Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris (Harper & Row; New York, 1967), 1080.

⁷Daniel Harvey Hill, *Young People's History of North Carolina* (Alfred Williams & Co.; Raleigh, 1923), 186.

⁸"The Spirit of Seventy-Six," Commager and Morris, 1073.

⁹"The Spirit of Seventy-Six," Commager and Morris, 1179. "Ninety Six" does not refer to a numbering of districts within the state, but to a community which still exists under this name. The community was established 96 miles from the old frontier fort of Prince George on the Keowee River. I am indebted for this information to M. E. Lattimore of Marshall, Texas, a native of North Carolina whose mother is a native of South Carolina. Mr. Lattimore, whose ancestors fought in both the Revolutionary War and the War Between the States, is an accomplished student of southern history and has travelled widely in both North Carolina and South Carolina.

¹⁰Because the indecipherable words are set off by quotation marks in the deposition record, it seems likely they were pejorative.

¹¹It would be interesting to know the circumstances of this friendship, given Anderson's migrations and several residences after the war, which spanned half a century and half a continent.

¹²This statement is in conflict with the information accepted by Boddie in "Historical Southern Families," as reflected in the B. H. Timmins family records stating Anderson's birth year as 1753. The author accepts Anderson's statement. Even though he was an old man when he gave his deposition, and even though his memory was hazy and less than accurate in some respects, it seems reasonable that he would have been accurate about the year of his own birth.

¹³Letter, December 18, 1974, from R. Lawrence, Kentucky Historical Society Library, to author. She quoted Collins' "History of Kentucky" as listing H. Bailey

Anderson as a member of the Kentucky House of Representatives from Warren County during the years 1800, 1801 and 1802.

¹⁴George L. Crocket, *Two Centuries in East Texas* (The Southwest Press: Dallas, 1932), 82.

¹⁵These letters are contained in the Robert Bruce Blake Research Collection (Vol. 35, 396 to 402) at Stephen F. Austin State University. Copies are among the B. H. Timmins family records.

¹⁶From deed records traced by Hays Abstract Company, Nacogdoches, Texas, as noted in Vol. A., Surveyor's Records, 405. Extract of this information is in the B. H. Timmins family records.

¹⁷The original deed is in the possession of B. H. Timmins.

¹⁸One of the giants of early Texas history, Van Zandt occupied a homesite in Marshall now a part of the campus of East Texas Baptist College.

¹⁹James Curtis Armstrong, "The History of Harrison County, Texas, 1839 to 1880." University of Colorado, 1930.

²⁰*Early History of Freestone County*, (Lewis Publishing Company:, 1893), as reprinted in the *Fairfield Recorder*, July 1921. The work was published in a series of installments. One of these installments concerned William Anderson, identified as "one of the oldest Texans in the County of Freestone" and the grandson of Bailey Anderson and the son of Bailey Anderson, Jr. A copy of this newspaper story is in the B. H. Timmins family records.