

SAR Patriot Ancestors' Biographies

Turner Lee Wilkerson (P-320142)

1758-1838

Private Soldier in the American War for Independence

My 17 year-old 4th great grandfather and namesake, Turner Lee Wilkerson, enlisted in the First Virginia Regiment in 1775 from Henrico County, Virginia. He served in the company that was led by Captain John Fleming of Goochland County, in the regiment that was commanded by Colonel Patrick Henry. In December 1775 he was marched from Williamsburg to what is known today as Great Bridge, Virginia a short distance from Norfolk. His pension application documents his service in the Battle at the “Long Bridge” known today as The Battle of Great Bridge. He also participated in a number of skirmishes against Lord Dunmore’s British Forces in and around Norfolk before returning to Williamsburg, and receiving a discharge in 1776, after his yearlong enlistment.

During the next five years, Turner lived, first in Henrico County and then in Buckingham County. He married a young lady whose identity is unknown to his present-day descendants and began his family. When the British initiated their Southern Campaign in South Carolina and began their northward march up through North Carolina and into southeastern Virginia in 1781, his militia unit was called to arms on at least three occasions—the first, was during The Battle of Guilford Courthouse, the second, occurred during the spring or summer of 1781 when his unit was marched to Hampton. His next call to service was in the late summer of 1781 when his unit joined the forces led by General Washington besieging Lord Cornwallis’s British Army during The Battle of Yorktown. After the surrender of Cornwallis, he served two additional tours as a militiaman before the war ended.

After the war, Turner resumed the raising of his family and farming in Buckingham County. From 1780 through 1801, Turner’s wife bore him nine children—Turner Lee, Susannah, Polly, William, Thomas, Walter, Daniel, Elizabeth and his last child, attributable to his first wife, Nancy was born on 13 March 1801. All five of their sons served in the Virginia Militia during the War of 1812. It is believed that Turner's first wife died shortly afterwards – perhaps even during Nancy’s childbirth – there is no clear record. Turner married Agnes Brooks on 10 August 1802 in Prince Edward County and began a second family of seven children before migrating from Prince Edward County, Virginia to Smith County, Tennessee in 1816. Their names were Brooks, Patsy, Fanny, Sally Lee, Joel, Liza and the last child, James Monroe, was born on 17 January 1820.

On 19 May 1838, Turner passed away.

He was eighty years old.

He was a resident of Bluff Creek in Smith County, Tennessee.

His home was surrounded by the homes of family and neighbors. He was buried in the family cemetery on his son Turner's, farm.

An unmarked field stone marks his grave.

The family cabin exists to this day and remains in family hands in an area that has come to be known as Wilkerson Hollow.

There has been a Turner Lee Wilkerson in every generation of the Wilkerson line since 1758.

Respectfully Submitted,



Turner Lee Wilkerson III
(SAR # 187468)