

# TRANSCRIPTION AND NOTES

## SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION APPLICATION

### OF

## GEORGE HUNTER MCMASTER (1869-1950)

The following is a transcription of a two-page addendum submitted in about 1893 by George Hunter McMaster<sup>1</sup> as part of his application with the [Sons of the American Revolution](#). The application is based on the revolutionary service of his great-grandfather, Hugh McMaster.

At the time of his application, George is 24 years old and lists his residence as Fort Huachuca, Az; and his occupation as "Lieutenant, U.S. Army."

George's notes are meant to document his great-grandfather's Revolutionary War service. However, he also provides fascinating background about his ancestors—not only regarding his great-grandfather's service; but also general details about South Carolina and the various factions involved at the time. He also details the difficulty of obtaining records verifying revolutionary war service—especially for those who served in "upstate" South Carolina.

I have added footnotes to amplify the information provided on the application. I welcome any comments, corrections or additional information that any reader may have and can be contacted through my [genealogical website](#).

SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

I, George Hunter McMaster, being of the age of twenty-four years and upwards, to wit, of the age of twenty-four, hereby apply for membership in the Society by right of lineal descent in the following line from Hugh McMaster who was born in Lowndesburgh, Ireland on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 17\_\_\_\_ and died in Atlantic Ocean on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 17\_\_\_\_ and who assisted in establishing American Independence.

I was born in the city of Columbia County of Richland State of South Carolina on the 30th day of May 1869

I am the son of Col. Fitz W. McMaster  
Mary Jane MacFie McMaster his wife,  
 grandson of John McMaster  
Rachel Buchanan McMaster his wife,  
 great-grandson of Hugh McMaster  
Margaret Killoch his wife,  
 great-great-grandson of John Killoch  
Mary Patton his wife,  
 great-great-great-grandson of \_\_\_\_\_

### Hugh McMaster

My paternal ancestor served during the revolutionary war with the Whigs who settled in the Calhoun settlement, in the 96 district<sup>2</sup>, South Carolina, which section was subject to partisan warfare with the British, Tories and Indians.

<sup>1</sup> George Hunter McMaster was born in Columbia, South Carolina on May 30, 1869. As can be seen in the application image above, he was the son of Col. Fitz William McMaster and Mary Jane MacFie. He was admitted to the Military Academy at West Point in June of 1888 and graduated in 1892. According to his death certificate, he was a veteran of the Spanish-American War and World War I; eventually retiring as a full colonel. Having never married, George Hunter McMaster died on 29 March 1950 in the Veterans Administration hospital in Columbia, South Carolina.

<sup>2</sup> The 96 district of South Carolina is an old judiciary district from 1769 to 1799. According to Wikipedia, "Its boundaries

Documentary facts as to privates always rare, are extremely scarce as to the patriots of upper South Carolina. The histories of the state were principally written by men who lived in Charleston, descendants of the English and French. The Scots Irish and Virginians had only settled the country a few years before the revolution and were separated from the low-country by 100 miles of only partially-settled territory. Hence little communication existed between the sections.

The six continental regiments on the South Carolina establishment in 1777 of 2400 men in 1780 did not exceed 800. But there were many independent companies that did service when the occasion demanded, whose roles have not been carefully preserved.

The principal records that existed were kept in the Comptroller's office and were destroyed by Gen. Sherman's army in 1865. Except a single book which contains the role of Col. Pinckney's Regiment—this happened to be in the office of the Secretary of State and was removed from Columbia.



*Col. Fitz William McMaster  
Commander 17<sup>th</sup> South  
Carolina Infantry Regiment*

My great-grandfather Hugh McMaster<sup>3</sup> and his two brothers John and Patrick settled in the 96 district about the beginning of the Revolutionary war. The only documentary evidence appears from grants of 100 acres of land to each of them in 1775, recorded in the office of the Secretary of State.

My father, Col. F W McMaster<sup>4</sup> of Columbia, South Carolina, states that he saw a roll of soldiers in the Comptroller's office in 1848—which the department Comptroller Augustus Black called his attention to which contained a list of South Carolina troops at the Battle of Camden<sup>5</sup> and he remembers distinctly of reading Hugh and Patrick as among the prisoners captured by the British at that battle. My father repeatedly heard during his

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included the current counties of Abbeville, McCormick, Edgefield, Saluda, Greenwood, Laurens, Union, and Spartanburg counties; much of Cherokee and Newberry Counties; and small parts of Aiken and Greenville Counties. The lands further west were Cherokee Indian lands."

<sup>3</sup> Hugh McMaster was born in about 1754 in the town of Ballymoney in County Antrim, Ireland. As his grandson's application states, he died upon returning to the United States on board a ship on the Atlantic Ocean.

Further information can be found in the South Carolina Magazine of Ancestral Research, Vol. I, Winter 1973, No. 1, p.11, p.12

Will of Hugh McMaster, late of the parish of Ballymoney in the County of Antrim and Kingdom of Ireland, now at this present writing a passenger on board the Friendship of Greenork in North Britain, Capt. Adam Cowear, bound for Charleston, S. C., last from Larne in the County of Antrim, being afflicted in my body, appointing Hugh McMullen and James Killoch now passengers on said vessel the Friendship my sole executors

Whereas I have in the hands of said Arthur Morrow a horse and 45 pounds of linnen, and in the hands of Mary Boyd in Long Cane Settlement 19 yards of linnen, these I give to the same James Killoch my executor

Notes received by executors not yet paid: Absalom Davis, Senr; Absalom Davis, Junr; Nathl Biddingfield; John McConnell; William Shannon; Robert Boyd; Elizabeth Garner; James Little; Thomas Coper; Richard Posey; Joseph McClorkey; David McClorkey; Robert Boyd; William Hays; John Jones; James Jones.

<sup>4</sup> Fitz William McMaster, Sr.; born March 26, 1826 in Winnsboro, Fairfield County, South Carolina—died September 10, 1899 in Columbia, Richland County, South Carolina. He married Mary Jane MacFie (1832-1898) on November 17, 1852 in Columbia. A graduate of South Carolina College, Fitz William rose to the rank of colonel and commanded the 17<sup>th</sup> South Carolina Infantry Regiment during the Civil War.

[\(Click here for his official reports after battles in Sharpsburg and Boonsborough, Virginia in 1862\).](#)

Assuming my records are correct, George Hunter McMaster was the eleventh of 14 children!

<sup>5</sup> The Battle of Camden—a decisive defeat for American forces—was fought near the town of Camden, South Carolina on August 16, 1780.

boyhood that his grandfather and his two brothers were soldiers in the revolution, that John had been shot through the head and killed in an engagement with the British and Tories near Augusta, Georgia; and that Patrick died as a prisoner of war at Camden.

There are no records in the State offices except the one already mentioned. The late Secretary of State, Mr. Hunt, now dead, informed him that it was with extreme difficulty he secured the papers of his own office and the papers of the Comptroller's office as to the revolution were destroyed.

After my grandfather, John McMaster<sup>6</sup>, came of age, he went over to Abbeville and sold his inheritance. The papers of 96 District which were deposited at Abbeville were destroyed by fire about 30 years ago; and there is no possibility of procuring any clue as to the services of Hugh McMaster from that source.

### **John McMaster**

My grandfather was a private in the war of 1812, located near Charleston, South Carolina. About 1816 he was appointed postmaster at Winnsboro, South Carolina, and resigned after about 40 years service. He married Rachel Buchanan, the niece of the distinguished patriot John Buchanan.

### **The Buchanans**

John Buchanan was captain during the whole revolutionary war. He received and entertained Lafayette on his arrival at Georgetown from France.<sup>7</sup> He was a member of the order of Cincinnati.<sup>8</sup> He was a leading man in Fairfield County for many years and died without issue in 1824. His brother, Robert Buchanan, was a lieutenant in the service of United States and died in a prison ship all Charleston during the war. He was unmarried.

There was intense prejudice amongst the Whigs against the Tories which was transmitted to their descendents and existed until the great Civil War. It is certain that the old patriot an officer like John Buchanan would never have permitted his niece and Ward to marry any other than the son of a good rebel.



### **Documentary evidence**

My great-grandfather, Hugh McMaster, visited Ireland after the Revolutionary war and married. On his return trip, he died and this will written on shipboard 1787 contains the following:

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<sup>6</sup> John McMaster was born July 9, 1787 in Drumrayer, (near Ballymena), County Antrim, Ireland. He married Rachel Buchanan (1793-1883) in June of 1816 in South Carolina.

<sup>7</sup> The Marquis de Lafayette arrived from France in Georgetown, South Carolina on June 13, 1777—despite the efforts of King Louis XVI, who tried in vain to keep the young man from leaving France. Shortly thereafter, he would return to Philadelphia to continue working with Congress and their independence struggle. He would later see his first action as aide-de-camp for Gen. George Washington at the Battle of Brandywine in September of 1777.

<sup>8</sup> From Wikipedia: "The Society of the Cincinnati is a historical lineage organization with branches in the United States and France, founded in 1783 to preserve the ideals and fellowship of the American Revolutionary War officers. Now in its third century, the Society is a nonprofit historical, diplomatic, and educational organization that promotes public interest in the American Revolution through its library and museum collections, exhibitions, programs, publications, and other activities."

"Whereas on leaving South Carolina in May 1785, I am powered by letters of attorney, William Dunlop and Arthur Morrow in 96 District, Long Cane settlement, to act for me and to collect such sum or sums of money as may be into me I hereby empower and authorize Hugh McMullen and James Killoch my said executors to receive require and sue for all such sum or sums of money as may be endue me either by the Honble & Honble<sup>9</sup> the United States of America as by any private person. And whereas I am invested and stand possessed of two lots of land viz: one of 100 acres situate lying and being in 96 district Long Cane settlement, South Carolina—my other estate consisting of 50 acres lying and being in 96 district Long Cane settlement."<sup>10</sup>

"And out of the first monies that is received by my said executors I give and bequeath 20 pounds to the society of reformed Presbyterians, or Covenanters<sup>11</sup> in the district of 96."

I give these extracts to show the character of the testator—"the sum or sums of money as may be into me by the Honble United States of America" gives strength to the truth of Hugh McMaster being a soldier of the Revolution.

The documentary facts are as stated above. A traditionary [*sic*] part is derived principally from Margaret McMaster, the widow of Hugh, and who lived for a few years amongst the comrades of Hugh in 96 district—the widow was of strong mind and well-versed in the Bible!—And from talks of John McMaster, her son and Jane McCarroll, her daughter—and from Capt. John Buchanan, thence through Mrs. Rachel McMaster<sup>12</sup>—Dr. JR McMaster<sup>13</sup>, now 77 years old—Col. FW McMaster<sup>14</sup> 67 and honorable GH McMaster<sup>15</sup> of Winnsboro, who is now 65 years old.

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<sup>9</sup> This appears to be an abbreviation of "honorable;" but why he would repeat it is unclear. In this paragraph, the rendition almost makes it appear that Hugh McMaster is referring to a corporation—especially in the context of monies that might be owed to his estate after his death. However, George types this three times, always as "Honble," and then links it to revolutionary war service—in which context "honorable" makes more sense.

<sup>10</sup> The Long Cane Settlement was centered around the Long Cane Creek area of present-day Abbeville County, South Carolina. Initial research shows that the majority of the residents of the settlement were of Scots-Irish descent, who had recently immigrated from Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Pennsylvania. There are many accounts of the difficulty of existence in the early days of the settlement—Indian raids, skirmishes, hostage taking, and untimely death were apparently quite common. One attack, known as the "Long Cane Massacre," occurred in February of 1760. According to contemporary newspaper reports, this attack "by about 100 Cherokees on horseback" resulted in the death of scores of settlers, who were apparently trying to seek shelter in nearby Augusta, Georgia; and whose wagon train had bogged down in a swampy area just before the attack began.

<sup>11</sup> Preliminary research indicates that the union of two primary subdivisions of the Presbyterian Church: 1) the Associate Presbyterian or "Seceders" (whose church was initially known as the Upper Long Cane Presbyterian Church) and 2) the Reformed Presbyterian or "Covenanters" (the Lower Long Cane Presbyterian Church—originally organized about 1760) occurred shortly before Hugh penned his will. Apparently, many of the issues that divided the congregations when they were in Scotland and Northern Ireland became less divisive once the church members settled in America. Records indicate that the two churches were officially united in 1782; and the Lower Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church came into being. Two years later, in 1785, the Long Cane, Cedar Springs and Little Run congregations officially petitioned to join the newly-created Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church.

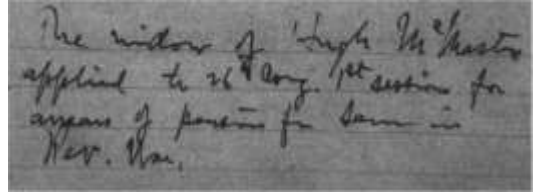
The fact that Hugh McMaster left South Carolina to return to County Antrim only a few years after this reunion (as mentioned above, in May of 1785), along with the fact that he wrote his will on his return voyage to the United States—again only a few years later—may be a reflection that the union of the two branches of the church has not quite been "complete" as far as Hugh was concerned.

(<http://www.longcanearp.org/faq.html>)

<sup>12</sup> Rachel [Buchanan] McMaster (1793-1883), George's paternal grandmother.

*Note: the following handwritten note is pasted at the bottom of the page:*

"The widow of Hugh McMaster applied to the 26<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session for arrears of pension for service in Revolutionary War."



The widow of Hugh McMaster  
applied to 26 Cong. 1st session for  
arrears of pension for service in  
Rev. War.

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<sup>13</sup> Dr. James Riley McMaster, Sr. (1822-1894), George's uncle.

<sup>14</sup> Col. Fitz William McMaster, George's father.

<sup>15</sup> George Hunter McMaster (1828-1902), George's uncle.