

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of John Burke R1458

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 20 April 2012.

State of Indiana }

Clark County } Ss Circuit Court May Term 1834

On this twenty first day of May one thousand eight hundred and thirty four personally appeared in open Court before the Judges of the Circuit Court within and for the County aforesaid now sitting John Burke a resident of Monroe Township in said County of Clark and State of Indiana aged seventy four years, who first being duly sworn according to law, doth, on his oath, make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress passed June 7th 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers, and served as herein stated. viz His first service was under Capt Frederic Edwards [sic: Frederick Edwards] and Lieut John T Sawyer [John Thompson Sawyer] – Col [William] Campbell commandant. That at the time he entered the service, he resided on New River a branch of the Kanhawa [sic: Kanawha River], in the County of Montgomery in the State of Virginia; he was a volunteer, and as he believes commenced his service a little before harvest of the year of the battle of Guilford Court House [15 March 1781]. That he marched under the officers aforesaid up New River into North Carolina against the tories, that in this expedition he was in no engagement, and that after serving about three weeks he was dismissed and suffered to return to his home. In the latter part of the same summer he again volunteered in the same company under the same officers. Colo [William] Preston, commandant, and was marched in detachment commanded by Lieut. Sawyer to guard some ammuniton to near the head of Reed river in Montgomery County [now Reed Creek in Wythe County]. Virg; that on this trip he served about three months and was discharged.

About a week or ten days before christmas of the same year he again volunteered in the service of the United States at his residence in Montgomery County aforesaid, under Capt James Montgomery, Lieut John T Sawyer. Commandant Lt Colo Walter Crockett; marched to the long islands of Holstion in Virginia [sic: Long Island of Holston at present Kingsport TN] as a place of rendezvous preparatory to suppressing the Cherokee Indians [see note below]; was out on this trip about four weeks when he was suffered to return home. In about a week or ten days after his last named return to Montgomery County, he again entered the service of the United States as a volunteer under the command of Colo. Preston, Lt. Colo. Crockett Capt Edwards and Lieut Sawyer, marched to the neighborhood of Hillsborough in North Carolina; and in that section of country was marched and counter marched, sometimes in pursuit of the enemy, and at others, retreating from them, until the sixth of March, 1781, when he was engaged in the skirmish with the British at the Reedy fork of Haw river near Whitsells mill [Wetzel's Mill]. In this engagement he was in the company of Capt. Edwards and under the command of Colo. Preston. He recollects that the latter, who was a very corpulent man, was thrown from his horse in the retreat of the Americans which succeeded the fight. While manoeuvring in the neighborhood of Hillsborough he saw Colo. [Henry] Lee and Colo. [William] Washington, and well recollects the fine appearance of the horse of the latter officer. He thinks that Colo. [Otho] Williams took an active part in the skirmish of Reedy fork; and remembers hearing it said at the time, that he ordered the retreat, but has no recollection of ever having seen him, nor does he remember that he saw, during his services in the revolutionary war, any other Continental officers than Colos Lee and Washington. After having served under the last named engagements about seven or eight weeks he was dismissed and suffered to return home. that he never had any written discharge from the service. Nor has he any Documentary evidence nor does he he know of any person whose testimony he can procure, who can testify to his service. He has no record of his age

That in whole he served in all at least sixteen weeks, that he never had any written discharge.

That he is as he believes in his seventy fourth year of age. His birth day is 15th day of July. He continued to live in Montgomery County Virginia for ten or twelve years after the war. From Montgomery County he removed into Tennessee where he lived about fifteen years. Then he lived in Shelby County Kentucky about three years. He moved then into the State of Indiana where he has resided ever since. He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or an annuity except the present and he declares that his name is not on the pension roll of any agency in any state of the United States

Sworn to and subscribed in open Court the day and year first above written.

John hisXmark Burke

State of Indiana } Before the Hon'l Willis W Goodwin (sole) Judge of the Probate Court of the
County of Clark } said County of Clark in open Court

On this eighth day of the month of February and the first day of the February session of the Probate Court of the said State of Indiana within and for the county of Clark aforesaid in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty one personally appeared in open Court, the Court aforesaid (the same being a Court of Record), now sitting, John Burke a resident of Monroe township in the said county of Clark and State of Indiana aged seventy nine years on the fifteenth day of the month of July in the year one thousand eight hundred and forty who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress, passed June 7 1832. That he entered the service of the United States under the following named Officers and served as herein after stated. That he declarant in the month of June immediately next before the month of July when he was twenty one years of age in the county of MtGomery in the State of Virginia entered the service of the United States in the War of the Revolution in a company of volunteers of [illegible word] riflemen of the Militia of Virginia which company he declarant joined and continued to belong to as a private therein until the fifteenth day of the month of March next following and the March next after that he was twenty one years of age that the Company was first commanded by Captain John Draper and Lieutenant Andrew Crocket [sic: Andrew Crockett] and Lieutenant John Thompson Sawyers that he declarant with a part of the Company [two illegible words] immediate command of Lieutenant Sawyers first pursued against the enemy in the vicinity and region of New river in North Carolina (the enemy there were said to be lead or commanded by one Roberds or Roberts (declarant does now recollect precisely which) that after he declarant was gone several weeks in North Carolina (he cannot now recollect the precise length of time other wise than that he was gone several weeks as above stated) in the detachment under Lieutenant Sawyers as above stated he declarant returned under Lieutenant Sawyers with that part of the company then under his command to MtGomery County in the State of Virginia where they remained refreshing and recruiting themselves and their horses a few weeks until the Company were ready late in the fall either in the month of November or December following in the same year he declarant cannot now recollect precisely which of these months he declarant with the Company again under the immediate command of Lieutenant Sawyers marched to the Islands of Holston in the State of Virginia in pursuit of the enemy and continued marching and watching and protecting the inhabitants against the British until some time after the new years of the following year and then returned with the Company under the Command of Lieutenant Sawyers to the County of MtGomery aforesaid where they remained about two weeks until the Company and their horses were again recruited and prepared for an other campaign and then the declarant with the whole of the Company under the command of Captain Edwards of the same company and Lieutenant Sawyers above named marched to North Carolina against the tories and the British there under Lord CornWallis where he declarant with the company remained until the fifteenth day of the month of March above mentioned when he declarant was discharged that on the sixth day of the same month of March he declarant with the same Company under the command of Captain Edwards and Lieutenant Sawyers above named being joined with the other American troops there had an engagement or skirmish with the British there on or near by the Reedy fork of Haw river in North Carolina in which the Americans lost six or seven killed and some wounded (declarant does not recollect

that he ever knew exactly how many were wounded in that engagement – he recollects that William Simpson of Capt Edwards Company fired the first gun on that occasion and killed or shot one of the British so that he fell The Americans on that occasion fired several rounds and then retreated to prevent their being surrounded by the enemy after that they had fought a short time that Lieutenant Sawyers above named was wounded and taken prisoner on that occasion – he Lt Sawyers was wounded in his right side but recovered from the [two illegible words] got well escaped from the British and returned home afterwards. That declarant recollects that it was then stated generally understood and currently belived at that time that the Enemy then lost 70 or 80 killed and about 150 wounded but whether the British then lost so many declarant can not tell nor venture an opinion but certain he is that many of the Enemy were lost as he declarant saw several of them fall he declarant not being more than about good rifle [illegible word] from the enemy when the firing commenced that he declarant recollects that the Regiment to which his Company was attached or belonged on that occasion and during that expedition was commanded by Major Joseph McCloyd [sic: Joseph Cloyd] and he declarant believes by Col Walter Crocket and Colonel Preston of MtGomery county that on one occasion during this expedition or campaign he declarant with his company under Capt Edwards with the other American troops there were in the pursuit of the British who he understood were under Tarlton [sic: Lt. Col. Banastre Tarleton] and took three of them one Hessian [sic: Hessian] and two British soldiers that during the time of his service above mentioned many of the Tories were shot and some were [illegible word] sometimes wounded and many made their escape parts of which he declarant saw but can not now recollect how many he saw killed of the Tories they were always armed and with the enemy on that occasion that he declarant believes as well as he can now recollect that the full name of Capt Edwards was Fredrick Edwards that he declarant recollects Colonel Preston during his service thinks he had chief command at times over the regiment to which Capt Edwards Company was attached or belonged that he declarant recollects Colonel or General Lee thinks that he was called Colonel also Colonel Washington whom declarant understood to belong to the regular army that he declarant was never particularly acquainted with any officers of the army or service beyond his own company except that he saw Major McCloyd when he saw him on parade or commanding – as well as Col Preston and Col Crocket above named that during his service he declarant was with a part of the same Company (to which he belonged) under the command of Lieutenant Sawyers guarding a quantity of ammunition to protect the same from the Tories while it was being carried from Chissels Mines [lead mines at Fort Chiswell in present Wythe County VA] on New river or new river hills to Holston for the use of the American Army but before they arrived at the place to which it was being carried Lieutenant Sawyers detachment was relieved by an other detachment of the American troops who undertook to guard the ammunition to the point or place of destination and then Lieutenant Sawyers with his command turned in different direction in pusuit of some British until the company returned to MtGomery County aforesaid this was done during or about the months of September or October next after declarant volunteered joining the Company and entering the service

That he declarant entered the service in the month of June immediately next before the month of July of the same year in which he was twenty one years of age as above stated but entered and served as a volunteer as a mounted riflement in the manner and during the time as aforesaid until the fifteenth day of the month of March following but owing to the lapse of time since, the troubles and misfortunes of life and old age and the consequent loss of memory he declarant cannot swear positively as to the precise day of the month of the June aforesaid when he entered the service or the precise length of his service but according to the best of his recollection he served not less than the period as below that is to say from some time near a little before or a few days only after the first day of the month of June until he was discharged the fifteenth of the month of March following as above mentioned and for such service he declarant claims a pension – And that owing to the same cause he cannot recollect the date or number of the year otherwise than as above stated that is that he was twenty one years of age on the fifteenth day of

the month of July immediately next after the immediately next preceeding month of June in which he entered the service as aforesaid. And that he will be Eighty years of age according to the best of his recollection on the fifteenth day of the month of July next in the year one thousand Eight hundred and forty one That when he entered the service he resided in the County of MtGomery in the State of Virginia aforesaid and that he was a volunteer and served as such [illegible word] the period as aforesaid – that he declarant has no documentary evidence. And that he knows of no person whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his service

He declarant adds that he has no record of his age and never had any that he found and provided himself with his own horse gun arms and accoutrements clothing and his own provisions and horse feed at his own expense and proper cost while in the service as aforesaid except that his rations and horse feed were found him a few weeks at the Long Islands on Holston in Virginia and that his powder and lead were all furnished him by the Government and his horse once shod at the expense or charge of the United States and that he has never received any pay for his service. That he depends on tradition and recollection above of the facts and statements in his declaration having no record or documentary evidence And he has not nor ever had any written discharge – that owing to the circumstances of old age lapse of time and bodily infirmity and consequent loss of memory as above stated he has forgotten much and many of the circumstances of his service especially of the precise dates and periods of times of and many circumstances of his service but that they are all true in substance and facts as above stated – that he was then poor – never had been rich though he has hitherto until very recently obtained a moderate competency by honest industry and hard labour which he is no longer able to perform and is now at the verge of want and is in fact to some extent dependant on private charity for support of himself and wife who being now about seventy four years of age is feeble from old age and has been wholly helpless and unable to do anything eight years past

That declarant cannot state in what year he was born otherwise than as he has above stated that he was born (from the best information that he has and according to the best of his recollection of all the information that he has ever [two illegible words] to obtain and as he in truth believes he was seventy nine years of age at least the fifteenth day of July last and will be eighty years of age the fifteenth day of July next that he has not and never has had any record of his age that he was born in Shanandoah County [sic: Shenandoah County, called Dunmore County until 1778] in Virginia that he was living in MtGomery County in Virginia when he volunteered and entered in the service of the United States in the war of the Revolution as aforesaid

that after he served in the Revolutionary war as above stated he continued to live in MtGomery county in virginia until he was about 29 years of age when he removed to Big Pigeon river in the State of Tennessee where he lived until about 27 years ago when he removed to Shelby county in the State of Kentucky where he lived about three years and removed Thence he removed to Franklin County in the State of Indiana where he lived two years thence he removed to Dearbourn [sic: Dearborn] County in the said State of Indiana and where lived about fifteen or twenty years and thence he removed to to Monroe township in the county of Clark and State Indiana where he now lives as above stated

He was called into the service and served as a volunteer as above stated.

He recollects Col or General Lee and Colonel Washington (above named) who were of the Regular officers and were with the troops in North Carolina where he served he does not recollect so as to distinguish the continental or militia regiments otherwise than as above stated and that he recollects Colonel Washingtons Regiment or Batalion of light horse or cavalry Declarant recollects seeing General [Andrew] Pickens in the army but whether he was of the regular army or not declarant cannot recollect that he declarant received no written but he received a verbal discharge from Lieutenant Sawyers above named No written discharges were given as declarant saw or heard on that occasion

That he declarant is known to William Lockheart [William Lockhart] and John Caldwell in his present neighbourhood and many others & who can testify as to his character for veracity and their belief of his

services as a soldier of the Revolution.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and declares that his name is not on the pension Roll of the agency of any state John hisXmark Burke

NOTE: The Cherokees had been suppressed for some five years before Burke says he went on an expedition to help prepare for it.