

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Pension Application of John Orr R16849 Elizabeth Orr MD PA
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 15 Feb 2015.

Virginia Preston County towit

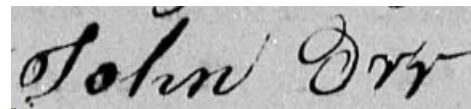
On this eighth day of september in the year 1832 personally appeared before the County court of the county aforesaid John Orr a resident of said county and state aforesaid aged 70 years who being duly sworn according to Law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by 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

I was drafted in Baltimore county Maryland and marched to Kent county [DE] and served under Captain James Baker I was stationed on the delaware to prevent the british from plundering the property of the inhabitation I continued in the service one month and was discharged This was probably in the spring or summer of 1777 but of this I am not certain but recollect it was before the march of the british through the Jersey I then returned home where I resided with my father in the county of Baltimore Maryland I was afterwards drafted when the english was expected to Land at Baltimore and served under Captain James Clendenen I was stationed at Baltimore until the british disappeared or the apprehension of their landing was over and was discharged having served about one month My Col was Holland this I think took place the summer following after my trip to Kent My Father afterwards probably in the year 1780 moved from Maryland to Redstone [now Brownsville] in Pa and there settled with [me] who about that time became of age – in the spring of 1782 I volunteered under Captain John Ashcraft and marched against the indians up the allegany [sic: Allegheny River] guarding the frontier against the indians and out about one month I then returned home and again volunteered in the same spring under Capt Thomas Carroll and marched with Col. [William] Crawford to the plains of Sandusky [sic: Sandusky Plains in Ohio, departed from Mingo Bottom 25 May 1782] and there served until some time in the month of May when we after a severe engagement with the indians [sic: 4-6 Jun 1782] were defeated in this engagement on the second days engagement I was [illegible word] by a ball passing through the lower part of my side just above the hip or hench bone but not so as to entirely disable me Col McClellan [sic: John McClelland] furnished me with a horse on which I in company with others made my retreat to a fort on the ohio river opposite to McCluahan's bottom I there remained until I recovered of my wound and returned home in this town I was out about three months

I have no knowledge of any person who has any knowledge of my services in my two first towns or have I any discharge nor do I think I ever had I know of one Major Paul now living in fayette County Pa who knows of my last services and if the nature of the service will entitle me to a pension I can get that testimony

He Hereby relinquishes every claim to a pension except this one – and declares his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state

Sworn to in open Court



Preston County To wit

This day personally appeared before me a Justice of the peace in and for said county John Orr an applicant for a pension who being duly sworn deposes and says that by reason of old age and consequent loss of memory he cannot say positively to the precise length of time he served but according to the best of his recollection he served not less than six months as a private soldier as follows on month drafted in the year as well as now recollected 1777 also one month when the british was expected to land at Baltimore also one month as a volunteer with Capt Ashcraft Also three months under Captain Carr and for such service he claims a pension. Given under my hand this 17th day of June 1833. Ch's. Hootan J.P

[On 16 July 1833 John Orr was issued a certificate for a pension of \$20 per year for six months service. On the certificate is written "Dropped Mch 24 - 1835."]

[The following report is by US District Attorney Washington G. Singleton who investigated hundreds of pension applications from present West Virginia. For details see my appendix to the pension application of David W. Sleeth S6111. Singleton wrote on this report, "Entitled."]

John Orr draws \$20

I the undersigned John Orr, at the requisition of the Secretary of War, give the following statement of my age and Revo. services to Wit – I am upwards of seventy years of age, perhaps 75. I am a native of Pensylvania. removed to Maryland when young & then in my 25 year of age went back to Pen Uniontown.

in the year 1777 I was drafted for one month and marched from Harford county Maryland under Capt. Baker to the head of Elk [now Elkton MD]. there were other companies at that station under Col. Holland of Balto.

In the next succeeding summer I was at Balt. for one month under Capt Clendening – this was all the service I done East of the Allegany Mountain – after my removal to union town & in my 25 year age I was an Indian Spy for two months.

and was afterwards a volunteer for two months, in the last service I was at Craford's defeat & was wounded by a ball passing through my side & thus ended my service. W. G. Brown wrote my Declaration. I gave him the same statement I now give – he drew \$50 & kept \$20

In Witness of all which I hereto subscribe my name August 6, 1834 John Orr

A Copy W. G Singleton/ Nov. 26, 1834

Kingwood May 11th 1835

Dr Sir [James L. Edwards, Commissioner of Pensions]

I am desired by Mr Orr a pensioner from Preston county Va whose pension has been discontinued to ask from the department the reasons or ground of dropping him from the roll – Since he made his declaration he has heard of James Collins [pension application S17895] a pensioner from Monongalia county Va. Aso Col. James Paul of Fayette County Pa. both of which know of his services If there evidence will be of any account if the department would direct the manner of taking & certifying it it will be forwarded Mr orr was wounded in Craford's defeat & he thinks he is entitled to be placed on the list of the wounded & disabled soldiers of the Revolution he can prove the wound but the manner of making the application does not know. If it can be had he would like to have a copy of Mr Singletons report in his case

There is the cases of Andrew Johnson [S15905] & John Hartman [W7680] discontinued if evidence of their service could reinstate them they would endeavour by sending on to Philadelphia to procure such evidence as might be satisfactory to the department Wm G Brown

War Department/ Pension Office/ May 23^d 1835

Sir [William G. Brown, Esq., Kingwood Va]

In reply to your enquiry as to the reasons for dropping John Orr from the roll under the act of 1832 I have to state that it appears by his narrative transmitted by Mr Singleton compared with his original declaration that he only performed two months actual service during the war of the revolution. His infrequent service not being provided for by law, the payment was necessarily stopped. [see endnote] On further explanation or consideration a reexamination will be made.

Evidence in this as the cases of Andrew Johnson & John Hartman must be sworn before a magistrate authorised by law to administer oaths and whose signature & official character must be duly certified by the proper officer under his seal of office. It should offer the statement of the magistrate whether the witnesses are credible, and they should state the facts in detail shewing their means of knowledge. [Copy not signed, but probably by James L. Edwards.]

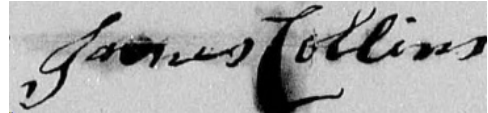
Union Town Pa/ Nov 5 1835

Dear Sir [Edwards] I am requested by John Orr of Preston County Virginia to inquire of you upon what ground & for what reason his pension has been discontinued, and what is required by the department to procure its restoration

yours respectfully/ And[re]w Stewart

Monongalia County Ss

This day [16 Nov 1835] James Collins aged about seventy three came before me the undersigned Justice of the peace in & for the said County of Monongalia and after being duly sworn according to Law deposed & says that he is now acquainted with one John Ore of Preston County and that he knew him in the spring of seventeen hundred & eighty two he belonged to a body of troops that marched from the neighbourhood of Uniontown Pa. against the indians he also knew him after Crawfords defeat he recolects of seeing the sergen dress his wound which he received in said defeat this affiant being also wounded in the same engagement Shortly after said Ore got well he left the neighbourhood in which this affiant resided but affiant saw said Ore a few days since & know him to be the same individual



[The following document is extremely faint in the original.]

Kingwood, November 30th 1835

Sir [Secretary of War] It is extremely painful to be me again to trouble you on the subject of my pension and would to god I never had. But having made my declaration with all the formalities required by your department and it being accredited their; I cannot now consent to see it invalidated & my reputation brought into infamy and disgrace without using all the means in my power to prevent it. But I know not the point or ground on which my veracity is assailed therefore have to grapple with my enemy in the dark who he is I know not and this I can only say that I have been hopping on one leg for near fifty years gathering a scanty subsistence on my little farm frequently telling the short history of my service in the revolution which history you have and thought there was not an individual of my acquaintance who ever doubted the truth of it but sir I now offer to you the evidence of James Collins an old fellow soldier who knew me in the army in 1782 and who like myself was wounded in Crawfords defeat he Collins is now drawing his pension If this will not do I think the whole community in which I live will sustain my good character for truth I would not hold this language with you If I was not fully satisfied that you have every wish to do me Justice I would be glad if you would preserve with my decleration the affidavit here enclosed Your obedient Servant/ John Orr

Depart of War/ Pension Office/ Dec'r 19th 1835

Sir [John Orr, Kingwood] In reply to your letter of the 30th ult'o upon the subject of your claim I have to state, that your name was drop'd from the pension roll, after you had made your statement to Mr Singleton. In that statement you allege that you served two tours of one month each, and one tour of 2 months under Colo. Crawford. You further claim for services as an Indian Spy, not named in your original declaration [sic: see endnote] and of course is disallowed, leaving you [illegible word] less than 6 mo

There is also much discepancy between your two statements respecting your service; In your 1st you say that you volunteered in the spring under Col Crawford and returned home in May [sic], having served about 3 mo. From all the facts, it seems conclusive that your service did not amount to 6 mo and of course not entitled to a pension I am Res.

[copy not signed, but probably by James L. Edwards, Pension Commissioner]

Department of War/ Pension Office/ March 12 1836

Sir [William S. Morgan, House of Representatives] In reply to your enquiry relative to the claim of Jno Orr of Preston Co I have the honor to state, that from the several statements of Mr Orr it is conclusive that he did not serve six months unless we admit a claim for services as an Indian Spy not mentioned at all in his original declaration [sic]; against which there are very strong objections.

I informed Mr Orr by letter on the 21st of Dec last of these facts, and these reasons why his name had been dropped from the roll. I have the honor to be Respectfully

[On 12 May 1846 Elizabeth Orr, 74 or 75, applied for a pension stating that she married John Orr in December 1792 or 1793, and he died on 14 April 1840.]

State of Pennsylvania } Ss
Fayette County }

On the 24th day of June AD 1846 Personally appeared before me the undersigned one of the Justices of the peace in and for said County Rachael McClelland being duly Sworn deposes and says That Elizabeth Orr was the wife of John Orr and That John Orr was the oldest Brother of this Deponent, and further says that said John Orr was a Soldier in the Revolutionary War and was severely wounded in Colo Crawfords defeat in the year 1782 and Deponent further states that she seen his wounds dressed very often, the deponent cannot say positively whether John orr was in the Militia or Regular service. the Deponent further states that she was present at the wedding and marriage of said John Orr and Elizabeth Johns then, now, Elizabeth Orr and that they were married in January 1792 This deponent knows this fact by her own marriage the October Following. The deponent further saith not. Sworn and subscribed the day and year above written

Rachael herXmark McClelland

[On the same day John McClelland made a similar statement, adding that he knew of John Orr serving under Gen. Josiah Harmar on the campaign in which Harmar was defeated by Indians on 22 Oct 1890, after the Revolutionary War.]

State of Virginia
Preston County Ss

Be it known that on this 14 day of November AD 1853 personally appeared before the County Court of Preston County and State of Virginia Hiram Orr a resident of said County and State aged 49 years who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declation in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the acts of Congress passed 3 March 1843, 7 July 1838, 17 June 1844, 2 February 1848 and 3^d February 1853 granting pensions to widows of persons who served during the Revolutionary war. that the said Hiram Orr for himself and Catharine Fortney, John Orr, Ruth Menear, George Orr and James Orr being all the children of John Orr dec'd. and Elizabeth his Wife also deceased the said Elizabeth was the widow of John Orr who was a soldier in the revolutionary war, and was a pensioner of the United States upon the Virginia agency and resided in said County of Preston when he drew a pension and up to the time of his death, but previous to the time of his death his name was dropped from the Pension rool from a report of W. G. Singleton Esq. District attorney & Pension agent in which great injustice was done the said John Orr [see endnote]. our Father was lame from being shot in his left side near his hip joint as he said in Harmers defeat [sic] and we often examined the scar or wound and the said Hiram Orr says that he believes that his Father served as stated in his declaration and was wounded as stated by him and he offers the testimony of Hon'l. William G. Brown, Israel Baldwin, Wm. Zinn, George Brown his neighbors on that subject to counter act the report of said Singleton he begs leave to refer to his declaration and the testimony accompaning this declaration, that the said Elizabeth Orr was married to the said John Orr on the [blank] day of [blank] in the year 1790 that their marriage took place in the County of Fayette in the state of Pennsylvania that her maiden name before marriage was Elizabeth John that he has no record of their marriage, but would refer to the ages of their children the said John Orr died on the 16 day of April 1840 leaving the said Elizabeth Orr his widow

who continued his widow up to her death which took place in said County of Preston on the 7th day of February AD 1851 and my Father said that he served under Gen'l. Crawford and Gen'l Harmer sworn to and subscribed on the day and year first within written before said Court, being a Court of record

[signed] Hiram Orr

[An accompanying certificate states that Catharine Fortney was 60.]

Virginia Preston County Ss

On this 12 day of October AD 1858 personally appeared before me Peter M Hartley a Justice of the Peace in and for said County David Minear [see endnote] aged Ninety three years a resident of said County, who being duly sworn according to law, says that affiant was personally well acquainted with John Orr now deceased [interlined: "I was acquainted with him from a boy."] from the year 1782 up to the time of the death of said John Orr, who died in said County when affiant first became acquainted with said John Orr he was a boy only 16 years old that they lived in the County of Fayette in the State of Pennsylvania, affiant knows that said John Orr left home in the year 1782 and joined the United States Army under Crawford that said John Orr was absent from home about six months That when said Orr returned home he was wounded in his left side by a bullet shot he had frequently seen said Orr dress said wound [sic] and affiant has also dressed it. said Orr told affiant that he was in Crawfords defeat that he received said wound in said battle, and affiant knows that he was lame from that time or from the time affiant first saw him after the defeat of Crawford untill the death of said Orr, affiant believes that he was a soldier in the war of the Revolution, and that injustice was done him by the Hon'l. W. G. Singleton in his report on his case, affiant has no interest in application of the heirs of said John Orr dec'd for the pension money due their Father

David hisXmark Minear

[No date] Israel Baldwin of full age appeared in open Court being duly sworn days that he was personally acquainted with John Orr now deceased from the year 1824 untill his death that he knew him to have a limp or halt in his gait as he walked and understood his lameness to have been occasioned by a gunshot wound received by said Orr while employed as a soldier or ranger in the service of his county [sic] during the revolution or indian war soon after and that he understood at one time said Orr was a pensioner and when after his name was stricken from the list his neighbours men of truth and probity said he was unjustly stricken from the pension list as said Orr had without doubt been wounded in the service of his country as he was a man of truth and correct character the subscriber is 65 years of age and farther saith not

Israel Baldwin

Pension Office/ Nov'r 27, 1858

Sir [John P. Byrne Esq]: I have filed the affidavit of David Minear in support of the claim of Elizabeth Orr, widow of John, of Va, under the pension act of July 7th 1838. this affidavit is to the effect that John Orr was about six months in the campaign of Crawford's defeat. Orr himself estimated the duration of his service in this tour at two months. This leaves his actual service, as estimated by himself, but not all proved, at five months, only. The claim remains suspended.

[A letter dated 28 Feb 1860 again rejects the claim.]

NOTE:

James L. Edwards's statement that Orr "only performed two months actual service during the war of the revolution. His infrequent service not being provided for by law" is contrary to the pension act of 1832 and Edwards's own regulations for administering that law. Nothing in the law or regulations excludes "infrequent service" or service against Indians on the frontier. For further discussion of Edwards's decision to exclude service against Indians see my appendix to the pension application of David W. Sleeth S6111. Excluding this service by Orr left him with less than the six months minimum required for a pension.

The letter of 19 Dec 1835, presumably by Edwards, obviously misrepresents Orr's claims. His

letter of 12 March 1836 also either misrepresents Orr's original declaration or shows that Edwards thought "guarding the frontier against the indians" was somehow different from being an Indian Spy.

Numerous injustices were rightly attributed to Washington G. Singleton, but in Orr's case the fault was entirely with Edwards.

Further misrepresentation is found on a paper in the file regarding Elizabeth Orr, on which is written: "Rejected & suspended claims shows following cause of suspension: 'No claim – husband was improperly pensioned – his services were after the Revolution.'"

David Minear who made a statement in 1858 may have been the one of that name who filed pension application S15932, but that David Minear was said to have died in 1835.

The file of John and Elizabeth Orr contains misfiled documents pertaining to Jehu and Jane B. Orr (W5453).