

[Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters](#)

Pension Application of John Clarke R1991

DE

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 12 Dec 2014.

State of Ohio. Belmont County SS.

On this day of March A.D. 1853 personally appeared in open Court before the Court of Common Pleas in the County of Belmont in the State of Ohio now Sitting John Clarke a resident of Belmont County in the State of Ohio aged [blank] years who being first duly sworn according to Law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefits of the Act of Congress passed June 7th 1832; That he entered the service under the following named officers and served as herein stated:

Your declarant states that he entered the Army of the United States in the month of November A.D. 1779 with Captain Robert Kirkwood of the Delaware regiment of the line. That in the year 1777 when Gen'l. [William] Howe who on his march to the Battle ground at Chad's ford [sic: Chadds Ford PA], applicant went as a volunteer under Capt. John Craig of the Pennsylvania Militia and when the Company went forward to attack the enemy, declarant being then young was left in charge of the baggage and Horses of the Company, and the said Company had a battle with the British troops at Couch's Bridge on the road from the head of Elk [now Elkton MD] to Brandywine declarant cannot recollect the name of the commander of the Militia, but it was a branch of the main Army and Commanded by a Colonel.

On the day of the battle of Brandywine (11 Sept 1777) declarant was engaged in removing the wounded of the American Army from near Martin's ford at which place they were deposited to a church near Gilpin's tavern distance about two miles and a half from Chad's ford: we were under the protection of Gen'l [William] Maxwell's brigade of New Jersey militia. After the battle declarant was engaged in collecting wounded soldiers and carrying them to his Father's house where their wounds were dressed and where they remained some time, until they were sent for to the General hospital which declarant believes was then at Valley Forge.

Previous to said battle declarant was employed by Benjamin McCowen who was in the service of the waggon master Gen'l. to collect waggons and horses for the use of the American Army to convoy the baggage of the Army to the battle ground. the neighborhood settlement was composed principally of what was then termed "Hickory quoquers" [sic: Hickory Quakers, properly known as Hicksite Quakers, followers of Elias Hicks] – most inveterate Tories and the waggons and horses were obtained by impressment

During the whole of the winter of 1777 & 8 declarant was engaged as a volunteer under the said Capt. Craig in the service of preventing Tories in the States of Pennsylvania and Delaware from carrying provisions to the British Army then in Philadelphia, this duty was very severe being in the winter as most of it had to be done in the night. All the stock taken from the Tories on their way to Philadelphia was transferred to the American Cantonment under Gen'l. Washington.

In 1778 the State of Delaware undertook to furnish one regiment of regular troops. David Hall was Colonel and Allan McClane [Allen McLane] of Wilmington Lieutenant Colonel – the subalterns were William McKennon [William McKennan] and Robert Kirkwood of Newark White's Creek, New Castle County, State of Delaware and Captain [Joseph] Stedham. One Lewis Bush of Wilmington, a Major was killed at the battle of Brandywine in 1777 at a Fort which he refused to surrender to the British and was consequently shot. Capt. Stedham resigned, and Thomas Kane took his place. Kane also resigned and William McKennon and Robert Kirkwood were appropriated Captains. James Campbell Lieutenant and John Bates was Ensign in McKennon's Company. In Capt. Kirkwood's Company – Alexander Steward was Lieutenant and Paul Garratt ensign. In the year 1780 the part of the Army under Gen'l. [Horatio] Gates was sent to the Carolinas to contend with Lord Cornwallis and [Lt. Col. Banastre] Tarleton. Gates was defeated August 16th 1780 at Camden [South Carolina]. He ran off and left his troops to do for themselves. Here the Delaware Regiment was broken and reduced to little more than one company

Captain William McKennon and Lieutenant Bennet [sic: Caleb P. Bennett, pension application S35779] afterwards Governor of the State of Delaware came to Christian [Christiana] Bridge in Newcastle County in the State of Delaware and called for more men. I had five or six men enlisted but there was no money to pay bounty. Some of the men enlisted went on to the Army which then was placed under the command of Gen'l. Green [sic: Nathanael Greene] who after several battles to wit – Eutaw [Eutaw Springs SC, 8 Sep 1781], Guilford Court House [Guilford Courthouse NC, 15 Mar 1781] and the Cowpens [17 Jan 1781], drove the British out of the Carolinas into Yorktown, Virginia where Lord Cornwallis and his army surrendered prisoners of war to Gen'l. Washington in October [19] 1781. I think this was about the end of the War with the British Government as peace took place in 1783. In the absence of Capts Kirkwood and McKennon I was under the orders and control of Gov Collins then Governor of the State of Delaware

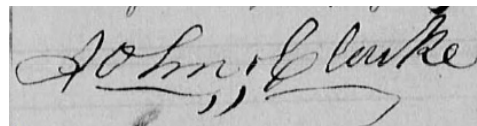
In the month of November 1779 declarant entered the regular army of the United States, under the Command of Capt Robt Kirkwood of the Delaware regiment Commanded by Colonel Hall. It was at the urgent request of said Kirkwood that declarant entered the service to continue to the end of the war declarant entered as a cadet and Capt Kirkwood engaged that on any vacancy of a subaltern office in his company: that declarant should be commissioned — the officers then commanding a company were a Captain and two lieutenants, but shortly afterwards, an Ensign was added to the command and declarant by orders of Capt Kirkwood listed and was considered by Capt Kirkwood and the other officers of said Company and by Capt William McKennon and the officers of that company in the said regiment as Ensign in Kirkwood's Company, and that on the said Regiment being ordered to the southward under Gen'l Gates declarant was engaged and employed Ensign in the recruiting service and that during this service declarant enlisted for the American Army at least five soldiers and delivered them at Christian bridge to Captain William McKennon and continued in the said service until the termination of the war in the year 1783.

Sometime after the termination of the war declarant met with Capt Kirkwood who addressed declarant and observed that as soon as he returned home he would furnish declarant a certificate of his service, which would be satisfactory evidence of the time he served and the rank he held in the Delaware regiment; this Capt Kirkwood neglected to do and before declarant had an opportunity of again seeing him, he (Kirkwood) was appointed a Captain in Gen'l. [Arthur] St. Clair's army and was killed in the Engagement St. Clair had with the Indians in 1791 [near present Fort Wayne IN, Nov 1791].

Declarant does not ask a pension for for his volunteer services in the militia, but for that rendered as Ensign, Commencing in November 1779 and until the conclusion of peace in the year 1783.

Declarant would have made earlier application, but that he intended to apply personally and was often prevented by sickness, sometimes for want of funds to bear his expenses to the seat of government, but most particularly from expecting to procure personal evidence of his service which from the decease of all with whom he was acquainted at the time it was rendered, he is still unable to provide.

Your declarant 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.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John Clarke". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Answer to the Interrogatories propounded by the Court.

- Ans. 1. I was born in Newcastle Co State of Delaware in Christian Hundred on the 23^d of Nov. 1767 or 1768 and am now 85 or 86 years of age [see endnote]
- Ans. 2. The record of my age is in my father's bible, now in the hands of Wm. Clarke Esq'r. living in Beaver, Beaver Co Pa.
- Ans 3. I lived in Newcastle Co Delaware in Christian Hundred until the year 1786; I removed to the town of Washington in Washington Co Pa; I now live in Belmont Co. Ohio where I have resided about fifty years.

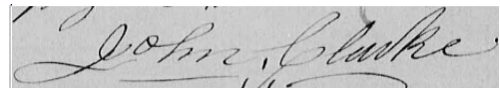
- Ans 4. I was called into service by the advice and solicitation of Capt. Robert Kirkwood, then Captain in the Delaware regiment commanded by Col David Hall and Lieutenant Col Allen McClain, I enlisted as a Cadet, under the grade of Ensign, and served in the recruiting service until the year 1781, money ran out; the Continental money was at that time not worth any thing. Capt. Kirkwood going to the South with the Delaware Regiment under Gen'l. Gates, left me under the direction of Gov. Collins, (who was then Governor of the State of Delaware), through his secretary, and aid Capt Joseph Barker.
- Ans 5. I was acquainted with Major Lewis Bush who was killed at the Battle of Brandywine; Captain Robert Kirkwood, Jos Stedham, Thomas Kane, William McKennon; Lieuts. James Campbell, — Bennett, afterwards Governor of the State of Delaware, and Alexander Stewart, taken prisoner at the battle of Camden in 1780. I was also acquainted with Col. Moore of the Pennsylvania line. and ensign John Bateson.
- Ans 6. This [his discharge] was left to Capt Robt Kirkwood, who promised to have all my account settled for recruiting &c with the war department. On account of affliction in his family, he neglected to settle my accounts, and part of his own which have been settled by his heirs since his death. I bore my own expense, I did not receive any pay while in service. I never received a discharge
- Ans 7. I received a written statement from Capt Robt Kirkwood on condition of which I went into service, and understood him that a commission would be sent to him for me. If this was done I never received it. I performed all the duties of my appointment the same as if I had received my commission. When I came into this Western Country I left all my papers concerning my connection with the Delaware regiment and the army of the Revolution in my Fathers hands, he informed me that he never received any thing. He removed to Washington Co. in 1787 or '88. All of his papers together with my own and a good deal of continental money he destroyed, thinking them to be of no use.
- Ans 8. Reference as to character &c Jos McCaughey, Moses Rhodes, Rev D. S. Welling, Reuben Miller, C. Hesson. Rev James B Brockeiner Jos Caldwell Ex President of Merchants & Mechanics Bank, & Chas Knox Merchant. Wheeling Va.

Bridgeport post office March 16th 1854

the Honorable John L Dawson Esq'r

Dr Sir} I Rec'd. your letter of the 11th this day after Examining its contents I finde in my Claim for pention the pention agent Has thought propper to defer a desission in the matter for some reasons which at this late day and all who new anything connected with my services in the war of the revolution is dead long time you say something about my service in 1777 in this service I was along with a Benjamin McCowen who was in the wagon master service in this service I was under the Controle of my father. after this in 1788 [sic] Captain William McCannon came to our neighbourhood to recruit and in list men for His Companey I was employed to asst Sargent Maxwell in this service ocaationley with Lutenant James Cammel and sometimes with Ensign John Bateson they were officer in Captain McCammons Companey after this I enlisted with Captain Robert Kirkwood as I have stated in my aplication for a pention as be agreement &c after gates was defeated at the Batle of Camden in Carolina. Captain Wm. McKannon and Let Benet after governour of Delaware came from the American army to Christeen bridge in new Castle County for to get more men their was not money to recruit with. I Had a few men inlisted which they took Charge of I think for want of money they did not join the army this was in 1780 in 1781 Cornwalace and His army was taken and there was no more recruiting or inlisting men (the peice took place in 1783 & if the pention agent should be any way doubtful in my Case I do not no that I Have any ufrther Evidance in the matter. I Have fulfild all the Enquerey and answred all the Enterogatorys put by the war department (the declaration was not filed up by the Clerk of the Court as I wished it was done in a Hurrey and not to my mind. I Comenced this aplication for a pention in 1835 sopusieing it would Have to go before Congress I Had concluded that I would not be able to get a

pension in my lifetime I laid the matter up until I was informed the pension agent would attend to such cases I therefore got Mr Cranmer a young lawyer to take my old application and revise it and draft the one now in your possession, as this was done entirely from memory there may be so many errors in it you say my nephew Robert D Clark is there and will attend to the matter He has found my name on the Roles of 1779 in Delaware state this does not correspond with my application I do not know that I can put this in any other shape, the winter of 1780 was the most severe that has ever been experienced in the United States and of course nothing was or could be done until in the spring in that year General Gates was sent of the Carolinas to contend with Cornwallis and Tarleton I was left to recruit but money was wanting I bore my own expence done what I could until the defeat of Cornwallis & c in 1781 October, you will please give my friendship to our Robert D I should like to hear from him (I served as a volunteer 1792 one month St Clair was defeated in 1791 I then was in Washington when the news came an Express came from Pittsburgh calling for volunteers to escort pack horses and beef cattle to the [illegible word] forts Venango and Erie supposing the Indians would immediately attempt to take those forts they were out of provisions and amunition I with others turned out we served one month time the month of January 1792 I bore my own expence found my own gun amunition & c I never rec'd anything I have a witness to prove this service I served as a Captain of Cavalry in 1795 after the Whiskey insurrection under General [Daniel] Morgan from the 25 December until 20th April in same year (Morgan broke up his camp at Bentleys farm my account was not settled and I did not get a discharge not being there when the army was discharged I mention those cases to shew I have other claims beside those presented & as I suppose you are engaged most of your time in Congress you cannot attend to any private case (therefor I [illegible word] Robert D Clarke can do any thing for me I will make him complete return and if he wants any information I can give he [illegible word] have it by application) my friend Honorable Wilson Thurmon Esquire [page is torn and text is garbled here and elsewhere at *] to attend to my claim for damage he will do all [*] my claim any evidence or instance to [*] willing to give him will be thankfully acknowledged [*] Read my writing or understand I therefore ask your indulgence and will be pleased to hear from you when you can make it convenient you will please except my best wishes for your health and happiness your Hmbl S't

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John Clarke". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and somewhat slanted to the right.

NOTE: A letter from the Pension Commissioner dated 4 April 1854 explains that Clarke's application was rejected because "what he did was only a voluntary service rendered by an ardent youth, who was too young to perform service as a soldier. This view is well sustained by his frank statements in his letter of the 16th ult. which bears all the marks of truth and candor." In fact, however, nothing in the pension act of 1832 or the regulations of the Pension Office specifically precludes a pension for such voluntary service or sets a minimum age.