

## Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of John Spencer R9977

f59VA

Transcribed by Will Graves

3/26/12

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Where the meaning is not compromised by adhering to the spelling, punctuation or grammar, no change has been made. Corrections or additional notes have been inserted within brackets or footnotes. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. A bracketed question mark indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. Only materials pertinent to the military service of the veteran and to contemporary events have been transcribed. Affidavits that provide additional information on these events are included and genealogical information is abstracted, while standard, 'boilerplate' affidavits and attestations related solely to the application, and later nineteenth and twentieth century research requests for information have been omitted. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading fails to catch all misinterpretations. Also, dates or numbers which the software treats as numerals rather than words are not corrected: for example, the software transcribes "the eighth of June one thousand eighty six" as "the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1786." Please call errors or omissions to my attention.]

Common Pleas Court November Term 1841

The State of Ohio Warren County Sct: Application for a Pension

On this 17th day of November in the year 1841, personally appeared in open court, being the Court of Common Pleas for the County aforesaid now in session, John Spencer, a resident of Warren County aforesaid, aged seventy-eight years, 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 7th, 1832:

That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers & served as hereinafter stated.

First: This declarant states that he resided in the County of Ohio, in the State of Virginia, & whilst residing there, his Father William Spencer, was, about the 1st of April 1779, drafted to go on a tour against the Indians for the term of six months: and this declarant (then being about 15 years of age was accepted & went out as his said Father's Substitute who performed that duty for him: & declarant states that he served out said term as follows – At the time last aforesaid he marched to a Fort at the mouth of Big Beaver (name of said Fort not recollected) at which place he entered the service under Joseph Bean who was Captain of said Fort, but this declarant does not recollect the names of the regimental Officers under whose command Captain Bean's Company was placed. This declarant at that time was young & very active, and was considered a very good woodsman, having been raised in the forest, and was, therefore, upon his arrival at said Fort, selected & appointed with three other persons, by Captain Bean, to act as Indian Spies between the Fort aforesaid and Fort Tuscarawa which was about sixty miles distant from the Fort at the mouth of Big Beaver aforesaid, and situate on the Muskingum River. This declarant, and the other three spies, were nearly the whole time employed in spying before the Guard under whose protection provisions were carried to Fort Tuscarawa. After serving on this tour for the term of seven months and about a half, this declarant was honorably discharged & returned to his home aforesaid, about the middle of November in the year 1779.

Secondly – This declarant further states that whilst he was residing at the same place aforesaid, he having acquired some reputation as an Indian Spy, sometime in the month of May in the year 1780, as near as he can recollect, he together with three other active persons, to wit, James Spencer, Samuel Brady & Lewis Whitsell (a greater number not being selected for fear of making too large a trail) were chosen by Captain McClure, whose Christian name is not recollected, to go to upper Sandusky & ascertain how many Indians were there, their strength & war light condition &c & to report whether it would be expedient or practicable to send out a Campaign against them. This declarant thereupon, in company with his said three comrades, set out from Cox's Fort on the Ohio River and went to Upper Sandusky when they arrived in safety.

After lying in the vicinity of the Indian Town of Sandusky, concealed in the forest & thickets for several days spying the Indians & watching the movements they returned to Coxes fort aforesaid with their report, having been absent on said tour of duty about twenty days, & without having encountered any other difficulty and suffering from want of food. Declarant performed his service as a volunteer.

Thirdly – This declarant also states that, his residence being at the same place aforesaid, shortly after his return from Upper Sandusky as aforesaid, to wit, about the first of June in the year 1780, he volunteered in the service of the United States, and served as an Indian Spy, or Ranger as sometimes called. His services consisted in spying, with others, continually, on the North West side of the Ohio River, between the mouth of Big Beaver & the mouth of McMahan's Creek – going continually two & two, between the two points. Lawrence Van Buskirk, then in command of Beech Bottom Fort, was the Captain of this declarant, and his commandant was Colonel McClure – but said Spies acted principally under the direct orders of said Colonel McClure. There was a line of forts or block houses at that time upon the Ohio River, principally upon the Eastern side thereof, to which, however, the spies had frequent communication. Those forts, as now recollected, are chiefly the following – a Fort at the mouth of Big Beaver (name not recollected) – McGuire's Fort, under the command of Captain Frank McGuire, Wells Fort under the command of Captain Charles Wells, these two were off the Ohio, on the waters of Buffalo Creek – Beech bottom Fort [also known as Fort Gaddis] on the Virginia side of the Ohio River & Beech bottom Fort on the North Western side of said River, the latter under the command of Captain Van Buskirk – Coxes Fort under the command of Captain Samuel Brady – Fort Wheeling & Grass [Graves?]<sup>1</sup> Creek Fort. After serving five months on this tour, this declarant, about the 1st of November in the year 1780, went into winter Quarters at Coxes Fort, where he remained until the following Spring.

Fourthly – This Declarant states about the 1st of March 1781 a Mrs. Glass the wife of John Glass was taken by the Indians near Fort Wells, in this Declarant therefrom in company with 15 or 16 others under the command of Captain Frank McGuire, pursued the Indians & recaptured Mrs. Glass at the Piny Fork of Shat Creek [Shot Creek?] about 9 or 10 miles from the Ohio River, on the North Western side thereof: and from this time this declarant was constantly engaged as an Indian spy until the Fall of the same year – the services rendered by him were performed at the same place, & were of the same character, of those rendered the previous year – that is to say, acting as spy upon the Indians, between the mouth of Big Beaver & the mouth of McMahan's Creek upon the Ohio River. And the declarant, as the year before, received his orders generally from Colonel McClure; and said Buskirk, if he mistakes not was his Captain – this service was also rendered in the character of a volunteer; and he returned to coxes Fort about the 1st of November (having been out about 8 months) in the year 1781, and again wintered at that Fort.

Declarant also served other tours as Indian Spy, during the Revolutionary War, but he cannot prove any service other [than] that heretofore detailed. And, after the close of the Revolutionary War, on the commencement of the Indian hostilities on the Frontier Settlements, he again entered the service of his Country, as an Indian Spy, and was constantly engaged as such during the whole & up to the termination of the Indian Wars – He accompanied General Wayne in his expedition, as an Indian Spy, and during an engagement with the Indians, under General

Wayne's Command this Declarant received a severe wound in his left hand by an Indian tomahawk, at the hands of an Indian.

The services performed by this declarant during the revolutionary War, as before detailed, in the whole amount to little over twenty-one months; and in all, save the first service detailed, he served as a volunteer and in the character of Indian Spy, under the command of Colonel McClure, who received his orders direct from General Washington, as he was informed & believes. This declarant states that he has no documentary evidence of his age & services during the Revolutionary War – his father's house having been pillaged & burnt by the Indians, in the year 1782, and all valuable papers therein contained, together with the Bible in which was registered the names & ages of all his Children were burnt up.

The reason why Declarant has not heretofore applied for a pension is that he could live well enough without it – having been blessed with health & strength to labor for a livelihood, although partially disabled by the wound received in his left hand as aforesaid: but having now become old & infirm and unable (especially from his said wound) to work for a living, he thinks it no more than just to claim, and he does therefore, hereby claim the benefit of the bountiful provision made by government for her Revolutionary Soldiers – although under other circumstances he never would have preferred [?]such claim.

And this declarant hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present & declares that his name is not on the Pension Roll of the agency of any State. Sworn to & subscribed in open Court this 17th day of November 1841

S/ H. M. Stokes, Clerk

S/ John Spencer



[f p. 15: John Probasco, a clergyman, and David Baker gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

The State of Ohio Clinton County: Sct.

Before the undersigned Justice of the Peace in & for the County of Clinton aforesaid personally came this day, James Spencer<sup>2</sup> who on being duly sworn deposes & saith, that he is now & has been all his life well acquainted with John Spencer, an applicant for a pension before the Common Pleas Court for Warren County Ohio, & whose declaration is hereto attached – and he also says that the said John Spencer is about seventy-eight years of age as this affiant verily believes – he himself being an elder brother of the said John Spencer.

This Affiant well recollects the first term of service described by the said John Spencer in his said declaration – and he knows that the said John's served about seven months during that tour, as a substitute for his Father, William Spencer, under one Captain Bean – that said Term of service commenced about the 1st of April 1779. This affiant was out in the United states service at the same time the said John was as aforesaid, but not in the same Corps, being further down the River – He, however, very frequently saw and heard from his brother during that period, as their services were rendered in the character of Indian Spies & the point of intersection – communication was Beech bottom Fort, or Block House.

This affiant likewise recollects the second term of service detailed by the said John

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<sup>2</sup> [James Spencer W4590](#)

Spencer in his said declaration. For this affiant was with him. Colonel McClure selected four persons that is to say this affiant, John Spencer, Samuel Brady & Lewis Whitsell to go to Upper Sandusky to ascertain the strength &c of the Indians at that point, & whether it would be prudent to organize & send out a Military force against them: – Accordingly those four persons above named about the 1st part of May 1780, set out from Cox's Fort on the Ohio, on this expedition, & reached Sandusky Town & remained there some time spying the Indians, & returned again in safety to Cox's Fort, after having been gone on their service nineteen or twenty days. This Tour of duty was performed by the persons aforesaid as volunteers.

This affiant also well knows, that, after his return from Upper Sandusky as aforesaid, the said John Spencer served the United States, as a volunteer, in the character of an Indian Spy, or Ranger, during the whole of the summer & part of the Fall that is to say his services commenced somewhere between the 1st & 10th of June 1780, & ended in the forepart of November in the same year last aforesaid making at least five months of service. This affiant was also out with his said brother during the greater part of this Service – and the duty performed was that of spying on the West side of the Ohio River, between McMahon's Creek & the mouth of Big Beaver of said River – there were others also engaged in the same service, and the names of the Forts, & the commanders thereof, are accurately stated in the said John Spencer's declaration aforesaid. The spies engaged in this service acted sometimes under the orders of the Captains of the several forts, whose names are correctly stated in said declaration, but generally received their orders from Colonel McClure. This affiant states that, during this tour of duty Captain Van Buskirk, the commandant of Beech bottom Fort, was the commander of the Corps to which the said John Spencer was attached. This was a very hard Tour of duty – and nothing was got from government during the time – it furnish neither rations nor ammunition.

This affiant also states he knows that the said John Spencer likewise performed service for the United States as a volunteer for the period of eight months at least – commencing about the last of February or 1st of March in the year 1781, & ending in the month of November in the same year. This affiant recollects the circumstance of Mrs. Glass being captured by the Indians, as set forth in the said John Spencer's declaration aforesaid; & of her recapture by a party of 15 or 20 whites, – this affiant & his said brother John Spencer, being members of the company that recaptured her; and from the period of her capture, which happened the last of February or 1st of March 1781, until the 1st of November, or some time in the latter month 1781, the said John Spencer was out constantly as an Indian spy. The services were rendered as before, on the West side of the Ohio, between the mouth of Big Beaver & McMahon's Creek, and his officers were the aforesaid Colonel McClure & Captain L. Van Buskirk.

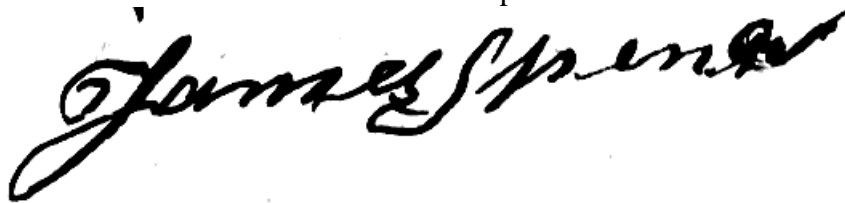
This was the last term of service performed by the said John Spencer of which this affiant had any personal knowledge, as this affiant then left that section of the Country – but affiant has no doubt but that his brother still continued in the service of his Country in the capacity of Indian Spy, as he was extremely fond of the woods, – young active & a good woodsman – and the services of such were, at that time, much required & sought after.

And this affiant knows, that, after the Revolutionary War was ended, and after the Indians had commenced their depredations upon our Frontier Settlements, that the said John Spencer was engaged as an Indian Spy during those Wars – he was out under General St. Clair, & General Wayne – during which time as affiant believes, the said John Spencer received, one at least if not more wounds – one in the hand partially disabling him. And the said John Spencer also served in the late war.

The services performed by the said John Spencer in the Revolutionary War as herein

before detailed were performed by him whilst he had his residence in Ohio County Virginia – and further saith not.

Sworn to & subscribed before me this 30th day of October 1841  
S/ Adam Miller, JP S/ James Spencer

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James Spencer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, decorative initial "J".

[f p. 23]

The State of Ohio Warren County: Application for a Pension

Personally appeared before me a Justice of the Peace within and for the County aforesaid John Spencer who being duly sworn deposes and says that the Captain of spies of which he has spoken in his application for a pension was not a commissioned officer but when the duty commonly required of spies was to be performed a certain number of persons were appointed and one of the number was named as Captain it was this duty the applicant performed both under General St. Clair & Wayne being a more temporary appointment no commission was granted and the command expired when the particular duty required was performed.

This applicant further states that the reason why he has not made an earlier application for a pension is simply this. For the most part of his life he has found his property suitable to obtain a decent living and he had resolved never to ask any aid from his government but he has now grown old and from the wounds he has received as stated in the certificate of the surgeons he is unable to earn a livelihood. This applicant further states that if he had seen fit to have made application for a pension many years ago he could have placed the fact of his numerous services in the Indian wars beyond all dispute ordered out by the testimony of John Sharp, Jabish Phillips and Captain Benham all of whom lived in the vicinity but not feeling the necessity of any aid from government at that time nor for many years since their deceased he could not then a great to make application but now when the necessity has arisen he finds it difficult to find man who were engaged in those wars with him and the only living witnesses within his knowledge are [ink blot obliterates one or more words] James Spencer and Peter Spencer, J. Cochran. This applicant further states that testimony was contained in papers which he had sent to the department in which he claimed compensation for horses lost in the service which showed conclusively his own services but applicant has learned that all his papers were lost during the late war when the British burned the capital. This applicant believes he has fully explained what the commissioner desired and further saith not.

Sworn to & subscribed before made this 13th April A.D. 1843  
S/ Benjamin Blackman, JP S/ John Spencer

[f p. 46]

Personally appeared before me a Justice of the Peace within and for the Township of turtleneck in the County of Warren [Ohio] James Spencer who being duly sworn deposes and says that in the spring of 1781 this deponent and the applicant John Spencer volunteered as spies North West of the Ohio [River] under Captain Lewis Van Buskirk. Van Buskirk's company was under the command of Major McCollock and Colonel McClure of Virginia near Wheeling. Van Buskirk's company was a company of spies. The company left Fort Wheeling in the spring of

1781, crossed the Ohio River into what is now the State of Ohio and continued to perform duty until the close of 1783. The company discharged duty ranging from Yellow Creek which empties into the Ohio below Beaver to McMahan's Creek below Wheeling. John Spencer was at that time quite young perhaps sixteen years old and I was about one year and nine months older than him. There were but few skirmishes when we were as spies. And in 1783 deponent left the company and went below on the Ohio to Marietta and Gallipolis leaving John Spencer as one of Van Buskirk's company. In 1791 deponent left Gallipolis and landed at Fort Washington now Cincinnati and entered into the service under Major Purlee or Balee the exact name deponent cannot remember, quartermaster. In 1792 deponent drove hogs from Fort Washington to Fort Hamilton and Fort Jefferson. John Spencer the applicant was then assisting to drive the hogs. John Spencer had come to Fort Washington in the latter part of 1791. In 1792 he and deponent took provisions in boats up the Miami [River] to Fort Hamilton and we were engaged during that year in boating as just stated and in driving cattle and hogs from Fort Washington to Fort Hamilton. In 1793 we were under the command of Robert Benham packhorse master and served until March 1784. We were very frequently separated and deponent was not at the defeat of Major Adair at Fort St. Clair but at that time was at Fort Hamilton. Deponent as far back as 1798 heard the said John Spencer complained of his being hurt. Deponent can't state that his hand was hurt a great many years ago. Deponent was not present when the said John Spencer received his wound in the hand, nor can he state where he received a wound in his own knowledge, all he can say is that he has frequently heard him state that he did receive the loan under Major Adair at Fort St. Clair and further deponent saith not.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 8th day of September 1842

S/ Benjamin Blackburn, JP

S/ James Spencer

[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$8 per month commencing July 24, 1843, for service as an Indian spy.]

[Note: There is documentation in this file dealing with the veterans services in the Indian wars of the 1790s and in the war of 1812. I have not transcribed those documents except to the extent as set forth above because they do not relate to the revolutionary war, the focus of this database.]