

## Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Declaration of Elijah Clay, S32178

f36VA

Transcribed and annotated by Roy Randolph, February 16, 2012.

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading. A bracketed question mark [?] indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. Not all the material in the Pension File is included in the transcription.]

State of Illinois, Edgar County

Be it remembered that at the December term of the County Commissioner's Court in and for said county and state begun and holden at Paris in said county on Monday this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of December 1833 personally appeared in open court Elijah Clay of said county and state aged seventy four years on the 27<sup>th</sup> of August 1833 who being duly sworn according to law made on oath the following declaration in order obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1832 relative to the surviving officers and soldiers of the Revolution. That is to say, I Elijah Clay was born in the state of Virginia in the county of Cumberland on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of August 1759. I think it was in the month of August in the year 1777 that I enlisted in Cumberland County Virginia under one Lieutenant Thomas Clay for a period of three years. The next day after I had enlisted Lieut. Clay and 16 that had enlisted including myself started on our way to Yorktown or York in Virginia. In Chesterfield County on our way to York I was sworn to my enlistment by one Jacob Asher of Chesterfield County. From Chesterfield County went through James City, Charles City into New Kent County. Among the 16 men enlisted by Thomas Clay as aforesaid I remember the names of Daniel Fargis, John Fargis, John Newberry Edward Crosstick, Abraham Dunorant, Jacob Flournoy & Nathaniel Rice who was afterwards made quartermaster sergeant. In going from Cumberland to York we crossed James River at a place called the Hundred. Soon after we got to York men enough had come in to form a regiment, which was done and of this regiment Thomas Marshall was made colonel and I think Elias Edmonson [sic, probably Elias Edmunds] was major. Of the company to which I belonged Henry Quarles was captain, Thomas Clay lieutenant. I was in Major Edmonson's [Edmund's] Battalion when Edmonson [Edmunds] came to York from Fauquier County his place of residence. He came a captain and was made a major at York. Owing to my health becoming somewhat bad I was discharged 10 months before my time was out & returned home to Cumberland County Virginia. I got for this service a written discharge. It has been some years since I saw it but I think the discharge was in full for 3 years & that was probably owing to my having a Negro boy in the service at York and Williamsburg where we were occasionally stationed during my service who waited upon the officers.

I had however been at home only about 10 or 12 days when hearing that the British were committing ravages on the shores of James River. I volunteered under captain George Williamson. In this expedition we rendezvoused at Petersburg & one Hamilton was major. We marched through Prince George County to a place called Hood's. Near this place the British lay in their shipping except a small party with whom we, two companies of us I think, had a fight. It began in the forepart of the night. I think the British [losses were] 52 killed and wounded. Finding us too hard for them or from some other cause they went on board then [their] shipping when they, all the British, got

under weigh and went down the river to Norfolk. A few days after the battle at Hood's Captain George Williamson's and another company left Hood's & went to a place called Jericho situated of about 2 miles below Suffolk Courthouse thorough which place the British and just gone when we got there and had left the place in ashes. We had been sent to this place, Jericho, about 20 miles from Norfolk to guard against & to watch the motions of the enemy. About once a week 18 or 20 of us under an officer were sent to Hall's Mills about 18 miles. In going to Hall's Mills we had to go through a part of the Dismal Swamp & the water was 2 or 3 feet deep in places through which we had to wade. In this expedition I served seven months & returned from it late in the spring or early in the summer of 1780. I was discharged & came home where I stayed 2 or 3 weeks & again volunteered under one captain Hughs [sic, Hughes]. We were ordered to rendezvous at Point Comfort. In this expedition I served just six weeks. I was discharged at Point Comfort & was during this my third term of service occasionally stationed at Hampton, Williamsburg and Smithfield for the purposes of guarding the places & of noticing the movements of the enemy. I also performed a volunteer tour in the fall of 1780 of 4 weeks & was discharged at Smithfield.

In the month of February in the year 1781 I was ordered to meet the militia company at the Courthouse in Cumberland now called Powhatan Courthouse Virginia to stand a Draft. I did as I was ordered & was drafted but for how long I do not remember. We were ordered to be ready in 5 days to march after we were drafted. Captain George Williamson who had ordered the draft started with us and continued but a few days when taking sick. His place as captain was supplied by Capt. Thomas Hubbard. We started towards North Carolina as was said to join General Green [sic, Nathanael Greene]. We were joined on the way by other companies and by the time we had got as far as Prince Edward Courthouse where men enough had got together to form, I think, a brigade. A brigade was therefore formed at a place called Sandy Creek Bridge. Of this brigade Robert Lawson was General, of my regiment Henry Skipwith Colonel, St. George Tucker Major & of my company Thomas Hubbard was Captain, John Moseley Lieutenant and Thomas Moseley Ensign. We now marched to Mecklenburg Courthouse and crossed the Roanoke at Taylor's Ferry into North Carolina. Soon after we got into N. Carolina we passed the residence of General Parsons. When we came near to Gen. Parsons some of the men who knew him & knew that he had cider went on ahead of the rest of the men in order to get some. We stayed at this place long enough to cook and eat [at] the back side of the General's farm & by some means or other a fire got into the grass & burned up 2000 or 3000 panels of fence & several tobacco houses. We went on and joined General Greene at or near Guilford Courthouse & I was in the battle of Guilford Courthouse [March 15, 1781]. I was well acquainted with Captain William Jones of Buckingham County Virginia who was killed in the battle. General Lawson's brigade marched to the forks of Cape Fear and Deep River (but why it was marched there I do not know) and then the brigade was discharged on, I think, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 1781. General Lawson then marched us to Hillsborough & on the next morning after we got there each captain by order of the Gen. took his men & marched them home.

In the service of 2 years & 2 months under Captain Quarles I was in the artillery & for 10 or 12 months of this time I was. [There is no punctuation here and I have added a period to try an make sense of this long and somewhat confusing sentence.] But with the exception of that I never got one cent paid either from the United States or from

Virginia or from any other state. In all the expeditions except the first I was in the militia & never received an article of clothing for & during my continuance in the service. Colonel Edward Carrington had been stationed at York previous to his place being supplied by Thomas Marshall's regiment. I do not know certainly whether I was in the state service or on [in] the Continental Establishment or how it was but this I know that I have stated the facts just [as] they were so far as I can remember them. Facts which may enable the Department to say whether I was in the state troops or not.

The court and propounded the following interrogatories to the applicant who made thereto the several answers annexed to them.

Question 1. Where and in what year were you born?

Answer 1. I was born in Cumberland County, Virginia on the 27<sup>th</sup> day of August 1759.

Question 2. Have you any record of your age and if so where is it?

Answer 2. I have no record of my age with the exception of that in my father's family Bible by which I shall be of the age represented in the body of this declaration.

Question 3. Where were you living when called into service? Where have you lived since the Revolutionary War and where do you now live?

Answer 3. When called into service I was living in Cumberland, now Powhatan County in the state of Virginia. I have lived in the state of Virginia all my life till four years ago when I came from there to the county of Edgar and state of Illinois where I now live.

Question 4. How were you called into service were you drafted did you volunteer or were you a substitute and if a substitute for four whom?

Answer 4. In the first tour of duty I was enlisted, in the last I was drafted and in all others I was a volunteer.

Question 5. State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops where you served such continental and militia regiments as you can and the general circumstances of your service.

Answer 5. The general circumstances of my service so far as I can remember them I have already stated in this declaration. I can remember the names of many officers but to say whether they were regular or militia I cannot at this period say. The only the Regiment I remember is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Virginia regiment which was the one in which I performed my first tour of service under Captain Quarles. I remember General Greene, Baron Steuben [Friedrich von Steuben], General Lawson, Colonel Marshall, Colonel Skipwith, Major Hamilton, Major Edmunson [Edmunds], Captain Quarles, Captain Hughes, Colonel Goode, Colonel Edward Carrington, Captain Flemming [Fleming], Captain George Williamson, Major St. George Tucker, Captain Thomas Hubbard, Lieutenants Thomas Clay & John Moseley & Ensign Thomas Moseley. I remember a man who was called Colonel Reddick but I do not think he had a commission. Also I knew Captain Nathaniel Clay & Col. or Gen. Charles Scott. (Col. Scott died a few years ago in Kentucky) and Lieut. William Moseley.

Question 6. Did you ever receive a discharge from the service and if so by whom was it given and what has become of it?


Answer 6. For my first tour of service I got a discharge from Colonel Thomas Marshall. Some years ago I went to see my son in a distant part of Virginia leaving my discharge with my daughter Catherine in the county of Montgomery in Virginia. I stayed longer with my son than I expected and when he came to this country I came with him without going to see my daughter Catherine. Since I came here I got a letter from my daughter in which said she had my discharge in safety. I have written for it several times within a few months but have heard nothing upon the subject of it. It is impossible for me to go for it myself not only because of my great bodily infirmity but also because all my property on earth if sold would not bring money enough to pay my way to Virginia.

Question 7. State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighborhood and who can testify as to your character for veracity and their belief of your service as a soldier of the Revolution.

Answer 7. John Burns a preacher of the gospel, William Mayo also a preacher of the gospel, General Sanford and Thomas Wilson.

I will further state a circumstance that may aid in the investigation of my claim. Virginia militia were laid off into classes. Every class, once in so often but how often I cannot say, had to furnish a man. I think it was in 1780 that my class hired a man. His name was William Locket or Lockhart. He and was put with Captain Charles Flemming's [sic, Fleming's] company and marched to the north I think. But whether Captain Flemming's [sic, Fleming's] company belonged to the Continental or State troops I am not able to say.

I have no documentary evidence except that already spoken of in this declaration and I know of no living witness by whom I can prove my service and I do hereby relinquish every claim what ever to a pension or an annuity except the present and declare that my name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state. Subscribed and sworn to in open court the day and year aforesaid. S/ Elijah Clay

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elijah Clay". The signature is written in dark ink on a light background.

*Observations regarding Elijah Clay's enlistment and service. Mr. Clay includes his original discharge in his pension application and it reads, "York garrison, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1778. Mr. Elijah Clay a listed soldier for three years his time being expired he is now discharged by me. T. Marshall, Col. 1<sup>st</sup> Regt." Mr. Clay notes in his pension declaration he was discharged ten months prior to the completion of his three-year enlistment. If this is true then his initial enlistment lasted two years and two months (26 months). If this 26-month period had elapsed on May 18, 1778 then he enlisted March 18, 1776. Contrary to this deduced enlistment date (March 1776), Mr. Clay states at the beginning of his declaration he thought he enlisted in August of 1777. The time from August 1777 to May 1778 (the date of the discharge) is only nine months. However, it seems Mr. Clay served more than the initial enlistment. He was in the militia as late as March 1781 because he participated in the Battle of Guilford Courthouse, March 15, 1781. Given these dates it is not clear how Mr. Clay's service was computed but it seems he was given credit for two-years' service as a private since he received a pension of \$80.00 per year—full pay for a private with two years of service. Note regarding Elijah Clay's age: Born August 27, 1759, Mr. Clay would have been sixteen years old in*

*March of 1776—minimum age for militia service. If he enlisted on or after August 27, 1777, he would have been 18 years old.*