

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of Simon Kenton S41719

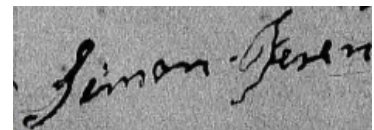
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled.

Your memorialist Simon Kenton respectfully represents that he was born in the State of Virginia on the 3^d day of April 1755, and at the early age of sixteen, to wit in the year 1771 accompanied by only two other persons, came to the country now composing the State of Kentucky with a view of exploring it, and never returned to his native State even on a visit, till after the treaty of peace in 1783. that within that period he was almost constantly engaged in the service of his country. As early as 1774 he was actually engaged in the Campaign of Lord Dunmore, then Governor of Virginia. That upon the Revolutionary war breaking out, he, together with the other explores of the fine country on the Ohio, betook themselves to Stations, which they fortified in the best manner their means would admit, being resolved to use their best efforts to prevent the country from being overrun and subdued by the Savage Allies of Great Britain; and in the defence of those stations, and of the country he was engaged in a multitude of battles and skirmishes with the Indians. He also rendered important services as a spy, and in one of his expeditions of that kind, to wit in September 1778, he was taken a prisoner by the Indians, and retained in captivity until the July following, when he made his escape from them and got safely back to Kentucky. That he endured great hardship and privations as well while he was with the Indians as on his return. He states that besides the many and important services he rendered in defending the country against the invasions of the enemy, he was with General George Rogers Clarke in his expeditions in the years 1778, 1780, and 1782, the first of these campaigns commenced in June of that year, and it was whilst he was on a spying expedition in September of that year he was taken a prisoner by the Indians as stated above.

Your memorialist will not descend into farther particulars of the services rendered by him, but he would beg leave to suggest that he believes they were of great importance to his native State in preserving to her the fine territory, which now constitutes the State of Kentucky, and that thus was laid the foundation of securing to the National Government the extensive and fertile Territory, North West of the Ohio, which the liberal and generous policy of Virginia induced her to cede to the national Government, with out any compensation therefor.

Your memorialist shews that after haveing spent the best energies of his life in from barbarians to fine a country, he is himself, at the age of nearly seventy four years, destitute of the means of comfortable subsistence, without the aid and assistance of his friends. He therefore feels justified in applying to his country for such aid, as in its bounty, it may think proper to render. He makes this application with the more confidence because he has seen, with great satisfaction, that the Congress of the United States has made a most liberal and beneficent provision for the officers and soldiers of the Revolution. But yet his case is not provided for, because he was not in service upon the continental establishment. If however his services have been equally important – and that they have been he confidently appeals to the history of the country, and the historical knowledge of the members of your honorable body – he humbly hopes his few remaining days will be cheered by the same liberal provision which has been made for the other defenders of our common country.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Simon Kenton". The ink is dark and the paper appears aged.

I certify that I came to Kentucky in the Summer of 1777; and in the fall of the same year became acquainted with Simon Kenton at Logan's Station [at present Stanford in Lincoln County KY]; with whom I have had more or less intercourse ever since. He was at the time refered to employed as a Spy as I

understood he had been, for some time previously. He was active, enterprising and confidential. He was generally deputed on the most dangerous and difficult enterprises; never failing to give entire satisfaction. No man of that day in Kentucky rendered more, if as much, hard service than he did.

In 1778, Col. George Rodger Clark carried on a successful expedition against Kaskaskias [sic: Kaskaskia in present Illinois] and its dependences. In this expedition Kenton took part as well as myself. He acted with his usual good conduct. After the fall of Kaskaskias [4 Jul] he was sent, by col. Clark, with despatches, in company with two others, to col. John Bowman in Kentucky. They were directed to take Vincennes in their route, then in the possession of the enemy – to reconitre the same & to report its condition &c to Clark. This service was performed.

I did not see Kenton again until July 1779. I met with him at Vincenns, in company with some Kentuckians, who assembled there to proceed on the expedition which Clark contemplated against Detroit, but which was abandoned because of the want of an adequate force. I had very little intercourse with him afterwards until 1784; when we made the first settlement in this county near where Washington is now erected. Being immediately on the frontier we were much exposed to Indian depredations until the final sucessful battle of the 20th August 1794 [Battle of Fallen Timbers at Maumee OH]. During this critical period, Kenton, who commanded a company, was actively and efficiently engaged in protecting and defending the new settlements. I believe I [two illegible words] say that no one in rendered near so much service as he did. He was also on the first campaign of Genl. [Anthony] Wayne in 1793.

I have understood of other and important services that Gen. Kenton has rendered to the country in a military capacity, of the truth of which I have no reason to doubt; but of these I have no personal knowledge.

Given under my hand in the County of Mason and State of Kentucky this 2nd day of December 1823.

[signed] William Bickley [pension application S30864]

Dear Sir: Gen. Kenton requests me to enclose the preceding certificate of my father to you; which I comply with, with pleasure. Yours respectfully/ John Bickley
Honl. John Chambers

To the Honorable the Congress of the United States
The Subscribers, Citizens of the State of Kentucky & Ohio beg leave to represent to your Honorable body, the claims which they believe Gen Simon Kenton to have, as well upon the justice as upon the gratitude of the nation:

At a very early day he adventured to the western country and took a very active part in all the wars with the Savages, to which its infant settlements were subjected. When there were but three stations or forts in Kentucky, he was engaged most actively as a spy in communicating intelgence from one to the other, at the constant hazard of his life from the hostile Indians, to the great advantage and security of the white population. In all places of danger, when duty called, he was to be found. When in 1778 to preserve Kentucky from British and Indian Invasion the gallant and patriotic Clark deemed it essential to possess himself of Kaskaskia, Kenton was with him, and subsequently he was constantly engaged in the most active duty untill the treaty of Greenville in 1795. It can with truth be said without doubt that there now lives no man in the west who had done so much for its infant settlements as Kenton. And when it is considered that the efforts in the west made by the people of Kentucky preserved in a great degree the frontiers of Virginia & Pennsylvania from invasion, during the revolutionary war, it must be conceded that such a diversion of force had a happy and salutary effect upon the war generally. Altho Gen'l. Kenton has thus long faithfully and effciently served his country and being advanced to his 70th year yet by untoward circumstances he is reduced to want. He has raised a large family and is without the means of providing for them.

Under these circumstances it is respectfully submitted to the representatives of that very nation for which he has devoted, with so much effect, the prime of his life, whither they will permit him to die

neglected and forgotten – another instance of the ingratitude of Republics, or whether assuming a genuine magnanimity honorable to the character of our free institutions and of the people they represent, they will appropriate to him a liberal portion of the waste lands of the country, or such other gratuity as may render the close of his days as happy as his life has been useful? [dozens of signatures follow]

NOTE: Kenton was pensioned at \$20 per month beginning 1 Jan 1829. More on this notable pioneer can be found online.