

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of Caleb Johnson (Johnston) S7081

f31GA

Transcribed by Will Graves

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[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. The word 'illegible' or 'indecipherable' appearing in brackets indicates that at the time I made the transcription, I was unable to decipher the word or phrase in question. 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 skills fail 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 8th of June 1786." Please call material errors or omissions to my attention.]

State of Mississippi County of Madison: SS

On the 4th day of December A.D. 1832, personally appeared in open court before Nicholas Calliham Chief Justice William Y. Collins and Joseph Parmele associate justices of the County Court of said County, constituting the County Court of the County of Madison it being a court of record now sitting, Caleb Johnson a resident of said County and State aged seventy-eight or nine years, being 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 the 7th 1832, that he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated.

He entered the service of the United States in the state of Georgia, he does not remember the precise year but at the commencement of the war of the revolution in that State and enlisted under Captain Henry Walker for two years of the Regiment of minute men commanded by Colonel John Stewart and Elijah Clark [Elijah Clarke] in Wrightsborough, then being citizen of Columbia County. He served a little upwards of one year in that Regiment, when, stationed on the Indian lands as a frontier guard the Captain with nineteen men left the Fort which they had built and took an excursion into the Indian country for the purpose of reconnoitering; but being surprised by the Indians a skirmish ensued in which Captain Walker and two of the men were killed. The balance came into the Fort. Soon afterwards the company in the Fort received orders to return to their respective homes, where they would hold themselves in readiness to march to whatever point required at a minute's warning. After remaining at home about two months he received orders to meet at Wrightsborough, from which place the company under Henry Carr (being promoted from Lieutenant to the captaincy, after the death of Captain Walker) marched to Augusta to join the Army under the command of General Howe [Robert Howe], Colonel Stewart & Clark still commanding the Regiment to which he was attached. They remained but a short time at Augusta before marching on a secret expedition the object of which was to surprise and take Saint Augustine in Florida. Through great difficulties, in passing a wilderness and cutting road they reached the Fort on St. Marys River (called Fort Tornin [sic, Fort Tonym])¹ which had just been evacuated by the British who had been apprised of their coming. They there formed an encampment and sent out about ninety men under the command of Colonel Clark to pursue the enemy. In two or three days march he encountered and drove in their picket guard to a new Fort which they had built in a swamp. The enemy then came out and gave them battle. After having one man killed himself and two wounded Colonel Clark retreated and came back to the

¹ <http://gaz.jrshelby.com/forttonyn.htm>

encampment.² A few days afterwards, five hundred select men (of which this affiant was one) marched to take the last named Fort but on arriving there the British had retreated and set fire to it. They then returned to headquarters; where they remained about a week, when provisions being nearly exhausted, the militia were discharged and the minute men directed to get back the best way they could to Midway Meeting House on New port [?] where they were told they should receive their pay and discharges. This affiant did receive his pay and discharge at the last named place; but thinking his discharge of no importance he took no care of it and it was soon lost. He now returned home. The date of the last named expedition he does not recollect; but that the date may be ascertained, he states there was a total eclipse of the sun³ while on his march to Florida.

On remaining at home two or three months he was called out as one of the militia to repel an expected invasion from Florida. They rendezvoused at Wrightsborough from which place they marched under the command of Colonel Ben Few [Benjamin Few]⁴ to Burke jail [January 26, 1779]⁵ where they were attacked by the Florida scout composed of British & Tories under the command of Colonel Brown [Thomas Brown] (called Burntfoot Brown), a Tory. The action was severely contested on both sides, but the enemy was finally retail: and left the country. The Battalion then marched back to Wrightsborough and disbanded. From this period until called on to march to Savannah, he was seldom long at rest, being called on to scout against the Tories, Indians and horse thieves; As well as he recollects in five or six months after the battle at Burke jail, the Militia was embodied to march to join the French in the Siege of Savannah [September 16-October 16, 1779].⁶ They went, under Colonel Ben Few, and a company then commanded (as he believes), by Captain William Few. -- he was in the Siege six weeks, and in the battle which took place in attempting to storm the enemies fortifications. After the repulse, this affiant with the Georgia militia were marched back and dismissed. From this period on to the close of the war he was, with short intervals of rest, engaged in scouting against the Tories and Indians.

He further states that he has no documentary evidence of the foregoing facts neither does he know of any living witness by whom he can prove his services. He received a certificate for two hundred acres of land as a bounty in the State of Georgia, but lost it and never received a land.

He 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.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.

S/ William Balfour, Clerk

S/ Caleb Johnston [sic], X his mark

By S/ Samuel D. Livingston

[Robert Hubert a clergyman and Harden D. Runnels gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

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Interrogatories propounded to Caleb Johnston by the court here sitting

² Veteran appears to be describing the Battle of Alligator Bridge, Florida, June 30, 1778.

<http://gaz.jrshelby.com/alligator.htm> This engagement took place in the third of the three unsuccessful campaigns mounted by the Whigs during the Revolutionary War aimed at driving the British from (and, perhaps more importantly, depriving the Tories of a safe haven in) East Florida. See also

<http://www.myrevolutionarywar.com/battles/780630-alligator-bridge/>

³ June 24, 1778 <http://eclipse.gsfc.nasa.gov/SEsearch/SEsearchmap.php?Ecl=17780624>

⁴ More likely, Lt. Col. William Few

⁵ <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/engagement-at-burke-county-jail>

⁶ <http://www.myrevolutionarywar.com/battles/790916-savannah/>

1st Where and in what year were you born?

Ans: I was born in Chester County Pennsylvania the date I do not recollect

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

Ans: I have none

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

Ans: When called into service I was living in the State of Georgia Columbia County. Since the revolutionary war I have lived in Wilkes County, from which I removed to Clark County from thence to Amite County Mississippi territory and from thence to Covich County thence to this County (Madison) where I now live.

4th How were you called into service; were you drafted; did you volunteer or were you a substitute, and if in substitute, for whom?

Ans: I first entered for two years in what was called the minute service, of the state of Georgia. After I served my time out, I was drafted for short terms of service, several times, and also volunteered on some occasions. I never was a substitute for any man.

5th State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops when you served, such Continental and militia regiments as you can recollect and the general circumstances of your service.

Ans: Colonel John Stewart first Colonel and Colonel Elijah Clark 2nd Colonel commanded the Regiment of minute men with whom I enlisted and served the first 2 years. I marched under the command of General Howe, who was in command of the continentals at Augustine Georgia to Savannah. The Polish General Pulaski and Count d'Estaing the French commander -- I believe had the principal command. The South Carolina General Williamson [Andrew Williamson] commanded the entire militia at the assault. He was commonly called at that time "Old Indian-fighting Williamson." I do not recollect any other principle commander -- for particulars of service I refer to my declaration.

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

Ans: I did, -- It was given by order of Colonel Elijah Clark and it was soon lost, being considered of no importance.

7th 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 in your services as a soldier in the revolution.

Ans: I named Colonel Harden D. Runnels to whom I have been known for 34 years. James N. Hubert, Rev. Robert Hubert, James Richards, Benjamin Long.

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The State of Mississippi Madison County

Personally appeared before me the undersigned Justice of the Peace in and for Said County Calib [sic] Johnson who being duly Sworn deposed and Saith that by reason of old age and the Consequent loss of memory he cannot swear positively as to the precise length of his Service; but according to the best of his recollection he Served not less than the periods mentioned below and in the following grades: For Two years as a private in the minute service. For one year I served as a Sergeant in the militia under Colonel Alexander in the State of Georgia altogether three years and that during the above periods of service I was engaged in no Civil pursuit, and for which I claim a pension.

Sworn to & subscribed before me this 19th day of August 1833

S/ S. W. Ewing, JP

S/ Caleb Johnson, X his mark

[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$100 per annum commencing March 4th, 1831, for service as a private for one year and a Sergeant for one year in the Georgia militia.]