

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of Robert Johnston (Johnson) S7092

f22NC

Transcribed by Will Graves

10/30/08: rev'd 2/25/16

[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 North Carolina, Bladen County: Superior Court of Law Fall Term 1832

On the eleventh day of October 1832, personally appeared in open Court before the Honorable Robert Strange one of the Judges of the Superior Courts of Law & Equity for said State, presiding in the Superior Court of Law for said County -- Robert Johnston, a resident of the County of Bladen, State of North Carolina, aged Seventy 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 and served as herein stated.

He was one of a Volunteer Company of Light Infantry under the Command of Captain Jared Irwin, who for two or three years before the termination of the Revolutionary War ^{Commanded} said company. He was an active and intrepid partisan Officer, who with his men was almost constantly engaged in service, against the Tories, who were numerous and active, being mostly emigrants from the Highlands of Scotland. Captain Irwin's head Quarters were at or near Elizabethtown, unless when obliged to retire before superior numbers of the Tories; the Company in their numerous expeditions against the Tories -- exposed to severe hardships and privations, were almost constantly engaged in active service for two or three years, but he is willing to claim but a small portion of that time, the time being so long since the service was performed, that he would prefer being under the mark, rather than over it. He is confident that he served seven months. He recollects being on the following expeditions under Captain Irwin, but does not recollect the length of time he served in those expeditions, except as above stated.

About the 1st June 1780 or 1781, but does not recollect which, he engaged in an expedition as a Private in a company of volunteer Light Horse, under the command of Captain Jared Irwin and Lieutenant Argulus Poynter [Argulus Pointer], accompanied by Colonel James Richardson, one of the Field officers of the Bladen Militia; their object was to attack the Tories, who had collected in considerable numbers, in the upper part of Bladen, (now Robeson) County, under the command of Colonel Hector McNeil. They heard of the Tories being on the Raft Swamp -- marched there, and ascertained where they were encamped, and that they were way-laying in ambush: there was much difficulty in crossing the Swamp; and in consequence thereof Colonel Richardson marched his force to Stewart's Mill on a Creek leading into Rockfish Creek, with a view of getting around the Swamp and surprising them -- but on arriving there Captain Peter Robeson who was a Volunteer, but not in commission -- volunteered, at the head of fifty men to perform that service -- encamped at ~~the~~ Stewart's Mill, that night after their arrival there, and when in the act of shooting two notorious Tories, who had been taken a few days before.

They were surprised by McNeil's men, and defeated [Stewart's Creek, July 26, 1781]¹ -- being attacked in front & rear at the same time; but succeeded in cutting their way through them. Colonel Robeson who had been Colonel of the County, but was then out of Commission accompanied the Whigs: there was with them a Company of Cumberland Militia under Captain Travis [Patrick Travis], one of whose man by the name of Armstrong was killed; after the defeat every man made his way home, in two or three days afterwards collected at the Plantation of Robert Edwards, on the North side of the Cape Fear River, ten or twelve miles below Fayetteville; where he was permitted to return home, on account of his leg being so much swelled; that he was unfit for service.

He was engaged in another expedition under the same officers, against the Tories in Bladen County (then Robeson) under the command of Captain Andres [Stephen Andres] -- Captain McDaniel [William G McDaniel] with a Company of Bladen Light Horse were also in the expedition. They came upon the Tories suddenly, and put them to flight completely, that they left their Horses, and made their way into [a] Swamp. All their horses were taken. A man by the name of Samuel Richardson belonging to Irwin's Company was ~~killed~~ wounded.

In the year 1781, he was engaged in another expedition against the Tories -- who had collected in considerable numbers in Elizabethtown, Bladen County, having encamped there, overawing the surrounding Country. Captain Erwin with his volunteer Light Horse owing to the inferiority of his force was obliged to cross the Cape Fear River -- a Plan was concerted between him, Colonel Robeson & Colonel Brown [probably Thomas Brown], to surprise them -- And was carried into effect by appearing to abandon the County by crossing Neuse River; but they suddenly returned, and crossed the Cape Fear River, one mile below Elizabeth -- surprised the Tories -- defeated them and killed there Commanding Officer Colonel Slingsby [John Slingsby] - - who was mortally wounded in the action; a Tory Captain named Baldwin was wounded -- having his leg broken -- several privates were also killed & wounded. The Whigs were sixty-three in number & the Tories 3 or 400.²

He was engaged in another expedition, in 1781, under the same officers, and the same Company, Colonel Thomas Owen of the Bladen Militia at their head. They joined General Butler [John Butler] commanding several Regiments of back country militia at the Brown Marsh Bridge -- marched thence to Marsh Castle in Columbus then Bladen -- crossed it, and marched up the same to Baldwin's Plantation -- where there was an engagement [Brown Marsh, September 1781]³ between General Butler's command & the British under Major Manson [Daniel Manson] from Wilmington. He did not participate in the engagement, being on Picquet Guard -- Butler was defeated, being completely surprised, his men having fled on the first fire -- The Bladen Militia, and the Duplin Militia under Captain Dodd [David Dodd], it was said behaved with much gallantry -- After the men were collected after the defeat, they were marched to White Hall, 12 miles below in Elizabethtown, where they crossed the Cape Fear River, and marched up the River to Waddel's Ferry, two miles below Elizabeth, where Irwin & his Company left Butler, and after returning home for two or three days, again joined him, ten or eleven miles above Fayetteville; where it was understood that General Rutherford [Griffith Rutherford] with several Regiments of Back Country Militia, was before us. Colonel Robeson, of Bladen, who was a Volunteer under General Butler, was sent by him to General Rutherford, & was accompanied by him (Johns'on) & three other men. Generals Butler & Rutherford with their

¹ http://www.carolana.com/NC/Revolution/revolution_stewarts_creek_2.html

² veteran is describing the action at Tory Hole, August 27, 1781.

http://www.carolana.com/NC/Revolution/revolution_tory_hole.html

³ http://www.carolana.com/NC/Revolution/revolution_brown_marsh.html

respective forces, formed a junction, the same evening, at a large branch leading into Rockfish Creek; whence they marched to the Raft Swamp in Robeson County, where they met with a considerable body of Tories, under a Colonel Elrod [Major John Elrod] -- defeated them [Raft Swamp, October 15, 1781];⁴ took their horses & baggage, and some prisoners, and encamped the same night at McPhail's Mills in the same County -- thence marched back to the Brown Marsh; thence to Marsh Castle, where Butler and Rutherford separated, and the Bladen Man under Irwin were permitted to return home

He was again called into service in November 1782, under Captain John Willis, afterwards General Willis, on a Tour of three months service, in a Company of Bladen Militia, as a Substitute for one Richard Plummer; The Company embodied at the plantation of one Peter Lord, on the Cape Fear River; and proceeded thence, on an expedition against the Tories, and to the upper part of Bladen, (now Robeson) County, for the purpose of getting in the Tories, under what was called the Act of Grace; collected a considerable number of them, and drove a large number of their cattle to Belfort Old field, and were discharged at the fork of the roads near Belfort, about two miles below Elizabeth town. He never received a discharge, could have got one, but never applied for it. He resided in Bladen County when he entered his respective terms of service.

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 & year aforesaid.

S/ Robert Johnston



Answers to the questions prescribed by the War Department and propounded to Robert Johnston the aforesaid applicant for a pension on account of Revolutionary Services

- Ans 1. I was born in Bladen County NC 18 March 1762
“ 2. I have a record of my age at home in a family Bible
“ 3. When called into service I was living in Bladen County NC where I also lived during the Revolutionary War & ever since and now reside there
Ans 4. I volunteered first and served as a substitute my last Term.
“ 5. Major McRee & Major Raiford & another regular officer whose name I am now do not recollect, I do not recollect any Continental regiments, I recollect the militia regiments I have stated in my declaration, The general circumstances of my service are stated in the preceding declaration.
6. I never received any written discharge
7. Governor John Owen, General James Owen, Isaac Wright Esquire, Robert Harvey & John Beard Esquire, John Russ, Frederick Miller & James Smith & others I could name
[Robert Harvey & John Beard gave the standard supporting affidavit.]

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State of North Carolina, Bladen County: Superior Court of Law Fall Term 1832

Personally appeared in open Court, this the 11th day of October in the year 1832, Musgrove Jones⁵ who after being duly sworn according to law deposeth and saith. That he served during the revolutionary War, in a Company of Volunteer Light Horse under the command

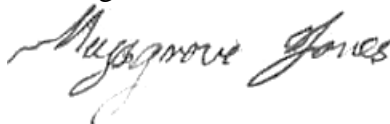
⁴ http://www.carolana.com/NC/Revolution/revolution_raft_swamp.html

⁵ [Musgrove Jones S7094](#)

of Captain Jared Irwin with Robert Johnston for the space of two years: that they were in frequent expeditions together against the Tories -- and recollects that Robert Johnston was in the expedition against the Tories at Elizabethtown -- Further this Deponent saith not.

Sworn to and subscribed in open Court

S/ Musgrove Jones



S/ Alex McDowell, CSC

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Personally appeared in open Court, this the 11th day of October 1832, Richard Cheshire⁶ who after being duly sworn, deposes and saith --

That he served during the Revolutionary War, with Robert Johnston in a Company of Volunteer Light Horse under the Command of Captain Jared Irwin -- that for the space of at least two years; that they were in frequent expeditions together against the Tories, and that he was with him in the engagement with the Tories at Elizabethtown -- further this Deponent saith not.

Sworn to and subscribed in open Court

S/ Richard Cheshire, X his mark

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State of North Carolina, Cumberland County

Personally appeared before me Esek Arnold one of the Justices of the Peace in & for the County aforesaid, Zachariah Reeves⁷ [sic, Zachariah Reaves or Reves] & Sherwood Ford⁸ [sic, Sherwood Fort] who first being duly sworn according to Law depose & say as follows

Z Reeves being first sworn deposeth & saith, that he is well acquainted with & have known Robert Johnston of Bladen County for about fifty years -- that during the Revolutionary War, and as well as this deponent recollects between the years 1880 and 1882 [sic, 1780 and 1782] -- the said Robert Johnston was a private Soldier and belong[ed] to Captain Irwin's Troop of Horse acting as a volunteer in said Company, and that he continued as a volunteer in the service at times, off and on for about two years -- and that during the aforesaid period, the Company Commanded by Captain Irwin was alternately, when in service Commanded by Colonels T. Brown & T. Owen, & this deponent further saith that he believes the said Robert Johnston was in actual [service] during the two years above named for [the] space of six months and upwards

Sworn to & subscribed before me the 3rd day of October 1832

S/ Esek Arnold, JP

S/ Zach Reeves



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Sherwood Ford being next duly sworn deposeth and saith that having read the foregoing deposition of Z Reeves, he fully concurs in all therein stated & That he believes & swears from

⁶ [Richard Cheshire W25403](#)

⁷ [Zachariah Reaves S41973](#)

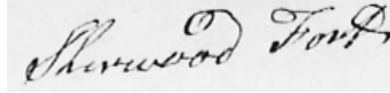
⁸ [Sherwood Fort S8499](#)

his own knowledge that the deposition of Z Reeves contains the truth & no more, further this Deponent Saith not.

Sworn & subscribed before made this 3rd day of October 1832

S/ Esek Arnold, JP

S/ Sherwood Fort

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sherwood Fort". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

[Attested by Daniel McDiarmid, Clerk of Cumberland County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions.]

[Veteran was pensioned at the rate of \$29.16 per annum commencing March 4th, 1831, for service as a private for 7 months in the North Carolina militia.]