

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of John Clark (Clarke) W10625
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

Lucy Clark VA NC

[Only the most informative of the 211 pages in the federal pension file are transcribed.]

The affidavit of John Clarke of King and Queen County state of Virginia aged 59 years taken this 11th day of May 1818 before the County Court of King & Queen & state aforesaid. This affiant being first sworn deposeth and saith that he enlisted as a private soldier in Capt. Burges Balls [sic: Burgess Ball's] company of Lancaster County in the 5th Virginia Regiment in the year 1775 on continental establishment and served two years*. and then reenlisted under Capt. Samuel Colston for three years at the seige of York Town Va. he was taken sick and had a furlough while on furlough the war ended [sic: Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, 19 Oct 1781]. that he is poor & by reason of his reduced circumstances stands in need of assistance from his Country for support

John Clark

*The said John Clarke now further declares on Oath that he was in the battles of Trenton [26 Dec 1776], Princeton [3 Jan 1777], & Brandywine [11 Sep 1777].

County of King & Queen Ss.

On this 9th day of June 1828 personally appeared in the Court of the said County in Open Court being a Court of record for the County aforesaid, having the power of fine & imprisonment John Clark resident in said County aged sixty eight years, who, being first duly sworn, according to Law, doth, on his oath, make the following declaration in order to obtain the provision made by the acts of Congress, of the 18th March, 1818, and the 1st May, 1820. That he, the said John Clark enlisted for the term of [note in margin:] "refer to certificate from War Office" two years on the [blank] day of October in the year 1776 in the State of Virginia in the company commanded by captain Burgess Ball in the regiment commanded by colonel Josiah Parker in the line of the State of Virginia on the continental establishment; that he continued to serve in the said corps until 1778 when his term of service expired and then reenlisted for the term of three years in the state of Pensylvania and discharged after the end of three years in the state of Virginia near Williamsburg. that he hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension except the present; that his name has been placed on the pension list; that the number of his pension certificate is 15,330 and that he never before exhibited a Schedule of his property, because it was his wish while he could maintain himself comfortable not to be chargeable to his country And, in pursuance of the act of the 1st May 1820, I do solemnly swear that I was a resident Citizen of the United States on the 18th day of March 1818 and that I have not since that time by gift sale or in any manner disposed of my property or any part thereof with intent thereby so to diminish it as to bring myself within the provisions of an act of Congress entitled "an act to provide for certain person engaged in the land and naval service of the United States in the Revolutionary War" passed on the 18th day of March 1818 and that I have not nor has any person in trust for me any property or securities contracts or debts due to me nor have I any income other than what is contained in the Schedule hereto annexed and by me subscribed. that, since the 18th of March, 1818 I have not been possessed of any property, having previously taken the oath of Insolvency – that I have not been able to accumulate any owing to bodily infirmity and a large and expensive family
A list of property owned by me

The profits of a post Office established at Clarkeston estimated at 30\$ at most John Clark

My family consist of six children and my wife, my children are

Benjamin F. Clarke	aged	13 yrs
Hannah B. Clarke		11
Sam. P. Clarke		10

Mary E. Clarke 8
Thomas J. Clarke 7
Martha E. Clarke 6

My oldest son Ben. F. Clarke is not living with me and of course is unable to contribute any thing to the support of the family – he is living in a store learning a profession – the remainder of my children are unable to render me any services whatever. I am a post master by which I gain the profits above estimated and also keep a house of entertainment which is worth scarcely anything. the profits of which do not support it. I am very infirm being afflicted with the rheumatism which incapacitates me for any bodily exertion
John Clark

Copies of a part of the evidence accompanying the petition of John Clark to Congress for commutation pay–

Executive Department/ Decr 3rd 1832

John Clarke is allowed land bounty as cornett of cavalry in the continental line for services during the war –
– John Floyd [Governor of Virginia].
No7309. On the 20th feby 1833 a military warrant for 2666 $\frac{2}{3}$ acres of land issued to John Clarke and was delivered to Rob Hord atto.

[The following three items are among [Revolutionary bounty-warrant papers in the Library of Virginia:](#)]

I do certify that John Clarke a Soldier in the 10th[?] Virginia Regiment enlisted in the Continental Army the 13th february 1777 to serve three years which time he faithfully served –
a copy Jno White B Ball Lt Colo Comd.

Middlesex County Court May Term 1819 [copy certified 24 Aug 1822]

James Healy & Edward Blackamore being sworn in open Court deposed and say that they are well acquainted with John Clarke of King & Queen County, that they enlisted with him in the year 1775 in Capt Burgess Balls company of Lancaster County under the command of Colo. Josiah Parker in the 5th Virginia Regiment on continental establishment, In Gen'l. Mullinburgs [sic: Peter Muhlenberg's] brigade & General Greens [sic: Nathanael Greene's] division, that they served with the said John Clarke two years. That they also know that the said John Clarke reenlisted under Capt. Sam'l Colston for three years, under the same command, which is ordered to be certified Edw'd. Blackamore James Healy

King & Queen county towit

Personally appeared before me William Fleet a justice of the peace for the county aforesaid John Clark of the said county and made oath that he is the same John Clark mentioned in the certificate from the clerk of Middlesex dated the 24th day of August 1822 taken from the affidavit of Edward Blackemore & James Healy made before the said court on the [blank] day of May term 1819. That he served the whole of three years mentioned by the said Blackemore and Healy, a part of the time as Sergant major of the Reg't. in which he also acted as adjutant. That he continued in the army until the seige of Yorktown in Va. having received an appointment, but no commission as cornet in Capt Ash's company of Cavalry of North Carolina, at that time he rec'd. a furlough from Gen'l. Muhlenburg to return home for the purpose of having his health restored, which was at that time much impaired. [See endnote.] That he has never applied for nor rec'd. any bounty in land for his claim. given under my hand this 24th day of October 1822.

I hereby certify that I have been acquainted with Mr. John Clarke of King & Queen county Virginia for many years. That about the year 1813 he failed as a merchant for many thousand dollars more than his

funds would pay. He was taken under an execution against his body & I with others became his security for the prison bounds. That he remained in prison for some considerable length of time & finally gave up all his property & then took the insolvent debtor's oath & came out of prison. I few friends assisted him by loans to set up a small grocery by which he barely maintained himself. Some time in the year 1814 he married another wife who had a small property worth perhaps 4 or \$500 which was made over by her before her marriage to trustees for her benefit. I was one of the trustees. The trustees bought the lot of land on which the said Clark now lives for \$200 & besides this there was a negro slave & perhaps 50 or \$60 worth of furniture all of which was conveyd to the trustees & is holden by them for the benefit of Mrs Clark & her six small children all born since the year 1814. If Mr. Clark was known to be owner of \$10 worth of property it would doubtless be immedeately seized by his creditors. He was a revolutionary soldier for 2 or 3 years & I have been informed by several old soldiers now dead that he was distinguished for his bravery & good conduct. He was made an orderly sergeant & in that character was several times sent on dangerous expeditions in which he was successful. At the end of his term in the Northern army he was offered & received a commission in the Southern army under Col. Buford [sic: probably Lt. William Buford]. This commission he afterward resigned through the persuasions of his mother & relations while on his way from the Northern to the Southern army What I say here must of course be from others as I was not old enough to be in the army myself but I received from those who were & who if alive would testify to Mr. Clark's merits as a soldier His conduct through life has been that of an industrious, sober benevolent & virtuous man at least for nearly 40 years from which time my acquaintance with him commenced. He is now about 68 or 69 years of age unable from age & infirmities to labour & has a young & increasing family. There is not (I think) an intelligent man in the bound of Mr. Clark's acquaintance who does not think him strongly entitled to the bounty of his country & who has not advised him to seek it. He however is a high minded man & could not be persuaded to urge his claims. To the above certificate I am willing to make affidavit if necessary.

As witness my hand this the 26th of August 1828.

Ro. B. Semple

To the Congress of the United States

The petition of John Clark of King & Queen county in the State of Virginia respectfully represents, that he enlisted in the service of the United States in the Virginia Continental line in the month of October 1775 under capt Burgess Ball, for the term of two years, and served out the said term, acting in the capacity of Sargent & orderly sargent. On the expiration of that term, he was discharged at white Marsh [Whitemarsh] in Pennsylvania, and he immediately reenlisted in the same service for three years & in the same line, under capt Samuel Colson & served in the 5th Va regiment commanded by Col Josiah Parker, in Genl Muhlenburgs brigade. That he was appointed Sargent major in that regiment in which capacity he acted, until our army went into quarters at the valley Forge, in the winter of 1777 & 78 where & when he was appointed an ensign. Soon after his appointment as ensign, he was offered and accepted the appointment of cornett in the cavalry, in a corps of congress troops under Capt Samuel Ash & Lt Wm Bluford [sic: William Buford], of the North Carolina line, which said office of Cornett had become Vacant by the resignation of a Mr Simmons. The said Lieutenant Buford was my near relation and was instrumental in obtaining my appointment of Cornett, and it was chiefly by his persuasion that I resigned my appointment of ensign in the company of Capt Colson, and accepted that of Cornett in the Cavalry. Soon after Congress adjourned from York to Philadelphia [2 Jul 1778] our troop was ordered to the west and we remained at Pittsburg and near Beaver Creek on the Ohio below until the number of our troop was much reduced by the expiration of their enlistments and other Causes, when we were ordered in the latter part of 1780 to Halifax in North Carolina to recruit men – when we started to the west, we were put under the command of General [Lachlan] McIntosh, who accompanied us, and the object in sending us to the west was to protect that frontier against the Indians & to assist in building a fort [Fort McIntosh, commenced Sep 1778] on Beaver Creek thirty five miles below Pittsburgs. On our way from thence to

Halifax I got permission to go home in Essex County Va where I then resided but with orders to join the troops in march following in Halifax. I had caught a violent cold which the physicians thought had or would settle on the lungs. Nevertheless in obedience to my orders I started to join the troop in very bad health and went as far as Richmond Va, joined the army and continued with it till the surren[page torn] of the enemy when Genl Muhlenburg renewed my furlough and I was permitted to retire from active service for the benefit of my health with a promise that I would return into active service whenever called on. After the aforementioned surrender of the enemy at Yorktown, there was no occasion for my services in this part of the country & very few officers were again called into service. I never resigned my commission, but always held myself in readiness to enter upon active duty whenever so ordered, and so continued until the promulgation of the treaty of peace. I kept both of my furloughs, as also my commission for many yr after the conclusion of the war but have lost them long since. I received a warrant from the state of Va for 2666 $\frac{2}{3}$ acres of land as my bounty for my services as a Cornett in the continental line during the war. I did not receive commutation of five years pay promised by congress, nor did I ever apply for it as they were considered at that period to be claims of little or no value. I have lately understood however that congress is now paying them and I hereby respectfully solicit the attention of your honorable body to a consideration of mine, and that an act may be passed, authorizing the proper department to pay my said commutation with such interest as may be due thereon—
[Certified 3 Dec 1833] [signed] John Clark Cornett in the revolution War

We the undersigned residents of the county of King & Queen in the state of Virginia do hereby certify that we have been for a long time personally acquainted with the Rev'd. John Clarke of the said county & we have no hesitation in stating that he has supported a good character, & has been considered a truthful & honest man by the public generally – Mr Clark now has a very large family to support, was once in comfortable circumstances, but some years since was unfortunate in business, and is at this time very poor. He has passed through an ordeal well calculated to elicit bad principles, if he possessed such – But we have never heard him suspected even by those who were sufferers by his misfortunes – We therefore state with pleasure that he is, in our estimation, & in that of the public generally, an honest man, and that in our opinion, no prospect however alluring, could induce him to depart from the truth in any statement he may be called on to make –

William Shepherd, school teacher

Wm Bird a Deputy sheriff for King & Queen County

Thos Walker, P M at Bruington

Harris Carlton, merchant at d[itt]o

Edwd Fox, Miller

Wm P Courtney, merchant, Stevensville

A R Harwood, member elect of senate of Virginia

Jno F Carlton, miller at King Queen Ct Hse & taverner

Jno R Haynes, house carpenter

Benone Carlton, house carpenter

Jno Bagley, Post master, Stevensville

Jno W Hillyard, millright

John Pollard, Commr of revenue King & Queen Co

I am acquainted with mr Clarke & most cheerfully certify that I believe him to be of strict integrity. P T

Pollard magistrate of King & Queen Co.

Baylor Temple, P M at Walkertown

Saml Crafton, merchant

Alexr Fleet, J P & Lt Colo.

Thos Hoskins, presiding Justice of K Queen

Beverly D Roy MD
Wm B Todd MD
Thos B Evans, merchant, Little Plymouth
Ben Pollard, justice
John Motley justice
George K Carlton, merchant
Wm F Pendleton
[Original certified 9 June 1834.]

25th CONGRESS/ 2d Session. H. R. 222.
DECEMBER 22, 1837.

Read twice, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House to-morrow.

Mr. MUHLENBERG, from the Committee on Revolutionary Claims, reported the following bill:

A BILL

For the relief of John Clark.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the proper accounting officers of the Treasury be, and they are hereby, authorized and required to settle and adjust the account of John Clark, a cornet in the army of the Revolution, and allow to him five years' full pay; which five years' full pay is the commutation of his half pay for life; with such interest thereon as would have been payable to the said John Clark if a certificate had been given him for the amount of said commutation, and the same had by him been subscribed to the funded debt of the United States, under the act of one thousand seven hundred and ninety; to be paid out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated.

I, John J Roane, late a Representative in Congress from the King and Queen district in the State of Virginia, but now a clerk in the Patent office, hereby certify, that the Reverend John Clarke before named, resided in the neighborhood in which I was born and raised; that I have personally known him from my boyhood, and that I fully concur in the statement made by sundry gentlemen on this sheet as to his character.

I further certify that I have long known Carter Croxton [pension application S9250] and Richard Shackelford [S38369] of Essex county (who I am informed, have given testimony to the services of said Clarke in the revolution,) and that they are men of great respectability, of undoubted credibility, and that they and Mr Clarke are all known in their region of country, as having been in service in the Revolutionary War. Mr Clarke was a near relation of General George Rogers Clarke [sic: George Rogers Clark], as I was informed by Governor Wm. Clarke [sic: William Clark] of St. Louis some years ago, who was brother to said G. R. Clarke

April 1st 1843.

J. J. Roane

Pension Office,/ April 11, 1843.

Sir: [Hon. J. M. Porter, Secretary of War] In relation to the case of John Clarke, alluded to in the enclosed letter, I have the honor to state, that in 1818, when he made application for a pension, he set forth in his declaration made under oath, that he enlisted as a Private Soldier in Ball's company of the 5th Virginia continental regiment in 1775, and served two years; that he then enlisted in Colston's company for three years; that at the siege of York he was taken sick, and had a furlough, and while on furlough the war ended. this is the whole of the service that he then alleged to have performed, and it is all that can be established by the rolls. Since 1818 attempts have been made to shew that he was an Officer, and pay as an Officer is now claimed; but I cannot increase the pension with the facts I have before me. If his first declaration be true, he must have belonged to Colston's company as late as 1779 or 1780, and Ashe's

troop of Dragoons, in which he alleges he was a cornet, was not in the service after 1778 [sic: see endnote]. I do not consider it necessary to make any comments on the evidence he has produced as to his good character, nor to the fact that the State of Virginia granted him a bounty land warrant as an officer. He may be a man of good character; but nevertheless he may be mistaken as to his service. Many persons have imagined that they were officers merely because they were promised commissions if they enlisted a certain number of men. Ashe's troop of Cavalry and another troop from North Carolina were never full, and they were disbanded in less than two years after they attempted to raise them. There was a promise made to certain persons that they should have commissions if they recruited a certain number of men; but they did not succeed. It is possible that the claimant might have been one of those to whom a promise of a commission was made conditionally, and he might have supposed that he had some claim as an officer. What is a little remarkable in this case is, that though Ashe's troop, in which he alleges to have been a Cornet, belonged to North Carolina, the Executive of Virginia granted land for service as an officer of the Virginia line. This I think shews clearly that in the examination of claims for bounty land, when Clarke's claim was allowed, there was not very strict attention paid to the papers exhibited, and that warrants were issued without due investigation. The fact therefore of his receiving bounty land does not tend to strengthen his claim.

I have the honor to be,/
Very respectfully,/
Your Obed. Servt.
J. L. Edwards [Commissioner of Pensions]

State of North Carolina/ Office of Secretary of State/ 18th Oct'r. 1852.

J. E. Heath Esq'r./ Commissioner of Pensions

Sir Your letter of the 14th instant is received; in reply to which I can say, that the only record in this Office affording evidence of the service of Cavalry in the revolutionary war is a book called the 'warrant book,' in which all warrants for lands are entered, but that does not specify the kind of service performed in many cases. I find Capt. Sam'l. Ashe had a Warrant for 33 months service. Colo. John B. Ashe [John Baptiste Ashe] had one for 64 months service. Sam'l. Ashe Lt. had one for 84 months. The warrants were issued on the certificates of Field Officers. If the Soldier for which Mr. Young asks a pension served two years, it is probable a Warrant has been issued for services.

Yours respectfully/ W. Hill

NOTES:

In his statement of 1822 Clark stated that "he continued in the army until the siege of Yorktown in Va. having received an appointment, but no commission as cornet in Capt Ash's company of Cavalry of North Carolina, at that time he rec'd. a furlough from Gen'l. Muhlenburg." Elsewhere in the file it is suggested that "Capt. Ash" was Samuel Ashe. According to Patrick O'Kelley, *Nothing But Blood and Slaughter*, Capt. Samuel Ashe commanded a troop of North Carolina Dragoons under Col. Malmedy in the Brigade of North and South Carolina Militia from before 20 June 1779 until after 8 Sep 1781. This period is consistent with the record showing that Capt. Samuel Ashe received bounty land for 33 months service. Clark may have omitted this militia service in his early declarations because only Continental service counted toward a pension under the laws of 1818 and 1820. On the other hand, Clark must have been in the service of Virginia at the time Muhlenberg gave him a furlough.

On 10 Nov 1853 Lucy Clark, 63, of the City of Richmond, applied for a pension stating that she was married in King and Queen County by Rev. John Spencer to John Clark on 29 March 1832, and her husband died in that county on 13 April 1844. Her application was successful. Subsequently Lucy Clark applied for the amount of pension that would have been paid to her husband as an officer rather than a private. This claim was initially granted, but was later revoked after it was discovered that there was no evidence that John Clark had ever been commissioned as a Cornet.

On an application for bounty land dated 20 March 1855, Lucy Clark was said to be 75 and a resident of Milton in Caswell County NC, and she stated that her name before marriage to John Clark was

Lucy Smither. The file includes a copy of a minister's return transcribed as follows:

"To the Clerk of King & Queen Cty Court./ This is to certify that according to your warrants, I have performed the Rites of Matrimony between the following persons vizt

1832 Feby 18 Levi Pitts & Sally Walden

" March 29 John Clark and Lucy Smither

" June 21 Henry Wright & Eliz'h Farinholt

Given under my hand/ John Spencer"

The file includes the two records transcribed below, certified as having been copied from "a large and old Bible represented to be the Bible of John Clarke."

John Clarke and Lucy his wife was married the 29th of March 1832.

John Clarke departed this life the 13th day of April 1844 in the 85th year of his age

The file includes a statement dated 3 July 1852 by Reuben Saunders, the agent for Lucy Clark, that reads in part, "Mr Clarke was married I think as many as five times but who his three first wives were I do not know but I know that his fourth wife was a Miss Fogg and that his fifth and last was a Mrs Lucy Smither of this County."

On 25 Feb 1855 Maria F. Smither wrote to Saunders as follows: "My dear Mother is in Milton N.C. Her health, I am sorry to inform you, is very bad, and has been for eight months. Her Physician thinks she cannot survive through the spring.... If mama lives till the 22nd of April next, she will be seventy five. She was married to father Clark March the 29th 1832." She referred to a brother Gary in Richmond. In a letter dated 6 Jan 1854 J. H. Davis of Richmond VA referred to Lucy Clark as his aunt.

A letter dated 26 March 1856 states that Lucy Clark had "died recently leaving several children."