

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of William Clay W156

Rebecca Clay

VA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Tennessee } ss.

Grainger County }

On this 10th day of October 1832, personally appeared in open court, before Samuel Powell, Judge of the Circuit Court of the County aforesaid, now sitting William Clay, a resident of the county aforesaid, 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 7, 1832. That he was born in Chesterfield county, Virginia, in the year 1760, and is now seventy two years old, according to information derived from his parents; but he has no record of his age. During the Revolutionary war, at all the times of entering the service, as hereafter to be stated, he lived with his parents and another relative in the said County of Chesterfield, until after the seige of York, and until about the last of the year 1781, when he changed his residence into Amelia County, Virginia, where he lived during three or four years; after which he removed to Halifax County, Virginia, and lived there until in 1793 as he recollects when he removed to Washington County, Virginia, & lived there a short time when he removed to what is now Jefferson County, Tennessee; and, after remaining there about a year, he removed to what is now Grainger County, Tennessee, in which he has lived ever since. In 1776, in the month of August, a few days after he was sixteen years old, he first entered the service as a substitute; but his recollection fails him as to the name of the person for whom he substituted; nor can he distinctly remember how long he then continued in service before he was discharged, but think it was at least six weeks, and probably more. He thinks the name of his Captain was Henry Cheatham; but cannot remember the name of any other of his Officers. He does not remember that the Militia with which he served were accompanied by any regulars during that campaign. The Militia, of which he was one, rendezvouzed at the place called the Hundred in Chesterfield County, marched to old Williamsburg, then to Hampton, in the County of Elizabeth City, where we was discharged, after the retiring of the enemy. Afterwards, probably in the year 1777 or 1778, but the year not distinctly recollected, he served a second campaign, on his own account, as a militia man, when the rendezvous was again at the Hundreds, from which they again marched to Old Williamsburg, and thence to York, and near that place, where he was discharged, after the enemy had again retired, a detachment of the troops having gone on to Hampton. He thinks he continued in service on this campaign at least five or six weeks. He does not remember the name of any of the Company officers; but thinks the troops were commanded by General [Thomas] Nelson. He does not remember, that any regulars accompanied the Militia on this campaign. The third campaign, that he served as a militia man was soon after the defeat of Gates [Horatio Gates at the Battle of Camden SC, 16 Aug 1780], or soon after the battle of Guilford [Guilford Courthouse NC, 15 Mar 1781], one or other of these occurrences occasioning the call, when the rendezvouz was at Good's [sic: Goode's] bridge on Appomattox river; and this tour was on his own account. The troops marched from Goods's bridge to Dinwiddie court house, where they remained for some time, and were there discharged. He was in service on this campaign, he thinks, as much as four or five weeks. He cannot remember the names of any of the Company Officers; but has a distinct recollection of the Colonel Commandant, Robert Goode. He does not remember, that any regulars accompanied the militia on that campaign. It was on that campaign that some difficulties arose on account of the plucking of geese to make plumes under the direction of Colonel Goode; an anecdote probably recollected by many. After this the emergencies of the times occasioned two general calls of the Militia, on which occasions he was in service. About the first of the year 1781 the first of these calls was made, and he, with others, rendezvouzed at Manchester, near Richmond. The troops went to Wilton, and then through Charles City to Westover, and then crossed

James River in an old brig, and went on to Smithfield, following the enemy down the river; a few miles from Smithfield, at Stone's or Macay's [sic: Mackie's] mills, we were discharged. This campaign, he thinks, he served at least six weeks. He does not remember the name of any of his Officers, except his Captain Edward Moseley. He does not remember that any regulars accompanied the militia on this campaign. The second general call, he thinks, was about the first of April 1781, when Major Frank Goode [Francis Goode] commanded the lower regiment of Chesterfield in which this applicant served. This Regiment after rendezvousing, went to a place called the Rocks on Appomattox river, and were near that during the battle of Petersburg [Battle of Blandford Hill, 25 Apr 1781], gradually approaching the city, awaiting orders, and ready for action, until they fell in as a rear guard to the retreating army, all marching that day and night to Nemery's old field where we encamped. Gen'l. Muhlenburg and Baron Stuben [sic: Peter Muhlenberg and Baron von Steuben] were commanding officers in that action. Lieut. Matthew Cheatham commanded the Company to which applicant belonged on this campaign; and on this tour he acted orderly Sergeant. The enemy followed us to Chesterfield Court house, where they burned public buildings. We marched in various directions until we got to Bottom's Bridges, where we remained some time, and where we were discharged; at least, some of the troops and applicant among them. He does not exactly remember the length of his service on this campaign, but thinks at least four or five weeks. Afterwards, and not long before the siege of York [28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781], he was again enrolled as a Militia man, on his own account, and the troops with him assembled at the Hundred and went to the new magazine above Williamsburg, where they remained some time before the army marched down to the siege of York. He was at the siege of York, with the other troops; and was discharged, after the surrender of Cornwallis, at Camp before York. His company officers were Capt. David Patterson, Lieut. Sam'l. Duval [Samuel Duval], and Ensign Joseph Whitaker. He belonged, as he thinks, to the 3^d Regiment of Virginia Militia, commanded by Colo. St. George Tucker, attached to General [Robert] Lawson's Brigade. he thinks he served on that tour at least two months. The applicant's youth, and the variety, and short duration, of his several services, he supposes, have contributed to render his recollection of many particulars indistinct and imperfect; and he may not be precisely accurate in some of the foregoing statements; but has endeavored to be as nearly correct as his recollection will enable him. He does not remember what particular individual signed his discharge at any of the tours before mentioned; except, he thinks, that after the siege of York his Captain discharged him by order of Colonel Holt Richardson. He has lost or mislaid all of his discharges. He does not know of any person by whom he could now prove any of his services, except it may be that Henry Nunnly [Henry Nuneley, pension application S4626], of Anderson County, of this State, might recollect something about applicant's service during the campaign at the Siege of York, and possibly some other of his services. The applicant has been well known for a considerably time to the Reverend Levi Satterfield, a clergyman, lately of this county, to Colonel Samuel Bunch, of the same county, & to other persons, by whom he thinks he could establish his character for veracity, and their belief of his services as a soldier of the Revolution. The applicant 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. [signed] William Clay

NOTE: On 3 May 1843 Rebecca Clay, 77, applied for a pension stating that as Rebecca Comer, daughter of Samuel Comer, she married William Clay in Halifax County VA about 30 Dec 1788, and he died on 4 Aug 1841. As evidence of her marriage she submitted the family register from her Bible, transcribed below. E. Hightower certified that the register was in the handwriting of William Clay. Their eldest son was referred to as "the Hon'l. Clement C. Clay of Alabama."

John Comear his hand and pen Jun 7th [year illegible]
Arystotle was folded [foaled] the 17th Day of July 1776
Arystotle was folded the 17th Day of July 1776 Sam Comer

Clement C. Clay was Born Dec'r. 17th 1789

Margaret M. Clay was Born Feb'y. 14th 1792.

Nancy Clay was Born Sept'r. 18th 1794.

William Clay was Born July 18th 1797.

Cynthia Clay was Born Dec'r. 15th 1799.

Maacah Clay was Born June 18th 1802.

Samuel Anderson Clay was Born March 29th 180[?; typed summary says 1805]