

Pension Application for Witter Johnston

S.23729

State of New York

County of Delaware SS.

Pension awarded \$220.00.

Transcribers note. Witter Johnston's pension is very lengthy. Previously I received part of it and typed it up. Then this part came to my attention and it gives more details. ajberry

On this twelfth day of June on thousand eight hundred and thirty three personally appeared before the undersigned, Amos Douglas one of the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas of the County of Delaware in the State of New York being a court of record constituted and declared by the vote of the Legislature of said State: Witter Johnston a resident of the Town of Sidney in the County of Delaware aforesaid aged about Seventy nine 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 was born in the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty three on the 30th September as he has always understood and believes that he has no other record of his age except the one made many years since in his own family Bible by his own direction. The place of his birth was the Township of Schenectady in Town of Princeton in the present County of Schenectady in the State of New York. At the time he entered the service of the United States he resided in the Town of Florida in the County of Montgomery and that he has since the Revolutionary War constantly resided in the Town of Sidney in the County of Delaware aforesaid—

That on or about the first of April 1782 He volunteered in the Service of the Country and was enrolled mustered and ranked as Second Lieutenant . He served under the following named officers for the period of one year and nine months to wit from the first of April 1782 until as he verily believes the 4th day of January 1784 when he was discharged and left the service at the City of Schenectady in the State of New York—

He entered the service as a Second Lieutenant in Capt. French Company in the Regiment commanded by Col. Marinus Willet and served therein several months the exact length of time he cannot state—and was transferred from French's Company to a company under the Command of Capt. Peter B. Tierce in the same Regiment and continued to service in said company until he was discharged as aforesaid.

His field officers were Col. Marinus Willet—Major Van Benschoten and Andrew Fink— During the latter part of the time in which he served as above stated in Capt. Fink's Company the Regiment was reduced to a Battalion under the command of Major Van Benschoten during which time he ranked as an Ensign—He has not data nor distinct recollection of the time the Regiment was reduced as aforesaid but believes it was (in the fall of the year) in the month of October 1782.

He (the declarant) had been frequently engaged as a volunteer in the militia service prior to his receiving a commission as aforesaid in Willett's Regiment. The general history of his services are as follows—viz—In 1771 His Father commenced improving the farm upon which he now resides in the Town of Sidney in 1777—the family were driven off by the Indians under Brant and went to Cherry Valley—He soon after volunteered in the Militia who accompanied Gen'l Herkimer down the Susquehanna to meet Brant—was present at the time they did meet under a flag of truce (their conferences held in sight of his father's farm) – They returned immediately after this to Cherry Valley—Gen'l Herkimer Shortly after marched with the Militia to relieve Fort Stanwix and the declarant again went as a volunteer in a company commanded by Capt. Whitaker in Col. Cox Regiment—In this expedition Herkimer was mortally wounded and Cox Killed—The declarant returned again to Cherry Valley and continued up to within a short time previous to the destruction of Cherry Valley in 1779—to act with the militia and was often engaged in exploring or Scouting parties and performing garrison duties—At the time and for a short time previous to the capture of this place he was employed as a deputy [?] company for the Garrison—Col. Alden at this time

Col. Alden commanded the regular troops stationed there and was killed in the attack – and the Lieut.-Col. Stacey was taken prisoner—He then retired to Schenectady and subsequently moved to Florida in Montgomery County—He next volunteered in a Company of Militia under the command of Capt. McMaster and was engaged in the pursuit of Sir John Johnson—was present at the battle in which the enemy were drive across the Mohawk River—followed the enemy until they crossed head water of the Unadilla and until the pursuit was abandoned at this time Governor Clinton was commander in chief which he believes was in the year 1780—does not recollect how long he was then engaged but he continued in the service until the expiration was closed—

In 1781 (as he believes) He again volunteered under Capt. McMaster's the company at this time being attached to Willett's Regiment – and marched to Johnstown was at the battle with the British Tories and Indians under Ross and went from there to Fort Herkimer—marched to the north through "Jersey Plains" as it was then called—fell in with Ross's Party and was at the taking of his rear guard prisoners and pursued the army to North Canada Creek where the Tory Capt. Butler was killed, continued the pursuit until night when the chase was abandoned—after this expedition was closed, returned again to Florida and a remained there until the fall of April 1782 when he again entered the service in Willett's Regiment as a Second Lieut. as before stated—He cannot estimate with any kind of certainty the time he was actively engaged in the Militia and is unwilling to undertake doing so.—

After joining Willet's Regiment as a Lieut. as aforesaid a great part of his time was spent in small exploring parties on our then frontiers. He was with Col. Willett in his expeditions against Fort Oswego in February 1783 and was one of the [?] who escorted General Washington from Fort Herkimer to Fort Stanwix.

The following are the names of some of the Regular Officers (besides Col. Willett & Majors Van Benscholten and Fink) whom he knows and with whom he served—to wit—Capt. French, Capt. Tierce, Capt. O'Conner, Capt. Guy Young, Capt. Rench?, Capt. Wright, Capt. Cannon, Capt. Henry & Capt. Harrison—some of these were "nine months men"—among those who continued in the service after the nine months service in Willett's Regiment were Cpts. Tierce, Cannon, Minch or Rench?, O'conner and Harrison according to the best of his recollection—among the Continental and Militia Regiment which he served—there was one as he believes from New Hampshire commanded by a Col. Reed—He recollects a Capt. Cherry and a Capt. MacGregor in said regiment—but as he was but a short time with them his recollection is not—distinct as to the names of the officers—There was another Regiment from Rhode Island which joined them on this [blot] expedition against Fort Dayton but he does not recollect the names of the officers—

He was acquainted with Cols. Campbell, Fisher and Clock who commanded militia Regiment in the County of Montgomery—

During his services as aforesaid he marched through what were then called Caughnawaga—Johnstown—Canajoharie—Currie Town and was at Fort Herkimer, Fort Schuyler, **Fort Plain, Fort Plank**, Stone Arabia & traversed through most of the frontier settlements west of Schenectady—

He received a Commission as before stated its date he does not recollect. It was signed by George Clinton – Governor of New York—He delivered his commission up to James Colwell of the City of Albany to whom he sold his military lands—and at the time of the sale—He does not know where it can be found. He has no documentary evidence—He has heretofore furnished the evidence to the department (and which he has been informed has been mislaid or lost) of his services as before stated—Several witnesses are still living who can testify to his services, but by reason of the personal infirmities of the declarant and those of the witnesses, as well as the remote distance at which they reside it is not in his power to procure their testimony nor personally to attend court for that purpose without great inconvenience.

The following are the names of some of the persons to whom he is known in his present neighbourhood and who can testify to his character for truth and veracity and their belief of his services as a soldier of the revolution—Nathan Egerton Esquire [?] Master, Charles S. Rogers, Henry Bradby and James Houghston Esquires Justices of Sidney—Isaac Hayes Esqr - Postmaster, Sherman Page Esqr (member elect to Congress) Abijah H. Beach and Henry Odgen Esqrs, of Unadilla and Daniel Waterbury a clergyman for the town of Franklin in the County of Delaware. Her 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) Witter Johnston.

Sworn and subscribed to the day and year aforesaid before me Amos Douglass Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of the County of Delaware.