

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of Erasmus Chapman R1867

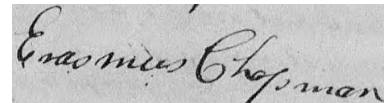
VA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

I Erasmus Chapman of the County of Howard and State of Missouri doth make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress passed the 7th day of June A.D. 1832 "I was born in County of Spottsylvania [sic: Spotsylvania] in the state of Virginia some time in the month of October A.D. one thousand seven hundred and fifty nine my birth day is to be found in my fathers family Bible if it is not destroyed, this I have been told by my relations and this is all I know of my age, by that account I was seventy three years of age some time last month; while a resident of the County of my nativity I entered the Service as a soldier in the army of the American confediracy, and as a substitute for a certain Thomas Coleman of the County last named above, who had been drafted for a tour of three months in the Virginia Militia, John Tankesley [sic: John Tankersley] being my Captain Edward Stephens [sic: Edward Stevens] commander of the Brigade, and ___ Meriweather alias ___ Meriweather [sic: Meriwether] commander of the Regiment, the particular month or year I don not now recollect, but believe it was in the latter part of the summer of the year AD1781 – that I commenced the march from Peter Stubblefields in the County aforesaid (the place of rendezvoize) in a direction to Little York, we proceeded through several counties (the names of many of them I have forgotten) till we reached the town of Williamsburg in Virginia where we joined Gen^l. Washingtons main army, who had camped below the town about two miles, at a place where a former Governor under the British government [probably Lord Dunmore in 1775] had thrown up Brest works (as I was told) the remains were plain to be seen, At this camp we staid some time how long I can not recollect; while the army continued here I frequently stood sentry at a place called the Stone Bridge which was made over a creek that emtied into York river not far distant; while on duty one night a Boat sailed or was rowed up the creek to the bridge, I hailed it, and detained the Boat, till a file of men and an Officer from our camp came; the Boat proved to be a Brittish one, and came with a flag bearing an American Colonel who had been taken prisoner by them and was dangerously wounded I may have forgotten his name but I now think the Col'os. name was either, Scamel, or Campbell, he was immediately sent to the Doctors at Williamsburg on a litter the Brittish boat was suffered to return; Shortly after this we (meaning the whole american army) marched to Little York where Cornwallais was stationed, and encamped around the town on the Land side on the water side it was blocked up by the French Fleet we now commenced throwing up brest works, perhaps about a mile from the buildings, or perhaps from the Brittish Brestworks, and we continued at the work for many nights & days advancing each succeeding night a little nearer the enemy. all this time the Brittish were continually firing their cannon at us whenever they could see where we were, When we had got as near (as I thought) our Commander wished, a flag arrived at Gen^l. Washingtons markee from the Brittish Commander Corn Wallace [sic: Cornwallis, 17 Oct] (with a proposition to surrender his army prisoners of war, the terms not being agreed to, as soon as the flag returned, Gen^l Knox ordered the officers of the artillery to open fire on the Brittish works [see endnote], at this instant I was below the cannon in the ditch in advance a little of the platform on which the cannon played, the shock of the explosion over my head was so powerful that in an instant I was deprived of my hearing and have continued so ever since; I was so bad that I was sent to the hospital, but I did not stay long there, but returned to my station being more willing to endure the malidy than be deprived of my brother companions in arms, for some time after this I could hear a little, but as I got older my hearing grew worse, and for several years past I can scarcely hear the loudest thunder, notwithstanding I continued to do duty as before, throwing up banks, standing on the watch tower, and performing all the usual duties of a soldier, till the surrender of the enemy [19 Oct], And when the Brittish march out to stack their arms, I was in one of the columns; As well as I remember the regulars formed one column, and the Militia the other, between which the prisoners of

war marched out of the town and grounded their arms at the head of the Columns, and then returned into the town, and in a few days were marched out again and guarded by our troops to the upper part of the State I assisted in guarding them till they reached the falls of the Rappahannock when my time of service expired and I was discharged, a written discharge was sent to me some time afterwards but I do not recollect by whom it was signed but think it was signed by my Captain Tankesley, this discharge I put into my pocket Book which was afterwards burnt with many other papers; After leaving the army I return'd to Spottsylvania aforesaid and continued to live there till I removed to Culpepper Virginia where I lived several years, and then removed to Row ann [sic: Rowan] County in the State of North Carolina where I lived many years, after which I removed to Lincoln County State of Tennessee where I live some time, I lived in this state during the Creek and Siminole War, being too old for an active Soldier I went along with the Tennessee Troops on that expedition with my waggon & team as a transport for the provisions of the army I continued in this service nine months, I had two sons in this campaign, one a lieutenant; Some time after my return from the army I visited my relations in the State of Mississippi and not long after removed to the County of Lincoln in the State of Missouri near the town of Troy, lived here a short time, and then moved to the County of St. Francois [Saint Francois] in said State, lived there three years and then removed to Howard County State of aforesaid where I now live. I have never before applied for a pension and hereby relinquish all right to claim a pension by virtue of any act of Congress passed before the 7th of June 1832. I have no documentary evidence to establish my service as a soldier of the revolution nor do I know of any person in this State by whom I can prove the same: And I will here remark that owing to my great deafness I am unable to communicate many circumstances which might be important in the establishment of my claim from not being able to hear what is said to me; It may be said that questions can be put in writing, but these questions are frequently put in such language or words that I cannot answer them, either in the negative or affirmative which make it laborious to the writer as well as my self, and my true meaning mistaken. But I cannot suppose, that my country is more unfortunate than myself, and will be deaf to the claim of one whose greatest calamity has been produced by his devotion to her dearest cause, merely because that misfortune prevents him from making a full disclosure of his services

[Certified 6 Nov 1832]

A rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in cursive script. The signature reads "Erasmus Chapman". The ink is dark and the background is a light, textured paper.

NOTES:

Chapman's statement that Henry Knox's artillery fired immediately after the delivery of Cornwallis's proposal of a ceasefire to discuss surrender is unlikely and not supported by other accounts. Other accounts also state that the British marched between Americans on one side and French on the other, not between American regulars and militiamen.

Correspondence in the file indicates that Chapman was still attempting to obtain a pension as late as 1850. The pension act of 1832, however, required at least six months service.