

[Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters](#)

Pension Application of John Dickinson R2938

VA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 1 Dec 2014.

State of Virginia }  
Monroe County } Towit

On this 25<sup>th</sup> day of January 1834 personally appeared before me Joel Stodghill a Justice of the peace for the County of Monroe and State of Virginia aforesaid: John Dickinson a resident of the said County of Monroe and State of Virginia aged Seventy one years on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of March last past; 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<sup>th</sup> 1832. That he entered the service of the United States under the following named Officers and served as herein stated. That he was drafted on the first or second day of September in the year 1781 to march to York Town; that at the time he was drafted he lived on the South Branch of Potomack [sic: South Branch Potomac] River in the County of Hardy and State of Virginia [sic: formed from Hampshire County in 1786, now in West Virginia] and mustered in a company of Militia commanded by Captain Christian Simmonds: that the officers that he marched under and who commanded the company to which he belonged was Captain Thomas Neal Lieutenant William Douthat and Ensign Scott that he and the Company to which he belonged and in which he marched to York Town in defence of the Liberty of his Country were first Rendezvoused at a small Town called Moorefield and from thence they marched throug Romney, Winchester, Faquier [sic: Fauquier] Court House and on to Fredericksburg where they remained two days to have their guns repaired, and from thence they were marched on by way of Williamsburg to York Town where Lord Cornwallis with the British Army were then lying; at York Town he and the company to which he belonged were attached to a Regiment Commanded by Colonel Samuel Vance. When forty miles distant from York Town on their march to that place he heard the Cannon firing between the British and American Armies stationed at that place. That from the time he arrived at York Town until the surrender of Lord Cornwallis [19 Oct 1781] he remained there actively engaged in such employment as he was commaned to perform such as standing on picket guard and assisting in opening new entrenchments and throwing up new breast works against the enemies of his Country

their Battery from which they seemed to anoy the enemy most was on top of Pigeon Hill which was directly between their Regiment and a Regiment of Regulars which had their tents pitched in a line in front of theirs and York Town which was in possession of the British Army.

That they at one time opened their Battery on the enemy lying in York Town and succeeded in injuring the Chimnies and Houses very much and he supposes killed a number of their men. The company which he belonged was what was called a Rifle Company and upon occasion himself and fourteen others Volunteered their services to anoy the enemies picket guard by crossing unperceived behind a Hedge within about one hundred and fifty yards of where they were stationed: they succeeded in killing a number before discovered by the enemy when they fired a Cannon loaded with Canister and grape shot, which hapily done them no other injury except to cut up the hedge and destroy their place of consealment

That after the surrender of Lord Cornwallis and the British army he marched as one of the guard over the prisoners to Winchester where he remained until the expiration of his three months tour when he was discharged by his Captain who gave him a written discharge which has been lost upwards of thirty years He again entered the service of his Country as a volunteer Indian Spy on the first day of April 1782 and his first excursion was in company of the late Jacob Warwick of the County of Bath then West Augusta; himself and the said Warwick set out on the day aforesaid from Warwicks Fort [probably the Warwick Fort at present Green Bank WV] on the head waters of Greenbrier River and passed by Cloverlick Fort [at present Clover Lick WV], on to the Mingo Flats [now Mingo Flats] thence on to the head of Elk and making no discovery of Indians after being out something like eight or ten days they

returned after which he went to Westfalls Fort in Tygarts [sic: Tygart] Valley situated where he understands the Town of Beverly now the County Seat of Randolph County is now situated and thence to Wilsons Fort four miles further down the River [at Arnold Hill].

From this last named Fort he crossed the mountains back to the waters of the Potomack on what was called the North fork where he joined John Philips and Adam Rader two other spies. In company of these two last he continued until the first of November following. That the nature of his services were to spy the mountains and traces leading into the infant settlements then just forming in Tygarts Valley and to guard and escort persons from Rockingham and Augusta who were engaged in packing Flour and other supplies into the valley. That he was frequently out five and six days at a time subsisting on such provisions as he could pack in his knapsack or upon such fruits and berries as the mountains afforded as they were based under a strict injunction not to fire a gun unless in the most imminent danger or in defence of life but never to kill game unless when in a state of starvation

That he faithfully performed that summer seven months services as an Indian spy. He has never seen or heard of Philips or Rader since they separated in the Fall of 1782 and Jacob Warwick he understands has been dead six or seven years. He was not engaged in any civil pursuit during the time he was thus engaged as and Indian Spy nor did he ever receive any pay for any services he rendered his country either against the British enemy or while acting as an Indian Spy. That he has no documentary evidence and knows of no person living by whom he can prove his said services or any part of them. He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a Pension or annuity of Pension except the present and declares that his name is not on the Pension Roll of the Agency of any State

John his<sup>t</sup>Dmark Dickinson

Interrogatory 1. Where and in what year were you born

Ans. I was born on Smiths Creek 11 miles below Harrisonburg in the County of Rockingham & State of Virginia in the year [blank].

2. Have you any record of your age and if so where is it.

Ans. I have no record of my age and never had that I know of.

3. Where were you living when called into service; where have you lived since the Revolutionary War, and where do you now live

Ans. I lived when called into service on the South branch of Potomack River in the County of Hardy and State of Virginia and remained there until the 1792 when I moved to the place where I now live and have lived at ever since.

4. How were you called into service; were you drafted, did you volunteer or were you a substitute and if a substitute for whom

Ans. I was drafted for the first tour to go to York Town and I then volunteered as an Indian Spy

5. State the names of some of the Regular officers who were with the troops where you served; such Continental and Militia Regiments as you can recollect, and the general circumstances of your service.

Ans. General LaFayette commanded on the Gloucester side as it was called. General [Anthony] Wayne commaned the line of Regulars and the Regiment to which I belonged was under the immediate command of General Washington and I cannot give a more detailed account of the circumstances of the service than I have detailed in my declaration

John <sup>t</sup>D Dickinson

NOTE: Jacob Cook, a clergyman, and John Swope certified Dickinson's character for veracity and reputation as a soldier of the Revolution. The explanation given for rejecting Dickinson's claim was insufficient proof of service, even though under the regulations of the Pension Office the certifications of character and reputation were to be considered sufficient proof in the case of militia service. The more likely reason for rejecting the claim is that by 1834 James L. Edwards, the Pension Commissioner, had become persuaded that Indian Spies on the frontier had not actually performed military service. For further discussion see my appendix to the pension application of David W. Sleeth S6111.