

PETER DEWITT IN THE REVOLUTION

Notes by
Charles E. Hoyer

In the Virginia census of 1782 a PETER DeWITT is listed in Hampshire County as the head of a family of five. This is evidently the Peter DeWitt who moved to Charles County, Kentucky, and on Oct. 18th, 1833, there made oath to an application for pension under the Act of Congress of 1832. He was born in Sussex County, New Jersey, July 8th, 1753, and when twelve (12) years of age moved with his father to Hampshire County, Virginia.

In his pension application Peter DeWitt states that on June 15th., 1775 he volunteered in Captain Michael Cresup's Company, (Michael died Oct. 18, 1775). Another note written previous to the one listed above, by Mr. Hoyer, states the following application for pension, on file in Washington, is of interest to us of Garret County (Md) because in it DeWitt gives in some detail his services on our frontier during the Revolution, a period of history about which we know little. The fact there is but little to tell is sufficient enough reason to treasure this record.. Since only a few friends, Frazees and others in the Blooming Rose Settlement, a few settlers on the Braddock Road, and perhaps two or three on the Patomac, then lived in what is now Garrett County.

Captain Daniel Cresup in 1775 doubtless lived at "Shawnee" Old Town below Cumberland, and Peter DeWitt resided nearby on the Virginia side of the Patomac. In DeWitt's story of their campaign of 1775 reference is made to marching to the "headwaters" of "Buffallow", - presumably Buffalo Run, in Maryland, west of Friendsville; at Glade Farms the settlers had built Fort Morris, the year before, and the friends on the Youghiohony had also fortified themselves.

Capt. Cresup' and his volunteers did not wait long in the mountains for the Indians to attack them, - they crossed the Ohio and attacked the Indians in their towns.

In his account of his capture of the deserter, he refers to an "enemies country consisting of Tories and Indians". He must have gone into Ohio, capturing his man and bringing him across the mountains over the McCullogh Path through Garrett County to the jail at Romney.

This Peter DeWitt was the Peter DeWitt who settled on Roaring Creek, Preston County, about 1795, and who became the ancestors of the DeWitts of Garrett County.

Application for Pension

State of Kentucky
Clarke County;

On the 18th day of October, 1833, personally appeared before me, Fielding Combes (a Judge and Justice of the County aforesaid), Peter DeWitt, aged 81 years on the 8th day of July, who, being duly sworn according to the law, doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed 7th day of June, 1832, that he entered the services of the United States under the following named officers, and served as herein stated:-

First he says he was born on the 8th day of July, 1753 in the State of New Jersey; in Sussex County, and there he states he lived until about 12 years of age, and then he moved with his father to Virginia, Hampshire County, and from this county on the 15th of June, 1775, he volunteered in Captain Cresup's Company, Ensign Ogle, as Col. A. McDonald. Rendezvoused at Redstone Old Fort. (Below this record was shown a lead-pencil sketch by Beulah Twigg-July 1937- of Capt. Cresup's Fort and Braddock's mile-stone). We here continued for two or three weeks; from thence we marched to the headwaters of the Buffallow; from thence to the head of Whelling Creek; from thence to the mouth of Grave Creek. At this place we continued for sometime to obtain provisions; from thence we moved to the mouth of

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Fish Creek; from thence across the Ohio, and pursued an Indian Trail, and so continued to within eight miles of their town, and had a short skirmish with some lying in ambush; had two of our men killed and six wounded. We left at this place a guard to take care of the wounded and pursued onward the town, until we arrived at Mushingum River. At this place we stopped, and he states that he remembers well of John Hargus killing an Indian across the River at a distance of about two hundred yards.

Our Colonel then gave orders that no other gun should be fired, and as the Indians were on the opposite side of the river, our interpreter invited them over to treat, but they declined. Breaking camp next morning by light we started for their towns. The first we reached was called Wacotamaca. We, however first desired a treaty but effected none; but as they evacuated the town we took possession without opposition. From thence we marched to Snake Town; from thence to a town called Whikoomonus Town. At this town we had a skirmish; had one wounded and took an Indian prisoner; and from thence we marched on home and arrived home on the 16th day of September, 1775, after an absence of three months on duty, and was discharged. On this tour he served as a private soldier.

He states the next service he rendered, he remembered, was from Maryland, Washington county, in the year 1776, on the 15th of April, as well as he can remember. He was drafted for six months in Capt. Kimberlin's Company of Spies and Rangers, and ranged through the mountains in the County Washington, and whose contiguous, to prevent savages from murdering the defenceless women and children while their husbands were out in the service of their country. He stated he also continued to range and spy as a private soldier, until the 15th or 16th of October, insuing at that time he returned home and was regularly discharged by his Captain, but he lost it. He states he served a gour in the following way:-- In the year 1777 there was a man by the name of James Night who had deserted the U.S. Army, and Capt.(whose name he has forgotten* advertised that if any man would arrest him he should receive a discharge for six months.

(Note:--While it doesn't state specifically at what season of the year, in all probability he took his discharge in the warm weather in order to advantage farm).

He states that he immediately started in search of him, and after hunting several days through enemies country consisting of Tories and Indians he says he found him and arrested him and lodged him in safety in Romney jail in Hampshire County, Va., and for this he says he got a discharge for six months. He says on the march he was at considerable trouble and expense and much fatigue and danger before he found him. (Probably working up through now Garrett County and back on Old McCollough Path running thro' Sunnyside). He thinks, therefore he sought to have an allowance for it, as he performed the series required by the Government.

He states he served many other turns, the particulars of which he has forgotten, and therefore claims nothing for them,-- tthe length of time as above put together will amount to 15 months, allowing for the six months last mentioned, if not more.

He states he has a record of his age in an old Dutch Bible (nearly 200 years old) and it makes him 81 years old on the 8th of July next. He has already stated where he was living when called into the service; also ~~xxxx~~ the manner of entering the service. He says that as his services were in the way as above described he had no opportunity for forming any acquaintances with the regular officers. As to a discharge he states that he has "named above, though some" never received a written discharge. He states that he never had a commission but served the several tours as a private soldier. He states that he is known by many of his neighbors as a man of viracity and as to his reputation in his neighborhood to have been a soldier of the Revolution; but particularly by Thomas Boon, a clergyman, residing in his neighborhood, and Thomas Caston, residing in the same, who can testify to the above facts.

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He also states that he is now old and helpless and unable to get about, so much that he finds it quite inconvenient for him to get to town, it being a distance of twelve or fifteen miles from his home. He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present, and declares that his name is not on the pension role of any agency of the State.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid. He also states that he has no witness to prove his service.

(Signed in his own hand) Peter DeWitt

Follow affidavit of Thomas Boon, etc.

On the old envelope it is recorded:-

Peter DeWitt, who was a private in the Company commanded by Col. McDonald, in the Virginia Line, for six (6) months.

Inscribed on the Roll of Kentucky pensions at the rate of Twenty (20) Dollars per Annum, to commence March, 1831.

Paid arrears to the 4th of September.....	\$50.00
Semi-annual allowance ending 4th of March.....	10.00
	<u>\$60.00</u>

So fifty (50) years after the War, Peter DeWitt got his pension, but only Twenty (\$20.00) a year.

Notes taken from
HISTORY OF CUMBERLAND
Lowdermilk

Colonel Thomas Cresup, Captains Daniel and Michael's father, and Captain McDonald, sub-officers under Maj. Grant. Pages 255-256.

Col. Cresup organized another Company, with his surviving sons, Daniel and Michael (his son Thomas having been killed a short time previously by an Indian, he killing the Indian at the same time), and a negro of giant stature, marched again, taking the same route on Braddock's Road, as far as Negro Mountain, where they met a company of Indians. Cresup's party killed an Indian. This incident Peter DeWitt mentions in his application for a pension in 1833.

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