

**JOHN GRAY, OF MOUNT  
VERNON; THE  
LAST SOLDIER OF  
THE REVOLUTION**

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John Gray, of Mount Vernon; The Last Soldier of the Revolution by James M. Dalzell

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**JAMES M. DALZELL**

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# JOHN GRAY,

OF

## MOUNT VERNON;

THE

### Last Soldier of the Revolution.

BORN near Mount Vernon, Va., January 6, 1764;

DIED at Hirambsurg, Ohio, March 29, 1868.

AGED 104 YEARS.

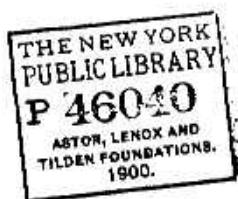
*Bx James M. Dalzell.*

"Chap. LXVIII.—An act for the Relief of John Gray, a Revolutionary Soldier.

"*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled,* That the Secretary of the Interior be, and he is hereby, directed to place the name of JOHN GRAY, of Noble County, Ohio, upon the Pension Roll, and that there be paid to said JOHN GRAY, out of any money in the Treasury, not otherwise appropriated, the sum of \$500 per annum during his natural life, payable semi-annually, commencing on the 1st day of July, 1866."

[See Statutes at Large, XXXIX Congress, Sess. II, Chap. 58, p. 44.]

WASHINGTON:  
GIBSON BROTHERS, PRINTERS.  
1868.



#### DEDICATION.

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To the Old Dominion, the birth-place of JOHN GRAY, and to Ohio, where  
his sacred ashes rest, and to the American people, whom he loved,  
and for whom he fought, this memorial of the last Soldier  
of the Revolution is respectfully dedicated by

JAMES M. DALZELL, THE AUTHOR,  
and  
WM. WOODBURN, OF OHIO, the Author's generous Friend.

# HISTORY OF JOHN GRAY,

OF MOUNT VERNON, VA.,

THE LAST SOLDIER OF THE REVOLUTION.

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STATE OF OHIO, EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT,

COLUMBUS, *February 2, 1867.*

DEAR SIR: Yours of 29th ultimo is received, and the letter to the State Journal has been delivered. My duties are inconsistent with my acting as the trustee of a fund for the benefit of any private citizen, and I must beg you to find some business man or firm of known character, in the vicinity of the residence of the veteran John Gray, of the Revolution, to do that work. It would involve a good deal of correspondence which could only be intelligently done by those who are near enough to be personally cognizant of the wants and necessities of the old patriot.

Earnestly sympathizing with the spirit which induces your action,

I am, very respectfully, yours, &c.,

J. D. COX,

*Governor of Ohio.*

J. M. DALZELL, Esq.

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[We here acknowledge ourselves much indebted to Honorable Judges Welker and Spalding, and Capt. Baugh, of Ohio, the Librarians of Congress, Heads of Departments, and many other high officials at Washington, who have aided us in the laborious task of compiling from the records of Congress and the Departments the authentic statements of this book.]

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For more than three-quarters of a century after the close of the war of the Revolution, John Gray lived a life of quiet and reticacy upon or near the banks of the beautiful Ohio. He left his native Virginia, the banks of the Potomac, the home of his childhood, the State for which he had done battle service in no less a cause than the independence of that State. He left her because she denied and refused the right of suffrage to those of her sons who

had not "caught Dame Fortune's golden smile," and made his home where—

"An honest man, tho' e'er so poor,  
Is king of men for a' that."

He wended his way over mountains and rivers, through the then almost unexplored wilderness of what is now West Virginia, and coming out on the borders of Western civilization, at Morgantown, Va., he constructed a rude craft, on which he descended the Monongahela to its junction with the Alleghany, and thence down the Ohio to the Flats of Grave Creek. Here he made his first settlement, and entered with ardor upon the duties of frontier life, having for his companions in toil, privation, hardship, and frontier warfare, such men as the Poes, Wetzel, Hughs, Wheeler, Boone, Kenton, and others, who have made their names conspicuous in the annals of the West. Time rolled on, and the beautiful region "north-west of the River Ohio" was, in the year 1802, erected into a State, and John Gray, after changing his residence once or twice, settled down on the waters of Duck Creek, a tributary of the Muskingum, within the present limits of Noble (then Washington) county, in the new, free, and prosperous State of Ohio.

Here, for nearly threescore years and ten, he lived and studied. He lived to see the almost unbroken wilderness "blossom as the rose," and Ohio proudly take her position, the third State in the American Union. He lived to see men born upon the soil grow up and take the highest positions, military, civil, and ecclesiastic, in the land, men of whom any State or nation might well be proud. He lived to witness the most wonderful achievements of science of any age or any nation in his own country. He saw the majestic steamboat take the place of the frail canoe upon her lakes and rivers. He saw the giant locomotive drag the ponderous train over the highest peaks of the Alleghanies, through tunnels under mountains, over rivers and plains, through forests and prairies, and to the very summit of the Rocky Mountains. He lived to see the inventions of Franklin and Morse distance time in the transmission of intelligence from London to New York, and crossing the continent to San Francisco, return the answer to New York just as old Father Time reached the shores of America.

During all this time John Gray had neither sought nor obtained from the Government any recognition of his services in the war of the Revolution. Never rich, indeed poor in purse, he was

yet too proud to ask a richly-merited annuity, and it was not till the frosts of a hundred winters had whitened his locks, and age, decrepitude, and want invaded his citadel, that he gave a reluctant consent for his friends to apply for a pension.

On the first day of the second session of the Thirty-ninth Congress, December 3, 1866, Hon. John A. Bingham, a member of the House of Representatives from the 16th district, than whom Ohio has not a brighter star in her galaxy of living statesmen, arose in his place and introduced House bill No. 835, for the relief of John Gray, a soldier of the Revolution, which was read a first and second time, and referred to the Committee on Invalid Pensions. (See page 6, Congressional Globe, second session, 39th Congress.)

On Thursday, December 13, 1866, ten days after the introduction of the bill, Mr. McIndoe, from the Committee on Revolutionary Pensions, reported back, with a recommendation that it do not pass, House bill No. 835, for the relief of John Gray, and the bill was laid on the table. (See Congressional Globe, 2d session, 39th Congress, page 3.)

Nothing daunted, the patriotic and indefatigable Bingham, after introducing the most incontestable proofs of identity of which the case would admit after the lapse of so many years, in which the old patriot had "outlived the generation born with him," on Friday, January 25, 1867, succeeded in getting a bill reported (No. 1044) by Mr. Price, from the Committee on Revolutionary Pensions, "for the relief of John Gray, which was read a first and second time. It directed the Secretary of the Interior to place the name of John Gray on the pension roll at the rate of \$200 per annum, payable semi-annually." "Mr. Delano, of Ohio, inquired whether the bill had the approbation of any Committee." He was answered by Mr. Price "that it had the approbation of the Committee on Revolutionary Pensions." "This applicant," said Mr. Price, "is one hundred and three years old, and I have another similar case to report, in which the applicant is one hundred and seven years old, (referring to the case of F. D. Bakeman, of New York, since deceased,) and both these men are supported by public charity."

Mr. Spalding, of Ohio, moved to amend the bill by striking out "two hundred dollars" and inserting in lieu thereof five hundred dollars, and the amendment was agreed to. The bill was then

ordered to be engrossed, and it was accordingly read a third time and passed.

"Mr. Bingham then moved to reconsider the vote by which the bill passed, and also moved to lay the motion to reconsider on the table. The latter motion was agreed to." (See Congressional Globe, 2d session, 39th Congress, page 754.)

On the same day, January 25, 1867, a message was received in the Senate from the House of Representatives by its Chief Clerk, Mr. Lloyd, announcing among other things that the House had passed bill No. 1044, for the relief of John Gray, a Revolutionary soldier, which, with others, was twice read by its title and referred to the Committee on Pensions. (See Congressional Globe, 2d session, 39th Congress, page 730.)

On Wednesday, January 30, 1867, in the Senate, Mr. Lane, from the Committee on Pensions, reported without amendment House bill No. 1044, for the relief of John Gray, a soldier of the Revolution. (See Congressional Globe, 2d session, 39th Congress, page 853.)

On February 14, 1867, "in the Senate, on motion of Mr. Lane, the Senate, as in Committee of the Whole, proceeded to consider House bill, No. 1044, for the relief of John Gray. The bill directs the Commissioners of Pensions to place the name of John Gray, of Noble county, Ohio, upon the pension roll, and that there be paid him the sum of five hundred dollars, payable semi-annually during his natural life, commencing on July 1, 1866.

Mr. Lane said "the bill, as it passed the House, was wrongfully drawn. I move to amend it by striking out the words 'Commissioner of Pensions,' and insert Secretary of the Interior, so as to make it conform to our legislation." The amendment was agreed to. (See Congressional Globe, 2d session, 39th Congress, page 1309, *et. seq.*)

The bill was reported to the Senate as amended; the amendment concurred in, and ordered to be engrossed and read a third time. The bill was then read a third time and passed.

On the 15th of February, 1867, the bill as amended and passed in the Senate was sent to the House, where, on the motion of Mr. Price, the amendment of the Senate was concurred in. (See Congressional Globe, 2d session 39th Congress; pages 1262 and 1275.

A motion to reconsider the vote concurring in the Senate amendment was laid on the table, and a message sent to the Senate, announcing that the House had passed bill No. 1044, for the relief of John Gray, a Revolutionary soldier.

In the House of Representatives, on the 16th of February, 1867, Mr. Trowbridge, from the Committee on Enrolled Bills, reported that the committee had found, upon examination, bill No. 1044, for the relief of John Gray, a Revolutionary soldier, truly enrolled by its proper title, whereupon the Speaker signed the same. (See Congressional Globe, 2d session, 39th Congress, page 1285.)

On the same day, a message was received in the Senate, announcing that the Speaker of the House of Representatives had signed the bill as engrossed, and thereupon it was signed by the President *pro tem.* of the Senate. Thus John Gray was placed on the pension roll at the rate of five hundred dollars per annum.

Two days after, February 18, 1867, Samuel Downing, of New York, was placed on the Revolutionary pension roll. From the report of the Commissioner of Pensions for the year 1867, it appears that the names of John Gray and Samuel Downing only remained upon the roll; the rest were dead. Of that noble band of patriots, they alone survived. Late in the fall of 1867, Samuel Downing died at Edinburgh, Saratoga county, New York. John Gray still lived, unquestionably the last soldier of the Revolution, till the 29th of March, 1868, when he died. The soldiers of the Revolution are extinct.

"This was the noblest Roman of them all;  
The last of all the Romans—fare thee well."

It is time to prove the leading statement of this history, namely that John Gray was the last soldier of the Revolution. That he *was* a Revolutionary soldier is proved elsewhere in this book; but here we are to show that he *was* the *last* Revolutionary soldier.

I wrote to the Commissioner of Pensions at Washington, D. C., to settle this. He replied by an endorsement on my letter, stating that "John Gray, of Ohio, and Samuel Downing were the only two soldiers remaining on the pension rolls of the Revolution, and that they were both alive in September last." Then I saw there were only two left. The question came up, is Samuel Downing dead? If he is, then John Gray is the last soldier of the