

John Yerry (Johannes Yurrie)

Service: N.Y State Militia

Birth : 1754 Johligen, present day Germany

Death 1-15-1837 Buried Woodstock, N.Y.

John Yerry (born in a small town in Germany referred to as Johligen) is one of two individuals we know of, buried in the town of Woodstock, who arrived in British North America as Hessian Soldiers.

Anita Smith writes, John Yerry “came to America as a member of the British Army in 1776 but soon left the Red Jackets to join the American forces with whom he fought for five years. He then journeyed up the Hudson to Rhinebeck where he worked as a farmer for several years before crossing the river and settling in Woodstock on leased land along the Bearsville Road. Thence he tried living in Mink Hollow, but eventually established himself at a place on the western flank of Ohayo Mountain which became known as Yerry Hill.” (Smith pg. 12)

After the war he settled near Rhinebeck. John Yerry married Maria Shultis in 1780 at the German Lutheran Church in Rhinebeck. Interestingly, Maria is the sister of Philip, George and Henry Shultis, three of the earliest settlers of the Bearsville, N.Y. region. They are all children of Heinrich (Hans) Shultis and Anna Maria Lascher (Lasher), both of whom are part of the 1710 Palatine Migration to British North America. Yerry and his wife Maria Shultis settled in Bearsville, then Mink Hollow, and subsequently to the western flank of the Ohayo Mt. now referred to as Yerry Hill.

Most of what we know about John Yerry (Johannes Theodorus Jager) is gleaned from the German Lutheran Church records in Rhinebeck and his wife’s pension application after his death. Yerry’s 5th great grandson Bob Baumeister writes that “Yerry would have been trained as a soldier before arrival in America.” (pg. 26) Baumeister notes that sometime after 1776, twenty-two-year-old Yerry defected and left the New York city area ending up in Dutchess County. It is believed that Yerry found work on the farm of Frederick Cramer, who was, coincidentally, the brother-in-law of Heinrich (Hans) Shultis.

Through a herculean effort, Yerry and other friends and co- Patriots proved Yerry’s service, even without discharge papers. Yerry is noted to be serving with the Patriot army at the Fishkill Depot in 1779. (pg. 27) Family researchers also uncovered that Yerry, during a nine-month service tour, was found serving with the Patriots at Fort Stanwix, outside modern-day Rome, N.Y. (Baumeister pg. 30)

Paraphrased from pension application

John Yerry, Johannes Yurrie who was born in 1754 and arrived in the colonies in 1776 with the British Army. He deserted and joined on with other militia men to fight for the Patriots during the American Revolution. He served five years with the NY militia and received a pension at age 78, on June 1, 1836. Yerry was known to have marched along the Mohawk River with his Unit and deponents for his pension application mentioned his presence at Fort Stanwix/ Fort Schuyler, Fort Dayton, Fort Hess and Fort Johnstown.

Yerry was awarded a small pension in 1836. The process of providing proof had to be repeated after his death in 1837, in order that his wife Maria Shultis Yerry could continue to receive John Yerry's military pension. Coincidentally, at this time, Henry Wynkoop resurfaces as an advocate writing to Honorable F.S Edwards, Commissioner of Pensions in Washington D. C on behalf of widow Maria Yerry.

Resources:

Quote has been adapted and transcribed from Anita Smith History and Hearsay

Woodstock Revolutionaries and Pioneers by Robert V. Baumeister, self-published, (2025)

Pension Rolls, John Yerry Ancestry.com

Compiled by Janine Fallon Mower