

HISTORIC RED HOOK

Captain John Klum

17 July 1736–15 September 1816

Old Red Church cemetery, Tivoli

A white marble tablet with curved top marked with a Revolutionary War stick marker about six or seven rows north of the church near some yuccas.



Visitors to West Point marvel at the links of the chain that was forged and placed across the Hudson River in an attempt to stop the British forces from navigating the waterway during the American Revolution. Capt. John (Johannes)

Klum (or Clum) had a hand in its placement, according to records in the New York State Archives and summarized in the “Capt Johannes Klum family + history” entry. And yet there are some questions and ironies, of course, surrounding his life.

Klum was born July 17, 1736. There is a baptism record for Johan. Philip Klum, the son of George and Anna Morie (probably Marie) Schnyder Klom and baptized in Reyn Beeck (or Rhynbeck now Rhinebeck of which Red Hook was a part) on November 1, 1736, according to the Holland Society of New York, and witnesses to his baptism were Philip Klom and Getr. Schnyder. Perhaps this is the Johannes Klum who eventually became a captain in the Revolution. Maybe there were two Johannes Klums born in 1736 in Rhinebeck: a Johannes P. and a Johannes I. More digging is required.

Regarding his marriage, there is a question. Capt. Klum was married to Maria Pulver, as claimed by the DAR applications of Miss Cornelia King of Columbia County and Mrs. Mary Scott born in Red Hook, NY, among others. According to these applications, the Klums had a daughter Maria Pulver Klum who, according to a family history, was born in 1764 or 1765 and died March 12, 1835. However, Capt. John I. Klum’s gravestone in the Old Red Church Cemetery is next to one Catherine Turner Klum (1765-1835) whose monument states she was his wife. There is no gravestone in the Old Red Church Cemetery for Maria, mother of Maria Pulver.

This mystery will take more investigation, but the fact that Catherine’s birth and death years mirror those of Maria Pulver Klum’s raises one’s eyebrows. Perhaps Capt. Clum’s gravestone here is a cenotaph and Catherine Turner Klum is another relative via marriage. Complicating this theory is that a George Turner is stated to be the child of John and Catherine, according to FindaGrave.com. Plus, the U.S. Revolutionary War Burial Index indicates that a Capt. John I. Klum who, other than the middle initial of I., matches the details of Johannes Klum, is interred at the cemetery in Madalin (Tivoli), NY, aka the Old Red Church Cemetery. Further investigation is warranted.

The Old Red Church figures in another aspect of Capt. Klum's life. According to Roger M. Leonard's *The Red Church*, discussing when the church was built and regarding a history of the church written by Walter Scott, notes the following: quoting Scott: "In the first place, then, the old road did not run continuously as it does now for, after passing the cemetery from the south, it turned abruptly to the west and running through the Captain Klum estate, till it reached a certain famous old red inn, it curved to the north and running through the valley and parallel with the adjacent creek, came out precisely at the point where the well known Hoffman mills stood." Leonard adds, "According to the appendix on page 22 in Scott's book, the inn belonged to the Captain Klum estate. The ruin of the mills was still visible in the 1980's, just west of the intersection of Stony Brook Road and Route 9G" (3).

What is certain is that Klum's service in the American Revolution began when he was a "1st Lieut. of Company commanded by Capt. Martin Hoffman belonging to the 1st Regt. of Dutchess Co. from Rhinebeck of N.Y. State Militia under the command of Col. Peter TenBroeck," according to "Capt Johannes Klum history + family." This source adds, "In the N.Y. State Library is recorded the promotion March 18th, 1778 of Johannes Klum to the Captaincy of said Regt., then under the command of Col. Morris Graham and also that the said Regt. Was in the active service from 1775 until the close of the War - Archives State of N.Y. Vol. 1, page 298. Johannes Klum was stationed at the Highlands and assisted in laying the great iron chain across the Hudson River to prevent the British ships from coming up. A copy of his payroll in the State House at Albany Vol. 8, Folio 121." Another source, verifies the date of Klum's promotion to captain and notes that John Hermans was his 1st Lieut. and Andres Hermans his 2nd, according to Revolutionary War Rolls found on Ancestry.com.

Here is a tragic irony: Klum may have enslaved people. According to the 1790 Census, a John Klum of Rhynebeck (or Rhinebeck of which Red Hook was a part) was the head of a household that numbered 14, with four being enslaved, and in the 1800 Census, John Klum was the head of a ten-member household, with six people enslaved. And yet, Klum fought for the liberty of Americans from the British. Sadly, this dichotomy was one that patriots such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson also exhibited. Thus while we can admire their service to the cause of freedom, we can mourn that they themselves denied the liberty of other humans in their own households.

Research and writing by Thea Burgess, 2026

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