

Pension Application for Thomas Balch

S.44338

Navy (Mass) Privateer

Essex SS

At the Circuit Court of Common Pleas for the Middle Circuit begun and holden at Newburyport, within and for the county of Essex on the third Monday of September AD 1820.

Present: Hon. Samuel Dana Chief Justice

Hon. William Webmore and Hon. Stephen Minot Associate Justices, in open court here being a court of record for said Circuit proceeding according to the course of common law, with a jurisdiction unlimited in point of amount keeping a record of its proceedings and having the power of fine and imprisonment. Thomas Balch, resident in Salisbury in said Circuit aged fifty-six years, who being first duly sworn according to law, doth, on his oath, make the following declaration, in order to obtain the provision, made by the acts of congress of the 18th March 1818 and the 1st of May 1820,.

That he the said Thomas Balch served in the Navy of the United States in the war of the revolution and on the Continental establishment more than twelve months, that he served in the Frigate, Boston, commanded by Capt. McNeil several months and afterwards in the summer of 1780 or in the course of that year, as nearly as he can recollect, he enlisted and served on board the private armed ship Hannibal of twenty four guns at that time commanded by Capt. Jeremiah O'Brien at Marblehead in said state of Massachusetts, and in the latter part of the year was taken prisoner by the British and imprisoned in the Jersey prison ship at New York and before the expiration of the year 1780, and as nearly, as he can now recollect in the month of September of ;that year, was with several other prisoners exchanged, and immediately afterwards arrived at Boston in said State of Massachusetts and then enlisted and entered on board the United States Frigate Alliance, commanded by James Barry, Esquire, in the month of December, of that year & sailed in her for France in the Spring of the year 1781, and continued on board said Frigate Alliance, as a Mariner until her return to Boston, aforesaid, which was sometime in November or December 1781 or the autumn of that year making a service as a mariner as aforesaid on board said last mentioned Frigate more than nine months at one and the same time under the same enlistment on the continental establishment. That on the passage home he was on board said Frigate when she engaged and captured a British ship and British Brig off Halifax after a small engagement. That he was discharged from said frigate at Boston, aforesaid, in the fall of the year 1781, and that he has no other evidence now in his power, except what is annexed to this declaration.

And the said Thomas Balch appears and exhibits to the court here a schedule, subscribed, as follows to wit.

Schedule

Containing his whole estate and income his necessary clothing and bedding excepted to wit.

No real estate whatsoever

2 tables \$2, 6 chairs \$;1.50, Chest of drawers \$3.50 \$7.
Ironware \$1.75, tinware 75 cts Crockery & glass \$1.20 \$3.70
Tablecloth and other linen \$2, Pine chest 50 cts \$2.50
Spoons, knives, & forks and plates \$1.25
A horse and wagon both very old \$35.
1 Cow \$8.

Debts due to him

A note of hand against Benjamin Garland of Hampstead, for a debt, due more than a year for \$51 which is not worth more than \$10
\$57.45

A note of hand for 3 sheep worth \$3.
\$60.45

That he has a wife and six children, three of whom depend on him to support, and the others are not able to contribute any thing to his support. That his constitution is so broken, that he is entirely unable to do any labour to support himself that would require much exertion.

That he goes to different people more than one hundred dollars and no income whatever except what he derives from personal labour, which he can only occasionally perform on the farm for the support of himself and family. (Signed) Tho. Balch

Declared and sworn before me. Stephen Minot, Judge of said Court.

Letter in folder dated September 10, 1928, written in response to an inquiry.

I advise you from the papers in the Revolutionary War pension claim, S.44338, it appears that Thomas Balch (son of Benjamin and Joanna Balch, who was the sister of Joseph O'Brien) enlisted and served several months on board the frigate "Boston", Captain McNeil, no dates given. In the summer of 1780 he enlisted at Marblehead, Massachusetts and served on board the "Hannibal", Captain Jeremiah O'Brien, was taken prisoner by the British and held on the prison ship "Jersey" until exchanged in September 1780. In December 1780 he enlisted and served on board the frigate "Alliance", Captain James Barry, sailed to France and on their return home had an engagement off Halifax and captured two British ships, served until November 1781. Sailor's father, Benjamin Balch, was chaplain on the "Alliance" in this cruise.

Afterwards served on a private armed vessel of twenty-four guns, Captain Charles Hamilton, was captured by the British off the coast of Ireland, no dates of this service.

He was allowed pension on his application executed September 25, 1820, at which time he was living at Salisbury, Essex County, Massachusetts, aged fifty-six years.

He died January 16, 1840 in Waterloo, Seneca County, New York, leaving a widow and one son and four daughters, son's name Benjamin, names of widow and four daughters not stated.

Another child is referred to, name not given.

Son-in-law, Dr. J.B. Elliott was living in Romulusville, New York in 1845.