

Pension Application for Robert Benson

W.20708 (Widow: Dinah Cowenhoven who was the youngest daughter of John Cowenhoven and his wife Catharine.) Married at Brooklyn, County of Kings, NY by Reverend Martinus Schoonmaker, Easter Sunday, March 27, 1785. Schoonmaker was the Pastor of the Reformed Dutch Church in Kings County. Robert died February 25, 1823. Robert was a Lieutenant Colonel and an Aide de Camp and Secretary to Governor George Clinton.

Declaration. In order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress of the 7 July 1838 entitled an Act granting half pay & pensions to certain widows.

State of New York

City & County of New York SS.

On this seventeenth day of June 1838 personally appeared before me Judah Hammond, one of the Judges of the Marine Court in and for the City & County of New York Dinah Benson of the said City and County of New York aged seventy seven years who being first duly sworn according to law doth on her oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the Act of Congress passed July 7, 1838 entitled "An Act granting half pay & pensions to certain widows."

That she is the widow of Robert Benson late of the City of New York who was an officer in the War of the Revolution.

That the said Robert Benson entered the service of this country in the early part of the said War as a Lieutenant of Militia as appears by the certificate of the Secretary of State of the State of New York hereunto annexed and that afterwards to wit in the year 1777 he was appointed Aid de Camp & Military Secretary to Governor Clinton and served in that capacity until the close or termination of said war and came into the City of New York with him as such with the American Troops at the evacuation of said City of New York by the British on 25th November 1783 as this Declarant always understood from and was informed by her said Husband and by the said Governor Clinton with whom she was personally acquainted & intimately knew as well before as after her marriage with said Robert Benson, as also from others their contemporaries who served with them in said War of the Revolution and all which she verily believes—that from the time of her knowing the said Robert Benson until his death he was known as and bore the title of Colonel, being the military rank which she always understood & believes he held in said War.

That she was married to the said Robert Benson at Brooklyn County of Kings N.Y. by the Reverend Martinus Schoonmaker then one of the ministers or Pastors of the Reformed Dutch Church, in Kings County aforesaid, and that the record hereto annexed in her family record, and is she verily believes in the hand writing of her said husband.

She further declares that she was married to the said Robert Benson as aforesaid on the twenty seventh day of March in the year seventeen hundred and eighty-five—that her husband the aforesaid Robert Benson died on the twenty fifth day of February 1823, in the said City of New York that she was not married to him prior to his leaving the service but the marriage took place, previous to the first day of January in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety four to wit at the time above stated. (Signed) Dinah Benson

Sworn to & subscribed the day & year above written before me. Judah Hammond Justice Marine Court.

Letter in file dated June 20, 1934, written in reply to an inquiry.

Reference is made to your letter in which you request the Revolutionary War records of Benjamin Benson, born February 13, 1731, and was shot August 5, 1779 by British spies at Haverstraw, New York, also of Robert Benson, born October 30, 1739, in New York City, served as Lieutenant Colonel, and Aide-de-camp to Governor George Clinton of New York state and who, you state, died February 25, 1827.

Revolutionary War data furnished by this office are obtained from claims for pension and bounty land made to the United States based upon military service of soldiers in that war.

A careful search of the records fails to show such claims on file on account of the Revolutionary War service of any soldier named Benjamin Benson. The record was found of one, Robert Benson, the only soldier of that name found in the records of this office who served from New York State, and it is given herein as shown in the papers on file in pension claim, W.20708, based upon his service in the Revolutionary War.

The date and place of soldier's birth and names of his parents are not stated.

Robert Benson entered the service early in the Revolution; on September 15, 1775, he was commissioned 1st lieutenant and served as such in the New York troops until 1777, while acting as clerk of the Senate of New York State, he was taken into the family of Governor George Clinton, was appointed aide-de-camp or military secretary to him, with the rank of lieutenant colonel, under which rank he served to the close of the war and was with Governor Clinton when the British evacuated New York City, November 25, 1783.

He died February 25, 1823, in New York City.

Robert Benson married on Easter Sunday, March 27, 1785, at Brooklyn Kings County, New York, Dinah Cowenhoven, youngest daughter of John and Catharine Cowenhoven.

Soldier's widow, Dinah Benson, was allowed pension on her application executed June 17, 1839, at which time she was aged seventy-seven years and a resident of New York City; she was still residing there in 1844.

Children of Robert Benson and his wife, Dinah, referred to in the claim were: Maria, the third daughter, born January 5, 1793, and Jane, the fourth daughter, born March 13, 1794.

In 1839, one Eliza Benson was a resident of New York City, her relationship to soldier's family not stated.