

Pension Application for Robert Betts

R.809

Declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress of the seventh of June 1832.

State of New York County of Queens. SS.

On this thirtieth day of October AD 1833 personally appeared before the Court of Common Pleas in and for the County of Queen in the State of New York the same being a court of record and having a seal and clerk holden in and for said County of Queens at the court house in North Hempstead Robert Betts of said County Weaver being a resident of said County and now aged eighty three years who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the act of Congress passed June 7, 1832.

That he was born at Rocky Hill in the Township of Flushing in this county in the year 1750 and that he has not any record of his age remaining and was living in the Township of Jamaica in said County in the year 1775 when news arrived of the battle Lexington that thereupon in or about the month of May in the year 1775 he joined and enlisted in a Regiment of Militia called minute men afterwards under the command of Col. Josiah Smith and in which Regiment in one of the companies of the same commanded by Captain Robart.

He served in the capacity of a private for the period of upwards of three months that when the British fleet have in sight he was marched to Brooklyn Heights and when the British landed at New Utricht the Regiment was sent to meet them and that he was in said Regiment at the battle fought near Flatbush on or about the month of August in the year 1776 when Lord Sterling and Gen. Sullivan were taken prisoners, that the Regiment having been severely exposed was then marched (after crossing the East river) to Kingsbridge on the Island of New York where it was disbanded, that he volunteered and enlisted in said Regiment and throughout served personally that he received no discharge from said Regiment.

He then volunteered in Capt. Lamb's Company of Artillery he believes regular troops of Gen McDougals Brigade that he volunteered in said regiment as a private and served as hereinafter mentioned but never received any formal discharge, for the reasons herein after detailed and as such was in the battle of Chatterton Hill or White Plains that about this time which as nearly as he can recollect was in the year 1776.

Judge Sloss, Hobart Wm Duet, Nathaniel Sacketts, Stephen Ward & Griffin Tompkins were a Committee of Safety of the provincial Congress to transact business at White Plains in the County of Westchester in the Regiment to which the appearer was then attached was commanded by Nicholas Fish as Major Commandant, that Judge Hobart personally knew the appearer, saw him on duty in the Regiment and said, "They must have just such a man for certain duties of their committee", that the appearer objected stating that he was engaged in the Regiment had passed his work and could not quit to which Hobart replied that he could manage "these", and shortly afterwards he sent to the appearer an order form his commanding officer to go into the services of the committee.

That said committee were there and for some time had been arduously employed in procuring the best information of the enemy and communicating with other parts of the armed forces that said appearer was employed by that committee in the military service sill continuing to belong to his Regiment, and taking expresses from one place to another, in doing which he suffered continual hardship and exposure & was in frequent danger of his life, that in consequence of this exposure he became unwell and that he was then sent to Norwich in the State of Connecticut to recover his health, with orders to consider himself yet in military service and to pick up what information he could that in this place he began acquainted with Hezekiah Belden a noted Tory who took him into favour and gave him a letter of recommendation to Parson Jarvis also a Tory who endeavoured to persuade him to quit the service and go home to Long Island that the appearer had discovered that these men had something officially intrusted to them by the enemy which he communicated to the committee who directed him

to pretend to acquiesce with them in their wish & then see how far they would commit themselves that he then told them that he was sick and would be glad to go home to Long Island that he dare not do it, that part of Long Island being in possession of the enemy & that from the nature of the service he had lately rendered the Rebel Army he would risk being hung if they caught him there, that they then furnished him with a proposition and committed to his care letters to Gen. Howe & the other British authorities – these letters were carefully served in the lining of his coat which was done by the parsons wife, that having pretended to start as they desired he changed his rout[e] and went to the committee who took copies of the letters and ordered the appearer to proceed and deliver them, that the appearer accordingly went below the lines & doubting his safety notwithstanding his protection delivered the letters into the possession of some of the enemy, that they might reach the parties to whom they were addressed, as the committee desired, that he then returned to the committee who approved of his proceedings & in whose service he continued in his aforesaid military capacity until Col. Duer was sent to Congress then sitting in Philadelphia whom he (Duer) wrote back to some one of the committee to send on the appearer to him at Philadelphia, accordingly he went on and saw Col. Duer at the state house who told him that President Hancock wanted to see him and his protection which was signed by Gov. Wm. Franklin formerly British Governor of New Jersey, that the president questioned him as to the manner of his obtaining it & took his affidavit that Wm. Hancock then told him he had acted correctly and said he would take care of him—that the appearer continued in the service of the committee considering it a public service and was sent frequently with dispatches from one place to another and that with his protection he was several times saved from capture by the enemy, that on one occasion in particular he was sent to Col. Trumbull paymaster general at Albany with two hundred thousand dollars in apper money and that with him were sent five men of Col. Bailey’s Regt on an scout that he safely delivered the money and got Col. Trumbull receipt & returned it to Egbert Benson who was then in the Treasury in Philadelphia and the appearer was also in a battle at Danbury when Gen. Wooster was killed by a grape shot in the groin sometime in the year 1777.

And that he was in the Military or public service during the whole period from his entry immediately after the news of the battle of Lexington until the close of the war although principally as before stated attached to the secret service.

The appearer further stated that he is known in his present neighbourhood to Leonard M. Layton Henry S. Layton & the Rev. Wm. Phillips besides numerous other persons and amongst them Capt. Israel Baxter and Samuel Searing one whom was in the army with him and both knew of his service generally and particularly of his being in the Militia at the Battle of Flatbush.

The appearer further declared and stated that the said respective regiment of militia and artillery were each of them are embodied corps called into service by competent authority that he was in the field during the principal part of the service in said regiments and that during the time of said services he was not employed in any civil pursuit.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or an annuity except the present and he states that he has resided ever since the revolution in the County of Queens and State of New York where he now lives and that his name is not on the pension roll of any agency in any state.

Weaver living in the County of Queens in the town of North Hempstead and that he now lives in the same county and town—being a pauper supported in the alms house of said town. To the fourth that he was not called into service but volunteered on having the news of the battle of Lexington—and that he served in person and was not a substitute—to the fifth he states of the names of some of the officers with the troops where he served.—Col. Nicholas Fish, General Wooster (whome he was near and assisted when killed). General Arnold (who lost a horse at Danbury) General Putnam, Col. Smith and Lieut. Col. John Sands. To the sixth that he received a warrant as a Sergeant or non commissioned officer that the same was signed by Captain Bailey and that he has lost the same—that he never received a written discharge from the Regiment of militia in which he served that one was given to him

or any others of the men. To the seventh he states the names of the Rev. Mr. Phillips, Leonard M. Layton & Henry Layton. Singleton Mitchell, First Judge of Queen County. Benj. W. Strong Judge of the County Courts for the County of Queens.

I Samuel Sherman clerk of the Court of Common Pleas for the County of Queens in the State of New York do hereby certify that the foregoing contains the original proceedings of the said court in the matter of the application of Robert Betts, for a pension in testimony whereof I hereuntil set my hand and seal of office in open court at the Court house in the town of Northhempstead in the County of Queens the thirteenth day of October. 1833. Samuel Sherman Clk