

Pension Application for Azariah Bill

S.17283

Declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress of the 7th of June 1832.

State of Connecticut, County of New London, and Probate District of Norwich SS. Norwich.

On this 4th day of December in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty three personally appeared before Probate Court within and for the Probate District of Norwich, Azariah Bill, a resident of the town of Lisbon, within the District aforesaid, aged 85 years, on the 15th day of April last past, who being first duly sworn according to Law, doth on his oath make the following declaration, in order to obtain the benefit of the provisions made by the Act of Congress, passed June 7th 1832.

That he enlisted in the army of the United States, [?] several terms or tours, and served in the several companies and Regiments, hereinafter stated under the following named officers viz.

1st Term. On the 25th day of June 1775 Azariah Bill lived in, and was an inhabitant of the town of Spencertown in the State of New York, and as a private soldier enlisted into the army of the Revolution, for the period of six months, and thereupon he immediately entered upon said service, in the company then commanded by Capt. Joel Pratt, who was then an inhabitant of said Spencertown.

The company with which I enlisted belonged to the New York State Troops, and according to my best recollection or Col. or General Schyler [Schuyler] commanded the Regiment. Our destination was Lake George and the Company marched thither under the command of Capt. Joel Pratt aforesaid and were stationed there during my period of service. Toward the close of this period of service I was taken sick and had a furlough to return home, on account of my disease and accordingly I went to my home in said Spencertown and within its limits again returned to the army in good health and served therein until the period of my enlistment expired on the 25th day of December next following my said enlistment, and was discharged verbally. Having been in years before, a sailor, I was now employed in carrying boards and other lumber across Lake George to build the barracks at Ticonderoga. This was soon after that fort fell into the hands of the Americans.

2nd Term of Service. After the expiration of my 1st term of service as above related, I enlisted into the Connecticut State Troops for the term of four months, which enlistment took place on the 1st day of February 1776 and according to said enlistment I entered the Company commanded by Capt. Fosbury.

The express object of this enlistment was an expedition to Canada and in virtue of said enlistment, on the 10th day of February 1776 I joined the company commanded by said Capt. Fosbury and immediately marched with said company for Montreal and Quebec, having stayed at Albany & there drew my gun.

The company arrived at St. John about the 1st day of February 1776, when I fell in with my old commander and his company Capt. Pratt, with [with] whom I served my first tour. From St. John's we proceeded to Montreal when we remained about two weeks and from thence proceeded down the River St. Laurence by land & over the ice to Quebeck, [Quebec] then besieged by Col. Arnold and his forces, to which our company was a reinforcement. The last of March 1776, the small pox broke and in the American Camp which disease attached me with great severity. I was removed from the camp with others, to a small island just below Quebeck, called "Orleans" when I was lamed through the effects of the smallpox. Just as we were recovered a "Man of War" and two frigates came up the river St. Lawrence, filled with British soldiers for General Carlton, who was the commander of the Fortress at Quebeck.

There three armed vessels broke their way through the ice. On the 5th of 6th of May following, the American troops gave up the siege and began their retreat. I was one of that body, we continued to retreat until we arrived at the River Sorel, where we met some re-enforcements from the colonies.

General Thomas or Thompson here had the command of the part of the army in which I had the command of the part of the army in which I served. We crossed the St. Lawrence at the Sorel River. We

crossed the St. Lawrence at the Sorel River in the night with great care, passing the enemy's vessels which had been sent up from Qubec [Quebec]. Genl Thomson was taken prisoner but I escaped and retired with all possible expedition to St. Johns. General Sullivan undetected the latter part of this retreat. The last time that I recollect seeing Gen. Arnold was at the river Sorel, when he gave me in person orders to draw provisions.

I was discharged verbally and arrived home on the 30th day of May 1776, the exact day of my discharge, I cannot now remember, but verily believe it was near the 20th day of May 1776.

I do remember the day when I got home at Spencertown and that was the last day of May as above stated.

After my discharge which was given me at Sorel River.

I went immediately to Spencertown a distance of about 260 miles.

The following are some of my officers and fellow soldiers with me when discharged. Lieut Loomis, Ensign Barret were two of my company officers.

3rd Term of Service. On the 20th day of May 1777 I enlisted as a private into the Connecticut State Troops for the period of six months, and immediately marched from my place of residence, Spencertown in the State of New York. Sargeant Pardee enlisted me for Capt. Woodbridge's Company, in Col. Ellmen's Regiment, Lieut Colonel Brown belonged to the same regiment—Majr Corpin was our Major. Immediately after my enlistment, I joined my company and marched to Albany. The first service performed in this town, was to go as a guard with other soldiers to Fort George with 20 Waggons, two men to a wagon, with powder for the American forces stationed there at that time.

I was gone upon this expedition from Albany two weeks. At the end of that time we returned to Albany again, and soon after, our company were ordered to the German Flats, (now Herkimer) where we were all engaged and employed in building the fort at that place.

Some time in the month of September 1777 we were ordered to Fort Stanwix, and immediately we took up our march for that post and remained there until the expiration of this term of service. Col. Ellmer commanded the fort (Stanwix) while I remained there—and at the expiration of my term of service November 20, 1777 he gave me a written discharge, which I have lost many years since, and cannot now, after diligent search find the same. I received this discharge at Fort Stanwix.

Lieut. Col. Brown, left Fort Stanwix at the same time and was killed on his way to Albany by an ambush shot.

I have no documentary evidence in my possession, and I know of no person alive who served with me in either of the foregoing tours. I am now nearly eighty six years old, and live at a great distance from Spencertown, from whence I went when I enlisted in all three of said tours. It maybe noticed that the two last mentioned to wit, I served in the State Troops of Connecticut; at that time I was not acquainted in the Connecticut having never lived there after 2 years 23 years of age.

During the last year I have made diligent enquiry for some one of my company, but can find none, and verily believe they are all dead. I am very infirm and therefore am unable to seek after them personally and cannot without great expense make further search of evidence.

I hereby relinquish every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and declare that my name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state.

Interrogatories put by the Court.

1st where and in what year were you born?

Answer. I was born at Lebanon Connecticut on the 15th day of April 1748 and removed when young to Spencertown N.Y.

2nd have you any record of your age and where is it?

Answer. I have none, but my age is well known where I now live.

3rd when were you living when called into service? Where have you lived since the Revolutionary War, and where do you now live?

Answer. When I entered the service as aforesaid I lived in the town of Spencertown on the east line of the State of New York. After the Revolutionary service rendered as aforesaid, I returned to said Spencertown, lived there till peace, then moved to the State of Vermont, lived there 15 years and then moved to Canterbury in the State of Connecticut, lived there 17 years, and now live in Lisbon Connecticut.

[4th] How were you called into service, where you drafted, did you volunteer or were you a substitute? And if a substitute for whom?

Answer. I enlisted each time.

5th State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops where you served, such Continental and Militia regiments, as you can recollect, and the general circumstances of your service.

Answer. I have in the body of my declaration stated my answer to this question or requirement.

6th Did you ever receive a discharge from the service & if so, by whom was it given, and what has become of it?

Answer. Twice I was verbally discharged, and Col. Ellmer gave me a written discharge at Fort Stanwix which I have lots.

7th State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighborhood, and who can testify as to your character for veracity and their belief of your services as a soldier in the revolution.

Answer. Revd. Philo Judson pastor of the church in Lisbon. (Signed) Azariah Bill

Sworn to and subscribed the day & year aforesaid before me. John Hyde, Judge of the Court of Probate.