

Pension Application for Joel Bower

S.29020

A sketch of the military services of Joel Bower in the United States Army during the War of the Revolution.

I was born in south Hampton Old England 20th Feb. 1763. I was about 5 years old when my Father emigrated to America, his name was Phinihas, he first settled on Long Island but at the commencement of the Revolution he moved up the North River & settled in Orange County. I was about this time apprenticed to Capt. Samuel Chard master carpenter (1) in the beginning of the year '77 he entered himself 3 sons & 2 apprentices in the Government Artificers at New Windsor, we drew our arms and accouterments we were at the Battle and storming of Fort Montgomery on the 6th day of October of this year, General James Clinton commanded, his Brother George, then acting governor of the State was also there with a small body of militia, the attack commenced from the best of my recollections between the hours of 12 & 1 o'clock (2) which was continued without intermission the remainder part of the day & under cover of the darkness of the night they succeeded in mounting the wall before we discovered them. The greater part of our soldiers were taken prisoners, the officers and a few soldiers with myself made our escape by a passage out of the fort next to the River which was not known to the British. They kept the fort but 3 days before they evacuated and burned it. A Cousin of mine whose name was Samuel Jones lay sick in the fort at this time and not being able to escape, & his comrades were prohibited the privilege of bringing him assistance so he was burned to death, our quarters this winter '77 was at New Windsor, in the spring of '78 we were stationed at West Point where we were engaged in building barracks, gun carriages, platforms &c, we were constantly equipped for the common defence & as liable to be ordered to battle as the Regular Army. Sometime in the forepart of the month of June of this year we received orders to reinforce Gen. Washington's army then in New Jersey, as Sir Henry Clinton was about to evacuate Philadelphia and concentrate their forces at New York, we joined a party on the Hackensack river & thence marched hastily down & joined the main body, in a very short time the British army made their appearance and a desperate battle ensued which is called the Monmouth Battle. (3) I was on the right of the left wing in Clinton's Brigade, I stood in the front rank where we sustained a tremendous cannonade as well as heavy fire of musketry for a considerable time we

then were impetuously charged by the Dragoons, and in their second charge a Dragoon aimed a deadly blow at my head which would have instantly killed me, but I raised my musket to shield my head from the meditated stroke, which caused his sword to glance & cut off my two middle fingers & the little finger about half off, this was my right hand which was holding on the small of my gun, my hand has ever since been very much disabled from this wound, as he was then passing me he made an underhanded blow at my head, and the point of his sword passed through my left eyebrow which made a deep incision & considerably stunned me, at this instant his horse was shot through the head & fell dead at my feet as I recovered from the last blow I received, I drew my bayonet & would have terminated his existence had not Adjutant Johnson (4) caught me by the shoulder & bade me desist saying "no murder here you young rogue the man cries for quarter" I was now sent to the rear of the army, the next day we was conveyed a few miles to a barn which was used as a kind of temporary hospital, from this place we were sent to Morristown and there I remained until I had recovered of my wounds so as to join the service again at West Point, where I remained Untill the Campaign of '79 we then joined Colonel Haythorn's Levies (5) With the intention of attacking New York, thousands of troops were gathered here on this occasion, & a larger quantity of Malitia was collected at this time than I see at any other place during the war, but the plan was defeated on the account of Count De Estaings not being able to get one of his largest ships over the Bar at Sandy Hook to cooperate with the land forces so the enterprise was abandoned, & when this campaign closed we returned again to West Point for winter quarters. At the opening of the Campaign in the spring of '80, I joined Clinton's Brigade in the 5th Battalion under the command of Colonel Willett, (6) we crossed the river at West Point & marched down to Kings Ferry & then we crossed the river, & marched to Fort Lee (7) where we remained a long time, or until Major Andre was taken prisoner & executed, we then returned to West Point where I remained as formerly until the Spring of '82 when I with 39 others of the artificials was sent to the frontiers on the branches of the Delaware to reinforce Colonel Spauldin (8) for the purpose of keeping the Indians in check who was making great havock amongst the settlers at this time. Very soon after we joined Colonel Spaulding's forces the Quarter Master of the regiment was taken sick & left the army & by the recommendation of Capt. Dodge (9) to Colonel Spaulding I was appointed to that station in which & acted until I left the army in the fall of this

campaign a large force of Indians came down upon the settlers & drove off a large number of their cattle, we pursued them & gave them battle but they were too numerous for us we were defeated & obliged to retreat. I received a shot in this engagement which passed through my left leg about midway from the foot to the knee I laid under a log the following night, in the morning from the great loss of blood I was scarcely able to raise myself, but with the greatest exertions I succeeded in crawling to the bank of the river where I fell in company with 5 others of the wounded, where we fixed a kind of raft of old logs & c. and floated down the river until we came to the settlements where we were taken care of, and as soon as I got able to walk I got a furlow, subject to return to the army at the shortest notice, I then went home to my parents in Orange County where I remained until the next season, when we got the news that the army was to be disbanded. I then went to New Windsor & received my discharge from the army.

My discharge with many other valuable things that I possessed was burned at the house of Capt. Stephen Hopkins an officer of the Revolution in the year 1809 at Lewiston, NY whose house was burned when he & his wife was absent visiting a certain sick person about ½ mile distant. All the compensation I received for the 6 years I was in the army was not available for more than \$25. When pay-day came I with many others paid no attention to it, the paper which we drew was of but little consequence as for instance when I was on the Frontier in a certain Barrack room there was 19 of us, we collected all the "shin plasters" we could, amounting according to the face of them to \$1008, which was all put in a hat & I carried it to a certain Old Scotch lady who kept a kind of grocery & all I could get for this amount was a half pint of Brandy which I carried to my quarters & then we rationed it out in a teaspoon so that all might get his share.

I know nearly all the principal officers of the Revolution. Washington, LayFayette & many other distinguished persons of the Army was in the habit of frequently dining at my Father's house during the war.

After various misfortunes in life I commenced a kind of trade in salt to Canada by this means I got considerably acquainted with many people of this Province & a short time before the breaking out of the war of 1812 I had moved to Niagara where it was well known that I was an old American soldier & not apprehending any trouble & it being difficult for me to leave my little effects & being then an old man I concluded

by taking no part in the war I might remain unmolested, but in this I was mistaken, I was apprehended by one Major Kirby of the incorporated Mounted Malitia as I was returning from my labour with a hoe on my shoulder & they forced me to run before them 1 ¼ mile to the guard house threatening to blow out my brains, I was then sent across the lake to York where I was locked up in a cold filthy prison where I suffered incredible hardships for more than two years, during my imprisonment I endeavored to acquaint the government of the U.S. of it but whether they ever received the intelligence or not I am unable to state. Many years ago while I was in the State of Indiana I received a letter from a friend of mine stating that Congress had granted a pension to the soldiers of the Revolution & that I could draw mine on application, I immediately came to this Province for the purpose of disposing of some little property I owned here, calculating then to proceed to Washington for the purpose of obtaining this pension, but before I had got my little business accomplished I was seized with an inflammation which settled in my left knee which has made a perfect cripple of me ever since, almost entirely loosing the use of this leg, so that it is impossible for me to walk a single step without the assistance of a crutch combining this with the infirmities which has accumulated during the various privations, hunger, cold & fatigues of the Revolution & the hard & cruel imprisonment in the late war all combining to render me a feeble helpless old man, & at this late period soliciting that assistance from the government which I am sure they will not refuse to one who never shrunk from danger when the liberties for the country were at stake, who fought, who bled, & who endured all the privation of the war for 6 long years, ever willing to sacrifice ease & enjoyment with all the pecuniary considerations for my country's good. I should have applied sooner for my pension but this place is mostly settled by old country people who feel a kind of delicacy in communication, with the government of the United States. Untill now I came across Isaac Hallock a citizen of that country who has undertaken the business for me, who & on my behalf I have legally authorized to receive my pension and arrearages or any communication the government may think proper to make. Again for me to bring forward any living evidence to substantiate my claim at this late period would be impossible as all that I know anything about has passed away, I can now only refer you to the rolls & documents of the Army in which I acted for proof of my assertions, humbly trusting that the government will be pleased to

overlook what is impossible for me to pervert, remembering that this appeal is from an old Revolutionary Soldier. (Signed) Joel Bower

C.E .Home District /Joel Bower being duly sworn before Alexander Campbell Esquire, and P. F. Whitney Esquire two of her Majesties Justices of the Peace and of the District aforesaid, says that he is the person described in the above sketch, that the relations contained therein are perfectly true, to the best of his recollection, and that he has authorized Isaac Hallock to act in his behalf. Alexander Campbell J.P.; P. F. Whitney J.P.

Sworn before us at Pickering in the District aforesaid this 17th day of December 1845.

Declaration. In order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress of the 7th June 1832.

Home District

Province of Canada SS.

On this twenty fourth day of January 1846 personally appeared before us A. Campbell and P.F. Whitney two of her majesties Justices of the Peace for said District Joe Bower a resident of Pickering in the Home District and Province of Canada aged Eighty three years the 21st of February next who being duly sworn deposeth and saith that by reason of old age and the consequent loss of memory he cannot swear positively as to the precise time he entered the army, neither can he positively state whether he enlisted, volunteered or under what particular form he entered the service, but according to the best of his recollections he entered the government Artificers in the month of March in the year 1777 at New Windsor which was under the command of Capt. Samuel Chard Master Carpenter, but thinks he had no commission only acting as foreman, but thinks that Capt. Machin (10) who was termed by us the "engineer" had a Commission, states he see one Capt. Moody (11) frequently in company with Capt. Machin but thinks he had nothing to with the Artificers, & that he Capt. Moody afterwards had the command of a company in the Artillery & remained in this station to the end of the war, he drew arms & equipment from the government stores & is sure that the artificers was at this time a legally authorized branch of the army but has no knowledge of their being at this time organized into companies with their officers as mentioned by the pension department he was first engaged in assisting to put a Chevaux de fries (12) across the river at New

Windsor. Nearly all the artificers with whom he was associated was at the battle of Fort Montgomery on the 6th day of Oct. 1777 and the only one of his party who escaped with him was Jeremiah Smith. James Thompson, Thomas Horton & several others of their party was taken prisoners and but one lived to return his name was Scott Francis.

During the engagement he was under the command of General James Clinton whose head was nearly white as snow. His brother George was there with a small body of Malitia he does not recollect the names of any other officers at the fort at this time, this battle commenced he believes between the hours of 12 & 1 o'clock PM which was kept up the remainder part of the day, the night being dark & a piece of wood standing but a short distance from the fort prevented their discovering the British troops until they had mounted the wall all the principle officers a few privates with himself escaped on the side of the fort next the river. The rest were all made prisoners. The British kept possession of the fort but three days before they evacuated & burned it. A cousin of his Sam'l Jones perished in the flames as stated in the sketch forwarded to the department under date of 16 or 17 of Dec. last. Their quarters this winter '77 was at New Windsor. At the opening of the Campaign of 1778 they were stationed at West Point where they were engaged in building barracks Gun Carriages, platforms &c until they received orders to reinforce Gen. Washington's Army in New Jersey as Sir Henry Clinton was about to evacuate Philadelphia for the purpose of concentrating their forces in New York. They left West Point & marched to [Sacoat?] a Dutch settlement in NY thence they marched to Morristown in NJ and then to the Hackensack river where they joined another party & then marched to the main army, he was in the Monmouth Battle but did not know, he does not recollect the names of the officers he was stationed on the right of the left wing of Clinton's Brigade, in this battle he was wounded by a dragoon, by having his two middle fingers cut off & the little finger nearly half off from the same person he received another wound by an underhanded blow the point of his sword passed through his left eye brow, at this instant the dragoon's horse was shot through the head & fell dead at his feet, and as soon as he had recovered a little he drew his bayonet at his antagonist but Adjutant Johnson caught him by the shoulder saying "no murder here you young rogue the man cries for "quarter" he was now ordered to the rear of the regiment, he see a great number fall this day from the excessive heat, want of water &c. He is positive that

General Washington and General Lee, highly disagreed this day that Gen. Lee had badly arranged the left wing so that their plan was defeated and the British Army gained the bridge. Gen. Washington this day was mounted on a [?] gray horse & he see him ride from the extremity of one wing to the other with great velocity, he also states that great indignation was felt by the army towards Gen. Lee for his bad management in this battle. After deponent the next day he was conveyed a few miles with the rest of the wounded to a barn from there they were sent to Morristown where he remained untill he had recovered of his wounds & then he returned again to the service at West Point where he remained until the campaign of '79 he then joined Colonel Haythorn's Levies with the intention of attacking [attacking] N.[ew] York he states that a great number from the service at West Point joined these Levies, that he was in the company commanded by Capt. Seth Marvin (13) one Johnson was their Lieutenant does not recollect the names of any other officers, this company was stationed at FishKill, so when this plan was abandoned he returned again to west Point for winter quarters. At the opening of the Campaign of '80 he joined Clinton's Brigade in the fifth battalion under command of Colonel Willett do not recollect the names of any other officers they crossed the river at West Point marched down to Kings Ferry then recrossed the river & marched to Fort Lee where they remained a long time or until the execution of Major Andre. They then returned to West Point where he remained in the Artificers employed building wood boat repairing vessels that were engaged in the service &c. as there was no particular call in the campaign of 81 he did not leave West Point. At the opening of the campaign of 82 he with 39 others was sent to the frontiers on the branches of the Delaware to reinforce Colonel Spaulding's forces for the purpose of keeping the Indians in check who were making great destruction amongst the settlers in this section of the country. They marched to Goshen the county town of Orange County from there to the lower forks of the Delaware where they joined Capt. Abram Westfall's (14) Company Colonel Spaulding on the account of poor health left the service and Colonel Weisenfelt took the command very soon after he joined this regiment the quarter master was taken sick & left the army and by the recommendation of Capt. Dodge to Colonel Spaulding he was appointed to this station in which he acted until he left the army. Capt. Dodge did not belong to this regiment, but was acquainted with deponent & was at that time on the frontier; cannot recollect to what company he belonged this regiment was divided in

companies & extended 60 miles in length in the fall of the campaign a force of Indians came down and drove off a drove of cattle belonging to the inhabitants & they pursued them & gave them battle but they were too numerous. They were defeated & obliged to retreat, the company to which Deponent belonged was the only one out of the regiment which was in the battle, the greater part were militia, and they were commanded by one Capt. Wood (15) of the Militia who was taken prisoner by the Indians, he does not remember the names of any other officers who were in this engagement deponent saith also that he was wounded in the left leg in this engagement that he laid under a log the following night, that from the great loss of blood he was so weak in the morning that he could scarcely raise himself, but by the greatest exertions, he succeeded in crawling to the bank of the river where he fell in company with five other of the wounded, the name of one was Patterson, (16) they constructed a kind of raft of logs &c and floated down the River until they came to the settlements, and as soon as he got able to walk he got a furlow subject to return to the service at the shortest notice he then went home to his parents in Orange County, and that in the following spring they got information that the army was to be disbanded, he then went to New Windsor and received his discharge from the army. Does not recollect by who his discharge was signed he thinks the time he received his discharge from the best of his recollections was either the last of May or the first of June in the year 1783, deponent further said that he was not employed in any civil pursuit from the time he first entered the service in March 1777 until he had received his discharge as above. Deponent further saith that he cannot from the failure of his memory that how it was or under what particular form that he entered the different branches of the army, only as he supposes that he was detached from one company to another where his services were most needed, neither can he state for what period of time he first entered the service, but that he never was free from service from the time he first entered until he received his discharge. He further states that his Discharges from the army was burned in the house of one Capt. Stephen Hopkins (17) of Lewiston NY whose house was burned in the year 1809—That shortly after the war he settled in Ontario Co. NY where he remained many years & then being engaged in bringing salt to Canada, he lived in various places and for the past 14 years in the township of Pickering Home District Canada. Deponent further says that he never before has applied for his pension and his reasons for not doing so, he states to be, that he never

heard that there was a pension for him until about seven years ago while he was in the State of Indiana, that he then returned to this Province for the purpose of arranging his business so as to apply for his pension, but was taken very sick before he had accomplished his design, and that reduced to the lowest design of poverty and made a perfect cripple by his illness he never found a person to vindicate his cause neither could he even learn what steps were necessary to take of the purpose of obtaining it and that from age weakness and debility it was impossible for him to act for himself and that now from his late increased bodily infirmities, he apprehends a possibility that he may not be in a situation of rendering further instructions in his case therefore he has authorized Israel Hallock of this Township of Pickering his agent in the settlement of his claim, trusting that the said Israel Hallock will consummate his designs in this matter. Deponent further says that at the time he entered the service at New Windsor he was a resident of Orange County he further says that he knows of no living evidence that he can bring forward to substantiate his services.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present, and declares that his name is not on the Pension Roll of any agency in any state. Again deponent says as a further reason for not applying for his pension that he had understood that it would be required by him to bring forward two living evidences to prove his services by that he had embraced every opportunity in making inquiry for such, but was always informed that they were not living and finally he had come to the conclusion that it would be useless to make application until Israel Hallock suggested the idea that it was not required or believed it would not be in his case since taking the above, deponent says that he has called to his recollection the names of the following officers that commanded in the 5th battalion of Clinton's brigade at the period that that he deponent was in the battalion. Capt. Hammock (18) a French gentleman Capt. Steward a Scotch gentlemen, Capt. DeBois, Duchman [sic], Capt. Vanderbergh, also a Duchman, Capt. Dodge an Englishman and Adjutant Johnson, a Scotch man. That after he left this battalion the five battalions were reduced to three. (19) (Signed) Joel Bower.

Sworn and Subscribed to before me the day and year above written. P.J. Whitney JP; Alexander Campbell J.P.

End Notes—Joel Bower—S.29020

1. I haven't found a payroll for Samuel Chard and his company of Artificers. These usually are civilian contractors working for the Continental Army. Joel would only have been be fourteen years of age in 1777.
2. The Battle of Fort Montgomery was on October 6, 1777.
3. The Battle of Monmouth was fought on June 28, 1778.
4. Ensign James Johnston of the Fifth New York Continental Regiment. He was not appointed Adjutant until July 14, 1780. In 1778 he was the Sergeant Major of the regiment.
5. Colonel John Hathorn of the Orange County Militia had command of levies which were active from October 20, 1779 to January 1, 1780.
6. Colonel Lewis DuBois resigned on December 22, 1779 as Colonel of the Fifth New York. Lieutenant-Colonel Marinus Willett of the Third New York became the Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant of the Fifth New York on July 1, 1780.
7. Fort Lee was in New Jersey.
8. Colonel Albert Pawling (sometimes spelled Paulding). He had a regiment of New York State Levies in 1779, 1780, and 1781.
9. Henry Dodge Captain in Colonel Frederick Weisenfel's Regiment of New York State Levies in 1782.
10. Captain-Lieutenant Thomas Machin in Colonel John Lamb's Regiment of continental Artillery (Second Regiment). Machin had served in other artillery regiments previous to this enlistment. He had been wounded at Bunker Hill on 17 June 1775 and wounded at Fort Montgomery, NY, on 6 October 1777. He was appointed a full captain on 21 August 1780.
11. Captain Andrew Moody (Moodie) of Colonel Lamb's Regiment of Artillery.
12. *Chevaux de fries* in this instance, is a type of river obstruction to prevent passage of ships. It can also be used to prevent a cavalry charge on an encampment of soldiers and often is able to be moved from one position to another. The barrier can be as simple as a bunch logs with their cut off branches sticking out to impale a man, or a more permanent type of stone with the inside part consisting of sharp stones sticking up to greatly slow progress.
13. Seth Marvin and Lieutenant John Johnson were part of Colonel Hathorn's Levies.

14. Captain Abraham Westfall was in Colonel Frederick Weisenfel's Regiment of New York State Levies in 1782. On page 30 of New York Certificates issued to Weisenfel's Regiment New York Troops to March 6, 1787, certificate No. 3479 £20..19..6 was paid to him on November 11. Revolutionary War Rolls 1775-1783, Series M-246 Folder 169, Roll 77, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
15. Joel is mistaken when this happened. Captain John Wood of Col. William Allison's Regiment of Orange County Militia was taken prisoner on 22 July 1779, at Minisink. Captain Joseph Brant and his raiding party dealt the patriots at Minisink Battle a severe blow. Colonel John Hathorn's Regiment lost the following officers in this battle: Adjutant Nathaniel Finch, Ensigns Gabriel Wisner and John Wood. Colonel William Allison's Regiment lost the following officers: Lieutenant-Colonel Dr. Benjamin Thurston (Tusten), Captain Samuel Jones and Ensign Ephraim Middagh. Captain Benjamin Vail of the Second Regiment of Ulster County Militia was also killed.
16. Possibly Joseph Patterson of Colonel Hathorn's Regiment.
17. Possibly the Captain Stephen Hopkins who had served in a Rhode Island State Regiment.
18. The officers mentioned were of the Fifth New York. They are as follows: Captain John F. Hamtranck; Captain James Steward; Captain Philip DeBevier (often listed by soldiers as Debois); Captain Henry Vanderburgh. Dodge and Johnson were previously noted. It should be noted that Dodge had served as a Lieutenant in the Fifth New York.
19. There were five New York Regiments plus some of the additional continental regiments were consolidated into two New York Regiments on January 1, 1781.