

Pension Application for Thomas Burch

S.12401

Declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June 7, 1832.

State of New York

Chautauque [Chautauqua] County SS.

On this 12th day of October 1832, personally appeared in open court, before the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas, in & for the County of Chautauque, now sitting Thomas Burch a resident of the Town of Ripley in said County aged seventy seven years, on the twenty fifth day of February next who being first duly sworn, according to law, doth on his oath, make the following declaration, in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June 7, 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States, under the following named officers.

That in the year 1776 he resided in Schaghticoke, then Albany now Rensselaer County of the then frontier northern settlements of the state. That the country was infested with Indians, Tories & Refugees. That the inhabitants were "few & far between" & that throughout the whole of the Revolutionary contest, they had almost constantly to stand by their arms. Early in the season of 1776 Declarant & the other Whig inhabitants of the place, formed themselves into a military association, for their protection & the annoying of the enemy & agreed to keep one company constantly in the field & for this purpose every inhabitant was to arm & equip himself & do duty in the company alternately a fortnight at each time.

Under these regulations declarant was out through the summer & fall of 1776, about every other fortnight & marched a number of times to Fort Miller & Fort Edward & through Stillwater & Fish Creek to what was then called Palmerstown & to various other places in the vicinity of Schaghticoke from which danger was apprehended. That on these expeditions, sometimes on inhabitant commanded the company & sometimes another, some serving as Captain but once or twice & others several times.

That he believes he was engaged in actual service the summer & fall all of this year at least three months. That he recollects among the captain of the company Peter Martin, & he thinks Elias Golden. That he believes that Col. McCracken commanded the regiment & Maj Blair was with them.

In March 1777 Declarant still residing in Schaghticoke went to Stillwater in Saratoga & enlisted in a company of batteauxmen, under Capt. John Vance in Col. Hays regiment in the New York Line under Genl Schuyler, Declarant always supposed that his services in this company was in the Continental Troops & that the returns of the Regiment was never made by Col. Hays, whose papers were destroyed by fire, but he has received information from the War Department in answer to an application for a pension under the law of 1818 that the company belonged to the New York Militia. He enlisted for the period of nine months & on the 1 day of April 1777, joined his company at the Barracks in Saratoga, & remained there until about the middle of that month, he went by the orders of Genl Schuyler to the General's Mills on Fish Creek in Saratoga & took charge of the said mills & continued there sawing lumber for the American Army until about the middle of August thereafter, when an express was sent for declarant to come to Gen. Schuyler's house, about a mile & a half from the mills.

That he went immediately down & not seeing the Gen. enquired for him of Mr. Schuyler who said that he had walked down the creek towards the River. That declarant went as directed & found the Genl who ordered him to return to the mills, take out all the irons & bring them under a coal pit bed near the mills, as he expected the enemy would come and burn the mills. While yet in conversation a General Officer came suddenly up to them & apparently in much anger drew his sworn, & flourishing it over Genl Schuyler's head, told him that unless he left the country in fifteen minutes he would be a corpse. Schuyler said not a word to the officer but pale and agitated turned to Declarant & said "Well do as I directed you", & in a hurried manner left the ground & went immediately to Albany.

The whole scene, so strange & inexplicable made a deep impression on declarant's mind. He could never ascertain who the officer was, who made the threat, but soon learned that Ticonderoga had

been abandoned by St. Clair & that Schuyler himself had retreated from Fort Edward & was suspected of treachery to the cause of his county.

Declarant went to the mills took out & secreted the irons as directed & immediately joined his company at Stillwater. While there an alarm was given that the enemy was near & declarant & his company were furnished with muskets & ammunition & marched up the river until they ascertained that the enemy was not near them when they were ordered to return to their tents. They remained a few days at Stillwater, & then went on to VanSchaick's Island when the main army encamped, soon after they went on the Island Gen. Gates took command of the troops in place of Genl Schuyler.

In a short time Genl Gates, advanced north with the army, & declarant's company was ordered & went to Half Moon Point, where their quarters continued, but they were employed in boating between that place & Albany, taking up [?] provisions & baggage for the army & after the battles at Saratoga & Bemus Heights taking down sick & wounded prisoners until some time in November, when they were ordered to take their boats to Albany & lay them up, & then went to rafting lumber from Schaghticoke to Albany & continued rafting until about the middle of December, when they went to cutting wood for the barracks, near the Cohoes Falls, when on the 1 day of January 1778 they were called together in Albany & dismissed in the manner that militia companies are usually dismissed from parades. That although declarant enlisted as a batteauxman, yet he considered himself bound to render military or any other service to the common cause on the order of his superior officers.

That in the subsequent years of the war, he was frequently out in the militia & so often that it is impossible for him to designate with accuracy the dates or specific periods of such services, that he hired substitutes on two such occasions, his brother Richard on one tour & Benjamin Bennett on another occasion, who went up to Fort Ann, he thinks in 1780 & was taken prisoner there by the British under Carlton & never returned again & was believed to have died, while a prisoner & declarant believes & had no doubt.

That he served at least, for three months, in these militia expedition after his return from the service under Genl Schuyler.

That he has no documentary evidence & that he knows of no person whose testimony he can procure, who can testify to his service, excepting his brother Richard & Alvin Hunt, whose depositions are annexed.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present & declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state.

And in answer to the particular interrogatories of the court now here he says.

1. I was born in Pawling, Dutchess County, New York, February 25, 1756.
2. I have no record of my age, but a family record was kept by my father & I recollect often seeing the record of my birth & have ever kept it in my memory.
3. I was living in Schaghticoke, when called into service & have lived since the Revolutionary War in Shaftbury Vermont, one year, being the year 1783 when I moved to Springfield Otsego County New York & lived there till about 1797. If then moved to Williamstown, Oneida County when I moved to [Flors?] & lived two years & lived till about 1816 when I removed into the town of Ripley where I now live & have since resided.
4. I was called into service by voluntary engagements, never having been drafted but once & never having been a substitute but have occasionally served by substitutes.
5. This interrogatory is answered as fully in my declaration as I am able to do.
6. I never received written discharges, but was always dismissed as militia now or on parade days.
7. I am known to Elder Isaiah Z. Butler, Madison Otis & others in my present neighborhood & who I presume can testify as to my character for veracity & their belief of my services as a soldier of the revolution.

(Signed) Thomas Burch

Subscribed the day & year aforesaid. B. Westworth, Judge Cho in Com Pleas.

Letter in file dated October 2, 1926, written in response to an inquiry.

I have to advise you from the papers in the Revolutionary War pension claim S.12401, it appears that Thomas Burch was born February 25, 1756 in Pawling, Dutchess County, New York.

While residing in Schaghticoke, Albany County, New York, he served as a private in the New York Troops, as follows—

In 1776, three months under Captains Peter Martin, Elias Golden, and Colonel McCracken.

From April 1, 1777, nine months in Captain John Vamee's Company, Colonel Hays' Regiment.

After this he served three months in the Militia, no officers stated.

He was allowed pension on his application executed October 12, 1832, while a resident of Ripley, Chautauqua County, New York.

He died August 3, 1837, leaving widow, Susanna.

There is no further data on file relative to widow or children.

And in answer to the particular interrogatories of the court now here, he says.