

### Pension Application for Abraham Coons

S15051

Granted pension of \$54.55 per annum, from 4<sup>th</sup> March 1831.

Declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress of the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1832.

State of New York

Montgomery County.

On this fourteenth day of May one thousand eight hundred & thirty three, personally appeared before me David Spraker one of the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas in & for the County of Montgomery aforesaid, being a court of record. Abraham Coons of Canajoharie & County of Montgomery & state aforesaid aged eighty five 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 provisions made by the Act of Congress passed June 7, 1832 that he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers & served as herein stated—to wit the applicant was born in Livingston Manor in the State of New York at the commencement & during the Revolutionary War he was a resident in the Town of Sand Lake in the now County of Rensselaer & state aforesaid; and was first Corporal in a company of Militia commanded by Capt. Jacob Defreest in Col. Henry VanRensselaers (1) Regt—That during the war there were frequent requisitions on said Regt for Militia Drafts—and occasionally the whole regt was called out—that in all the partial requisitions there was a beat for volunteers, to save drafting that in every instance this deponent with many others volunteered, except when his whole company were called out & that in all the services therein detailed this applicant acted as first corporal. His first service as far as he is now able to recollect was in the month of January 1776—does not recollect the day of the month when Genl Schuyler made a call for Militia on a rumor that Sir John Johnson (2) was building fortifications north of Johnstown to be garrisoned by his Indians.—Deponent volunteered under Capt. Jacob Defreest, in Col. Henry Van Rensselaers Regt.—& marched up the river & was put under the command of Genl Ten Broeck, (3) the Militia under Genl Herkimer (4) were also ordered out. They were paraded on the ice upon the Mohawk opposite Johnstown, Near Major Fonda's.(5)—The dependants of Sir John Johnson were dismissed or discontinued their labors & then were dismissed & returned home, applicant was out on duty at this time 2 weeks or more. The next service within his recollection was on a requisition upon said Regt when he volunteered under the said Capt Defreest on a call to go to Skeensborough now White Hall at the South end of Lake Champlain about the first of July 1776 entered at Sand Lake aforesaid—passed through Lansingburgh, Saratoga to Fort Edward then remained one week with his company—then were marched to Fort Ann—Tarried there one week—then to Skeensborough—Col. Van Rensselaer was with us—remained there 2 or 3 days & returned to Fort Ann & then tarried 2 weeks making & repairing walls & standing sentry—This was when the Northern Army which had retreated from Canada was at Ticonderoga. Applicant thinks at this time the Americans had command of the Lake Genl Schuyler appeared to have command of the main army—applicant then returned to Fort Edward was there a few days—were then dismissed & returned home by way of Saratoga & Troy—distance 80 or 100 miles—after serving more than 6 weeks—among his comrades were Abm Peck & Andrus Bort—dismissed after the middle of August. In June 1777 he volunteered again under Capt. Defreest in Col. Van Rensselaer's Regt. With his whole company at Sand Lake—Marched through Lansingburgh & Saratoga to Fort Edward, staid there 2 weeks then to Fort Ann, staid one week—Then to Ticonderoga & arrived there when the British were on a hill which overlooked the Fort—Called mount Hope or Mount Independence—Retreated from Ticonderoga with the American Army. This was in July 1777—was with the Army in its retreat towards Stilwater and until the surrender of Burgoyne & in the battles fought with this army—Except that during this period he had leave to go home on a furlough—staid home 2 days & was ordered with some of the Militia to go up the North River or Mohawk to Fort Stanwix, where the fort was invested by St. Leger—was at the Oriskany battle where the Militia were defeated & Genl Herkimer Killed (6)—Then crossed to the army at or near Stilwater—was in a skirmish with 300 of Burgoyne's men—was then under Capt. George Sharpe, Col. VannRensselaer (7) was badly wounded—was at the subsequent battles with Burgoyne's Army (8) & present when he surrendered his sword—Genl Gates (9)—Schuyler & Arnold were the principal in command was beside Col. Vn Rensselaer when he fell—heard him say I am a dead man—"Let um alone fight on" he recovered. After the surrender of Burgoyne, the applicant with his Capt. Defreest and the whole regt went down at North river with that portion of the army sent by General Gates to meet Genl Vaughan & Sir Henry Clinton (10) who was understood to be at Kingston—but they had relocated to New York—After burning and destroying all in their way—They passed down through Albany to Red Hook—they were then dismissed & returned home & arrived home between the 10<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> of November this deponent thinks—was in the service in this campaign at least 5 months—

On a call for Militia as deponent believes in 1778 in the month of June of that year Deponent volunteered four months with 10 or 12 of his company at Sand Lake & were put into a company commanded by Capt. George Sharpe & his own Lieut. Andrew Miller (11) in Col. Henry Van Rensselaer's Regt—And they went to Albany & were marched from there under the command of Major Fisher (12)—to the upper fort in Schaoharie to keep the Fort & for scouting parties a distance of about 70 miles from this town & staid there until September—when he was dismissed and then returned home—having served his said term of three months & one week over. There was at the time 3 forts, called the lower—middle—and upper fort. At one of their Forts Col. Vrooman (13) commanded—There was a Col. Harper (14) there occasionally. Whether he commanded either of the forts, does not recollect. Had no battles during this

time—There were all the time Tories & Indians prowling about but we could seldom get sight of them—A few were captured & taken by us to Albany [?] was known by [?] by horses & cattle being frequently drove off & occasionally a person killed or building burnt & constant [consternation?] & alarm among the people.

The deponent is perfectly positive as to all the facts set forth in the last recollection except as to and the year is not quite positive as to the year. And he has no means in his power to correct if it be an error only by its relation to the following events which deponent thinks must be a matter of history – although not within his reach. On deponent returning from Schoharie as above stated to his house it was not more than 3 or 4 days before he volunteered on another call for Militia to go to a place called the Beaver Dam—in Delaware County N. York where there was a picket Fort. This deponent thinks was in the last of September he volunteered under his own Capt. Defreest, Lieut. A Miller—The whole company turned out—went under Major or Col. Fisher (15) & Gen Ten Broeck from Albany with about 3000 troops—It was understood that a collection of Tories & Indians were in that vicinity. We succeeded in taking 100 of the Tories & Indians principally the former & returned with them to Albany then was dismissed & returned home. In October as deponent believes a distance between 60 & 80 miles—was in the service at this time at least one month—On the last of October or first of November of this year deponent with his Capt. Sharpe & Lieut. Miller volunteered at Sand Lake aforesaid—went through Albany, Schenectady & then up the North side of the Mohawk with Major Fonda—to Johnstown then to Fort Plain—Then to where Utica now is & on their return went to Cherry Valley (16)—after it was burnt—by the Indians. Their [?] absent from home about one month as deponent believes.

Applicant also volunteered for a scouting excursion with a small party of Militia in November 1777 in Very cold weather with Capt. Jacob Defreest with about half of his company on the ground where Burgoyne's army had traveled on a rumor that some British scouts were coming from the North after the surrender of Burgoyne saw the ruins of Genl Schuyler's home what had been burnt absent 3 weeks more & was dismissed in December and returned home.

In the spring of 1779 (this is impossible for deponent to state the day or be certain as to the month) he volunteered with half his company under Capt. George Sharpe—Which Lieut was then out does not recollect was out with Major John Fonda From Greenbush as he now thinks—They marched up the Mohawk to Fort Plain to Otsego Lake there was no road to Otsego Lake from the River—applicant says he saw before his return-- Col. Van Schaick--& Heard of General Clinton & Col. Willet (17) being in that vicinity. Thinks it was before his army arrived with Gen Sullivan (18)—applicant went with his company around Lake Otsego around the outlet of Lake Otsego crossed then returned home by way of Cherry Valley—Schoharie—Albany home was out on scouts for Indians & Tories—out two months—as near as he can recollect--& he believes not far from the time that Genl Clinton & Sullivans army met & joined each other—shortly after this in the month of August 1779 applicant volunteered under Capt. Sharpe with part of Defreests Company went to Johnstown. Major or Col. Fonda commanded went to picket fort—stood sentry on guard & in scouts one month & returned in Sept. of 1779 as he believes—was out on this occasion one month—was dismissed & returned home. Distance about 60 miles—The inhabitants were alarmed with a rumor that Brant or Butler was coming upon them with the Indians-- Deponent was at there other times besides that above mentioned—at the upper Fort in Schoharie each time a part of his own company were with him—Volunteered under Capt. Peter Woodbeck (19) of Col Van Rensselaers Regt—were with Capt. Sharpe & were with Capt. Jacob Defreest—Turned out on alarms—distance 65 miles—were gone from home 2 weeks went before & went after the destruction of Schoharie by the Indians –but nothing remarkable occurring & the times being short—it is impossible for him state the order of the times nor what month or year it was except it was in the summer months.

In October 1780—the day of the month deponent does not recollect he volunteered with his whole company at Sand Lake aforesaid – under Capt. Sharpe (this deponents Capt. Defreest being then Lieut.) and Lieut Miller—all under the command of Genl. VanRensselaer of Claverack passed through Albany up the Mohawk to Stone Arabia—Had a skirmish with the Indians & Tories—Col. Brown (20) & nearly fifty of his men were killed—Gen. V Rensselaer called us back & the soldiers were very much angry—The enemy were pursued—the next morning when it was too late—they crossed Canada creek & then retreated back—The whole regt returned down the Mohawk were dismissed & returned home—Col. Fisher (21) was scalped on this excursion—Returned some time the last of November 1780 in service five weeks or more.—

Deponent further states that in consequence of old age & consequent loss of memory he cannot relate the order of the events & services which he performed—consequently he cannot give the dates with certainty—But he recollects absolutely that he volunteered & went under his own Capt. Defreest & Lieut. Miller—Another time [?] [?] to Fort Stanwix where Rome now is when [?] Col. Gansevoort (22) commanded at the fort but he cannot give the month nor year—from the fort he went around on a scout with his Capt. On the north side of Oneida Lake & then around & returned to Fort Plain—From there were dismissed & returned home after more than one months service-- On another occasion not above stated—deponent volunteered under Capt. Defreest, Lieut. Miller & Col. Henry Van Rensselaer with the whole regt. or nearly all & deponent has nothing to aid his memory as to the month or the year only that they marched from his residence to the Mohawk—staid about 2 weeks at a little fort called Fort Fox on the north side of the Mohawk with part of his company to protect the farms in harvesting—Were ordered to Fort Schuyler there

remained 2 weeks—They were dismissed gone from home 5 weeks—That it was August but what year does not recollect.

Deponent was a volunteer—with Capt. Defreest & Lieut Miller under Col. Willett at the Battle of Johnstown (23)—Left home in Sept 28, the early part was at the Battle & returned in October after the battle after having been in service about six weeks—was at home but a day or two when he volunteered again to go to the North—under the same Capt. & Lieut.—on the last of October or first of November went through Troy—Saratoga—to Fort Edward—then to Lake George Capt. Sharpes Company was with us—It was there the news of the Capture of Lord Cornwallis—came to us—From there a part went to Fort Edward—& deponent with 90 men off west into the wilderness. Took fifty Indians in a Cedar Swamp—When they were asleep at Fort Edward under the command of a man called Capt. Bull—They were tied two & two & taken to Fort Edward—remained at Fort Edward 2 weeks & deponent was dismissed these two excursions were at least three months—The snow was deep when deponent arrived home—Deponent thinks in December 1781.

Previous to the year of the Capture of Lord Cornwallis in the month of June & July but the year Deponent is not certain of he volunteered with the whole regiment in Capt. Defrees Company, Col. Van Rensselaers Regt. Major Fonda was with us—Went through Troy to Fort Edward—was there 2 or 3 weeks—When Capt. Sharpe was ordered on a scout to the banks of Lake Ontario & then to the St. Lawrence—passed through on extensive wilderness seeking Tories & Indians—they took eight days provisions were gone from the Fort 2 Weeks--& were 4 days without any food—deponent was detached & performed the scout with them they found none of the enemy were on the service 7 weeks were dismissed & returned home—Deponent thinks on the last of July or first of August—at all events it was in the summer—

Deponent has always believed that from the Spring of 1776 to the close of the year 1781 he was in the Revolutionary War at least five & a half months in each year that he was not able in any one of those years to remain at home in his own business—Between May & December inclusive to the amount of three months in any one year—But his services were in such detached periods he cannot otherwise & no more fully detail the same than he has above done. In some of those years he was not able to plant or sew his fields & at other times when they were planted he had no opportunity to harvest on account of his frequent calls to the service.

Deponent believes he is correct as to the officers under whom he has served—but not the precise order & date of his services he cannot be certain but as to the part of his having served on the occasions above stated, he is not mistaken—As to the aggregate amount of his services at the times above specified—he saith that by reason of old age & consequent loss of memory he cannot swear positively but according to the best of his recollection—he has served in the periods which he as above detailed as first Corporal not less than two years & seven weeks—For two years of which he claims a pension—does not recollect that he was stationed with regular troops nor was he acquainted with any only those whose names he has mentioned.

Deponent has no Documentary evidence & he knows of no person whose testimony he can procure who can testify to his services.

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. (Signed with his mark) Abraham Coons

Subscribed and sworn this 14<sup>th</sup> day of May 1833 before me. David Spraker a Judge of Montgomery County Courts.

Letter of inquiry dated September 25, 1939.

The data which follow were taken from papers on file in the pension claim S.15051, based on the military service of Abraham Coons.

Abraham Coons was born in 1748 in Livingston Manor, New York. The names of his parents are not shown.

While a resident of Sand Lake (which was later in Rensselaer County) New York, Abraham Coons enlisted in January 1776, and served at various times until the close of 1781, amounting to about two years and seven weeks in all, a private and first corporal with the New York troops under Captains Jacob De Freest, George Scharpe, and Peter Woodbeck, and Colonels Henry Van Rensselaer and Willett; he was in the battle of Oriskany, in both battles of Stillwater and at the surrender of Burgoyne, in the battle of Stone Arabia and the battle of Johnstown.

Abraham Coons was allowed pension on his application executed May 14, 1833, at which time he was living in Canajoharie, Montgomery County, New York.

He died July 24, 1841.

John Coons, son of Abraham Coons, was living in Canajoharie, New York in 1833, aged fifty-nine years. There are no further data relative to the soldier's family.

End Notes—Abraham Coons—S.15051

1. Captain Jacob Defreest was in the Sixth Regiment of Albany County Militia under Colonel Stephen J. Schuyler. Henry K. VanRensselaer was the Lieutenant-Colonel.
2. Sir John Johnson was a very influential loyalist living in Johnstown, Tryon County (now Fulton County) and organized his tenants for his protection. Major General Philip Schuyler having

learned of Johnson arming his tenants had ordered the militia to Tryon County to arrange a meeting with Sir John.

3. Brigadier General Abraham TenBroeck of the Albany County Militia.
4. Nicholas Herkimer at this time was the Colonel of the First Regiment of Tryon County Militia. He was the senior Colonel and was appointed the chief Colonel of the Tryon County Militia. He was appointed the Brigadier General of the Tryon County Militia on September 5, 1776.
5. Jellis Fonda was the Captain of a company of Exempts in the Third Regiment of Tryon County Militia commanded by Colonel Frederick Visscher (Fisher). Fonda had been a major in the militia under Sir William Johnson, the father of Sir John. Fonda was also a merchant and traded with the Indians.
6. The Battle of Oriskany was fought on August 6, 1777. It is possible he was at Oriskany but most of the Albany County Militia were either at Stillwater to oppose General John Burgoyne's Army from Canada or employed along the North River (Hudson River) with bateaus, etc.
7. Abraham's memory is wrong here. Lieutenant-Colonel VanRensselaer was wounded at the Battle of Fort Ann on July 8, 1777; a month before the Oriskany battle. Captain Sharpe was also in the Sixth Albany.
8. The Battles of Saratoga were fought on September 19 and October 7, 1777. General Burgoyne surrendered on October 17, 1777.
9. Major Generals Horatio Gates and Benedict Arnold of the American Army.
10. Kingston New York was burned on October 13, 1777.
11. Andrew Miller was the Second Lieutenant in Captain DeFreet's Company
12. Major Fisher is unknown, there was a Major John Fonda in the Sixth Albany.
13. Colonel Peter Vrooman of the Fifteenth Regiment of Albany County Militia.
14. Colonel John Harper of the Fifth Regiment of Tryon County Militia. Harper on May 11, 1780 was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of a regiment of New York State Levies.
15. The only Colonel Fisher was Frederick of the Third Tryon.
16. Cherry Valley was burnt on November 11, 1778.
17. Colonel Goose VanSchaick of the First New York Continental Regiment, Brigadier General James Clinton and Lieutenant-Colonel Marinus Willett of the Third New York Continental Regiment.
18. Major General John Sullivan of the American Army. Generals Sullivan and Clinton led an expedition against the Indians loyal to the British in western New York.
19. There is no Captain Peter Woodbeck but there is a Captain Peter Whitbeck in the Fifth Regiment of Albany County Militia.
20. The Battle of Stone Arabia in which Colonel John Brown and nearly fifty of his command were killed was in the morning of October 19, 1780. Brigadier General Robert VanRensselaer caught up with Sir John Johnson and his British forces in the afternoon of October 19 and a battle ensued. Johnson and his forces escaped under the cover of darkness.
21. Colonel Frederick Fisher was tomahawked and scalped on May 22, 1780 in Sir John's first raid of 1780 into the Mohawk Valley.
22. Colonel Peter Gansevoort of the Third New York Continental Regiment. This scout would have to taken place before November of 1778. The First New York under Colonel VanSchaick replaced the Third New York as the garrison at Fort Schuyler. (Fort Stanwix)
23. The Battle of Johnstown was fought on October 25, 1781. For any part of this regiment to have been in this battle they would have to have been stationed in the Mohawk Valley. A dispatch from Colonel Willett would have gone to Schenectady first, for reinforcements. Some of the Second Regiment of Albany County Militia reached Johnstown in time to be in the latter half of the battle.
24. Cornwallis surrendered his British Army on October 19, 1781. It was after the Battle of Johnstown before the Mohawk Valley received news of Cornwallis' surrender.