

Pension Application for Phinehas Culver

R.2571

Personal information in a letter from a family member. Phinehas was born March 17, 1764, Horseheads, NY. No date of death. Married Phoebe Breese, 1794. She was born Feb. 18, 1773 and died March 17, 1854.

Document marked as "copy".

State of New York

Tompkins County SS.

At a Surrogate Court held in and for the County of Tompkins, at the Surrogate's office in the Village of Ithaca in said county on the [blank] day of August 1842, Present Arthur S. Johnson, Surrogate, Personally appeared in open court (believed to be a court of record) Phineas Culver, a resident of the town of Hector in said county aged eighty one years, the seventeenth day of March last past, who first being 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 May 15th 1828.

That he enlisted in the army of the United States on or about the sixth day of March in the year 1779, at Hackett's Town in the County of Sussex and State of New Jersey with Capt. J acob DeWitt and in General James Clinton's regiment, that he immediately repaired to Sussex Court House the place or rendezvous, and served as a private in the said DeWitt's company in the third regiment (as he now thinks) of the Battle line, under the following named officers, and after so remaining at Sussex court House about two months, he was exchanged into the company of Capt. John Spaulding, whom he marched about the month of June 1779, to Wilks Lane in the State of Pennsylvania where Colonel Zebulon Butler was in command where he remained nearly the full period of his enlistment which was for nine months, when the company marched back to Easton and were discharged by Capt Spaulding, that he at that time received an honorable discharge from said Captain Spaulding, which discharged has been mislaid, burned or lost. That he then returned home late in the fall of the year 1779 where his mother resided which was about two and half miles from Hackett's town in the county of Sussex and State of New Jersey and where he remained until the Spring of 1780, when he again enlisted into the company of Captain Jacob DeWitt's and in the same regiment as second Sergeant for during the war.

That at the time of his second enlistment aforesaid he would be entitled to a reward of eighty dollars. That Captain DeWitt paid him at the time of his enlistment two pound (\$5.00) and was to pay him the balance of said reward when he rendezvoused at Sussex Court House, which was to be soon after. This was at Hackett's town and immediately thereafter rendezvoused at Sussex Court House on the sixth day of June of that year, he received his certificate of enlistment as second Sergeant in Capt. Jacob DeWitt's company which Capt. DeWitt wrote in his presence and handed to him of which the following is a copy.

“This may certify that Phineas Culver has this sixth day of June one thousand seven hundred and eighty enlisted for during the war and in my company and is to have the second sergeants Com’n. Jacob DeWitt, Captain”

The original of which certificate is hereto attached. That he served eighteen months as Orderly Sergeant, and the remaining part as Second Sergeant, that he was a portion of the time in the second and a portion in the third regiments of the United States army. That Colonel VanCourtland was his colonel a great portion of the time, that J.B. Decker and Levi Decker (soldiers now dead) were in his mess.

That during the year 1780 he performed the following service, that he with about forty of his company under Lieutenant Fisher marched from Sussex Court House in the State of New Jersey to Pinpack or Peapack in the State of New York from thence he went with Scouting parties sometimes under Lieutenant Fisher and sometimes in command of squads himself, first to Goshen and then through Shongunk [Shawangunk] Mountains to Warwick then to the Rosendolph, then back to Pinpack and in the spring of 1780 the whole part returned to Sussex Court House. He then went again with Lieut Fisher and about forty soldier to Shaver’s Mills at Polenskiln and scouted from that post until July 1781. From there they went to Drounde Lands on the Minnasink, scouting and returned back to Sussex about the month of August 1781.

Then his Captain DeWitt went with selected troops to Yorktown in Virginia when he with Lieut Fisher returned back to Pinpeck with a party of about forty and remained there scouting until the fall of 1782. Then he with about twenty five under the command of Lieut Fisher marched to Mamakating Hollow in the State of New York where they were on scouting service.

The applicant at that time had command of seven men as Sergeant in pursuit of the Indians, who had about ten days previous burned a house there and committed other depredations and being more fleet on foot than the rest of his party, he came upon an Indian in advance of his party and secured him. For the struggle with the Indian a soldier by the name of Grover or Glover came to his aid—and in that struggle the applicant had three ribs broken and the Indian thrust him upon the ground and pierced the palm of the right hand with a helmlock knot, which severely wounded the same. He was also badly wounded in the head at the same time.

After three or four days the applicant was taken back to Pinpack and from there to Sussex Court House, and the Indians was secured and taken to Orange Court House. The applicant remained in camp unable to do duty from the wounds until March 1783 when he received from Captain Jacob DeWitt a furlough for sixty days of which the following is a copy as near as can to the original of which is hereto attached.

“General Clinton’s Regiment. Whereas Phinias Culver a sol___ in this___ is lame in his hand occasioned by a ___ which render him unfit for duty___him pass for sixty days and ___oyer then to return to the same Co___wherever they may be stationed___under my hand at Sussex Court ___this 6th day of May ___783. Jacob.

Within which furlough he returned to camp at Sussex court House, and from thence after remaining some days in camp he was ordered by Capt. DeWitt back to

Rinpeck where he remained for sometime unable to do duty under Lieut Fisher from fatigues of his march and exposure of his wounds, which were not yet sound and his hand and side unfitting him for doing duty he again received a furlough for ninety days from Lieut Fisher, and while the applicant was absent on this furlough visiting his friends in the counties of Sussex and Morris in the State of New Hersey and still unable to do duty from his wounds and within the time of his furlough last mentioned, the army was disbanded without his knowledge, which last furlough mentioned has been lost, burned or mislaid. And the applicant hereby relinquishes every claim to a pension or annuity except the present, and he declares that his name is not on the pension roll of any agency in any state or territory. (Signed) Phineas Culver.

Subscribed and sworn before me this 31st day of August 1842. Arthur S. Johnson, Surrogate.

Letter in folder dated Oct 1, 1842. Very interesting! No clue as to whom it was addressed.

Pension Office.

Sir:

The claim of Phinehas Culver has been examined & his papers filed under the Act of 15 May, 1828—This claim now asserted for the first time for an alleged service of the highest merit in the Revy. War is discredited by the very delay—It cannot be admitted that a poor man “having no property or place of residence for the last 16 years but quartered about among his friends” & who had such claims to pension & bounty land as his alleged service entitled him to, would forbear to present them—Discredited as his claim is by the circumstances under which it is presented, it is still more so by the records of this Dept. & by his won exhibits—All the enlistments for the war appear on the rolls—upon the final settlements—upon the lists returned as entitled to bounty land—and of those who received the “gratuity”. His name is not found on either--& if he had served for the war in the Continental Army it would necessarily have been borne on all.—

In support of this allegation he exhibits a certificate of enlistment and a short furlough dated a few weeks before the discharge of the “wars men” these papers bear on their face palpable & obvious evidences of fraudulent fabrication—The first one is signed by “Jacob Dewitt Capt.” & the other Jacob—obliterated. There were no enlistments for the War in N.Y. or N.J. except in their respective lines of the Continental army and Capt. Jacob DeWitt belonged to the militia of N.Y.—this shows the falsehood of the substance of the certificate viz., that he Capt. Jacob Dewitt had enlisted claimant for the war—

The statement of the service is inconsistent with that of the wars men and Capt. Jacob Dewitt was not at Yorktown in 1781.

His claim is rejected. A. Beebe Esq. Ithaca, N.Y.