

Pension Application for Christopher Dennison or Dennison

S.22207

State of Vermont

Addison County

City of Vergennes SS

On this 7th day of August AD 1832, personally appeared in open court before Belden Seymour Mason & John H. Sherrill & Ford [fold in document, several words missing] Aldermen of said City of Vergennes, & constituting the City Court of said City, now sitting Christopher Dennison, a resident of Waltham in the county of Addison & State of Vermont, aged eighty eight 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 act of Congress passed June 7th AD 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers & served as hereto stated.

At the commencement of the American Revolution applicant was residing at Spencertown, in the County of Columbia & State of New York; was a tanner by trade, was thirty two years old, & had been married in the previous autumn (the autumn of 1774).

In April 1775 & upon a Sunday, news arrived at Spencertown that the British had attacked our people near Boston. Applicant was then one of the members of a militia company in that town, commanded by one Captain Abner Hawley. At the time of the alarm applicant & fourteen others volunteered to go to Boston, one of the number by the name of Joel Pratt, was selected as Captain & they marched to Great Barrington in the State of Massachusetts. At this place six of their number enlisted in the army for six months—the rest of them, (among whom was this applicant--) were put under the command of General Fellows & marched to Boston, where they remained about a week, were not wanted & returned home.

In the same year applicant volunteered under the before mentioned Capt. Abner Hawley against the Tories in the neighborhood of Spencertown. Went among other places to Nobletown & was with one Captain Ethemar Spencer personally & assisted in taking a celebrated Tory by the name of Nooman Fealey. He was taken from his bed at midnight by said Captain Spencer & this applicant was tried by a Court Martial at Nobletown, sent to Albany & from thence to Poughkeepsie where he was executed. Feely had received an Ensign's Commission in the British service. He was hung about the same time that one Colonel Hawson and the celebrated tory was executed at Albany.

Applicant recollects that as soon as Hawson was executed the hangman went immediately down the river to execute Feely. Upon this tour of service applicant remained a considerable time at Albany. The volunteers were detained there from the fear of a general rising of the Tories when these executions should take place.

In 1776 applicant again volunteered under Captain Hawley & marched to Albany—the volunteers were there joined to a regiment of troops (part of which were voluntary & part regulars) the commanding name of which applicant does not

recollect. They marched to Fort Edward, where they were joined by others & were placed under the command of General Schuyler. Applicant was then marched to Lake George & back to Albany from whence he returned home with Capt. Hawley. Was absent from home two or three months.

In 1777 applicant volunteered again under the same Captain Hawley – went to Albany & was placed under the command of General Schuyler—marched to Lake George, from whence they retired to Fort Edward and Stillwater—was among those who were occupied in tearing up the bridges & felling trees across the roads to impede the advance of General Burgoyne's army—recollects when General Gates took command of the troops advanced with the army from Stillwater to Saratoga & was in one of the engagements fought there. That part of the battle in which applicant was engaged was upon the left of the American Army & was commanded by General Arnold—applicant was present also at the surrender of Burgoyne—thinks he was out at this time about four months.

From this period through 1778 & 1779 applicant was frequently out as a volunteer—went upon one occasion to Fort Stanwix & upon another to Johnstown, but cannot name the particular period, having been so often called out, & his memory being somewhat impaired by old age. Applicant however remembers that in one of those years (he believes in 1779) he went under Capt. Hawley to Albany & was there put under the command of a militia Colonel named McKinster & under him marched to Cherry Valley. At Cherry Valley was put under the command of Colonel Alden—had several battles there with the Indians & Tories in one of which Colonel Alden was killed. Applicant saw him after he was tomahawked. Was absent about two months.

At another time (applicant thinks in 1780), volunteered again under Capt. Hawley & marched to the Mohawk River, where he was placed under the command of general VanRensselaer. Was frequently engaged with the Indians & Tories – remembers particularly a place called Stone Robbies, on the north side of the Mohawk in which one Colonel Brown was killed. In following the enemy all suffered most severely, for three successive days there was barely provisions enough to sustain life & horses beef was resorted to as a means of subsistence. Cannot tell how long he was out upon this occasion, but it was through the entire campaign.

Applicant was out in 1781, but cannot particularly name where he was engaged. Remembers however that he was with the troops at Saratoga when the news of Cornwallis' defeat arrived. Recollects also that an old man who was called Lord Sterling (whom applicant thinks had no command there,) had lately come there from Albany—was large, fleshy man, with white hair & a red face & got merry in the celebrating the news.

The frequent calls upon applicant as a volunteer from 1775 to 1781 broke up his trade—he attempted to keep a little farming along, but his absence made it a matter of small importance. One year his wife had to pick the corn. When engaged against the Tories he got no pay, for the services he received his pay in depreciated Continental paper, & has now a common cast iron teakettle for which he paid seventy dollars of it.

Interrogatories propounded by the Court.

Where & in what year were you born? Answer – I was born in Seabrook at the mouth of Connecticut River on the seventh day of October AD 1743.

Question, Have you any record of your age & if so, where is it? Answer. I have no record in my possession. There was a record in the old family Bible, which passed into my oldest brother (John Dennison's) hands. I saw it at my brother's house in Seabrook about fifteen years ago for the last time. My brother John is since dead and I do not know where the record is. My brother died about six years ago.

Question. Where were you living when called into service; where have you lived since the revolutionary war, & where do you now live? Answer. I was living at Spencertown, as before stated & lived there at the close of the revolution. In 1787 I removed to Goshen, in the County of Litchfield & State of Connecticut, where I remained until 1793, when I removed to New Haven, in the County of Addison & State of Vermont. A part of the town of New Haven has been since incorporated into a town by the name of Waltham & in that part of New Haven now called Waltham I have resided for the last twenty years.

Question. How were you called into service; were you drafted, did you volunteer, or were you a substitute? And if a substitute for whom? Answer. I always served as a volunteer, as stated in the body of the foregoing declaration.

State the names of some of the regular officers who were with the troops where you served; such Continental & Militia regiments as you can recollect & the general circumstances of your service.—Answer. I remember General's Fellows, Schuyler, Gates, Arnold, Nixon & VanRennsellaer, Colonels Ford, Pratt & Brewer. I cannot, at this distance of time, name the particular regiments either of Continentals or Militia, with which I was acquainted. The general circumstances of my service I have stated in the body of my application.

Question. Did you ever receive a discharge from the service; and if so, by whom was it given & what has become of it? Answer. I never received a written discharge. Being always a volunteer, I served as long as I was wanted & when informed that my services were no longer needed I returned home.

State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighbourhood; and who can testify as to your character for veracity and their belief of your services as a soldier of the revolution. Answer. Reuben Wheeler of Ferrisburgh has known me forty years, both when I resided in Connecticut & since my settlement in this State. The Reverend Alexander Lovell, the nearest settled clergyman to my residence (located at Vergennes) had known me for fourteen years.

This applicant further states, that he knows of no person now living who was out with & served with him—the last of them, (the Reverend Increase Graves at Bridgeport and James Saxton of New Haven in Addison County) having died within a few years.

This applicant 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 the agency of any state.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid. Christopher Dennison
Sworn before me, V. Lawrence, Clerk of City Court.

Letter in folder dated June 24, 1931, written in response to an inquiry.

You are advised that it appears from the papers in the Revolutionary War pension claim, S.22207, that Christopher Dennison or Dennison was born October 7, 1743 in Seabrook, "at the mouth of the Connecticut River".

While a resident of Spencertown, Columbia County, New York, he volunteered in April, 1775 and served at various times as private, corporal, and ensign in Captain Abner Hawley's Company under Colonels Ford, Alden, Pratt, McKinstry and Brown in the New York Militia until 1781. During this time he was in several skirmishes while on expedition against the Tories and Indians and was in the battle of Saratoga.

In 1787, soldier moved from Spencertown, New York, to Goshen, Litchfield County, Connecticut where he remained until 1793, then moved to New Haven, Addison County, Vermont, and in 1832, resided in Waltham, Addison County, Vermont.

He was allowed pension by special Act of Congress, approved June 28, 1838, on account of seven and one-half months service as sergeant.

He married in the fall of 1774, but he did not state the name of his wife, nor is there any reference to children.