

## **Pension Application for John French**

R.3794

State of New York

Saratoga County SS.

On this twenty fourth day of February in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and thirty five personally appeared before the Honorable [?] Cowan Vice Chancellor of the fourth Judicial Circuit of said State sergeant John French a resident of the town & County of Saratoga and State of New York aged eighty five years on the second day of March last who being first duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the act of Congress passed June 7<sup>th</sup>, 1832.

That he enlisted in the army of the United States as a soldier and also entered the service of the United States as a militia man and served in the New York line and also in the State troops and Rangers in said State in the Companies Regiment and under the officers as hereinafter stated.

That his first service as a soldier in the United States was in the year 1775 under Captain O'Hara who commanded a company in the Regiment of New York militia commanded by Col'l Cornelius VanVeghten and included the frontier settlers in the Territory now forming the north part of Saratoga of Washington County.

That the applicant was a sergeant in said company and in the summer of 1775 marched under the command of Capt. O'Hara from Saratoga where the applicant and Captain resided to Forts George & Ticonderoga where the applicant was stationed through the summer and until after snow in the fall or winter following. That Capt. O'Hara left his men at Fort George and the applicant understood that he afterwards commanded Washington's life guard.

That in the spring of 1776 Captain Samuel Norton took the command of the company previously commanded by O'Hara and the applicant was in constant service as a Sergeant in said company from the spring of 1776 until Captain Norton's death by the small pox in the summer of 1777.

That the Country through which the applicant marched in 1776 and 1777 under Captain Norton was the Northern part of the State of New York now principally embraced in the Counties of Warren Saratoga & Washington and his service consisted in guarding the frontiers in repelling the incursions of British Indians and Tories and in manning Forts Edward, Anne, George, and the garrisons at Skeensborough, Palmertown, and Saratoga & Ticonderoga.

That upon the death of Captain Norton in the summer of 1777 his company was commanded by Lieut Benjamin Guyles under whom the applicant served the remainder of that year being with the American Army at the Northern Forts and during its retreat to VanSchaick's Island upon the advance of Burgoyne and marched with the Army from VanSchaick's Island to Bemus's Heights in Saratoga and continued in service until after the surrender of Burgoyne.

That he supposes and believes that a portion of the above service was as a volunteer without quitting or losing his station or abandoning his company.

That in the winter of 1777 & 8 he labored for a farmer and about the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1778 went to Poughkeepsie and the same spring enlisted as fourth Sergeant for six months under Capt. Conklin and received of him twenty five or thirty dollars bounty money.

That he does not know whether Capt. Conklin belonged to the Regular United States troops Rangers or State Troops nor can he tell the Regiment.

But from that enlistment he continued uninterruptedly in the service of the United States as a Sergeant until the close of the war serving in different companies—with the Continental troops—in a company of Rangers—and also as a volunteer and received his discharge at West Point from Col. VanCortlandt he believes.

That the same summer he enlisted at Poughkeepsie he marched to Fishkill, West Point, White Plains and into New Jersey and was in the battle at Monmouth in Genl Lee's division and remembers to have seen Genl Washington ride up to Genl Lee waving his sword in an impassioned manner.

That in the summer of 1779 or about the time of Arnold's defection he was under the command of Genl Wayne and the scar on the ball of the thumb of the applicant left hand was occasioned by a bayonet wound in the assault upon Stoney or VerPlank's Point and was inflicted by the party detached from the British [British] fleet—That after he received the bayonet wound and in 1779 or 80 he marched from West Point with a large detachment of the American Army to repel the incursions of the Indians and marched to the Delaware River—thence to Fort Stanwix from which place he marched under Capt. Phillips to destroy [destroy] the enemy's boats on the Lake—

That the second day after leaving the effort the party was ambushed by the Indians and the officers of men were all killed or taken except applicant and four soldiers who returned to the Fort—

That in his retreat he was pursued by an Indian who threw his Tommy Hawk [tomahawk] and inflicted the wound the mark of which is still to be observed on applicant's scull—That he saved his life and secured his retreat by shooting the assailant.

That he returned from Fort Stanwix with the detachment to West Point & White Plains and the following campaign served in a company of Rangers—marched again to Fort Stanwix and thence along the frontiers visiting all the Posts between that Fort and Lake Champlain—

That he thinks she served as such Ranger on the Frontiers in the years 1780 & 1781 and received his discharge at West Point sometime after the capture of Cornwallis—Whether after his first enlistment at Poughkeepsie he volunteered or enlisted during war or for three years or for several short periods applicant cannot distinctly remember or declare.

That about twenty years after the peace applicants house in the town of Saratoga was burnt and with it his discharge.

That about thirty years ago John Thompson then a member of Congress from Saratoga apprised applicant by letter that there was money coming to him from

Congress and procured from Applicant a copy of his discharge and a power of attorney and subsequently paid him thirty dollars which is all he has received since the war from the General or State Governments in money or Land.

That he cannot state the names of other officers than those above named save the following viz—Lieut Doty, Capt. Sherwood, Capt. McCracken, Col. McCrea—Col. VanRensselaer, Col Livingston and Col. VanSchaick, Genl Schuyler, Genl Gates & Genl Nixon and cannot with any degree of certainty distinguish with what character of troops he served otherwise than is exhibited in the above declaration. And 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 the Agency of any State.

The court propounds to the applicant the following Interrogatories.

1<sup>st</sup> Where & in what year were you born? Answer—In Morristown New Jersey 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1749—

2<sup>nd</sup> Have you any record of your age, and if so where is it? Answer—In my Family Bible.

3<sup>rd</sup> Where were you living when called into service where have you lived since the Revolutionary War and where do you now live? Answer—In Saratoga except 2 or 3 years at Lake George a few years past.

4<sup>th</sup> How & where [were] you called into service; were you drafted, did you volunteer—or were you a substitute? And if a substitute for whom? Answer—As a Militia man, a volunteer of Ranger and an Elisted [Enlisted] Soldier.

5<sup>th</sup> State the names of some of the Regular officers who were with the troops where you served; such continental and militia Regiments as you can recollect and the general circumstances of your service. Answer—Genl Washington, Genl Lee, Genl Gates, Genl Nixon. Genl Wayne, Genl Schuyler, Col VanCortlandt, Livingston, VanSchaick, VanRensselaer, McCrea, VanVeghten, Captain (afterwards Major) Sherwood, Captain (afterwards Col'l) McCracken, Captains O'Hara, Norton, Conklin, Phillips, Lieut Doty & Guyles some of whom were Regular & some Militia officers. I recollect the Regiments commanded by the Colonels above named. My service previous to the Decent of Burgoyne consisted in repelling incursions of Indians & Tories and in manning Forts of Garrisons—I was at the capture of Burgoyne—in the Battle of Monmouth—Stoney & Verplank's Point and in the Indian Expedition up the Delaware to Fort Stanwix & to Lake Ontario and in the latter expedition was wounded in the head by an Indian Tommy Hawk and at Stony Point in the hand by a British bayonet—which wounds are attested by the scars shewn to the court—I served as Sergeant during the whole war except one winter as above stated either as militia man, volunteer—ranger or enlisted soldier.

6<sup>th</sup> Did you ever receive a discharge from the service and if so by whom was it given and what has become of it? Answer—I received a discharge from the service at West Point at the close of the war signed I believe by Col'l VanCortlandt which was burnt with my house in Saratoga about thirty years ago—previous to which John Thompson a member of Congress from this district took a copy of it and subsequently paid me thirty dollars which he said he received from government for back pay.

7<sup>th</sup> State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighborhood and who can testify to your character for veracity and their belief of your service as a soldier of the Revolution. Answer I am known to the old Inhabitants of this neighborhood generally and state in particular the names of Rev'd Robert Washburn, James Brisbin, Asa Welch, Dr. John H. Steele, Benjamin Clements, Miles Beach, Daniel Finch, Gilbert Waring, Francis F. Winney.

And the said Applicant further declares that he is enabled to prove by Deacon James Brisbin resident of the Town of Saratoga aged about eighty eight years the facts that the applicant belonged to a company of Rangers in the Revolutionary War and by his oldest daughter Lydia Fuller of Washington County the existence and distruction [destruction] of his Discharge as a soldier in the Continental Army and had hereto annexed their affidavits instead of producing them in court by reason as well of the inconvenience of expense to him as of their bodily infirmities. (Signed with his mark)  
John French

Sworn to and subscribed the day & year aforesaid. Richs Hill Jr. Dep. Clerk In Chancery of the 4<sup>th</sup> Circuit.