

Pension Application for William Griffis or Griffith

S.29185

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

State of New York

Jefferson County SS.

On this 26th day of May in the year of our Lord 1836, personally appeared in open court before the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas in & for the County of Jefferson in the State of New York, now sitting, William Griffis, a resident of the Town of Fredericksburgh in the incorporated Counties of Lenox & Addington in the Midland District of the Province of Upper Canada, aged seventy one 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 7, 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated, that is to say.

On the first day of December in the year 1775 he entered the service of the United States as a volunteer and served as a private soldier in a company commanded by Captain Woodworth, in Colonel Schuyler's Regiment at Saratoga in the State of New York where he then resided for three months.

That immediately after he joined said company at Saratoga aforesaid, on the said 1st day of December 1775 he was detailed as one of a fatigue party for the purpose of getting out and procuring timber for Block houses, bridges &c, and that he was employed in that service in and about Saratoga aforesaid until he was discharged at the expiration of said term of three months (being the 1st March 1776) when he returned to his residence.

That on the first day of December 1776 he again volunteered as a private soldier in Captain Woodworth's Company, Colonel Schuyler's Regiment for three months, and joined said company on the day last aforesaid, and was soon thereafter detailed as one of a fatigue party, in the same manner, and for the same purpose as he was detailed in the preceding winter, and that he served until the expiration of said term of three months (being the 1st March 1777) when he was discharged and returned to his residence in Saratoga.

That on the first of December 1777 he again volunteered as a private soldier for three months and entered the service at Saratoga aforesaid in a Company belonging to colonel Graham's Regiment. That he does not now recollect who commanded the company at the time, but believes it must have been Captain Woodworth—of this however he cannot speak with confidence.—

That immediately after his joining said company, he was detailed in the same manner and for the same purpose that he had been detailed the two winters immediately preceding and that he remained in said service until the expiration of said term of three months, when he was discharged at Saratoga aforesaid and returned to his residence.

That nearly or all of the nine months service above set forth was occupied in the fatigue business, procuring timber &c as above set forth within the County of Saratoga in the State aforesaid. That the said last mentioned term of three months expired on the first day of March 1778.

The said William Griffis further on his oath declares—That on the first day of August 1778 according to his best recollection, he again entered the service of the United States as a volunteer at Saratoga aforesaid in the capacity of a private soldier in Captain Hezekiah Dunham's Company, and joined said company at Fort Edward on the East Side of the Hudson River about twenty miles above Stillwater in said County of Saratoga.

That he volunteered for the term of four months, and that he remained with said company, performing garrison duty at the last mentioned place, and scouting in the vicinity thereof, during the term of four months for which he so volunteered from the said first of August 1778 until the first of December in the same year, when he was discharged from the service, and returned to his residence in the town of Saratoga aforesaid.

That he cannot now recollect to which Regiment the said Company under command of Captain Dunham belonged, nor the name of the Colonel who commanded the said Regiment.

That he recollects that said company joined a body of New England Troops at Fort Edward but he does not now recollect the names of any of their officers, nor does he now recollect the name of any officer except Captain Dunham who belonged to said company.

The said William Griffis further declares as aforesaid. That previously to the last above mentioned and on or about the tenth of March in the year 1778 aforesaid he entered the service as a private soldier by volunteering in Captain Woodworth's Company, Colonel Graham's Regiment, which said company he joined at Saratoga aforesaid, and that he marched with said company from thence to Palmertown in said County for the purpose of protecting the inhabitants of that place and its vicinity against the Indians who had made frequent incursions upon the neighbourhood of that place, and destroyed the property and liars of some of the inhabitants.

That he remained at Palmerstown & its immediate vicinity one month doing duty in the said Company when he was discharged, and returned to Saratoga his place of residence.

That he cannot now recollect the name of any other officer belonging to said company or regiment except those above named Philip Rogers a Lieutenant in said company.

And the said William Griffis further on his oath declares. That on about about first day of July in the year 1780 he again volunteered as a private soldier at Saratoga aforesaid for the term of five months, and soon after joined Captain Lansing's Company in Colonel Morris Graham's Regiment in the City of Albany in said state.

That he recollects being examined and sworn at a place called Halfmoon, on his way to Albany. That soon after he joined said Company at Albany aforesaid the

Regiment, of which said company constituted a part, embarked on board of boats or vessels, for Fishkill landing and arrived there within a short period thereafter. That from the place last mentioned he marched with said Regiment along the Hudson River across the Highlands, to a place called Stony Point, below West Point, where they remained a few days.

That they then crossed over to the west side of the Hudson and marched to a place called Haverstraw, where said Regiment encamped for a few days. That he recollects while at Stony Point, seeing a British vessel in the River below, and being told that it was the same vessel in which the traitor Benedict Arnold, escaped from West Point to the City of New York, then in possession of the British.

That from Haverstraw they marched to Dobb's Ferry where they immediately commenced erecting a Block house. That after being so employed for a week or a fortnight, the said Regiment was ordered to West Point to which place they then immediately marched.

At West Point they remained a considerable time, engaged principally in garrison duty. First he recollects while there, he assisted in drawing up some heavy cannon from the river by means of Cables or ropes to the knights upon which the fortifications stood,

That at West Point he embarked with said Regiment for Albany in boats or vessels and arrived at the latter place near the last of October, having been absent, from the time of their embarkation at Albany as above mentioned, nearly four months.

That from Albany, Captain Lansing's Company, to which said Griffis belonged, and one other company belonging to said Regiment, were dispatched to Schoharie a few miles west from Albany, where they were stationed in what was called the middle fort of which Major Wolsey there had the command. That they remained at said Fort nearly a month, and that at about the end of that time the said Fort was attacked by four hundred British and two hundred Indians, under the command of six John Johnson.

That there was but one American killed during the attack and that the British and Indians were repulsed, but he does not now recollect the amount of their loss.

That he recollects that there were at that time at said Fort, nine Pennsylvania Riflemen, who were remarkably good marksmen, and who were principally employed in conducting scouting parties in the vicinity of the said Fort.

Said Griffis further says that the next day after the attack was made upon the fort as before stated by Sir John Johnson, the two companies which marched from Albany as before stated, were ordered to pursue the retreating British & Indians, and that they did pursue them as far as the German Flats, on the Mohawk River, without being able to overtake them.

That their term of service having at that time nearly expired, they were marched from the latter place to Schenectady, where they were discharged on or about the first day of December 1780 having completed the full term of five months from the time of his entering the service, as last above stated.

The said William Griffis further says that at the time they left Albany in July 1780 one Jellis A. Fonda was a Lieutenant in captain Lansing's Company aforesaid, and that he was afterwards appointed to the office of Adjutant in the Regiment in the Regiment aforesaid and was acting in that capacity when they returned to Albany in October 1780.

That he recollects that one day before they arrived at the German Flats as aforesaid, there was a battle fought at a place called Stone Robby on the Mohawk River between the British & Indians under Johnson and a body of Americans under Johnson and a body of Americans under Colonel Brown in which engagement Colonel Brown was killed, and that on their way to Schenectady, the two companies aforesaid went to his grave, and fired three volleys over it, as a mark of respect for his bravery & devotion to the service of his Country.

The said Griffis further declares that from the great length of time which has elapsed since the events transpired to which their declaration relates, the early period of his life when he first entered the service, (being then only 13 years of age) and the infirmities which have crept upon him in his old age & impaired his powers of recollection (being now 71 years of age as above stated) he is unable to state whom he was acquainted during the time of his service as a soldier of the revolution than those he has above named, more particularly the circumstances of his service, or to name any other officers with whom he was acquainted during the time of his service as a soldier of the Revolution than those he has above named.

The said William Griffis further on his oath aforesaid declares that according to the best of his knowledge and belief he was born in the town of Huntington, Suffolk County on Long Island, in the State of New York in February 1763.

That he so believes from the fact that he resided at that place at the time of his earliest recollection and that about a year ago he saw in the family bible of his deceased father, there in the possession of James Griffin in his oldest brother a record of his age, in the hand writing of his father, which set forth that in the said William Griffis was born in February 1763, but the day of the month as therein set forth he does not now recollect.

That according to the best of his recollection and belief he never received any written discharge from the service, at any time.

That according to the best of his recollection and belief he never received any written discharge from the service at any time.

That he resides in Huntington aforesaid from the time of his birth until March 1775 when he went to reside at Saratoga aforesaid at which latter place he resided, when not absent in the service of the United States with the exception of about six months which he spent in the County of Dutchess in said state, until the year 1783. That he then returned to Huntington aforesaid when he lived about three years. That from thence he removed to Dutchess County aforesaid where he lived about four years. That from thence he removed to within about four miles of the City of Albany, where he resided about three years at the end of which time he moved to

Fredericksburgh in the incorporated Counties of Lenox and Addington aforesaid where he has ever since resided and where he now resides.

That in the neighbourhood where he now resides, he is well known to William Pringle, the Reverend George Sills, Samuel Dorland Esq, Justice of the Peace. Jonathan Allen & Richard Low Esqs Justices of the Peace, Lewis Thorp Esqr Commissioner of the Court of [Bequest?] for said District the Reverend Robert McDowell and numerous other persons, who can testify as to his character for truth, and their belief of his services as a soldier of the Revolution.

That the affidavits hereto annexed, constitute the only positive evidence which he has been able to obtain from surviving witnesses after much pain and trouble, having traveled a great distance, and been at considerable expense in endeavouring to procure such testimony.

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) Wm. Griffis

Sworn to and subscribed the day & year aforesaid. P. Burchard Clerk.

Letter in folder dated Dec. 7, 1930, written in response to an inquiry.

You are advised that it appears from the papers in the Revolutionary War pension claim, S.29185, that William Griffis (as he signed, but was referred to in some instances as William Griffith) was born in February 1763 in Huntington, Suffolk County, on Long Island, New York. He lived there until March 1775, when he moved to Saratoga County, New York.

While a resident at Saratoga, Saratoga County, New York, he enlisted and served as a private in the New York troops as follows: from December 1, 1775, three months in captain Woodworth's Company, Colonel Schuyler's Regiment, from December 1, 1776, three months in Captain Woodworth's Company, Colonel Schuyler's Regiment, from December 1, 1777, three months in captain Woodworth's Company, Colonel Graham's Regiment, during said nine months, procuring timber for block houses; from March 10, 1778, one month under Captain Palmer against the Indians; from August 1, 1778, four months in Captain Hezekiah Dunham's company at Fort Edward; in 1779, several tours of three weeks each under Colonel VanVechten; from July 1780, four months in Captain Jacob Lansing's Company, Colonel Morris Graham's Regiment and one month at a fort in Schoharie under Major Woolsey, at which time they were attacked by the British under Sir James Johnson.

Soldier lived in Saratoga County, New York, until 1783 with the exception of six months spent in Dutchess County, then moved back to Huntington for three years, from there moved to Dutchess County where he lived four years, after which he lived near Albany, New York for three years.

He was allowed pension on his application executed May 26, 1834 while a resident of Fredericksburgh, Lenox County, Midland District, Province of Upper Canada, where he had moved from Albany, New York.

It is not stated that soldier ever married.