

Pension Application for Richard Hilton

R.20513

State of New York

County of Oswego SS.

On this 30th day of December AD 1834, personally appeared before me John Reynolds Esquire a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of said County of Oswego Richard Hilton a resident of the County & State aforesaid of the age of Eighty 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 Provision made by the act of Congress passed June 7th 1832.

That on the breaking out of the Revolutionary War I the said Richard Hilton resided in that part of the said State of New York now called the County of Saratoga (then called County of Albany).

That when General Montgomery (1) & Ethan Allen (2) went to Canada with the American Troops I engaged as an artificer and enlisted as such under my father Peter Hilton (3) who was a captain of a company of Artificers in the American Army and we were employed in building boats, barracks-Hospitals-bridges &c at Ticonderoga-and on lake George-Champlain-fort Edward-fort George &c for the accommodation of the American troops.—That I was engaged as such artificer until the Surrender of General Burgoyne (4) at Saratoga when I received an honourable discharge which is now lost-and a certificate for Bounty Lands & went home—according to the best of my recollection (which is partly impaired by old age & its attendant infirmities). I entered this service in the fall of 1775 & was discharged in the fall of '77 and I remained in this service two years—the certificate for land I sold for three dollars in Specie to one Col. Leonard Van Vechten a son in law to one [a relative of General Schuyler is crossed out]. I recollect this well from the fact that Specie was a scarce article at that time.

In the year after the taking of Burgoyne which was in the fall of 1777 the Tories and Indians commenced depredations again on the frontier—I volunteered with a number of others, my neighbours, to defend it—(5) We left home sometime in the Summer of 1778 & went on a Scout to Scroon Lake & round by lake George. We were gone six weeks on the expedition as near as I can recollect.

One Scott (6) as with us in this Scout & VanVechten (7) or VanSchaick & which I cannot recollect. I was out with the militia a number of times this year but cannot recollect how many or how long each time.—I acted sometimes as an officer & sometimes as a private but the particulars I cannot recollect but I am sure I performed active duty this year more than three months as a soldier in the service of my country. I claim however for three months service only.

The next year 1779 a considerable force was raised to repel the indians & tories—Col. Willett (8) was in Albany & went on to fort Schuyler—I took an active part in the struggle—Jacob Lansing (9) called us out a number of times during the season & Col. VanVechten was very active—but as I was in no actual fight I cannot recollect the number of times or were out nor the precise length of each time particularly—We went to Lake George once & were out on the expedition four weeks as near as I can recollect—again we were called out & we were gone three weeks up into the woods scouting—the object of the company to which I belonged was to keep the Indians back & give information where they were & fight them if possible—and the country was in a constant alarm from them & many outrages were committed by them. Sometimes I acted as Sargent or some other officer & sometimes as a private, but the particulars I cannot recollect. There was an expedition this year against the indians from the Mohawk river west and during that expedition the company to which I belonged were out all the time for 6 or 8 weeks—but the particular time I cannot state. The expedition went against

the indians near Oneida or Onondaga Lake (10)—All the service I performed this year I should say amounted to more than 15 weeks but but [sic] I put it at fifteen weeks as I do not wish to claim for services I never performed & I claim as a private soldier in the militia of New York for all the service I heretofore did & after Burgoyne was taken.

On hearing the annexed certificate (11) of my receiving a commission read it reminds me of things that I had in a measure forgotten through the infirmities of age & the lapse of time.

The officers named in the certificate I recollect I did not do much service after I received the commission of Ensign until the fore part of the summer of 1780; when it began to be rumored that the British and tories were coming down again & our company turned out again to defend it—We went up to Schroon Lake—our expeditions were generally that way as it lay over the mountain West of Ticonderoga & the British & Indians usually came that way instead of down Lake Champlain as Scroon [this was spelled various ways in the document] was out of the way of Settlements & they could make an expedition from that place into every part of the Country.—In this expedition I was ensign. Col Willett (12) went up the Mohawk & they had some bad fighting—I was out to Scroon Lake six weeks & returned with the company and immediately after we returned we were called out again & remained out until winter—not at home more than a day or two during the whole fall.

The Governor of Canada (Carleton I think) (13) with a body of tories & Indians made a decent [descent] in the settlements & drove all before them—Johnson (14) the tory was further west on the Mohawk & Carleton in our neighbourhood the services of the company to which I belonged were very arduous—exposed to all weathers & inferior in numbers to the enemy—but I cannot recollect the particulars of these transactions and the names of the most of my companions in arms had escaped my recollection.

I verily believe that I was engaged in active service of my country during the year 1780 as an ensign in the whole time six months.

About this time Arnold deserted & Andre was hung—

The next spring I was promoted to a Lieutenant (15) & my commission which appears from the annexed certificate from the Secretary of States office of the State of New York bears date 22nd of March 1781. – My commissions have been destroyed—My grandchildren tore them up within a few years past—they had them as toys or pictures to play [?]

I went out with the company two or three times this year 1781 onto the frontier. I acted as lieutenant – I cannot recollect precisely how many times we were called out but my belief is that it was three times & we were out a number of days & times besides for two or three days at a time—but I cannot recollect the particulars.

Sometimes we drew rations & sometimes we took from home enough provisions to last until we returned.

The services I actually performed in the year 1781 as Lieutenant was ten weeks as near as I can recollect & I verily believe it was much more than that time. Still I cannot designate particularly the times—for as we were on the extreme frontier being north of the Mohawk & West of the Hudson River we were in a continual State of Alarm & prepared for the combat at any moment.

In the year 1782 we began to have rather more peaceable [peaceable] times—Still we were out in service a few times during this year for a few days at a time I acted as lieutenant in all our Scouts & excursions sometimes taking command as Captain—we were not out to exceed a week at any one time & then we were at home some days & then called out again and so our time passed making busy times between the gun & Plow—Cannot recollect the number of times we were out this year nor the length of the tours particularly.

Still I verily believe we were on duty in actual service watching the frontier & scouting five weeks. I have no recollection of performing any service during the war after this year, that is 1782—

And I further declare that the reason why I cannot be more particular as to the time of service &c and length of my services each time in the above declaration is from loss of memory through the infirmities of old age. I have no recollection of being in the regular continental army.

And I the said Richard Hilton hereby relinquish every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present & I declare that my name is not on the pension roll of any agency in any state.

1st Question. Where and in what year were you born?

Answer. I was born in Albany County in the State of New York on the 30th day of June AD 1753.

2^d Question. Have you any record of your age, & if so where is it?

Answer: I have a record in the family Bible.

3rd Question: Where were you living when called into Service? Where have you lived since the Revolutionary War? And where do you now live?

Answer. I was living in Albany County State of New York (now Saratoga County) I resided there until 1805 I then moved to Lee Oneida County & resided there until 1820 when I moved to Oswego County where I now reside.

4th Question. How were you called into service—Were you drafted—were you a volunteer or were you a substitute?

Answer: I was not a substitute & have no recollection of being drafted, but I volunteered & went willingly.

5th Question. State the names of some of the Regular officers with when you served—such Continental and Militia Regiments as you can recollect and the general circumstances of your service.

Answer. The above declaration & the annexed certificate is the fullest answer I can make to this question—together with Hezekiah Dunham an officer & Col. VanVechten.

6th Question. Did you ever receive a discharge & from the service & if so by whom was it given & what has become of it?

Answer. I recollect of receiving a discharge as an artificer but it is lost & I cannot recollect by whom it was signed & my commissions were destroyed as above related except a few small pieces which I am informed are at Washington—and there is no living witness of my services as I know of.

8th Question. State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighbourhood & who can testify as to your character for veracity & their belief of your services as a soldier of the Revolution.

Answer: Parley Wyman, a Justice of the Peace, James Carpenter, Eli Strong and Jonathan Dustan

And I further declare that from bodily infirmity I am prevented from attending in open court to make the above declaration.

The reason why I cannot obtain the certificate of a clergyman to certify as to my character &c is because there is not one residing within a number of miles of me who is acquainted with me. (Signed with his mark) Richard Hilton.

Sworn and subscribed by making his mark the day and year aforesaid before me. John Reynolds a Judge of Oswego County Courts.

Letter dated September 12, 1932, written in response to an inquiry.

Reference is made to your letter in which you request the record of Matthias Wart (VanWirt) and Richard Hilton, soldier of the Revolutionary War.

A search of the records of this office fails to show a claim for pension or bounty land on file based upon the service of Matthias Wart, under any spelling of that surname.

In regard to your inquiry relative to searching the records, you may examine and collect data from Revolutionary War pension claims in accordance with the regulations of this office, should you come to this city. It is requested that you give the full name of the soldiers whose records you desire to have searched, and, as stated before, as much as possible of the following data in regard to each in order to expedite the search: approximate dates of birth and death, places of resident at enlistment and after service and given name of widow.

The record of Richard Hilton is given below. The data are obtained from the papers on file in pension claim, R.20512, based upon his service in the Revolutionary War.

Richard Hilton, son of Peter Hilton, was born June 30, 1753 in Albany County (which was later Saratoga County), New York and was living in the neighborhood of Lake George at the beginning of the war.

He applied for pension July 12, 1831, at which time he was a resident of Orwell, Oswego County, New York.

He stated that he volunteered in the fall of 1775 and served as an artificer under Captain Peter Hilton (his father), constructing boats, bridges and hospital in the vicinity of Saratoga, Champlain, Fort George and Fort Edward until after the surrender of Burgoyne, which surrender he witnessed; that in the summer of 1778, he was commissioned lieutenant and served three months under Captain Hezekiah Dunham and Colonel Cornelius VanVechten in the New York troops; that he served during the following years until the close of the war, part of the time as private a part as ensign, as sergeant and lieutenant and was in active service against the Indians and Tories, specific dates of service and officers names not given.

His claim for pension was not allowed as he failed to furnish proof of service as required by the pension laws.

Richard Hilton lived in Saratoga County, New York, after his service until about the year 1805, then moved to Lee, Oneida County, New York.

He died August, 1842.

In 1847, one Anna Hilton requested an investigation of the pension claim of her "late husband", Richard Hilton. She did not furnish any details in regard to date or place of marriage, or date and place of her husband's death, and there is no other reference to her in the papers in this claim, R.20513.

Peter Hilton made affidavit in 1852, in Oswego County, New York, before James Carpenter, Justice of the Peace in said county, that he was a son of the soldier, Richard Hilton.

James Carpenter of Orwell, Oswego County, New York, married the youngest daughter of the soldier, Richard Hilton; the name of his wife is not designated. He stated that Richard Hilton lived with him during the last thirty years of his life, and that he (Richard Hilton), was married in 1776, but did not state the name of the person he married.

In 1853, one Pamela Carpenter, before James Carpenter, Justice of the Peace (County not named), executed a Power of Attorney to determine the status of the pension claim of Richard Hilton of New York, who had applied for pension; her relationship to the family is not shown. No pension was ever allowed because, as stated above, proof of services was never established.

The soldier had grandchildren at the time he made application for pension, but their names are not shown.

End Notes—R.20513—Richard Hilton

1. Brigadier General Richard Montgomery and then promoted to Major General of the Continental Army.
2. Ethan Allen was appointed colonel on July 4, 1778 of a regiment called Green Mountain Boys. The regiment s to have seven companies and not to exceed 500 men and officers for the regiment.
3. So far a company muster roll or pay roll has not been located for this company of Artificers.
4. Lieutenant General John Burgoyne surrendered the remnants of his British invasion force on October 17, 1777 to Major General Horatio Gates of the Continental Army.
5. Richard is confused about his rank and times when appointed. On June 22, 1778, Richard was appointed second lieutenant in Captain Hezekiah Dunham's Company in Colonel John McCrea's Thirteenth Regiment of Albany County Militia. He most likely served in the service of the regiment before this time. The company when first organized in 1775 and was the sixth company under the command of Captain Joseph Palmer. Dunham was the second lieutenant.
6. So far a surname of Scott has not been found for this regiment for any rank.
7. Lieutenant Colonel Cornelius Van Veghten and Second Major Jacob Van Schaick of Colonel McCrea's Regiment.
8. In 1779, Marinus Willett was the Lieutenant Colonel of the Third New York Continental Regiment. Willett in April went to Fort Schuyler to join Colonel Goose VanSchaick of the First New York Continental Regiment. Colonel VanSchaick led an expedition against the Onondaga Indian Village on Oneida Lake. Willett was the second in command of this expedition.
9. Richard does not give any details about which Jacob Lansing he was referring to. Jacob Lansing, Jr. was the Colonel of the First Regiment of Albany County Militia. Jacob Jonathan Lansing held serving titles including Judge Advocate under Brigadier General Peter Gansevoort of the Second Brigade of the Albany county Militia in 1781.
10. This expedition is referred to in end note 8. The major expedition to the Western part of New York was under Major General John Sullivan and Brigadier General James Clinton.
11. Richard is mistaken by the reason of old age and lapse of time. This certificate was signed by Ensign Richard Hilton also known as Derick who was appointed ensign in Colonel Lansing's Regiment. Several things in this file are wrong due to the mix up of which Richard was a certain rank at a certain time and to which regiment. The same confusion is done with several pensions of a certain name and more so when they served in the same regiment. This confusion over which Richard Hilton was in service contributed to this Richard's pension application to be rejected for lack of proof.
12. Hilton is referring to the year 1781 when Willett was appointed Lieutenant Commandant of a regiment of New York State Levies and was sent to the Mohawk Valley.
13. Major Christopher Carlton led a large raid in October of 1780 and destroyed Forts George and Ann.
14. Sir John Johnson on October 17, 1780 destroyed several settlements in the Schoharie Valley and then headed for the Mohawk Valley.
15. Part of this Richard's commission was part of his file but the date would have been June 22, 1778. Again he is mistaken as he already is a second lieutenant. Ensign

Richard Hilton was commissioned a second lieutenant on March 26, 1781 in Colonel Abraham Cuyler's Regiment. Lansing had resigned on March 3, 1780.