

Pension Application for John Riker

S.6001

John Riker was awarded pension of \$30.00 per annum.

Declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed June 7th 1832.

State of New York

County of Steuben SS.

On this twenty seventh day of November in the year 1832, personally appeared in the open Court of Oyer and Terminer of the County of Steuben before the Judges there of now sitting John Riker a resident of Prattsburgh in the County of Steuben aforesaid aged sixty seven 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 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers & serviced as herein stated—

That he was born in Newark in the State of New Jersey on the 18th day of March in the year 1765 as is recorded in his fathers family bible which is the only record of his age he has—

That he was residing in New Paltz in Ulster County in said State when in the month of March in the year 1780 in the company commanded by Captain Whelps (1) & in which McCoy (2) was Lieutenant and Dewey was Ensign said company belonged to Col. Willets Regiment that he joined said company at fishkill [Fishkill] that they went on board a vessel at fishkill & went up to Albany and from there marched to Saratoga barracks (3) where they stayed about a month—from there they marched up the Mohawk river to Fort Plain (4) that while at Fort Plain a Scouting party was sent out among which was this deponent—that said party discovered a body of Indians encamped upon low plain that they returned to Fort Plain & informed Col. Willet—that Col. Willet arrived where the Indians were encamped about sunrise and arranged his men on each side of a vale and sent out a few men to discover themselves to the Indians upon seeing whom the Indians gave chase the men ran between the lines of men stationed on each side of the vale the Indians followed & where they had passed in Col. Willets men fired upon them a most sanguinary battle (5) ensued the Indians were beaten—Col. Willets men then returned to Fort Plain carrying the wounded on their backs—this deponent was in said battle—that while Col. Willets Regiment was at Fort Plain this deponent was one of a squad of men sent to guard Pariss Mills stayed there about three weeks & then rejoined the regiment at Fort Plain said Regiment then marched to German Flatts & stayed at Fort Herkimer about two months during that time one Burt & McIntire (6) were shot for desertion—a company went out from the fort and were cut off by the Indians (7) the next day Captain Whelps company with others went out & buried the dead. Captain Whelp's company afterwards marched to Johnstown that while at Johnstown (8) they had one engagement with the enemy neither party had the advantage when night separated them—the enemy (he thinks) were commanded by Major Ross & Col. Butler—the next morning we pursued the enemy until Canada Creek where we had a skirmish with them, the enemy retreated across the creek and Butler (9) as he was going out of the water was wounded one of our Indians crossed the stream and killed him—from there marched to Fort Hunter at Fort Plain on our way to Fort Hunter I had my shoes stolen & had to go through the snow to Fort Hunter bare footed—Col. Willet was with us in the preceding engagements—while at Fort Hunter the nine months expired for which I was enlisted—but he received no written discharge.—

That Elias [Junous?] Nehemiah Lamb, Israel Graves, Conrad Shout and Abraham H. Deyo are his neighbors & can testify to his character for veracity & their belief of his services as a soldier of the revolution.—

That after the said service he resided in New Paltz, Ulster County he then married & moved to Morris County State of New Jersey he moved to Kent in Litchfield County Connecticut and he now resides in Prattsburgh Steuben County State of New York where he has resided for twenty years.—

That he has no documentary evidence and knows no one whose testimony he can procure to his services.

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 John Riker)

Sworn to and Subscribed the day & year aforesaid. M.S. Rumsey Dep. Clk Steuben County.

Letter of inquiry dated September 25, 1935.

Reference is made to your letter in which you request the Revolutionary War record of John Riker, who died July 13, 1853 and was buried at Ingleside (called Riker's Hollow), Prattsburg, Steuben County, New York.

The record of John Riker is furnished herein as found in the papers on file in his claim for pension, S.6001, based upon his service in that war. He received his pension in Prattsburg, New York.

John Riker was born March 18, 1765, in Newark, New Jersey; the names of his parents are not shown.

While a resident of New Paltz, Ulster County, New York, he enlisted sometime in March 1780, and served nine months as a private in Captain Whelp's company, Colonel Willett's New York regiment; during this period of service, he marched from Albany to Saratoga, thence up the Mohawk River to Fort Plain and, while there, was one of a scouting party to discover a band of Indians which resulted in the defeat of some of them in an encounter afterwards, he was in the battle of Johnstown, was later stationed at Fort Herkimer, and was in another engagement with the Indians, then went to Fort Hunter. He stated that his shoes were stolen from him on his way to Fort Hunter and that he walked through the snow in his bare feet.

After his service John Riker resided in New Paltz, New York, then married and moved to Morris County, New Jersey, afterwards to Kent, Litchfield County, Connecticut, thence to Prattsburg, Steuben County, New York. He did not state the date of said marriage, nor give the name of his wife.

He was allowed pension on his application executed November 27, 1832, at which time he resided in Prattsburgh, New York; he has resided there about twenty years. John Riker made no reference to children.

On November 26, 1832, Thomas Riker of Prattsburgh, Steuben County, New York, stated that "he is well acquainted with John Riker and from and agreeable to his father's record that said John Riker was sixty-seven years old on the 18th day of last March and further says that he enlisted in the Revolutionary War soon after he became sixteen years old and was gone something like nine months before he returned home"; he did not state any relationship to said John Riker.

End Notes—S.6001—John Riker

1. Anthony Whelp was appointed captain on April 27, 1781 in Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Marinus Willett's Regiment of New York State Levies. John Riker's name cannot be found on Captain Whelp's pay receipt roll for 1781 nor on any muster roll or pay receipt roll of any other company in Willett's Regiment.

2. There were no officers in Willett's Regiment named McCoy or Dewey. Captain Whelps lieutenants were Benaniel Duel, Jacob Bokee and Isaac Salkill. FROM: Revolutionary War Rolls 1775-1783, Series M-246, Roll 78, folder 73, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Also it corresponds with Willett's Letter and Orderly Book, Fort Rensselaer 1781 dated Albany May 21st 1781. He records Bokie [Bokee] as James instead of Jacob. Most likely his Christian name was Jacobus which translates to James. FROM: Colonel Marinus Willett's Letter and Orderly Book, Fort Rensselaer 1781, Doc. No. 15705, Special Collections and Manuscripts, New York State Library, Albany, New York.
3. In the same order under May 21st, 1781 after Willett arranged the officers into companies, they were also given their instructions and where they were to be stationed as follows. "The Officers are to take post until further Orders in the manner following: Major [John] McKinstry with Companies of Captains [Silas] Gray, [Holtham] Dunham and Whelp at Saratoga." Source is the same as end note 2.
4. In Colonel Marinus Willett's Letter and Orderly Book is the following order of June 21, 1781: "Capt Whelps Company is to march from Saratoga to Johnstown with as much expedition as possible when they will receive further orders." It appears they were ordered to Fort Rensselaer and according to Colonel Marinus Willett's Letter and Orderly Book they were still there in September of 1781.
5. The Battle of New Dorlach was fought on July 10, 1781. New Dorlach is the present day Village of Sharon Springs and the Town of Sharon, New York.
6. Several pensioners in their applications mention deserters being executed and a few have given names but they were not the ones executed and one even received a pension for his service. John Burk [also given as Burt] served as a private in Captain Joseph Harrison's Company and his pay was received after the war by Timothy Hutton. An Aron Burk also served in this company and his pay was received by William Willson. An John Burt served as a drummer in 1782 and 1783 in Captain James Cannons' Company but was not in Willett's Regiment in 1781. FROM: Revolutionary War Rolls 1775-1783, Series M-246, Roll 78, folder 173, National Archives, Washington, D.C. According to Captain Lawrence Gros' Company Muster Roll for 1781 lists Daniel McIntire as enlisting May 1, 1781 and executed on August 18, 1781. Riker has one the names right. FROM: Revolutionary War Rolls 1775-1783, Series M-246, Roll 78, folder 173, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
7. John may be referring to the ambush of Lieutenants Solomon Woodworth and Richard Randolph Wilson. They were both killed with about twenty five men on September 7, 1781.
8. The Battle of Johnstown was fought on October 25, 1781. Major John Ross and Captain Walter Butler commanded the enemy. Lieutenant Salkill was killed near Fort Johnson riding to Schenectady with dispatches of the attack which occurred on that morning.

It appears from some particular parts of John Riker's testimony that he was indeed part of Whelp's Company also mentions going to Fishkill. In a letter to Brigadier General James Clinton dated Albany, July 26, 1781 states "Capt Whelps is arrived here with six men from Dutchess County." FROM: Colonel Marinus Willett's Letter and Orderly Book of 1781. Why Riker's name is omitted from Captain Whelp's receipt roll is unknown.