

Pension Application for John Backus

R.354

State of New York

Rensselaer County SS.

On this thirty first day of January 1834, personally appeared in open court before the Court of Common Pleas held in and for said county now sitting John Backus a resident of the Town of Hoosick in the County of Rensselaer and State of New York aged ninety 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 at the Battle of Bennington he was living in the town of Hoosick about ten miles from where said battle was fought that there was at that time a general turn out of the militia in that quarter as volunteers that he was a private & belonged to a company commanded by Captain John Lampman (1) and of which Henry Loring (2) was Lieutenant that he at that time turned out and went with his gun and was there taken prisoner by the enemy & carried to Burgoyne's (3) army then stationed at Still Water or Saratoga in the State of New York that Captain Lampman's Company were most of them taken prisoners at the same time that he was then taken to Ticonderoga and there locked up with other prisoners that was in the year 1777 and after being kept there a short time he was sent to St. Johns and from there kept confined for some length of time and was kept until the close of the war in close confinement or under guard in such a manner that he could not escape and that the time that he was such prisoner to the enemy was between six and seven years when at the close of the war he was released and came home that during his imprisonment he was kept in Canada at Bucks Island and at Oswego most of the time that while at Oswego a number who were there as prisoners with him attempted to escape one of them went off with a plan of the fort but was followed and shot by the enemy—

That he is not acquainted with any clergymen residing in the vicinity of his residence nor elsewhere whose certificate he can obtain he being verry old and inform and poor and in consequence of which has for years past remained mostly at home not living near any church & not being able to attend church.

That he has no proof of the facts above stated but the affidavit of Lodowick Bonesteil which is hereto annexed nor does he know of any other person living at the present day by whom he can prove the same although he has made diligent search & enquiry.

I-That he was born at Rhinebeck in the County of Dutchess in the State of New York in the ear 1742.

II-That he has a record of his age at home in a testament which has been kept in the family.

III-That he was living at the time he was taken prisoner as aforesaid in Hoosick in the County of Rensselaer and State of New York and has lived there ever since the Revolutionary War and still continues to reside there.

IV-That he was not drafted but that he went voluntarily in manner above stated.

V-That he has stated above the names of all his officers which he can recollect.

VI-That he was not discharged but was taken prisoner as above stated.

VII-That the persons to whom he is known in his present neighborhood and who can testify to his character for veracity and their belief of the facts above stated are Jonathan Haynes.

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 in the union.
(Signed with his mark) John Backus

Sworn to & subscribed the day & year aforesaid in open court. Henry R. Bristol, Clerk.

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Personally appeared before me the undersigned a Justice of the Peace in and for the county of Rensselaer aforesaid John Backus who being duly sworn depose and saith that he was captured and taken prisoner as stated in his declaration hereby annexed by a party of the enemy who were then called green Yorkers they were Rifle men, that he was taken to Burgoyne and from there to Ticonderoga where he was locked up in the fort until news came that Burgoyne had surrendered to the American Forces and the morning after receiving this information he was before day break taken on board a British vessel and immediately sailed for St. Johns, that he was a prisoner of war taken and carried into Canada as such and detained and kept for the length of time Stated in his declaration as such prisoner of war, and that its detainment was not voluntary but was during all the time he was there occasioned by the restraint which was exercised by the enemy towards him & that he was not released from their custody until the Period by him stated and that he all the aforesaid time was confined or guarded in such a manner that he could not escape and that he knows of no person living by whom he can prove his imprisonment but Lodowick Bonesteel Esq. (Signed with his mark) John Backus

Subscribed and sworn before me this 21st day of June 1834. Henry Patterson, Justice Peace.

End Notes—R.354—John Backus

1. John Lantman or Lampman was the Captain of the third company in Colonel Stephen J. Schuyler's Sixth Regiment of Albany County Militia. There were no known muster rolls for this company.
2. Henry Loring does not appear as an officer or any other rank in the regiment. Captain Lampman's Company officers were as follows: Peter Vosburgh as the first lieutenant, John Schurtz as the second lieutenant and Conrad Best as the ensign.
3. Lieutenant General John Burgoyne led an invasion force from Canada via Lake Champlain to Lake George to the Hudson river and continued his advance to Stillwater. The Battle of Bennington was fought on August 16, 1777. John did not say he was taken in that battle but from other pensioners from the Albany County Militia it lends the possibility that there was a detachment at the battle. There is no record of the officers from John's Company as to what happened to them.