

## Pension Application for David Church or Shirts

R.1947

State of New York  
Columbia County SS.

Jacob Esselstyne of the town of Claverack in said County being duly sworn says that he knew and was well acquainted with David Shirts before the Revolutionary War as well as during and after the close of the War, that he formerly Resided in the town of Claverack in said County near said Deponents and that in the year 1777, thinks the forepart of June, the Militia were called out and marched from Claverack to Fort Edward. Said Deponent went as one of said Militia under Capt. Peter Bortle and said Deponent's Father Richard Esselstyne commandant Major and said David Shirts went and was there at the same time and belonged to the same company with said deponent and after about one month said deponent returned home to attend to harvesting and when he went home he left said Shirt doing duty as usual at Fort Edward.

Said Deponent did not return to the Army nor has he any knowledge of nor does he believe that said Shirts returned home or left doing military Duty until after the surrender of Genl Burgoyne but how long he stayed or precisely when he returned home said deponent does not recollect and further saith not. (Signed) Jacob Esselstyne

Subscribed and sworn to at the City of Hudson on the 26<sup>th</sup> day of August 1836 before me. James Rowley, Commissioner of Deeds.

State of New York  
County of Rensselaer SS.

On this twenty second day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty six personally appeared before George R. Davis one of the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas of the County and State aforesaid David Church a resident of the town of Watervliet in the County of Albany and State of New York aged eighty seven years, who being first duly sworn according to Law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain he 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 viz. That he was drafted in a company of Militia commanded by Captain Michael Horton in Colonel VanRensselaer's Regiment as a minute man and was stationed at Claverack in the County of Columbia and State of New York and its vicinity for at least two years and things for a longer time. That his principal duty was to stand guard and as a Centinel in that place.

That he frequently went out on alarms. That at one time he went from Claverack to Fort Edward North in a Company of Militia under the command of Captain Peter Bortle, Richard Esselstyne Major at that time he was in the battle and at the taking of Burgoyne, he thinks he must have been gone at that time at least five months, he don't recollect the time but supposes it much have been in the year 1777, he then returned to Claverack again at another time he went in a Company of Militia commanded by Captain Peter Schuyler up the North river to Fort Stanwix and vicinity. The Indians having made an attack upon Fort Stanwix and they there had a battle in which he this declarant was wounded in the thigh with a grape shot from the effects of which he has never recovered entirely.

That he was at Schenectady Schoharrie and vicinity until Fort Washington was taken and then returned to Claverack again that he was gone that time he should think at least three months. The year nor the time of year he cannot recollect after that tour he returned to Claverack again. And at another time he went from Claverack in a company of Militia (the Captain's name he does not recollect.) To the highlands on the North River on an alarm was gone three weeks, then returned to Claverack again, the year or the time of year he does not recollect.

That he was then ordered to carry dispatches to Gov. Clinton and rode night and day while engaged in that business – was in that service he should think at least three weeks. That the several times to which he has alluded as having gone on alarms he thinks he was drafted, but it might have been some of the times he volunteered, that he always stood ready to do service whenever called upon or ordered by his commanding officers—that he was wounded in the ancle [ankle] as well as his thigh at Fort Stanwix.

That he knew General Washington and General Green—that he is so old and infirm that he cannot recollect many particulars in relation to his service that what he has related according to the best of his knowledge, belief and memory is correct, that he was born in Claverack in the year 1749 on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of May.

That he has had a record of his age on a loose piece of paper in a Bible which paper has been lost a number of years.—

That he lived in Claverack Columbia County when called into service, that since the Revolutionary War he has lived at Redhook Dutchess County State of New York, and at Waterford Saratoga County in said State and at Watervliet where he now resides.—

He thinks he entered the service as above mentioned in his Declaration.

That he cannot recollect any more of the Regular Officers, Regiment or general circumstances of his service than what he has above stated.

That he has received a written discharge from service but it has been lost a great many years. That he is known to John Schuyler, Thomas Evans, Rev. Mr. Bronck, Philip Schuyler, Reuben Schuyler and others in his present neighbourhood and who can testify to his character for veracity and their belief of his services as a soldier of the Revolution.

That he knows of no person who can testify to his service whose testimony he can procure except Jacob Esselstyne and Jacob Moul hereunto annexed.

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.

That he this declarant is a high Dutchman and that the Dutch of his name is Shirts and in English is Church. That he goes by both names that all the old people and especially the Dutch call his name Shirts and others call him Church.

That he has no family but his wife (who is eighty four years of age). That they never had any children, but have always got a comfortable living until within a few years since which time and now are very poor and destitute and receive a great portion of their living from Inhabitants of the City of Troy, they living on the opposite bank of the Hudson River from the City of Troy and directly opposite to said City that he and his wife have often talked about trying to get his pension since 1832, but living in a great measure secluded from business people, did not know what the requirements were but supposed he should have to prove all his service by some person that was with him in order to get a pension (and knowing he could not do that) he thought he could not get one, and especially of late years his memory has failed very much and cannot remember particulars in regard to his service as he used to, all these circumstances (besides a few ineffectual efforts from some persons who have undertaken to get his pension for him) have kept him from making a proper application for his pension before this. That he has been a sexton to the Baptist Church where he resides a number of years which gave him some means of support, until a few years past he has become so old and decrepped [decrepit] he can scarcely get out of his own yard—therefore cannot do anything for his support. That he expected to have procured some testimony of his service from on Peter Snyder who has been in the town of Watervliet until within a few months past and where he said Snyder is not is he cannot tell, neither does he know, but the report in the neighborhood is that he is dead—that he has made repeated enquiries for said Snyder within five or six months, and the most information he can get about said Snyder is that the people suppose he is dead. (Signed with his mark) David Church

Sworn and Subscribed the day and year aforesaid. Geo R. Davis Judge of Rensselaer County Courts.