

Pension Application for Abijah Peck

S.14153

Declaration. In order to obtain the benefit of the act of Congress of the 7th of June 1832.

State of New York

Saratoga County SS.

On this 5th day of September AD 1832 personally appeared in open court before the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas of the County of Saratoga now sitting Reverend Abijah Peck a resident of the Town of Clifton Park in the County of Saratoga and State of New York, aged seventy four years the third day of April last, who being 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 and served as herein stated.

In February 1776 he enlisted in a company commanded by Abraham Mead Captain. The Lieutenant was George Peck to go to New York; enlisted for the term of two month. Started soon afterwards and in our course went thro' Rey, New Rochelle, EastChester; halted at West Chester; the officers opened a jail & let some prisoners out—We crossed Kingsbridge 14 miles from New York & when at New York were quartered in the Kings barracks. At this time the Asia a 74 British ship of war lay off from the docks. The Phoenix Clipper shop of war lay a little below the grand battery. We were employed during this service in cutting a Forrest a little north & making fences with the boughs and in keeping guard. After the expiration of our time, we returned by water.

In June of the same year he entered the service under the same Captain & enlisted for six months. The Lieutenant was Henry Warring. Went to New York by water, quartered in empty houses, short time after crossed to the Jersey shore—our principal duty was to guard Bergen Point. I do not know its name now. It is opposite Statten [Staten] Island. He recollects that one time the sentinels were doubled & the whole regiment which was under Col. Silliman, Lieut. Col. Chandler & Major Mead was all night under arms not permitted to lay down or sit down. After a short time they returned to New York & went into their former quarters.

In July 1776 the Declaration of Independence was read in the Grand Parade in New York & he was pregnant. The whole Army was there, General Washington & other Generals were there whom he knew then & often before & afterwards.

We were sometimes employed with the Chevauxdefries [chevaux-de-frise] in preparing to get them round to sink in the North River. When the British landed at Flat Bush we were ordered across to re-inforce the army. Deponent was soon ordered on the Guard which marched down to the lines of the enemy. For want of artillery men I was attached to a field piece. The different flanking parties of the armies kept a constant firing. This consisted of a large division of the army to hold the enemy in check. We were relieved by Lord Sterling. Genl Sullivan and Genl Parsons. They were surprised by the British and cut off, the two former generals were made prisoners &

the relief forces were most of them killed, made prisoners. This was at dawn of day. I saw General Parsons come into the line with nine men. This day I was a guard over the magazine, that is over an ammunition cart attached to the regiment, the British advanced in front of our lines. Our station was on the left of the army and the first regiment I think that retreated off the island. We re-crossed & returned to our former quarters & continued there till the city was evacuated which I think was on Sabbath morning.

On Monday we made a stand on Harlem Heights & hove up lines quick known by the Harlem lines. Our next move was to East Chester. Here the British had landed and marched up in a straight line, a number of Americans stationed under a Stone Wall in the road gave them a warm reception. The British fell back, formed in Platoons & marched up & the Americans soon gave way. I do not recollect who commanded this diversion. My regiment was not engaged – we stood in open view, but was not ordered to re-inforce. Shortly after, we went to White Plains.

Here I was in the battle from commencement to the close. Genl Spencer commanded in person. I often [ran lines pass & repass?] where I stood in company with Colonel Sage. It was said General Lee was also there. I did not see him. But I believe the battle commenced with the Picket Guard then under his command after the Connecticut line gave way, there was a respite for some time. The British army advanced & formed on a plain & advanced on the York line then on a ridge of land, we were ordered to re-inforce or support the York line on the left which was commanded by Genl McDougal. Before however we reached the left we were ordered to support the right. We were the last that retreated, the left & center being the first that were attached and gave way, we after this moved to Peekskill, halting at Wright's miles & returned to North Castle which we had passed in our route to Peekskill which lies on the North River. North Castle one time which had been employed in helping guard, expired and I was discharged. The Colonel at the head of the regiment driving us to be ready to take the field in the spring.

In the spring of 1777 I enlisted in a company of Rangers for seven months, commanded by Captain Benjamin Stephens, Caleb Lawrence was Lieutenant. It's operations were in WestChester County principally New York. It was attached to no particular regiment—did duty between the lines—in watching the motions of the enemy, in scouts & so on. A part of the company commanded by Ensign Warring being on dutyb at one time, heard horse[s?] going over rye bridge in West Chester judging them to be British a part of Delancy's Core, the took a favorable position & when the enemy came opposite halted, the answer was [surround?] our party fired & made good their retreat. One man & two horses were killed of the British. The company once joined Genl Putman at East Chester & moved to Morrisiana took a number of prisoners & returned. We were frequently in a company with Colonel Meigs of the Continental line who commanded a regiment then called the Leather Caps.—also with Colonel Sheldon of the line who commanded a regiment of horse. After the surrender of Burgoyne & the British had evacuated the [?] they had taken on the North River & returned to New York, we were discharged. I think it was a week or two

before our time had actually expired, as the weather was getting cold & we were without tents.

In the year 1788 I was drafted two months, served under Captain Isaac How—Lieut Lockwood, both of Greenwich in Connecticut. Stationed at seven pit, town of Rye Westchester Count N.Y. Duty was that of Guard. Served the time out. No very interesting occurrences then, we were under Col. John Mead.

After this I was a short time on board a whale boat commanded by Captain James Ferris—It was at Greenwich on the Sound. Duty was to guard the points & watch the enemy. Was in this service two weeks; perhaps more—is not certain. At one time I recollect as we had landed from a cruise a part of the British had advanced to a place called Breshis landing in that town with the view of destroying the salt works in which they succeeded we with the militia & inhabitants pressed on & killed some & took some of the British prisoners.

I served a short time on board a Galley commanded by Capt. Samuel Lockwood. It was at the same place, was engaged two weeks, perhaps more—is not quite certain. In company once with a small privateer from Boston called Thunder, we attempted to surprise a Guard Brig, laying under Long Island; for want of sufficient wind, we did not arrive in season & were discovered—she gave us a close chase. We made a harbor called [Tommack?] she came & anchored a little off. The crew of the Thunder came aboard the Galley doubled manned our oars & rowed out & continued a fire of two hours, our metal being heaviest; she gave broad sides—we could not succeed in driving her off however.

After this I was enrolled in the Militia—in Greenwich. We were quartered in our houses, drew pay and were classed so each one knew his alarm post & the officer who commanded in each particular night. Our duty was to guard the different points of the land. We were all this time in actual service. I recollect, that one dark night the enemy surrendered in landing at one of the points marched into the main town, took a number of cattle & prisoners—we pursued them closely, they drove the cattle & took the prisoners on another point, succeeded in getting them aboard their vessel and we here unable to retake them. I was enrolled in this militia in 1788, & continued in this service nearly two years—most of the time on actual duty.

In 1780, I moved into the County of Westchester, the town of North Salem, N.Y. Here I was enrolled in Captain Ephraim Lockwood's Company in Colonel Thaddeus Crain's [Crane's] regiment. Previous to this, Col Crain had been wounded at Richfield at the fall of Genl Worcester but kept the Command of his Regiment. Here I did duty sometimes while the Regiment was out on the lines at others we were classed & did duty at home by guarding against Tories out plundering—also we were out on scouting & patrolling parties occasionally towards the last of the service. I was sent on a party detached from the Company as a guard to get a prisoner at West Point who was afterwards tried & executed as a spy in North Salem. I was not in this service til the close of the war. From 1780 I was in actual service I think as much as six months probably more.

I never had any written discharge. I resided in Greenwich, Fairfield County, Connecticut when I first entered the service.

As I before stated, I was with nearly the whole army at Long Island, and saw most of the high commanding officers. I knew Genl Washington who was there. Genl Sterling who was taken prisoner—Genl Sullivan—General Spencer—Genl Parsons-- & others. I well recollect seeing the Generals & other officers assembled in consultation in the afternoon before our retreat.

There were many others with whom we did duty on different occasions—as Genl Putnam whom I knew well personally —also Col. Meigs & also Col. Sheldon.

I recollect many other circumstances & incidents of the war & many dangers & privations I encountered, too numerous to relate, but which is required by the Secretary of War I will cheerfully state.

I had often occasion to admire the protecting providence and have [morals?] that preserved me while so many of my companions fell around me.

I have no documentary evidence and as I live nearly two hundred miles from the scene of action & the place of my nativity. I do not know of any person living who can testify to my services. There may be persons there, but I have not been there in near 20 years & know not that I should be able to get any testimony by going. All the officers I was under I believe are dead, and do not know of any companions in arms living. I should have gone & made enquiries, but suppose the Secretary of war does not contemplate that, if sufficient evidence can be otherwise furnished, especially at this season of Pestilence & in a man of my age, which prevented my going.

I remark to the Secretary at War, that I had prepared my papers myself & came out to Court but accidentally lost them out of my pocket & do not therefore present the Certificate of the nearest Clergyman which I had who is Elder Hubble who is now my colleague in the Church where I have preached for nearly 40 years; but have procured that of Elder Finch with whom I have now met at Court and who has lived in my neighbourhood & been acquainted with me many years —but [blurred] another tour of the same country.

I hereby relinquish every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present & declare that my name is not on the Pension Roll of the agency of any state.
(Signed) Abijah Peck

Sworn to & subscribed the day & year first aforesaid in open court. Thomas Palmer Clerk.