

Pension Application for Silas Runnolds

R.9078

Revolutionary War, Indian War 1791, and War of 1812

State of Vermont

Rutland County SS

On this first day of March, 1837, personally appeared in open court, before the Honorable Probate Court of the District of Rutland in the County of Rutland aforesaid, now sitting, Silas Runnolds, a resident of Fairhaven in said County, aged 78 or 79 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 he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers, and served as herein stated.

That about the last of April or first of May 1775, (1) he enlisted for the term of nine months, being then at Kinderhook in the State of New York, under Captain Stoffle Miller (2) of Claverack and in Col. Willett's Regiment of New York troops was first marched under Capt. Miller to Conajohary or Fort Plain; in a few days after their arrival, less than a week, Capt. Miller returned to Albany, leaving the Company under the command of his Lieutenant, of the name of Stockwell; (3) they staid there till about the first of June, then marched to Fort Herkimer and thence to Fort Staniwix where they arrived the 4th or 5th of June; remained there during the siege, (4) which lasted 22 days. The 15th day of the siege, Col. Willet, (5) with a Lieutenant whose name is not recollected and a private of the name of Asa Munroe, then left the fort, at night, for the purpose of passing the enemy's lines, and processing reinforcements. They did not return with the reinforcement, until the morning that the British left. General Arnold then came, with a body of 3 or 4000 American troops. After the siege, he returned to Fort Herkimer; moved from there to Fort Plain; and from there, on a scout to Fort Herkimer; where he remained about a month. After that, he was employed with his company, until cold weather the next winter; in scouting through that country; in the winter, went into garrison at Fort Plain. The term of his enlistment was out, sometime after new years of 1776; (6) just before which time, he enlisted again, at that place, for the further term of three years, under Capt. Tierce, and was presently transferred to Capt. Harrison's (7) Company—Lieuts Loup and Hans Becker of Schoharie, being his subalterns: this was at Schoharie Middle Fort—lay there perhaps 1 ½ month. Afterwards, through the season, was on scouts, from Cherry Valley, Cobleskill, Turlow (8) (a small village and block house west of Schoharie which was burnt during the war) Canajoharie, Fort Plain, Fort Herkimer, Fort Dayton and back. Col. Malcolm (9) commanded the Regiment that season.

Wintered at Schoharie. Capt. James Livingston of Livingston's Manor (10) and Lt. John Morris Faught (11) of New Windsor commanded the company that summer, and Capt. Livingston continued in the command, until toward the spring of 1777; when he was succeeded by Hans Becker (12) of Schoharie as Lt. commandant.

In this year, 1777, Col. Willett was commander of the Regiment; though Maj'r Fondy (13) was in actual command, most of the time where applicant was that season. Capt. Livingston was commander of the company though absent a good deal of the time, and left the command mostly to Lieut. Hans Becker.

In 1778, the service was similar to that of the preceding year. Lt. Stockwell (14) was commandant of the Company and Col. Willet of the Regiment. Of the many expeditions in which the applicant was this year engaged, one consisting of ten men only, commanded by a Sergeant Murphy, (15) set out from the Schoharie Middle Fort, went to Tioga Point on the head waters of the Susquehanna, and in the night crossed the river, captured a sentinel on his post, got the countersign from him, then went into the enemy's camp (where there were several hundreds of English, Tories, and Indians) took out six prisoners, sixteen rifles, and returned in safety to the fort, in less than a fortnight.

In 1779, before the expiration of his last term of three years, the applicant enlisted for another period of three years, under the said Lieut. Commandant, Hans Becker, in Col. Willett's Regiment. The service, throughout this last period, was similar to the former. In the summer of 1781, a hostile Indian came to the Middle Fort at Schoharie, when applicants' company then lay and gave notice, that a party of several hundred of the enemy under command of one Charles Smith, consisting of British, Tories, and Indians, were about crossing the Schoharie creek, on the road to Coxsackie, for the purpose of destroying the inhabitants and laying waste the country. A party was, in consequence, dispatched under the command of Sergeant John Murphy, above mentioned, from the fort to intercept them; which was done, so successfully, that they killed a great number of the enemy—among them, their Tory commander—took 5 prisoners and their guns, and returned in safety. Applicant was one of that party.

In the winter of 1782, the last expedition the applicant was engaged in, during the revolution, was Fort Herkimer, under Col. Willet, for the purpose of capturing Oswego Fort.

At the close of his last term of service, applicant lay sick at said Middle Fort in Schoharie at the house of Lt. Becker, while the rest of the troops were marched to Schenectady and there discharged, as the said applicant afterwards understood from said Lieut. Becker, who would not release applicant, until his health was reestablished, in July or August following.

And, most unfortunately for this applicant in May 1791 he enlisted for three years in Capt. Jedediah Rogers' Company of Cavalry, and marched with them into the Western Country; where, in the disastrous affair of the 4th of November, he was captured by the Miami Indians, and detained among them upwards of four years, before he was enabled to make his escape. In the summer of 1796, on the northern head waters of the Missouri he embarked on board a bark canoe; and after pursuing the course of the streams, lying by in the daytime, and travelling only in the night, after 40 days, and in an almost exhausted state (being afraid to kill game with his gun, but he should be discovered by other savages) was taken up, below New Orleans, by an English 40 gun ship (name not recollected) commanded by Capt. Venables. He escaped from the British ship at Baltimore, where she had put in, to refit, after an engagement with a French armed vessel, off the capes of Virginia; and on board a merchant brig, Capt. Smith, he shipped himself, secretly, and arrived in New York in January 1797. In a few days, after his arrival in New York the British vessel came in to that port; and while she lay there, this applicant gave notice to the City Authorities, and was the means thereby, of liberating about 30 American citizens, who had been impressed into the English service on board of that ship. After the river opened in the spring, applicant took passage on board a sloop to seek his family which he had left in Stephentown, in Rensselaer County, about 6 years before, and to whom he had been dead, since the battle of Miami under General St. Clair. (16)

But, the applicant had the honor and satisfaction of serving his country once more, in the War of 1812-14, one year, as a private in the 30th Infantry; during which time he conducted several parties across the lines, into Canada, and at one time assisted in capturing the British Capt. Bisbee and his whole company without the loss of a man at Odstown in said Province. And, for the remainder of the war, he served as a volunteer on board the fleet on Lake Champlain was on board of the fleet at the battle of Plattsburgh, (17) and afterwards, in February or March 1815, was honorably dismissed, the service at Whitehall by Commodore MacDonough. (18)

And the applicant further states, that he has no documentary evidence and that he knows of no person whose testimony he can procure, excepting that of Asa Munroe of Granville in the County of Washington in the State of New York, who can testify to any part of his service.

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. (Signed with his mark) Silas Runnolds

Sworn to, and subscribed in open Court the day and year aforesaid, before me. Wm. Hall Judge.

End Notes—R.9078—Silas Runnolds

1. Silas is mistaken as to the years that he did his military enlistments and services.
2. There is no Stoffle (Stephen is crossed out) Miller (Muller) serving under Colonel Marinus Willett. In 1775, Willett was a Captain of the Second Company in the First New York Continental Regiment under Colonel Alexander McDougall. Some of the events that Silas refers to occurred in August 1777. Willett, at that time, was the Lieutenant-Colonel of the Third New York Continental Regiment which was commanded by Colonel Peter Gansevoort.
3. Levi Stockwell was the First Lieutenant in Captain Cornelius I. Jansen's Third Company in the Third New York. On examining the muster rolls for this regiment, Silas Runnolds (Reynolds, Rynolds, Runnels, Rannals, etc.) was not found in any of the companies.
4. The Siege of Fort Schuyler, or Fort Stanwix, which stood in the present day City of Rome, Oneida County, New York; lasted 21 days and ended when Major General Benedict Arnold marched with a relief column of about 1,000 men which reached the fort on August 23.
5. Actually Colonel Willett, Lieutenant Stockwell and Private Munroe slipped out of the fort on August 8 at 1:00 A.M.
6. Again, Silas is mistaken as to the year. The year of the enlistment was in 1782 according to the Descriptive Book No. 4, Colonel Marinus Willett's Regiment of New York State Levies, Doc. No. 11105, Special Collections and Manuscripts, New York State Library, Albany, N.Y. Silas enlisted as follows: "Enlisted May 18, 1782 by Col. Marinus Willett for 2 years 7 months 12 days. Born at Nine Partners, Dutchess County, N.Y. Age—18. Size—5 fit 7 in. Complexion—light. Hair—Brown. Eyes—Brown. Occupation—farmer. Remarks—Deserted." Silas' name also appears on *A Roll of Deserters from Col. Marinus Willett's New York State Regiment of Two and Three Years Troops and the Battalion commanded by Major Elias VanBunschoten*. No date for the desertion is given in either record. FROM: Revolutionary War Rolls 1775-1783, Series M-246, Roll 78, Folder 173, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
7. Captain Joseph Harrison, Lieutenants Peter Loop and Storm Becker. Silas is not listed on Harrison's PayRoll/Muster Roll of 1783. It appears that Silas did not return from desertion and that he deserted before January 1, 1783. FROM: Revolutionary War Rolls 1775-1783, Series M-246, Roll 78, Folder 173, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
8. Turlow, Terlow, Telow, etc., refers to the settlement of New Dorlach now Sharon Springs, Schoharie County, New York.

9. Colonel William Malcolm or Malcom had a regiment of New York State Levies in 1780. Silas was clearly mixing up his military service.
10. Captain Gilbert J. Livingston of Colonel William Malcolm's Regiment of New York State levies in 1780. According to the muster roll for July & August Silas had enlisted on July 27, 1780 and he was "In Fishkill Hospital". According to the September & October 1780 roll he was listed as "deserted October 15, 1780". FROM: Revolutionary War Rolls 1775-1783, Series M-246, Roll 72, Folder 73, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
11. Lieutenant John Morris McFaught or McFought, etc., served in Captain Daniel Gano's Company in Colonel Lewis DuBois' Regiment of New York State Levies in 1780. He was later appointed captain in this regiment.
12. Storm Becker was a sergeant in Captain Jacob J. Lansing's Company in Colonel Morris Graham's Regiment of New York State Levies in 1780. FROM: Revolutionary War Rolls 1775-1783, Series M-246, Roll 72, Folder 75, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
13. Jellis A. Fonda, Lieutenant and Adjutant in Colonel Graham's Regiment in 1780.
14. Again he is mistaken. Levi Stockwell was not serving under Willett. They served together only in the Third New York and Stockwell left the regiment in May of 1778. Stockwell lived in the Skenesborough District of Charlotte County which is present day Whitehall, Washington County, N.Y. Stockwell had served as a First Lieutenant in the First Regiment of Charlotte County Militia before he had joined the Third New York. In 1779 he had served as a captain in Lieutenant-Colonel Henry K. VanRensselaer's Regiment of New York State Levies. He was stationed mainly in and around Skenesborough. He again served under Lieutenant-Colonel VanRensselaer in 1780 from January to April at different times in guarding Skenesborough as the militia would not do duty or not enough of them showed up to garrison this important post. On May 11, 1780, Stockwell was appointed Captain in Lieutenant-Colonel John Harper's Regiment of New York State Levies. He was discharged on November 30, 1780 and he returned to Charlotte County. On April 12, 1782 he was commissioned as Captain in the First Charlotte.
15. He later says it is Sergeant John Murphy. Again, he appears to be mistaken in both instances of his testimony. In 1778, the Seventh Virginia Continental Regiment which was formerly the Eleventh Virginia but better known as Morgan's Riflemen, (Colonel Daniel Morgan) under Major Thomas Posey along with the Fourth Pennsylvania Continental Regiment under Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant William Butler were sent to the Schoharie Valley. The Middle Fort was their headquarters. Timothy Murphy served in the Rifle Corps as they were referred to, as a detachment under Major James Parr of the Seventh Pennsylvania Continental Regiment which was at the Middle Fort and was in many of the expeditions to the Susquehanna River. Timothy Murphy was in the expedition in 1779 to capture Charles Smith.
16. Arthur St. Clair, Major General in the United States Army.
17. The Battle of Plattsburgh, N.Y., was fought on September 11, 1814.
18. Commodore Thomas MacDonough.