

### **Pension Application for Thomas Sniffin or Kniffin**

W.19386 (Widow: Rachel) Married 1783, by a Justice of the Peace, Harrison. Thomas died September 17, 1837. Rachel died January 1, 1839, leaving Thomas, William George G., and Susan Bird, surviving children.

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

State of New York

County of Westchester

On this twenty third day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty seven personally appeared in open court before the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas in and for the said County now sitting at Bedford in said County Thomas Sniffin a resident of the town of Rye in said county aged seventy four years on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of August last—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 the seventh 1832.

That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein after stated, that is to say he entered the said service in the month of March Seventeen hundred and eighty one on or about the first of the said month under the command of Captain Valentine Rider of the bateau or whale boat service on the Long Island Sound [?] period service that he continued in active service in the said Tour for and until the end of [?]. That he then again entered said service under said Captain Rider in the whale boat or Battou service as aforesaid on or about the first of March 1782 and that he this declarant continued in active service in said service on the aforesaid Sound, until peace took place, and was honorably discharged from said service the beginning of April 1783. (Signed) Thomas Sniffin.

State of New York

Westchester County SS.

On this eleventh day of December in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty two personally appeared in open court before the court of common pleas in and for the said county of Westchester now sitting at White Plains in the said County of Westchester, Thomas Kniffin a resident of the Town of Rye in the said County of Westchester aged seventy years who bring 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<sup>th</sup> 1832. That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers and served as herein stated. That is to say.

This Declarant was born & has always lived (except when absent on Military Duty during the Revolutionary War) in the Town of Rye in the said County of Westchester. That in the month of March in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty one (but the particular day of that month this declarant cannot recollect) this declarant having taken an interest in favor of the cause of Independence, found it impossible for him to remain in safety any longer at his residence in Rey aforesaid, & went up to New Canaan in the State of Connecticut and there enlisted as a private in Cap'n Valentine Rider's Company of Whale boat men. But this Declarant although he recollects signing a paper by direction of the said Rider when he enlisted as aforesaid, yet he cannot recollect whether any or if any, what term of time he enlisted for, but this declarant well recollects, hearing the said Valentine Rider say and it was then understood that he had a commission as Captain of said whale boat company from his Excellency George Clinton then Governor of the State of New York, and acted under his orders. That this declarant immediately after his aforesaid enlistment joined his said company and was marched with them by his said Captain's orders from New Canaan aforesaid to Middletown in Connecticut for a Galley or Gunboat called the Resolution carrying a long four pounder and swivets &c their arms, which had been built there for said Cap'n Rider & his company and an eight oared whale boat also built there for said Rider & his company.

That at Middletown aforesaid said Rider this declarant & his said company went on board their said Gunboat and sailed round with her & their said Whale boat to New Haven in Connecticut where they took on board their cannon & swivels and then sailed to Stamford Harbour which continued to be their place of Rendevous [sic] til the close of the Revolutionary War and this declarant continued to serve as a private in said Rider's company in said Gun boat Resolution and their whale boat in the sound and East River and around the south side of Long Island constantly whenever they were not prevented by the ice in the waters till the peace was proclaimed and the Revolutionary War ended in the winter or spring of the year 1783. Except that in the winter of the year 1782 this declarant went up to Lower Salem in said County of Westchester was inoculated and had the small Pox there (by the direction of his said Cap'n Rider as this declarant was constantly exposed to be taken prisoner and sent to the British Prison Ship where he would be sure to die with the Small Pox if he had not been inoculated) and was absent two months before he recovered from said disorder. That as soon as he was recovered he returned to Stamford aforesaid joined his said company & done duty as before—

That this declarant was in actual service in his aforesaid company under arms under his said Captain Valentine Ricer from the month of March 1781 when he enlisted therein as aforesaid till sometime in the month of March 1783, excepting the two months he was sick with the Small Pox as aforesaid and a few weeks during the winter. That the ice prevented them going out of Stamford Harbour being in the whole at least one year and six months actual service under arms by this declarant as a private in the aforesaid Valentine Rider's Company in the service of the Americans aiding to establish the Independence of these United States—That the service in which this declarant was engaged as aforesaid was of the most hazardous and exposed kind of any—rendered by any of the soldiers of the Revolution.—

That this declarant was during his aforesaid service engaged & in many service conflicts with the British forces, some of which he now recollects and relates as follows. Viz. About the month of May 1781, this Declarant in their whale boat in Company with said Rider in his said Gun Boat went over to Hempstead Harbour & there went after an armed British sloop. That was in there attacked her and after a severe conflict Rider & his men were beat off in consequence of his fun boat running on a sand bar & being unable to board the British Sloop in the same year in service this declarant with Rider & his company went down in Throgs Neck to take Cap'n Frederick Williams of Delancey's Corps of British Refugees then laying on Throgs Neck aforesaid they landed, went up to his quarters, took his Cornet James Jereau and brought him off was attacked by the British but escaped with the loss of one of their men killed & eight men wounded on another occasion, they went out and met a British whale boat on the Sound with one Cap'n Joseph Smith a British officer in her and brought him in a prisoner. On one occasion this declarant was engaged with five British Whale Boats on Norwalk Island carrying 49 men this declarant and his boats crew took one British Whale boat with a Cap'n Dascomb a deserter from the Americans and five men—on another occasion this declarant was engaged with said Rider & his company at Norwalk Island aforesaid with two British Whale boats under command of Cap'n Joseph Hoyt and Cap'n Johnson and after a serve [severe] fight and loss of three of our men killed and several wounded took both of said British Whale boats with their crews and carried them into Norwalk, and Major Talmage took charge of ;them—That Cap'n Rider & his said company to which this declarant belonged and served in as aforesaid—during his said service took many British officers & soldiers prisoners, and thereby effected exchanges of American officers & soldiers out of the British prison ship in New York and was the principal means of defending Stamford and the adjacent shores from the British whale boats & men and rendered important services to the Americans. That this declarant's claims a pension for his aforesaid eighteen months actual service as such private under arms in Cap't Valentine Riders aforesaid company of whale and gun boat men. That said Valentine Rider is dead and the only witnesses of his said services that he can now produce are Abraham Hyatt and Isaac of Harrison in the said County of Westchester and Rivers Morrell of the Town of Rye aforesaid whose affidavits are

hereunto annexed. That this declarant is very poor and needs a pension for his support which he believes himself entitled to for his many risks & services during the Revolutionary War as above stated.

That this declarant was born in the Town of Rye aforesaid on the 28<sup>th</sup> day of August in the year 1762 as he was informed by his parents & verily believes to be true. That he has not any record of his age, it having been lost during the Revolutionary War. That this declarant was living in Rye aforesaid when he entered the service as aforesaid and has lived there ever since the Revolution and now resides in the said Town of Rye. That this Declarant volunteered as aforesaid, was not ever drafted neither did he ever serve as a substitute.

That the names of the Regular Officers who were with the troops where he served such Continental and Militia Regiments as he recollects and the general circumstances of his service are as above set forth on this his declaration. That he never received a Discharge from the service. That he is known in his present neighbourhood to the Hon. Nehemiah Brown residing in the Town of Rye in the said County of West Chester and to Charles Purdy of the Town of White Plains in the same County who can testify as to this Declarant's character for veracity, their belief of his age & their belief of his services as a soldier of the Revolution. And this declarant further saith that there is not any clergyman living in his vicinity who is sufficiently acquainted with him to give such certificate.

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) Thomas Kniffin

Sworn to & Subscribed in open Court the day & year aforesaid before me. N. Bayles, Clk of said Court.