

Pension Application for John McGraw

S11051
State of New York
Montgomery County

On the nineteenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty two personally appeared in open court before the judges of the Court of Common Pleas of the County & State aforesaid now sitting at Johnstown, John McGraw, aged eighty 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 in the latter part of the year 1775, this deponent belonged to a company of Militia in the Town of Florida in the County and State aforesaid whereof Samuel Pettingell (1) was Captain in a Regiment commanded by Col. Frederick Fisher (Visscher) of the New York State Militia. That this deponent received orders from his captain to prepare himself with a gun, bayonet and cartridge box to fight for liberty and freedom.

That this deponent prepared himself accordingly and sometime in the forepart of the year 1776 as near as he can recollect, he was drafted from Captain Pettingell's company to go to Sacandaga at a Block House (3) built by the Americans at this place for the purpose of preventing the Tories, British & hostile Indians from passing to and from this part of the country to Canada.

That this deponent with William Snook the Lieutenant of the Company and Henry Snook, William Pettingell, Joseph Pettingell, Daniel McGraw & Hugh Connolly privates in said company and probably others which he does not now remember, marched from the Town of Florida to Sacandaga and lay in the fort as a guard at that place until relieved by another draft from the same company.

That he had been drafted and went to Sacandaga four or five times in like manner and served his several tours at that place, sometimes would be stationed there a week, at others a fortnight, three weeks and a month, as occasions in the service required, but he cannot be particular as to the precise time he did serve there, he judges however, that he served in all the Sacandaga Block House as much as two months at least.

That in going from Florida to Sacandaga they usually crossed the Mohawk River at Tripes Hill, and some times at Amsterdam, and marched to the Block House at Sacandaga principally through the woods and that place as but little improvement in roads had been made, to that section of country as well as to avoid any surprises by the enemy.

And this deponent further says, that in the year 1777 he was drafted in like manner from Captain Pettengill's Company as many as five times and served regular tours at Johnstown in a picket fort around the Johnstown Jail.

That the several times of service at that place would vary from one to four and five weeks before he got relieved.

That Captain Walter Vrooman (3) commanded at the fort a principle part of the time.

That one Beekman (4) was Lieutenant and one Hatch a Sergeant.

That the object in keeping a force at that place was that the Americans apprehended an attack from the enemy coming through from Canada by the way of Sacandaga, Johnstown being the residence of Sir John Johnson, a Tory who had done much injury during the war.

That in the month of August 1777 Captain Pettingell's company was ordered out and the whole of Col. Fisher's Regiment to March for Oriskany in the County of Oneida at the time the battle was fought between the Americans and the British at that place and that this deponent was excused from serving at that place in consequence of a lame knee.

That in the Oriskany Battle Captain Pettingill was mortally wounded as this deponent was informed and believes, and Lieutenant Snook (5) afterwards took command of the company and was appointed captain.

That after the Oriskany Battle a certain number was drafted from Captain Snook's Company to join General Gates (6) forces at Saratoga, among which was this deponent, that one Thomas Van Horne (7) commanded the draft from same company, he the being Lieutenant of said company.

That they marched from Florida to the City of Schenectady and from thence down the Mohawk River and crossed over into Saratoga near Stillwater and there found General Gates Army.

And a few days before the battle between the forces commanded by General Gates, and those of the British commanded by General Burgoyne, this deponent was ordered to the town of Florida on business by Major David McMaster (8) who commanded the forces at Stillwater to which this deponent was attached in the Militia. And this deponent did not return as this news arrived, that the battle had been fought and that Burgoyne and his army had been taken.

And this deponent further says that sometime in the year 1778 as near as he can recollect, Col. Fisher's Regiment was ordered out including Captain Snook's Company & marched to Stone Arabia in the Town of Palatine upon an alarm of hostilities in that quarter, and were there about ten days as near as he could judge and was then relieved by another company of militia.

That in the year 1779 this deponent was drafted from Captain Snook's Company to march to the German Flats. He recollects that Captain Snook was among the number and that Robert McCrady,

Cornelius Van Horne, William Phillips, Daniel McGraw, Conradt Steen, Justin Rorey and Henry Snook, privates in said company were also among the number drafted.

That they marched up the Mohawk River on the south side to the German Flats and joined some Militia at that place, who had been called out in consequence of the Indians having scalped some of the Americans at that place. That this deponent was then absent about three weeks.

That this deponent had been ordered out in the years 1778, 1779, and 1780 on various occasions and stationed at Fort Plain, Fort Plank, Fort Windecker, Fort Dayton and the German Flats to protect the Americans from the incursions of the British and Indians. That from the repeated and number of occasions this deponent had been called and stationed at the before mentioned places in the American service, and from the great length of time, he is unable to state particularly how long he served in each of those places in particular. He recollects that he has been at Bowman's Creek in the Town of Canajoharie and served on regular tour on guard at that place.

That at the time the battle was fought at Johnstown between the American forces commanded by Col. Willett and the British troops then commanded by Major Ross (9), Captain Snook's company was ordered out and went to their relief and arrived the next morning after the battle was over and thinks that the Americans followed Major Ross about two days journey, Major Ross marched westward towards The Canada Creek but that Capt Snooks Company joined the Americans and pursued Ross as before mentioned and then returned.

This deponent further says that he has been stationed at Tripes Hill to stand guard at that place, an attack was expected from the Tories, he cannot remember the year but thinks it was the latter part of the war, nor the length of time, but he remembers that Captain Snook Commanded at the time.

Captain Snook's (10) Company was also called out sometime the latter part of the war, and was stationed opposite Fort Plain in the now Town of Oppenheim (now St. Johnsville) as he believes on the north side of the Mohawk River and helped guard at that place.

They crossed the Mohawk River a little above Caughnawaga & marched up the river on the north side and found some of the American commanded by one McMasters, he cannot recollect how long they were stationed there.

He has also been placed on guard at a stone house a little below Fort Hunter to watch the movements of the Tories & Indians but how long, cannot recollect.

And this deponent further says that during the whole war he held himself in readiness to march any moment he was called upon to serve his country, and from the various services which rendered he thinks he can safely state that he served the country as much as two years and probably much longer, but his memory fails him and he cannot detail the events of the war with much minuteness or exactness.

And this deponent further says that he was born in the town of Florida in the County and state aforesaid in the year 1752 and resided in the same place when he entered the service and has so resided ever since. That he has a record of his age in his family Bible written in German in his possession, that when called into service he had been principally drafted or called upon by his superior officers and always held himself in readiness to obey the call and served the country on his own account that he has stated the names of the principle officers engaged in the services as near as he can recollect and the circumstances of his services. He has no documentary evidence in his possession nor any written discharge and hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present, and declare that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any state or of the United States and this deponent expects to prove by Henry Snevvt, Garret Newkirk, Daniel McGraw & George Stine some of his services He also expects to prove by Nicholas Hill & Henry Snook who can testify as to the veracity of this deponent and of their belief as to this deponent's services as soldier of the Revolution.

John McGraw (his mark)

Sworn to and subscribed this day and year aforesaid, Geo D. Ferguson, Clerk.

End Notes

1. Pettingill was Captain of the Fifth Company in Col. Frederick Visscher's Regiment of Tryon County Militia [Third Regiment].
2. The service at the Sacandaga Blockhouse was in 1779 or later. However there were earthen redoubts in or near the same area as early as 1776.
3. In 1780, Walter Vrooman was a Captain in Colonel John Harper's Regiment of New York State Levies.
4. The lieutenant was John Bateman and the sergeant was William Hatch.
5. William Snook became Captain but was not commissioned until the 8th of March 1781. John mentions Henry Snook who is the son of William Daniel McGraw is John's brother.
6. Major General Horatio Gates.
7. Thomas Van Horne was the Ensign and received his Commission dated 25 June 1778. He was promoted to First Lieutenant and received his commission on 8 March 1781.
8. David McMaster was the captain of the Sixty Company in Colonel Visscher's Regiment.
9. The Battle of Johnstown was fought on the 25 of October 1781. The British were led by Major John Ross and Captain Walter Butler.
10. John also is listed as serving as a private in Captain Hermanus Mabee's Company in Colonel Visscher's Regiment.