

Pension Application for Gilbert Underhill

R.10,803

The Declaration of Gilbert Underhill, A Soldier of the Revolution. In order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress of the United States passed June 7, 1832.

State of New York

County of Westchester

Court of Common Pleas for the County of Westchester SS.

On the twenty first day of May AD 1840, personally appeared before the Judges of the Court of Common Pleas of the County of Westchester, Gilbert Underhill a resident of said County, who fist being duly sworn according to Law, doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the Act of Congress passed June seventh 1832. Entitled "An act supplementary to an act for the relief of the surviving officers & soldiers of the Revolution" That he was born in the year 1763 on the 20th day March—and at the age of 13 years he entered as a volunteer in the American Army as a private in Capt. Israel [Hemawell's?] Company in the month of November 1776.—that said company was attached to the lower section of the Westchester Regiment—the company were stated "Minute Men" and were enlisted for six months, and he the said Gilbert Underhill hath fully served out is term of enlistment in said company—that the Colonel's name was James Hammond and the Major's name was Strange—that after the completion of this term of service he received his pay at White Plains at John Faulkner's—he thinks the name of the paymaster was Kemble—that his next captain's name was Gilbert Dean—that the Continental troops in which he served from time to time were from Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island—that the General's name at one time was Scott—after him was Colonel Sheldon in command—that he received a wound in the right arm near Dobbs Ferry and at that time received nine bullets through his clothes—this was in consequence of a mistake made with our own men—that he was again wounded in a Skirmish near Morrisance on the hip—he was also wounded again between East Chester and White Plains—that he was taken at Bedford in June of 79 or 80 by Colonel Tarlton's Troops and made his escape—that he was in an engagement, under Capt. Daniel Williams, near Phillips Mill with the Yanghee troops or Hessians—in which he and his comrades had to retreat—that col. Sheldon was in the engagement and commanded one division of the horse, and Col. Barker another troop of horse and that he and the Americans retreated to North West of Bedford to their camp—that he then was in an engagement with a Lieutenant (whose name he forgets) to take his horse and equipments, when General Scot told him, this deponents, that he wanted his services to go and find out the movements of the enemy as he knew the country well—That Gen. Scott gave him a pass to go through our lines into the English lines, that his orders were to return in fourteen

days—that the only person who knew of his errand was the General & Col. Drake—that he went down to Yonkers and viewed the troops and encampment of the British—that he was so young that he was taken for a country boy and loyalist and according to the General's orders pretended to be foolish—that he passed unmolested—that he then obtains the information desired by the General—to wit, if the English were going into Winter quarters—that he then went down to Willet's Neck in the dead of night, as the General wanted also to know how strong the British were there, so that he might drive them off as they were cutting the timber and taking it to New York,—that there was a man named Isaac Willett friendly to our cause, but who lived within the English lines who went with me—that he saw the destruction of timber—saw their troops—some militia & some horse troops and a few guard vessels lay in the harbor at Lord's Neck—that he left that place and got into a boat with some market [?] and rowed the boat until he came to New York—that he went in the first place to see our prisoners at the Quakers meeting house in Queen Street, and slyly got a talk with some of our officers, so as to learn what he could of Cornwallis's Army in the South—and see how they were used,—that he then went to the North Church—it was full of prisoners, yard and all—that he obtained entrance to see his brother (this was pretence as he had none there)—that he was nearly detained, but the sergeant let him go, as he told him he came to see his rebel brother, but could not find him—that he then went to see one Thomas Gardner a merchant, as one of the officers on parole told him that he was friendly and that he might be depended on, and safe to approach him, if with due caution that he went and saw him—and commenced by asking him if the British were going to kill all the Rebels in the south—that after a little enquiry where he came from and where he lived, Gardner answered, “Oh see we are getting along better than before—we will march them yet.”—Gardner then gave him a newspaper, as General Scott wanted a newspaper and all the intelligence from the south—that he left the City—went up the river with a market boat with some women above Hell Gate and went ashore at Willett's Neck in West Chester county above Tom Hunt's Point—that having destroyed his pass when he entered the English lines, he made his way through the fields and woods and when ever hailed by the American troops he told them to “Come along, as he could not stop—that he had express to General Scott and not to delay him but come with him to the General”—that he hurried all night as his 14 days expired next morning—that he saw Col. Drake first—that the Col. went with him to General Scott—that he told him every thing—gave him the paper and that the General told Col. Drake to take him home, and that he (Underhill) need not do any more actual service & that he should have a good proportion of the new land—that he went home with Col. Drake and staid with him all winter—that on the next spring about the first of June he went with Colonel Sheldon's guard of his own choice to prevent being taken—they lay in the East side of the town of Bedford—that the troops were surprised by Col. Tarlton's horse—Tarlton's horse—that he was also taken prisoner—that Colonel Sheldon jumped out of bed and fled—that he saw the British hold up Sheldon's clothes and cap in triumph—that they started after him but could not catch him—that the deponent was [?] and carried

down to East Chester being in the night the prisoners were stoped and the horses fed and in that on being ordered to march he staped one said in a vacant tent and made his escape—that he went back to Bedford and became a guide to the Eastern troops—that the French lay between White Plains and Dobbs Ferry and that one John Archer and he became their guide, and performed duty in Westchester County—that he stuck to the army and the good cause until the last—that he never left the army but came down to the Battery and help to put up the American Flag, that the English had slashed the staff that he waited and saw the last vessel of war of the English leave the harbor and then the war was ended.—

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) Gilbert Underhill

Sworn and subscribed the day and year aforesaid before me Augustus Lawrence, Justice of the Peace.