

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements

Pension Application of Henry Cato R1815

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

State of Virginia } Sct  
Rockbridge County }

On this 29<sup>th</sup> day of April 1834 personally appeared before me Robt. S Campbell a Justice of the Peace in and for the County aforesaid personally appeared Henry Cato a resident in said County and State, aged 77 or 78 the 25<sup>th</sup> of last March, 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<sup>th</sup> 1832.

That he enlisted in the Army of the United States (in what year he cannot say) but he enlisted at the beginning of the Revolution, 4 weeks before the British came into Long Island Sound [Aug 1776], with Capt. Joseph Dark and served in the 22<sup>d</sup>. Regiment of the Continental Line of troops of the Jersey Line, under the following named officers —

Before he proceeds with his services, he will state that he is a free man of colour (having been free born) his Father was a Catawba Indian, and his mother a Mustein [possibly "Mestee," meaning "mixed," with less than one-eighth Black ancestry]

He farther states that he enlisted in the service of the United States, for "during the War" as it was called and served from the commencement till the close.

For fear that his name may not be found upon the Rolls, he will make out his Statement as particularly as if he had been a Militia Soldier.

Ques. 1. Where and in what year were you born?

He was born within 5 miles of Newark in the State of New Jersey on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of March 1756 or 7.

Question 2<sup>d</sup>. Have you any record of your age, and if so where is it?

He has no record of his age now except in his memory.

Question 3<sup>d</sup>. Where were you living when called into service - where have you lived since the Revolution - and where do you now live?

Answer — He was living in the Elizabeth Town in the State of New Jersey, when called into service. He lived 8 years in the state of New Jersey after the Revolution - he then lived a few years in New York, after which he removed again into New Jersey, where he remained untill 1791. when he enlisted under Zebulon Pike in the Jersey Battalion, and after St. Clair's Defeat [defeat of Arthur St. Clair, governor of the Northwest Territories, 4 Nov 1791] he went to Knoxville Tennessee where he lived 3 years - after which he volunteered under [General] Mad Anthony Wayne. And after he (Wayne) had subdued the Indians [at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, 30 Jun 1794] he returned to Knoxville, where he remained 2 years, at the end of which he removed into the said County of Rockbridge, where he has continued to reside since, having lived in said County about 38 years as well as he can recollect.

question 4<sup>th</sup> How were you called into service &c.

Answer - He enlisted as above stated.

question 5<sup>th</sup>

State the names of some of the Regular officers, who were with the troops where you served - such continental and militia Regiments as you can recollect, and the general circumstances of your service?

Answer - He enlisted at the beginning of the Revolutionary War in the Town of Newark in the State of New Jersey four weeks before the British first came into Long Island Sound [29 Jun 1776], before the battle of Long Island under Lord Howe or Lord Cornwallis [27 Aug 1776 under Gen. William Howe]. His Colo. was Hanley; his Commanding officer was Washington then Colo. as he believes [sic]. He states that 2 or 3 weeks after he enlisted he was stationed at a Fort on Staten Island. Whilst at this Fort, the time he cannot state, the Asia a very large British vessel, under the command of Lord Howe or Cornwallis (which this affiant cannot say particularly) when she came into sight, she ran aground, the tide having left her - she then hoisted a white Flag. But when the tide rose she hoisted a "Bloody Flag," and then fired upon the Fort. There

were only one hundred & Five men at that time in the Fort. We did not fire at all, but were ordered to retreat [2 Jul 1776] We retreated to Newark, where the whole army was then stationed under General Leigh or Lee [Charles Lee]. The British landed at New York. They also landed at Elizabeth Town Point. A short time after they landed we went and repulsed them at White Plains, under General Green or Sullivan [sic: see note below]. General Lee had been taken at Newark by the British [sic: at Basking Ridge, 13 Dec 1776]. After the White Plains he went on to Quebec under General (or Colo.) Washington. he had a skirmish at Quebec [sic: see note below] - retreated from there to Morris Town [Morristown] in New Jersey, where we took Winter Quarters [6 Jan - 26 May 1777]. During this winter quarter he was with General Washington, where he took 500 Hessians on Christmas day without firing a gun [sic: Battle of Trenton, 26 Dec 1776]. He thinks the Hessians were taken on Staten Island. They were in a Drunken frolic when taken. At this time, which he thinks was in December 1776, all New Jersey was overrun by the British. He was present at the battle of Trenton and there fought, under General Washington. After the battle at Princeton [3 Jan 1777], a detachment was ordered by Washington consisting he thinks of 700 - to guard Springfield then invaded by the British. [See note below.] In this detachment this applicant marched. When they arrived at Springfield, the houses were on fire. The British fled - we pursued to Elizabeth Town Point firing on them as long as they could reach them. The British then crossed over to Long Island. 20 or 30 of the British were killed & wounded. 10 or 12 were taken prisoners. The army then came together. after this he was at the Battle of Monmouth [28 Jun 1778] This applicant farther states that he acted as a waiting servant on General Washington for 3 years during the term for which he enlisted. He was present in his capacity of waiting servant on Washington at the Battle of York Town [Siege of Yorktown VA, 28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781]. He farther states that he bore arms in actual military service, Four years, and acted a waiting man on General Washington Three years. making the term Seven years. He has now in his possession a copy of a discharge given to him by Zebulon Pike Capt. from his service in he Indian War. to a copy of which herewith exhibited, he refers as evidence of his character as a soldier.

Copy.

“By order of his Excellency Arthur St. Clair

Henry Cato private soldier belonging to the Jersey Battalion, having served from 18<sup>th</sup> of April to the 20<sup>th</sup> November 1791. as a faithful brave soldier, is hereby honourably discharged.

Signed Zebulon Pike. Capt.

Commander Jersey Battalion Liveys[?].

The above is a true copy of the original discharge as filed in the office of the Register of the Treasury as appears by a certificate now in my hand, from under the hand of Wm Simmons Accountant

(Signed) C W Alisler[?]

That he remained in the service untill after the Surrender of Lord Cornwallis, at which time he was discharged.

question 6<sup>th</sup> Did you ever receive a discharge, and if so by whom was it given - and what has become of it? He did receive a discharge from General Washington, after the Surrender of Lord Cornwallis. But it was destroyed with his, house, which was burned about 20 years ago. But he refers to William B. Donald of his neighbourhood, who has seen said Discharge, and who is well acquainted with this applicant. He also refers to the Rev'nd. Allen D. Metcalf and Samuel Cummins of his neighbourhood as evidence in his behalf — He knows no living Witnesses.

This applicant from great deficiency in his memory, & from his want of learning has been unable to make a corrected statement of his services. This applicant believes that he enlisted the 1<sup>st</sup> day of August 1776. and served untill the Surrender of Lord Cornwallis 4 years of which time he actually bore arms. And for this amount he claims a pension.

He hereby relinquishes all and every claim what soever 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.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.

Henry hisXmark Cato

State of Virginia }

Rockbridge County to wit }

On this 24<sup>th</sup> day of October 1834 before me Robert S Campbell a Justice of the Peace in

and for the County aforesaid, personally appeared Henry Cato a resident in said County, and an applicant for a Pension under the late Act of Congress, who being first duly sworn according to Law, doth on his oath make the following amendment, to his original declaration, in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress, passed June 7<sup>th</sup> 1832.

This applicant from extreme debility both of mind and body is unable to make as full a statement of the particulars of his service, as the Department may require. He will endeavour to make such amendments, as the directions require.

To the first requisition, respecting his Regiment Company and Line, to which he belonged, during this first mentioned service - He answers - That he belonged to the 22<sup>d</sup> Regiment of the Jersey Line and served under Colo. Hanley in Capt. William Darke's company of Infantry, called the "Green Coats" (In his original Declaration he stated the name of Darke as being Joseph. He believes that Joseph Darke was the Lieutenant & William the Capt.) That he served in the 22<sup>d</sup>. Regiment, under Henly & Darke, untill the end of the second year of his enlistment. At which time, about February he was transferred from the 22<sup>d</sup>. Regiment of the Jersey Line, to the Continental Line and went upon Continental Establishment under Colo. Matthias Ogden and served with troops, called the "Veteran troops." His Capt. he can not remember nor the number of the Regiment to which he was transferred. It was a Regiment in the Continental Line of Jersey troops, commanded by Colo. Matthias Ogden, who was as this applicant is informed afterwards a Regular General. The date at which he was transferred to this regiment must have been February 1778. In Ogden's Regiment he remained untill he became a waiter to Gen Washington. At the end of this term of Four years his father, who was a Regular in the United States troops (and who was a Friendly Indian) interceded on account of this applicant, being unable to bear Arms, by reason of the Ravages of the Small Pox. and he became a waiter to Washington, in place of a man with whom Washington was dissatisfied on account of his habit of drinking - and who took this applicant's place in the Line under Ogden. Washington promised this applicant that he should receive the same wages as a soldier. When this applicant broke the Small Pox it was supposed the Contagion was brought into the army by a Ship load of clothing for the soldiers. It committed great ravages, and the men died "like rotten sheep."

This applicant farther states in addition to his original statement that he was in the battle when Gen Burgoyne surrendered his army to Gen. [Horatio] Gates at Saratoga. This was about the middle of October, in the second year of his enlistment [17 Oct 1777] and whilst he was in Darke's company and Henley's Regiment. After this Surrender, a Hogshead of rum was rolled out of the British stores, upon the Green, and each soldier was to fill his Canteen. This applicant tied two Canteens together, and dipped them into the Rum and filled both. the only piece of roguery he will confess. The quarter master of the troops to which this applicant then belonged at the time of this defeat, was named Swales, as he now believes, and was very hard upon the soldiers.

This applicant will farther state that when Gen. Morgan (commonly called the "Black Waggoner" [sic: "Old Wagoner"], was taken prisoner by the British, he was bound under an oath never to raise arms against Britain again. He was released (or escaped) which the applicant cannot say) and came to Washington, whilst this applicant was waiter to him, and got permission to raise a company. This applicant was in the door of Washington's markee, when the application was made. Washington asked him, what about his oath, he had taken to the British? Morgan replied "By God Sir, he had let it run down the wrong side"! Washington smiled and told him, that if the British would take him again, they would quarter him. Gen Morgan a short time afterward went to the South, and fought there till the close of the War. [See note below.]

Whilst a waiter to Washington, this applicant does not consider himself as having been as an enlisted Soldier, but merely as a private waiting man - of course he belonged to no regiment - or particular Line - He only claims for the first four years of his service, for which time he was an enlisted Soldier, and was in actual military service. He farther states that he may from his debility of mind, and from the confusion of names, dates & circumstances of the Revolution, produced by his debility, have confounded many things and made mistakes as to names and dates - but refers his claim to that indulgence which is due to his old age and loss of mind.

He is now in want - unable to help himself - threatened with the Poor house - and will soon be beyond the aid of Pension provisions -

He is required to furnish living evidence of his services. This he cannot do. He knows of no one who was with him in the service who is now alive, or within his reach.

He went from New Jersey in to service and it would now be utterly impossible for him to acquire living evidence.

The first two years he served in the 22<sup>d</sup> of the New Jersey State line - and the remainder of the four years, in the Continental Line.

Having said all he can say, he submits his claim to the indulgence of the Government agents.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year above written, before me - a Justice of the Peace for the County aforesaid. Henry hisXmark Cato

In looking over the printed lists of rejected & suspended Revolutionary Claims prepared by order of Senate's Resolution of Sept 1850 the claim of Henry Cato is stated to have been rejected on the ground of his claiming for service as Waiter to Gen'l Washington which narrative is not believed &c

This is a mistake. Cato claims for 4 years Military Service although it is true he did act as Waiter at one time for Gen'l Washington. But then in his declaration you will find a copy of Documentary testimony of his being honorably discharged from Capt Pike's Comp'y. It is further testified by a witness that he had seen the discharge of Cato from Gen'l Washington which was destroyed when Cato's house was burned down. Other witnesses testify of repeated conversations with Revolutionary Soldiers who affirmed Cato to have been one himself - &c &c &c. It is true Cato being nearly 80 years old &c admits blunders and errors in some of his statements &c but as a man of Colour this is not surprising hence he speaks of connexion with 22<sup>d</sup> Reg't of N. J. Line when there was not - but he was certainly I think in Capt Wm. Darke's Comp'y & it might be well to examine the Rolls &c In view of feebleness of mind on the part of the old man, rendering it very difficult to connect dates officers &c of the Revolution it is certainly very easy to percieve how blunders & errors could be made, but that the old man was a revolutionary soldier I think is quite apparent, and it is earnestly hoped his claim may be allowed.

At the request of the Commissioner, I write the above and desire it may be considered as part & parcel of my former letter respecting this case. Sam'l Keppler  
Sept 23/53 Present

#### NOTES:

I could find no other mention of Henry Cato in muster rolls or other records, nor any reference to the following in New Jersey: Capt. or Lt. Joseph or William Dark or Darke, Col. Hanley or Henley, Quarter-Master Swales. Matthias Ogden was colonel of the 1<sup>st</sup> Jersey Regiment.

At the Battle of White Plains NY on 28 Oct 1776 the British and Hessians under Gen. Howe defeated the Americans, who were commanded by Gen. Washington, not Gen. Nathanael Greene or Gen. John Sullivan.

Washington never led an invasion of Quebec.

The action at Springfield NJ resembles the battle on 23 Jun 1780, but it is out of chronological order and not correctly described.

Daniel Morgan was captured at Quebec City on 1 Jan 1776 and was neither paroled nor escaped, but was exchanged after about eight months. He was inactive from Jul 1779 until Oct 1780, when he was given the rank of General. He went to the South in Dec 1780 and served until Feb 1781, when he retired because of rheumatism.

On 31 Jan 1853 William Cato and William Cato, Jr. of Fairfield in Rockbridge County, heirs of Henry Cato, assigned power of attorney to try to obtain a pension for their father's service.