

[Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters](#)

Pension Application of Alexander Hill R4991

PA

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris.

[The following report is by US District Attorney Washington G. Singleton who investigated hundreds of pension applications in present West Virginia. For details see my appendix to the pension application of David W. Sleeth S6111. It appears that Alexander Hill had applied for a pension before this interview, but the application is not in the file.]

I the undersigned Alexander Hill of Ohio county Virginia, give the following as a re-declaration of my services as a soldier in the war of the Revolution to Wit. I am a native of Franklin county Pennsylvania and lived there during the war of the revolution. I was born May 1, 1755. So says my fathers family bible – in December 1776 I volunteered in Franklin county Pa. under Capt John Johnson in a Troop of Cavalry for six months if not sooner sent home. Capt Johnsons company (rank and file) amounted to about 30 men. Thomas Campbell was first, and my self Second Lieutenant of the company. Wm Ramsey [William Ramsey] was cornet. We rendezvoused at Shippensburg Pa. marched to Carlile [sic: Carlisle] crossed the Susquehannah [sic: Susquehanna River], went on to Lancaster and from Lancaster to Philadelphia. whilst we lay at Philadelphia (about two weeks) Capt Johnson sent me to General Putman [sic: Israel Putnam] (then commanding at Philadelphia) for orders. he directed our company to cross over into Jersey to operate against the enemy there. wherever our services should be most wanting. we accordingly crossed the Delaware, in the same flat with Lord Sterling [sic: William Alexander, Lord Stirling] & James Monroe late President of the U States. Went on to Trenton and there encamped, we scouted about Trenton for some time, and then moved our quarters to Mount Holly, and from Mount Holly we went to Crambury [sic: Cranbury], & there remained for the greater part of the Winter, in our Scouts whilst stationed at Crambury we took much plunder from the enemy – the plunder thus taken was sold an [illegible word] and apportioned among our company – we remained in New Jersey until about the first of May 1777 and then returned home after being in actual service at least five months – we were some time engaged in preparing to march and some time returning home, in all not less than 6 months, our term was called and considered a 6 months tour. I was commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant by General Putman. my commission has been long since lost.

In the first of September 1777 the same company of cavalry before mentioned, in which I was 2^d Lieutenant as before stated volunteered again for an indeffinate time, we rendezvoused (about 24 in number) at Little York Pa. Marched to Lancaster and remained there until the 12th September, when we marched to Brandywine and joined the army at that place, our company was attached to Genl. Lees [sic: Capt. Henry Lee's] Regt. of cavalry, we had an engagement with the enemy at Brandywine I think on the 15th September 1777 [sic: 11 Sep 1777] in which my horse was shot & my self wounded by a Musket Ball passing through my leg just above the ancle (here Mr. Hill shewed the wound) my wound was dressed by Doctors Stephenson & John Wilkins then Surgeon mates in the army. I lay at a private House until my wound was nearly well and then joined my company again near German town. on the same day [sic] in which the battle of Germantown was fought [4 Oct 1777] our company of Cavalry had a skirmish with a party of the English[?] cavalry at the Crooked Billet [1 May 1778]. in this Skirmish I received a flesh wound in the head from a british Sabre. (Mr. H. here exposed this wound) – after this latter affair our company was discharged and went home. after being in actual service at least four months. – in the Battle of Brandy Wine I think Genl. Washington commanded in person, dont know or rather remember who commanded the british army.

In the fall of 1777 or 1778 (I cant say certainly which) I was appointed by Waggon master Genl. Robert Culvertson [sic: Robert Culbertson] a waggon master & served in that capacity at Vally forge [sic: Valley Forge]. I was ordered with Ten Waggons to Harford [sic: Hartford] Conneticut for clothing for the army. at Newburgh [sic: Newburg] my orders were counter-manded. The clothing after which I was then

going having ben sent around by water. I returned with the waggons to Vally forge & remained there during the Winter [1777-78]. I was in this latter Service at least seven months. thus ended by service – there is no one living by whom I can prove my services, I made my Declaration in open court. it was written by Mr. Nelson with whom I made no contract for his services. the substance of the statement here given is the same as detailed to Mr. Nelson. July first 1835.

A Hill
A copy W G Singleton

Mr. Hill is a man of good character, and of great moral. so said every one with whom I conversed on that subject
W. G Singleton

Winchester Febru'y. 20, 1836

Sir [James L. Edwards, Commissioner of Pensions] Within the last four days, I received a communication from Col. Moses C. Good of Wheeling Va. saying that on enquiry at the Pension office, it was replied, that I had made no report in the case of Alexander Hill, an applicant for a Pension from Ohio co. Va. I am perfectly satisfied that I did make a report in the case refered to, and have no doubt it has been overlooked. I now re-report the case, and beg leave to ask your attention to it. Please write Col. Moses C. Good of wheeling Va. on the subject.

I have the Honor to subscribe my self very Respectfully/ W. G Singleton

Wheeling March 8, 1836.

Hon. Wm. L. Morgan

Dr Sir. Some three years ago I prepared for Mr. Alexander Hill of this place a Revolutionary Soldier, a declaration &c and forwarded the same to the Department in order to obtain a Pension. The application proved unsuccessful; but when W. G. Singleton Esq'r. U. S. Attorney for the W. [Western] Dist. of Va. was here last year, he examined Mr. Hill personally, under instructions from the War Department, (as I understood.) of which examination he has made report to the Department. When R. McKee Esqr. of this place was in Washington in January, he made enquiry, & could not learn that Mr. Singleton's report had been received. I have seen a letter from Mr. S. dated the 17th ult. in which he says, "I most certainly did report to Mr. Edwards my examination of Mr. Alex. Hill – But to remove all difficulty on the subject, I will immediately re-report the case of Mr. Hill & call Mr. Edwards' particular attention to it."

I have now to ask you, on behalf of Mr. Hill who is a very worthy man, & yet bears on his person honorable scars, one of which was received at the battle of Brandywine, to make the proper enquiry at the Department, to ascertain whether Mr. Singleton's report has been received, & what determination, if any, has bee made thereupon.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully/ Your mo ob't. serv't/ Morgan Nelson

State of Virginia } Ss.

County of Ohio }

On the 8th day of February A.D. 1837 personally appeared in open Court before the County Court of the County of Ohio aforesaid, now sitting, Alexander Hill, a resident in the City of Wheeling, in the County aforesaid, in the state of Virginia, aged Eighty one 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 7th 1832:

That he entered the service of the United States under the following named officers, and served as herein stated. That in the month of October in the year 1776 a voluntary company of Cavalry of which affiant was a member, raised in the then County of Cumberland in the state of Pennsylvania, was mustered at Shippensburgh by order of Col. Benj. Blythe the County Lieutenant. the number mustered was about forty, under the command of John Johnson Captain Thomas Campbell first Lieutenant. this affiant second Lieutenant, & William Ramsay Cornet. From Shippensburgh they were marched to Carlisle, & thence to Lancaster by the way of Harris's Ferry [now Harrisburg], where they were joined by part of a

Company of Cavalry from York County, whereby their number was increased to upwards of fifty; that they proceeded thence to Philadelphia & there reported themselves to Gen. Israel Putnam of the United States army who was then in command at Philad'a. at which place affiant received a Commission from Gen. Putnam, as second Lieutenant of said troop of Cavalry; that by the order of Gen. Putnam they then proceeded up the Delaware & crossed the same, toward the latter part of December 1776 near Trenton into New Jersey, for the purpose of scouring the country, watching the motions of, & acting against the common enemy to the best advantage. Owing to the lapse of time & the great age of affiant, & his consequent loss of memory, affiant can not now remember dates, or relate particulars with as much certainty as he could desire; but he remembers crossing the Delaware at the time aforesaid, in company with Gen. Sterling & the late James Monroe, then acting as his Aid; That the [illegible word] was thereafter employed during the residue of the winter & the following Spring up to the latter part of April as affiant thinks, in traversing the country (New Jersey) & watching the motions of the enemy between the Delaware & Raritan, often being at Trenton, Princeton, Mount Holley, Cranberry &c & going as far East as New Brunswick; in which service they encountered many British foraging parties, took a good many horses from the enemy & made several prisoners. Affiant, with a detachment of said troop under Lieut. Campbell aforesaid, joined Gen. [Thomas] Mifflin at Princeton & was engaged in the battle there in January 1777 [3 Jan 1777]. Returning from that service, affiant with said troop reached home the latter part of May 1777, having been absent in the service about seven months. The said troops drew their pay in Philad'a. in Continental paper money.

In August 1777 the said troop of Cavalry was again called upon by Col. Blythe aforesaid, to engage in the public service & they therefore mustered about thirty of their number at York, Penn'a. & proceeding thence via Lancaster, under the same officers herein above named, they joined Gen Anthony Wayne's command shortly before the battle of Brandywine in Sept. 1777 & bore a part in that action, where affiant had a horse shot under him & received a gunshot wound in his right leg, the scar whereof is yet visible. Affiant was afterwards in the action with the enemy at a place called the Crooked Billet, near Germantown, & on the same day of the battle of Germantown, in which action affiant received a severe sabre wound upon his head. On this occasion Gen. [James] Potter of the Penna. Militia commanded the detachment of which affiant formed a part. On this latter occasion affiant was discharged & returned home after about two months' service of the United States.

After this affiant acted as Conductor of Wagons employed in the public service for several years. For near five years [sic] he was [illegible word] two months out of the public employ. And particularly in the winter of 1777-8 while the American army lay at Valley Forge, affiant was dispatched with a Brigade of ten wagons, to bring clothing for the Army from Hartford Conn; That proceeding on that expedition as far as the Hudson river at New Windsor, they met a parcel, consisting of about eleven hhds. [hogsheads] of clothing, which the conveyed & safely delivered to the army at the Valley Forge. Affiant was thereafter employed in various places, as a Conductor of wagons, in hauling provisions & stores for the Army, as above mentioned the principal part of the time for near five years.

In answer to the interrogatories propounded by the Court, He states, on oath,

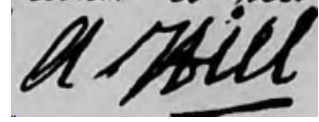
That he was born on the 1st day of May 1755, in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.

He copied the record of his age from the Bible belonging to his father, that this copy is in his own Bible now in his possession – that his Father's Bible was received by his eldest brother, who is dead – and that he knows not where the bible is. That when he was called into the service, he lived near Chambersburgh [Chambersburg], Pennsylvania, in what was then Cumberland County. That he lived after the Revolution, near Chambersburgh until the year 1802, then he moved to Alleghenny County, near Pittsburgh, Pa. where he resided until about seven years since, when he removed to Wheeling, Virginia, where he has ever since resided, and still resides. He was a volunteer in the Service of the United States, and was not a substitute for any person. When he was out on the first tour he was under Col. Thompson, who commanded a Troop, which went from Lancaster to Philadelphia. When he was out on the second tour in the latter part of the year 1777 he thinks he was under the command of Col. Lee of Virginia, a part of the time. Does not now recollect the names of any other officers except those already above mentioned. He

received a Commission as second Lieutenant signed, he thinks, by General Israel Putnam. The Commission has been destroyed by time, or accident.

Does not know of any person living who can prove his service in the Revolutionary war.

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.



[Rev. William Armstrong, Redick McKee, Archibald Woods, James Cargill, and James Baker certified Hill's character for veracity and his reputation as a soldier of the Revolution.]

I Archibald S. Todd, a practicing Physician and Surgeon residing in the City of Wheeling, County of Ohio, Virginia, hereby certify that I am well acquainted with Alexander Hill who has subscribed and sworn to the above declaration, that I have examined the scars on his right leg, and on his head, and give it as my opinion, from their appearances, that the scar on the leg is a gun shot wound, and that on the head is a wound occasioned by a sword or sabre; that I believe him to be Eighty one years of age; that he is reputed and believed, in the neighborhood where he resides, to have been a soldier of the Revolution, and that I concur in that opinion.

[signed] A. S. Todd

Depart of War/ Pension Office/ feby 18 1837

Sir [W. S. Morgan, House of Representatives] I have examined the declaration of Alexander Hill of Va. and have placed it on the files of this Office.

Mr Hill alleges that he joined a volunteer Co of Cavalry in the State of Penn, in Oct 1776 and served in the same until May 1777 – that soon after he had thus joined the said Company, it was reported to Gen'l Putnam at Philad'a. by whom he the claimant was appointed & Commission'd a Lieut. – that he subsequently was called out with said Company and served two mo's; and that after that, to wit in the latter part of the year 1777 he acted as a conductor of public wagons, in which service he continued, nearly five years. the objections to the first named service are, that the militia of Penn. did not serve in tours of such a length as is described by the claimant; two mo's. was the usual tour. and that Gen'l Putnam had nothing to do in making or commissioning the officers of that State, or of the United States, & could not have gave him the commission above named. The wagon service is unadmissible in as much as it was simply the prosecution of a civil pursuit, and not in any manner military service.

I have the honor [copy not signed, but evidently by James L. Edwards]

H. R. June 2^d 1838.

Sir [Dr. Crump, Acting Commissioner of Pensions], Alexander Hill of Wheeling Va. (in behalf of whom the enclosed was written) is a gentleman of much moral worth, and integrity above suspicion. This case is one which elicits more sympathy than any in my District, from the fact that, he is one of the few men who must sustain the "woe" pronounced upon the man of whom "all men speak well," [Luke 6:26] and that he is poor & very needy while bearing honorable scars of wounds received in defence of his Country.

I had the case before the Committee [on Revolutionary Pensions] but they could not let it in without opening the door for thousands of claims without merit. The Department will confer a great favour on me by saying whether it would review its decision provided the old man will come & exhibit his scars & explain his services. Very truly your friend,/ W. S. Morgan [Congressman]

War Dep/ Pension Office/ June 6, 1838

Sir [W. S. Morgan], I herewith return Mr. Nelson's letter in the case of Alexander Hill. The rule of evidence in this case, which has heretofore been made known, cannot be departed from. This Dept. can

perceive no reason for the claimant's visiting the seat of government, as any verbal statement he might make during such a visit could not supply the place of that evidence which the rules direct.

It is not in my power to admit the claim, without the testimony of two credible witnesses as to his service.

JLE [James L Edwards]

NOTES:

Although drafted militia tours in Pennsylvania may have been limited to two months, there was no such limitation on voluntary tours. From other pension applications it appears that each volunteer company decided how long it would serve. There is also no basis for Edwards's assumption that Hill's service in the wagon service was "simply the prosecution of a civil pursuit, and not in any manner military service."

The rule of evidence alluded to in Edward's letter of 1838 is found in the regulations approved by Edwards and reads as follows:

"[j] In a case where the name of the applicant is not found on the records of the Department, he must prove his service by two credible witnesses...." This is followed by, "The proof required by rule in note [j] applies to continental troops only." The requirement for two witnesses therefore applies only to those claiming service in the Continental Line. For militia service a plausible declaration of service and the certification of character and reputation as a soldier of the Revolution was to be considered sufficient proof.