

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Massachusetts Militia, Col. Job Cushing, Capt. Asa Rins
Nahum Parker

Pension Application of Nahum Parker S 11200

Parker was born 4 March 1760 and thus 17 ½ years old at the time of the Battle of Bennington.

"I went in Col. Job Cushings Regt Capt. Asa Rins company, we went to Bennington, from there to Stillwater, in a day or two we were ordered back, as was said to fall on the back of Col. Baums command, but a detachment under Capt. Parker being waylaid on the Bennington road, we were hastened back on that road, arrived on the battle ground, picked up the dead, and marched to Bennington, arrived, there I think the day after the battle, we were stationed at Bennington until the 29 of August 1777 when we were dismissed & went home."

Parker kept a diary in five installments covering five of his six short-term terms: 1) 29 April – 10 July 1777, 2) 24 June – 19 October 1777, 3) 1 April – 31 June [sic] 1778, 4) 7 October – 25 December 1779, and 5) 3 July – 12 December 1780.

His diary for the 24 June to 19 October 1777 covers the Battle of Bennington:

On the way to Stillwater on Wednesday, 6 August "we Arrived at Beninton and went into the Metinghouse."

The regiment departed from Bennington on 11 August and marched seven miles through Mapletown [i.e on Mapletown Road to Hoosick]. On

"Tuesday 13 [August 1777]
we marched on threw thick and Thin And Crosd The River in the Evening And lay on the Ground There was an Alarm in the Night we Crosd The River [Hudson] at half moon [north of Troy]

Wednesday 14

It was Rained I Got wet The old duch man is A Getting in What It Rained the Cornals are A drawing Provision No Brekfast to Day we Drawed Fresh beef and Flour and got Potoes It Clered of toward Night

Tuesday Thursday 15

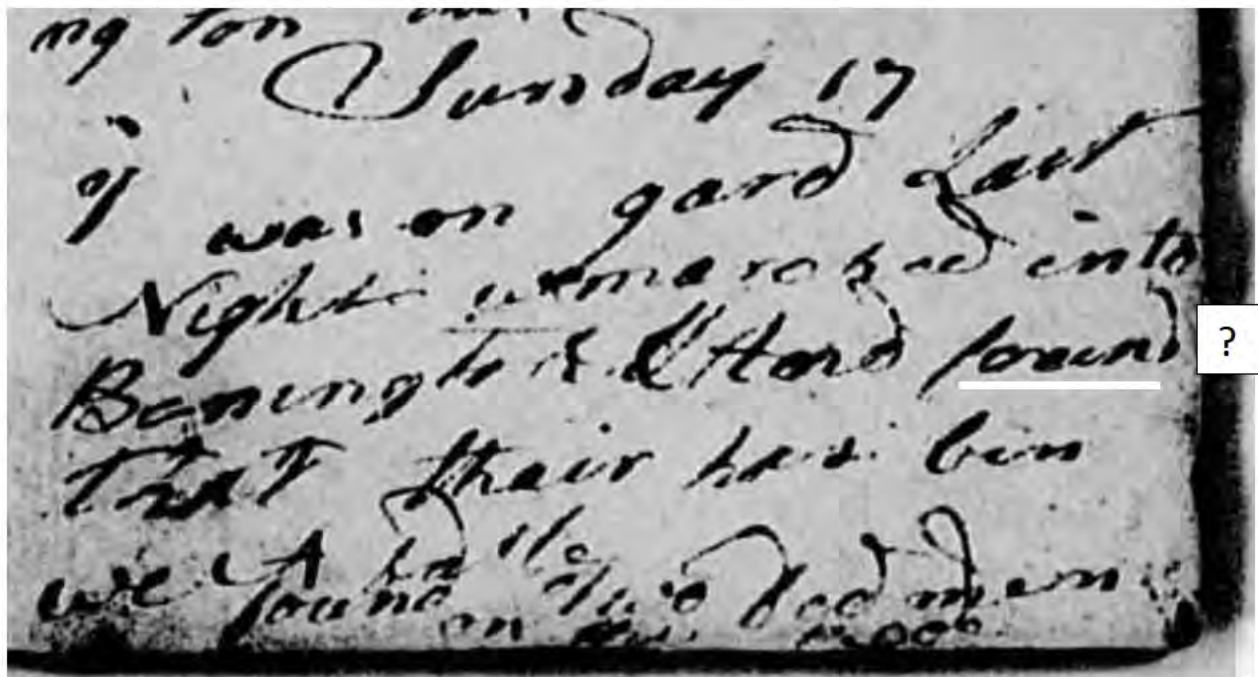
The regemint Praded in The morning and at Night their was some Contineltal Soldiers go By on their Retrete from Stil Water I went and Spent Two Shilings this morning we had orders to Send of part of our Bagag to Benington

Friday 15

It was Cloudy we drawd 3 days Provision Every Thing is in A Hubhub they are A killing an ox At our dore

Saturday 16

This morning we have orders to have our packs Done up by 8 o clock At which time we marched For Bennington this "Sunday 17



Sunday 17

I was on gard Last Night we marched into Benington & I heard (illeg.) that thair had ben A battle [insert: we found two ded men on our road] and our men Beet and Took About 700 Prisners in the Evening the Prisners got out And they Killed Five of them we Campd on the Ground it Rained

Monday 18

Capt Rice with A number went out on Scout I stood Sentory the British Troops & the Husens went of the Scout got in About Midnight we drawd fresh Beef & Flouer I built me a Camp I had some Nice Broath for Super It was Cloudy all Day but Cleard of At Night there is A Number of wounded in Every Barn Last Night they brought in Four Peces of Bras Canon

Tuesday 19

Fare wether to Day I Lay Nesely Last Night They Took Some Tories All Tide to gether Strong They had A fine Shout At them when they went of.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Green Mountain Boys, Col. Samuel Herrick, Capt. Burton
Solomon Parker

Pension Application of Solomon Parker S 11183

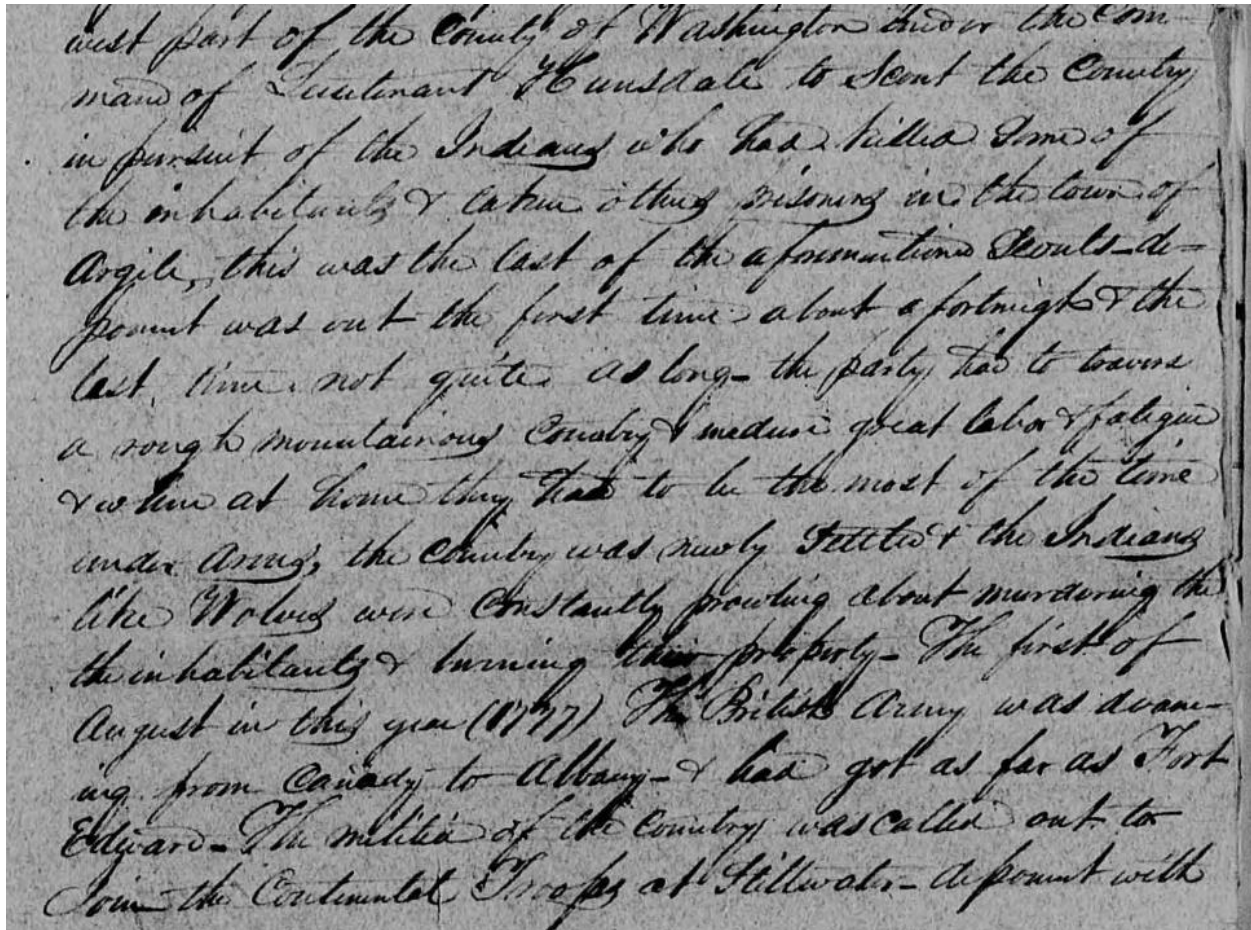
“the last of June or first of August Herricks Regiment were rangers & we moved on to Pawlet Vt & when Col. Baum led out the Hessians to take the Stores at Bennington we went there to (illeg.) them & Attacked him & his Indians from the west while Stark attacked them from the East & Col. Nichols on the north & we took them all except the Indians who broke through between Nichols Regiment & ours & fled leaving several dead – Then we marched back to Pawlet”.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Vermont State Troops, Col. William Williams
John Ralston

Pension Application of John Ralston R 8568

Born on 27 November 1762 in New York City he departed on a boat up the Hudson River with his parents a day or two before the battle of Long Island to Albany; he first served barely 14 ½ years old in June 1777. In the summer of 1777 he marched with his unit to the "west part of the County of Washington" where "the Indians like Wolves were constantly prowling about murdering the inhabitants & burning their property".

A snippet of a handwritten manuscript, likely a pension application, written in cursive. The text describes the conditions in the western part of Washington County in 1777, mentioning the threat of Indians and the British Army's advance from Canada to Albany. The handwriting is in dark ink on aged, slightly textured paper. The text is written in a single column and is partially cut off on the right side.

west part of the County of Washington under the com-
mand of Lieutenant Hunsdale to scout the Country
in pursuit of the Indians who had killed some of
the inhabitants & taken others prisoner in the town of
Argile, this was the last of the aforementioned Scouts de-
partment was out the first time about a fortnight & the
last time not quite as long the party had to traverse
a rough mountainous Country & underwent great labor & fatigue
& when at home they had to be the most of the time
under arms, the Country was newly settled & the Indians
like Wolves were constantly prowling about murdering the
the inhabitants & burning their property. The first of
August in this year (1777) The British Army was advanc-
ing from Canada to Albany & had got as far as Fort
Edwards. The militia of the County was called out to
join the Continental Troops at Stillwater - a point with

a part of the Regiment to which he belonged under
the command of Col. Williams went to Burlington in
the State of Vermont & then joined a part of Vermont
militia who were marching to join General Stark who
was sent with a detachment from the American Army
to attack a body of British Troops commanded by
by ~~Col.~~ Baum. This was about the middle of
August as far as a deponent can recollect. Soon after
the detachment to which a deponent belonged joined the Ver-
mont militia & within an hour the battle commenced
between the British & Americans & a deponent was engaged
in the same. The British were defeated & many of them
~~were~~ taken prisoners - after the battle the troops proceeded
to join the American Army at Stillwater commanded by

"Soon after the detachment to which [the 14-year-old] deponent belonged joined the Vermont Militia within the hour the battle commenced between the British & Americans & deponent was engaged in the Same. The British were defeated & many of them taken prisoners - after the Battle the Troops proceeded to join the American Army at Stillwater".

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Massachusetts Militia, Capt. Barnes
Chauncey Rice

Pension Application of Chauncey Rice S 15616

“Applicant further says that in the spring of the year 1777 he went to Lanesborough in the State of Massachusetts to work for an acquaintance of his that soon after he volunteered to go with a number of the militia of that place to watch the movements of the enemy [...] soon after he returned he volunteered again to go in a company commanded Cap^t Barnes and Lieutenant Friske and proceeded to Bennington that there he saw General Stark that they arrived on the ground and joined the army the day that Colonel Baum was killed and the British surrendered that on that day applicant fired his gun as he thinks nearly twenty times that his gun got so hot he was obliged to stop firing awhile that on that day applicant was wounded twice once on the side of the neck and the scar is to be seen to this day once on the right side the ball passing through his clothes and glancing off that the Lieutenat [sic] was killed and buried at the foot of a tree the term of service which he performed during this time was about four months that part of the prisoners were conveyed down to Lanesborough and applicant assisted to guard them to that place.”

Rice was born in Wallingford, CT in 1757, but “in the spring of the year 1777 he went to Lanesborough in the state of Massachusetts to work for an acquaintance of his” when he decided to volunteer for militia duty.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: New Hampshire Militia Captain Lemuel Roberts

Two days only had passed, after my return to Zoar, before we received an alarm by express, and heard at the same time the roar of cannon and musketry from towards Bennington. I was in an ill state of health, and my observations on the equal dealings of God, in the camp, on my road, and at my home, had a very impressive and somewhat of an abiding influence on my mind : resigning myself therefore, with something of a sense of religious acquiescence in the divine disposal, I determined to do my duty, at every risk as a citizen and a soldier, and endeavored to enspirit others to follow my example, and fly with me to the assistance of those whom I conceived to be in distress at Bennington. My neighbors, however, pretty universally, chose to wait for particular orders; which not suiting the impatience of my mind, I fit out immediately, with three friends, viz, Sylvanus, Artemas and Martin Rice, to share the fortune of the day, if possible, with our assaulted friends.

We sat out but could not complete our journey across the mountain that night ; laying by therefore for a few hours, but rising with the day, we pursued our course, expecting every minute to meet the fugitives from Bennington, flying before a superior and cruel enemy ; but herein the mercy of Heaven displayed itself to our view, for when we had crossed over, we perceived signals of joy and rejoicing ; the intrepid Col. Stark had been plumed with a most signal victory, a large party of the enemy were in captivity, and the terror of Bennington was turned into triumph.

Memoirs of Captain Lemuel Roberts. Containing adventures in youth, vicissitudes experienced as a Continental soldier, his sufferings as a prisoner, and escapes from captivity. With suitable reflections on the changes of life (Bennington: Anthony Haswell, 1809), pp. 51/52.

Zoar lies about 25 miles due east of Bennington.

Unit: Vermont Militia, Capt. Elijah Dewey
Lieutenant Joseph Rudd

Letter by Joseph Rudd to his father dated 26 August 1777. Bennington Museum

Bennington, Aug. the 20th , 1777

Honored Father: - After my duty I take this opportunity to write to you, hoping these few lines will find you well, as through the goodness of God they leave me and my family. We met with a great deal of trouble on the 16th instant. Myself and brother John was preserved through a very hot battle. We killed and took according to the best account we can get, about one thousand of the enemy. our loss was about thirty or forty. We marched right against their breastwork with our small arms, where they fired upon us every half minute, yet they never touched a man. We drove them out of their breastwork and took their fieldpieces and pursued and killed great numbers of them. We took four or five of our neighbors – two Sniders and two Hornbecks. The bigger part of Dutch Hoosick was in the battle against us. They went to the Reglers a day or two before the fight. Samuel Anderson was a captain amongst the Reglers, and was in the battle against us. Whilst I was gone my wife and children went off and got down to Williamstown. After I got home I went after them and found them to Landlord Simons. I have got them home again. My wife was very much tired out. She had four children with her. Belinda [Celinda] was forced to run on foot. We soon expect the enemy will come upon us again and what shall I do with my family I know not. [...]

Joseph Rudd

Also quoted in Gabriel, *Soldiers and Civilians*, pp. 93/94.

This supporting statement by Amos Searles in Rudd's pension application W17582 filed by his widow Sarah in 1837 is also quoted in Gabriel, *Soldiers and Civilians*, p. 54.

Mr. Rudd related to me that he carried his sword and gun into the Battle of Bennington, that after with others had stormed the breastwork, and the Hessians were retreating and firing, he snapped his gun at a stout built Hessian, and that from some cause, and for the first time on that day his gun missed fire, that he pursued to grapple with the Hessian to take him prisoner. The Hessian turned and raised his piece to fire, but Mr. Rudd said he was so near to him that by a spring and quick effort he knocked the Hessian's gun up, and he grappled with him drew the Hessian's sword instead of his own, and gave the Hessian a severe blow on his neck as he broke from him and turned to run. And that Mr. Herrick struck the hessian with the butt of his gun and killed him. Mr. Rudd said he always regretted Herrick's killing the Hessian for he meant to have him brought in as a prisoner. The sword Mr. Rudd took from the Hessian I have seen. I have also heard Mr. Herrick and others relate repeatedly the same story.

Question—In 1777, you state your husband to be out in public service this year six months—what circumstance or reason can you state for this belief?—

Answer.—There are various facts of a domestic kind that sustain my recollection & belief. A reference to the family record in town clerk's office will show that my son Joseph was left then a month old when my husband was called from home into the public service—this is my recollection—Mr. Story's testimony shows it—that my husband left home the first two or three days of May.—That he returned from the northern tour of service to be in the battle of Bennington the 16th of August 1777—that he continued

in service until the capture of Burgoyne, and my recollection is he was out as an officer in public service until a period in the month of November of this year. Another reason why I am correct, it was an eventful year—I can never forget, while any thing of memory lives, my flight on horse-back, and in feeble health, with my babe & ^{& my eldest daughter manning on foot by the side of me} two other small children from Bennington to Williamstown under circumstances of great alarm & fear from Hessians, tory-enemies & Indians—and the absence of my husband at the time of this only trial, for months before, & for months afterwards—Mr. Searles' testimony supports my knowledge of it.—

On Sarah Rudd see also Gabriel, *Soldiers and Civilians*, p. 87.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Green Mountain Boys, Col. Warner, Capt. Joslyn
Sergeant Jacob Safford

Pension application of Jacob Safford S 46071

he marched through Northampton to Bennington V^t and remained there for a few days and was ordered to march to Stillwater N.Y. and after marching a few miles news was received that Col. Baum had been ordered to march to Bennington to destroy the Stores at that place and the troops returned to Bennington same night – This was on Thursday 14th August – On Friday, Gen Starks came to Capt. Joslyn and requested him to march his company down and fire upon Col Baum and draw him out if he could – the company marched and a part of them halted before they were near enough to fire on the enemy and a part went and fired, but could not draw them out – and we retired again to Bennington – The next day, Saturday, 16th August, the Americans under Gen Starks attacked the British Army under Col. Baum in their entrenchment – Capt Joslyn's Company, with some other was kept a reserve – Col Baum was driven from the entrenchments but was soon joined by a reinforcement and made a stand about three miles from when the action commenced – Capt Joslyn's Company was then ordered up under Major Rand to keep the enemy at bay until Gen Starck could get in behind them – that the Americans won the day and took about five hundred prisoners – that he remained at Bennington a few days after the battle and was then ordered to St. Croix – to which place they marched and remained there until the latter part of September when he was verbally discharged.

Jennings, Isaac *Memorials of a century. Embracing a record of Individuals and Events chiefly in the early History of Bennington, VT. and its First Church* (Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1869), p. 174:

Should think the action at Baum's Hill one and a half hour of scattering fire, then twenty-five to thirty minutes of close work.

Ibid., pp. 183-185:

After the battle of Hubbardton, by which our regiment was reduced to less than one hundred and fifty men, we were stationed at Manchester. On the 14th of August, I should think, information was received that we were wanted at Bennington, but, owing to the absence of a large scout under Captain John Chipman, and perhaps from some other causes, we did not march till the morning of the 15th. The day was rainy, but by marching till nearly midnight we arrived within about a mile of Bennington village and encamped. We were drenched with rain, and our arms and equipments having been all day exposed to the weather, it took a considerable part of the forenoon of the next day to fit ourselves for a march. We were also short of ammunition, which occasioned some delay, and so much time was employed in making the necessary preparations for battle, that it was about noon, or perhaps a little past, when the regiment marched from Bennington village and our arms and equipments having been all day exposed to the weather, It took a considerable part of the forenoon of the next day to fit ourselves for a march. We were also short of ammunition, which occasioned some delay, and so much time was employed in making the necessary preparations for battle, that it was about noon, or perhaps a little past, when the regiment marched from Bennington village. While going down the Henderson hill [two miles from Bennington] a scattering fire of musketry was commenced in the direction of the battle-ground.

"We halted a short time at Stark's encampment [four miles from Bennington]; left our coats and knapsacks; and a gill of rum with water was dealt to each man. The weather was extremely warm, and after crossing the first bridge [about five and three-quarter miles from Bennington] we were halted while the men drank at the river. Two sergeants were now requested to volunteer to head the line, and I with another went in front. About this time the firing, which had gradually increased, became very heavy, and a general attack seemed to be made. We now began to meet the wounded, and when we arrived at the second bridge," [three-quarters of a mile below the first], the Hessians were running down the hill, and the two pieces of cannon were taken. If we halted at all at this place, it was but for a very few minutes. Here I was put in command of the left flank guard, and the march was continued by the regiment down the road, and by myself and guard across the flat. There was also a flank guard on the right. We continued our march until we came to the top of the eminence next beyond where the brick factory now stands [one and a half miles below the second bridge], where I found the regiment had halted. On inquiring the cause, I was told that a reinforcement of the enemy was near. I mounted a fence, and saw the enemy's flank-guard beyond the next hill, say half a mile distant.

We were then ordered to form a line for battle, by filing to the right; but, owing to the order not being understood in the rear, the line was formed by filing to the left, which

brought many of our men into a sort of swamp, instead of on the hill above, where we should have been. We, however, waited the approach of the enemy, and commenced firing as they came up; but owing, as I think, to the unfavorable nature of the ground, we soon began a retreat, which was continued slowly and in good order, firing constantly for about three-quarters of a mile, until we reached the high ground west of the run of water, where we made a stand. The enemy had two pieces of cannon in the road, and their line extended a considerable distance both below and above the road. A party of Hessians undertook to outflank us on the right, and partly succeeded, but were finally repulsed and driven back. The action was warm and close for nearly two hours, when it being near dark the enemy were forced to retreat. One of their pieces of cannon was taken near the run, and the other a few rods below the brick factory.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: New Hampshire Militia, Col. John Stark, Capt. Stephen Parker
Ebenezer Severance

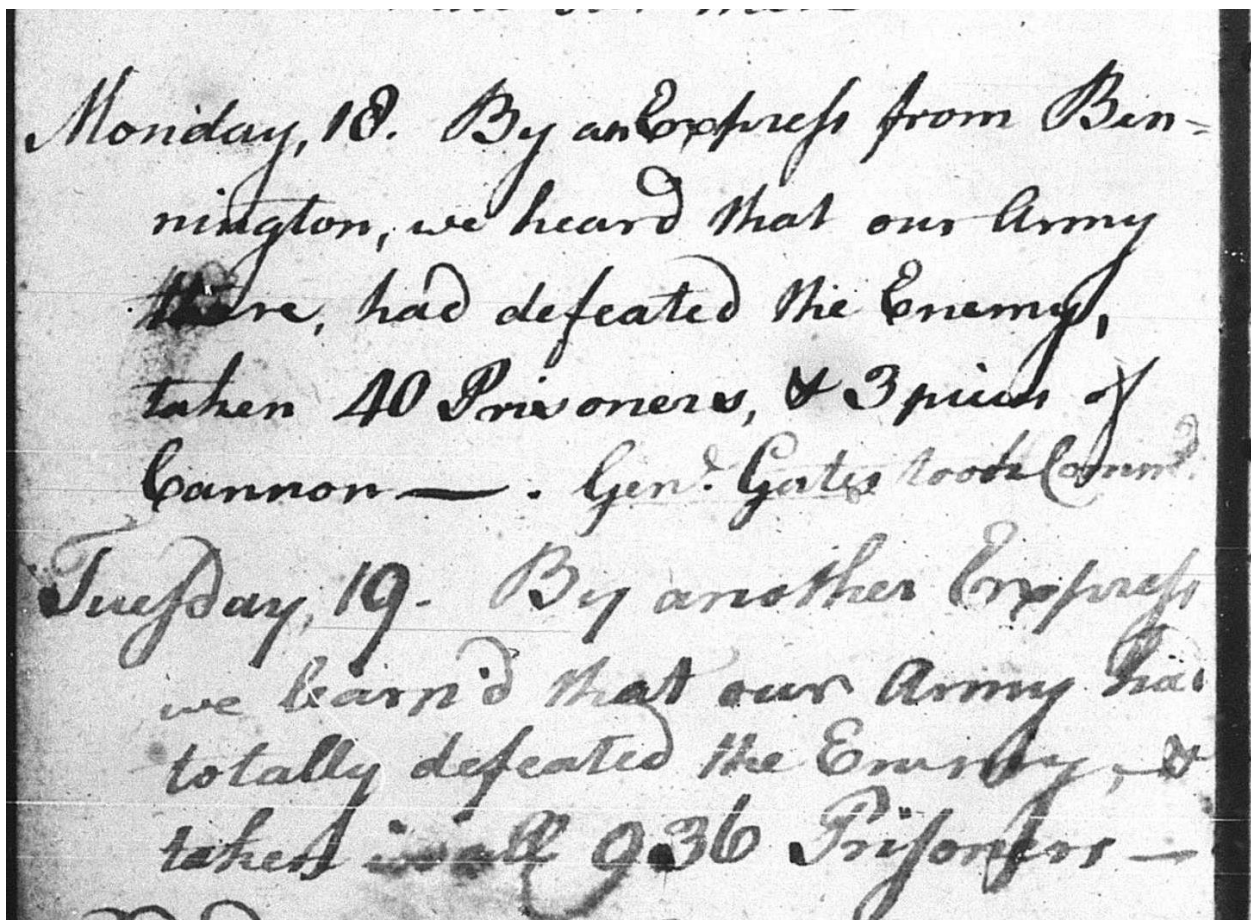
Pension Application of Ebenezer Severance S 22500

“marched to Manchester, Vermont, there stopped from a week to two weeks for information as to the state of the army – thence marched to Bennington Vermont – there we were embodied and just ready to march to Half-Moon, when news came that the British were on towards Bennington, and the troops stopped. The first British troops under Gen. Baum, finding the Americans too strong; reinforcements were sent for; but before the 2d British party came on Gen Stark marched out and killed and took the principal part of the men under Baum. When the 2d British force came up Gen Stark followed on and defeated them, drove them ‘till sundown – took their field piece and some more prisoners – The declarant was in the first engagement, but not in the second fight, being at Bennington guarding prisoners – here he remained some days, untill the prisoners were removed .”

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Second Massachusetts Regiment
Captain Henry Sewall

Monday, 18 [August]. By an Express from Bennington, we heard that our Army there had defeated the Enemy, taken 40 Prisoners, & 3 pieces of Cannon – Genl. Gates took Commd.
Tuesday, 19. By another Express we learn'd that our Army has totally defeated the Enemy, & taken in all 936 Prisoners



Monday, 18. By an Express from Bennington, we heard that our Army there, had defeated the Enemy, taken 40 Prisoners, & 3 pieces of Cannon — . Genl. Gates took Commd.
Tuesday, 19. By another Express we learn'd that our Army had totally defeated the Enemy, & taken in all 936 Prisoners —

Sewall is on Van Schaick's Island at the time.

Henry Sewall Diary. Call No. Ms. N-905, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA.

His diary up to Thursday, 1 July 1777, was published as "Diary of Captain Henry Sewall, of the Army of the Revolution, 1776-1783." *Historical Magazine*, 2d Ser., vol. 10 No. 2 (August 1871), pp. 128-137.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Massachusetts Militia, Col. Israel Chapin, Capt. Samuel Fairfield
Prince Skiff

Pension application of Prince Skiff S 11405

In June 1777, living in Williamsburgh in Massachusetts “he went as a volunteer against Col. Baum near Bennington and was actually in the battle called Bennington battle, and that from this place he was marched immediately to Saratoga immediately to meet Burgoyne’s army”.

Born 7 January 1746, he is 86 years old when he applies for a pension in 1832. He was “now kept at the Poor House” in Eaton, Madison Cy, NY, where he had lived for the past 4 years. He died in 1834.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Massachusetts Militia, Col. Job Cushion, Capt. John White
John Spafford

Pension application of John Spafford R 9947

“in July 1777, he enlisted for five weeks [...] and marched through Deerfield, crossed Connecticut River into Sunderland and went to Bennington, Vermont, then marched to a place called Half Moon in the State of New York, staid there one day and one night, then marched back to Bennington, Vermont, arrived there the night of the Bennington battle, and guarded the prisoners in Bennington meeting house, and staid there five weeks, and was discharged”.

He was born in 19 October 1756 in Sterling, MA.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Massachusetts/Berkshire County Militia Capt. Jacob Stafford

This information was provided in 1828 by his son Richard Stafford:

My father lived in the western part of Massachusetts, and when Col. Warner called upon the militia to come out and defend the public stores at Bennington, he set off at once with many of his neighbors and hurried his march. He was well known to his townsmen, and so much esteemed that the best men were ready to go with him, many of them pious people, long members of the church, and among them young and old, and of different conditions. When they reached the ground they found the Hessians posted in a line, and on a spot of high ground a small redoubt was seen formed of earth just thrown up where they understood a body of Loyalists or Provincial troops, that is Tories, was stationed. Col. Warner had command under (Jon. Stark, and it is generally thought that he had more to do than his superior in the business of the day. He was held in high regard by the Massachusetts people, and my father reported himself to him, and told him that he awaited his orders. He was soon assigned a place in the line, and the Tory fort was pointed out as his particular object of attack.

When making arrangements to march out his men, my father turned to a tall, athletic man, one of the most vigorous of the band, and remarkable for size and strength among his neighbors. 'I am glad,' said he, 'to see you among us. You did not march with the company; but, I suppose, you are anxious for the day to begin.' This was said in the hearing of the rest, and attracted their attention. My father was 'surprised and mortified on observing the man's face turn pale) and his limbs tremble. With a faltering voice he replied: 'Oh, no, sir, I didn't come to fight, I only came to drive back the horses!' 'I am glad,' said my father, 'to find out we have a coward among us before we go into battle. Stand back, and do not show yourself here any longer.'

This occurrence gave my father much regret, and he repented having spoken to the man in the presence of his company. The country, you know, was at that time in a very critical state. Gen. Burgoyne had come down from Canada with an army which had driven all the American troops before it. Crown Point and Ticonderoga, the fortresses of Lake Champlain, in which the northern people placed such confidence had been deserted at his approach, and the army disgraced itself by a panic retreat without fighting a battle, while Burgoyne was publishing boastful and threatening proclamations which frightened many, and induced some to declare for the King. Just at such a time when so many bad examples were set, and there were so many dangers to drive others to follow, it was a sad thing to see a hale, hearty, tall man shake and tremble in the presence of the enemy as we were just going

to fight them. However, an occurrence happened, fortunately, to take place immediately after which made amends. There was an aged and excellent old man present, of a slender frame, stooping a little with advanced age and hard work, with a wrinkled face and well known as one of the oldest person in our town, and the oldest on the ground. My father was struck with regard for his aged frame, and much as he felt numbers to be desirable in the impending struggle he felt a great reluctance at the thought of leading him into it. He therefore turned to him and said: 'The labors of the day threaten to be severe, it is therefore my particular request that you will take your post as sentinel yonder, and keep charge of the baggage.' The old man stepped forward with an unexpected spring, his face was lighted with a smile, and pulling off his hat in the excitement of his spirit, half affecting the gayety of a youth, whilst his loose hair shone as white as silver, he briskly replied : ' Not till I've had a shot at them first, Captain, if you please.' All thoughts were now directed toward the ene -

[p. 50] mies line, and the company partaking in the enthusiasm of the old man gave three cheers. My father was set at ease again in a moment, and orders being soon brought to advance he placed himself at their head, and gave the word, 'Forward, march !' "He had observed some irregularity in the ground before them which he had thought might favor his approach, and he discovered that a small ravine, which they soon entered, would cover his determined little band from the shot of the enemy, and even from their observations, at least for some distance. He pursued its course, but was so far disappointed in his expectations that, instead of terminating at a distance from the enemy's line, on emerging from it, and looking about to see where he was, he found the fresh embankment of the Tory fort just above him, and the heads of the Tories peeping over with their guns levelled at him. Turning to call on his men he was surprised to find himself flat on the ground without knowing why, for the enemy had fired and a ball had gone through his foot into the ground, cutting some of the sinews just as he was stepping on it so as to bring him down. At the same time the shock had deafened him to the report of the muskets. The foremost of the soldiers ran up to take him in their arms, believing him to be dead or mortally wounded, but he was too quick for them, and sprang on his feet, glad to find he was not seriously hurt, and was able to stand. He feared that his fall might check his followers, and as he caught the glimpse of a man in a red coat running across a distant field, he cried out, ' Come on, my boys! they run I they run!' So saying, he sprang up, and clambering to the top of the fort, while the enemy were hurrying their powder into the pans and the muzzles of their pieces, his men rushed on shouting and firing and jumping over the breastworks, and pushing upon the defenders so closely that they threw themselves over the opposite wall, and ran down the hill as fast as their legs could carry them.

It so happened that many years after the close of the war, and when I heard my father tell this story many times over, I became acquainted with an old townsman of his who was a Loyalist, and took an active part as a soldier in the service of King George, and he told me the following story of the battle of Bennington:

I lived not far from the western border of Massachusetts when the war begun, and knew your father very well. Believing that I owed duty to my King I became known as a Loyalist, or, as they called me, a Tory, and my position became very unpleasant. I therefore left home, and got with the British troops who were come down with Burgoyne to restore the country to peace, as I thought.

When the Hessians were sent to take the stores at Bennington I went with them, and took my station with some of the other Loyalists in a redoubt or small fort in the line. We were all ready when we saw the Rebels coming to attack us, and were on such a hill, and behind such a bank that we felt perfectly safe, and thought we could kill any body of troops sent against us before they could reach the place upon which we stood. We had not expected, however, that they would approach us under cover, but supposed we should see them on the way. We did not know that a little gully which lay below us was long enough and deep enough to conceal them; but they knew the ground, and the first we saw of the party coming to attack us they made their appearance right under our guns. Your father was at the head of them. I was standing at the wall with my gun loaded in my hand, and several of us levelled our pieces at once. I took as fair aim at them as ever I did at a bird in my life, and thought I was sure of them although we had to point so much downward that it made a man a small mark. Your father and I fired together, and he fell I thought he was dead to a certainty, but to our surprise he was on his feet again in an instant, and [p. 51]

they all came jumping in upon us with such a noise that we thought of nothing but getting out of the way of their muskets as fast as possible, and we scattered in all directions. I had a Sister living in that vicinity with whom I sought refuge.

Ellen M. Raynor and Emma L. Petitclerc, *History of the Town of Cheshire, Berkshire County, Mass.* (Holyoke: Clark W. Bryan & Co., 1885), pp. 49-51.

Also quoted in Gabriel, *Soldiers and Civilians*, pp. 55-58.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Vermont Militia, Col. Eli Bronson, Capt. John Stark
Samuel Stark

Pension application of Samuel Stark, S 28895

Born in Canterbury, CT 17 July 1762, the oldest of 13 children, before the family moved to Vermont around 1768, Samuel entered the service as a 15-year-old in Pawlet in April 1777,"in a company called out to guard the county". The company was commanded by his father John Stark (1741-1806), captain of the Pawlet Company of Colonel Eli Bronson's Vermont Militia Regiment. John Stark was wounded by a musket ball through his right thigh during the Battle of Bennington, 16 August 1777.

"that he continued with said Company at Manchester till a few days before the Bennington Battle when said company marched to Bennington accompanied by three other companies Commanded by Captain Ormsby of Manchester, Captain Galusha of Shaftsbury, Eastman of Rupert at Bennington they met General [John] Stark with New Hampshire Troops. That he was engaged in skirmishing with some Indians a day or two previous to the Bennington Battle and in Sight of a Body of Heßsians commanded by Colonel Baum. That he was present at the Bennington Battle that he was not actually engaged in said Battle but was stationed near the Battle Ground with some others to guard the Baggage. That the engagement continued till the enemy were dislodged when upon the coming up of a reinforcement from Burgone's army the Militia rallied & Colonel Warner arrived with his regiment from Manchester and the Battle Continued till dark. On the next day he proceeded with his father who was wounded in the Battle of Bennington & continued with his father at Bennington & took care of him till he was able to ride."

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Green Mountain Boys Col. Samuel Herrick, Capt. John Warner
Silas Walbridge

Pension application of Silas Walbridge S 11676

“On the 8th of July [1777] at Pawlet I enlisted for six months in the Regiment of State troops denominated rangers, commanded by Col. Samuel Herrick, (there being no Lt. Colonel) this Regiment of Rangers consisted of four companies [...] Our head quarters were at Manchester. And on the 15th day of August 1777 we were ordered from Manchester to Bennington where we arrived on the evening of that day. And on the next day were engaged in the memorable battle of the 16th of August 1777, called Bennington battle. I was in both actions of that day. The one that commenced in the forenoon against the enemy’s breast-work commanded by Col. Baum – and in the one that commenced in the afternoon of that day against a reinforcement of the enemy. In the afternoon engagement Gov. Skeen commanded where I was; this action continued until after sunset. Two days after the action we were ordered to march to the north and stationed upon the frontier for the protection of the inhabitants”.

Walbridge was born in 1759.

This deposition is almost identical to that included in the pension application of Erastus Hathaway W 19741.

In a statement to Hiland Hall, Walbridge told the future governor that setting out from their encampment he and his detachment went

west across the river (the Walloomsac flows northerly past the place of encampment, then curves westward, and soon takes a southerly direction past Baum's hill, and onward a short distance curves again westward, and so passes by Sancoik), crossed it again below Sickles's Mills (brick factory, now Austin & Patchin's paper mill, a mile and a half westward from Baum's Hill, on the Sancoik road), and came in on the rear of the Hessian redoubt.

Just before we arrived at the redoubt we came in sight of a party of Indians, and fired on them. They retreated to the north west, leaving two killed. Our men came within ten or twelve rods of the redoubt, and began firing from behind logs and trees, and continued firing and advancing until the Hessians retreated out of their works and down the hill to

the south. We followed on down the hill to the level land on the river, and some pursued on further.

Jennings, Isaac *Memorials of a century. Embracing a record of Individuals and Events chiefly in the early History of Bennington, VT. and its First Church* (Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1869), p. 172.

The first battle over, Silas Walbridge

went back with Captain Warner to where the action began, to look for the wounded, and while there we heard firing, the beginning of the second battle. We made all haste to the scene of action, and found things in much confusion. Some of the officers were ordering ' forward/ others saying ' retreat.' Our men retreated for some time, finally made a stand, and after hard fighting till about night we drove the enemy and took their cannon. This battle lasted an hour and a half or two hours. Warner's regiment, I believe, kept in order on the retreat, and served as a rallying point for the other troops.

Ibid., p. 183.

Gabriel in *Soldiers and Civilians* p. 53 quotes a slightly different version from the Hall Park McCullough Collection in the Bennington Museum in Bennington, VT.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: New Hampshire Militia, Captain Daniel Runnels, Col. Moses Nichols' Regt.
John Wallace

July 20, 1777 we had orders at Londonderry to raise every fourth man of the Melitia for two months. friday we met at Lieut. Joseph Griggs and Chose Daniel Runels for our Captain, David McCleary for our first Lieut. Adom Taylor for our Second and John Huey for our Ensine.

Munday 28th of July we met at Mr. Joenes (?) and Chose our under officers and that night we stayed at Mr. Tomsons.

[...]

Munday [11 August] we marcht into Benington and staid there the remainder of munday and tusday.

Wednesday we had orders to march to Stillwater and our Packs slung but had not marcht but a few rods till we had Intiligence that an army wase Comeing Down from Salatogo through Cambridge.

I was takin on Munday with the Camp Disorder and Wensday I thought I could march with the Company but that Knight I was taken so bad with Purgin Blud that the next day I was not able to march.

Wensday the 13th in the Evening Col. Gregg went with a detachment of 216 for to make discovereys.

thursday the 15 the whole Brigade marcht from Bennington and met our Scouting Party Comeing in who informed us the Enemy was near at hand and in number about 1500. Gen. Stark's hearing this retreated back to a height and on a breastwork in the afternoon our Brigade went near to them and Exchanged Several Shots with them. But the distance Being so far Did little Execution. I had not the honour to be there as I was lying sick at Bennington. The having Exchanged a good many Shots it is said our men killed two of their Chief Indians and several others then the Brigade Came back to their Brestworks.

Friday th 15 a large Party was detachd but it rained so Excessively that they all returned to their Brestworks without effecting anything.

Saturday the 16 of August 1777 Gen. Stark's Brigade with a number of men from the Massachusetts Bay marcht to Pay them a viset and drove them from there Brestwork and obtained a Compleat victory over them; took about Seven hundred Prisoners and Killed and wounded three hundred more. Recovered four Bras field Peices with their Carriages with many guns Swords and other articles there wase Belonging to Gen. Stark's Brigade 84 men Killed and 43 wounded Of the men Belonging to diffirant Partys.

Women and Children flying before the enemy with there Effects, women crying, sum walking sum Rideing the men Joyn our army, the women left to shift for themselves, some Rideing on horses with there Children at there Brests Sum before, sum behind tyed to there mothers. People Packing there Goods Loading there teams tory Lyes of [sic]

Cattle Blating Seams loth to leave the frutfull Soyl – en men found dead near New Sitty in meadow killed by the Torys – A party of our men sent to gard Cattle to Stillwater on there return fired upon by a Party of 80 Torys took three Prisnors the Torys killed 2 and Wounded 1 of our men.

Sabbath day August th 17 our men brought in 80 prsoners and one of our wemen Broughtt in with them who was taken by the Indians – the Prisoners in attempting to escape 6 shot by the gards 3 got of which caused as to Keep a Stronger Garde the Brittish hizions & other Prisnors, Excepting 140 T[aken ...] to Berkshire by a strong garde.

tuesday the 19 Massekueets Torys sent home in order for trial – about 10 loads of Plunder Came today from the Lines.

Wensday 20 the Post Dispatched for Exeter Court A number of Torys Sent W in order for trial; about 40 Torys cleared they swearing allegence to the United States.

[...]

Munday 25th 1 Tory Deserted from our gard in womens Cloaths.

[...]

Wensday th 27 Several of the wounded Hushens & Waldeckers dyed of there wounds.

Bennington Evening Banner 3 May 1932; the diary covers the time period from 20 July to 16 September 1777.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Vermont Militia

Nathaniel Wallace

Squire Nathaniel Wallace [from Pownall] has told his experience. He was a patriot, earnest and true, and presented himself at the post of duty upon the first threatening of danger. When the battle [of Bennington] was well commenced, and the Tories from behind their breastwork were exulting in apparent victory, Wallace with a few companions took up their station upon a pile of chips in front of the enemies' line. He afterwards described their works as being formed of stakes and pieces of timber set close together at the bottom, so as to be impenetrable to bullets, while the tops diverged, thus leaving a space for the soldiers to direct their fire. Upon the inside at the foot of the upright timbers, was thrown up a platform of logs and earth which was high enough to enable the combatants to bring their faces up to the aperture. Here they discharged their guns, stepped down from this elevation, and no longer exposed to danger, re-loaded their pieces.

At one of these apertures, Wallace had noticed a young man, wearing a white neck-tie, appear several times. Finally resolved upon his destruction, he arranged his rifle and awaited his re-appearance. After the usual interval of time for loading had expired, the opening was again filled by the same young looking face; but before he had marked his victim, Wallace pulled the trigger, and the space was once more empty. After the order to charge had been executed with perfect success, Wallace went to the position opposite the pile of chips, identified the body of the young man, measured the distance to his former standing place, which proved to be 30 yards.

Forsburgh affirmed, after the battle, that young Hogle stood near him behind the breastwork, and wore a white neck-tie, and that when, at one time he was about to discharge his piece, he saw instantly a bright blue spot appear in the centre of his forehead and Hogle fell back upon the ground a dead man. Before and during this action, consternation was upon the countenance of every one. They feared yet they dared—women and children left their homes, and retired to places of security. But if doubt and trepidation had prevailed before the contest, joy and jubilee were abundant afterwards. Meetings of rejoicing were held at the south part of the town, and articles of proscription against the Tories were read and approved. And for many subsequent years, upon any public occasion, they were made the subject of reproach and ridicule. One was left hanging upon a stake by the leather waistband of his breeches. Another received an application of the "Beach seal;" and even so, a spirit of hostility and contempt always existed towards them while they lived.

The Vermont Historical Gazetteer: A magazine embracing a history of each town, civil, ecclesiastical, biographical and military Abby Maria Hemenway, ed. 3 vols. (Burlington, Hemenway, 1867-1877) vol. 1 (1867), p. 215.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Massachusetts Militia, Col. Cushen, Capt. Rice
Alexander Watson

Pension application of Alexander Watson S 23472

He was called out "about the tenth of July" and marched via Bennington to

"Halfmoon now Waterford in the county of Saratoga and State of Newyork where the regiment encamped for about two weeks when said regiment was ordered back to Bennington aforesaid in said state of Vermont to aßsist in stopping the progress of colonel Baum whom General Burgoyne had detached from his army at Batten Kill with a strong corps against the said town of Bennington where the Americas had depots of provisions and other munitions of War for the use of the northern army opposed to the British army under said general Burgoyne. That the said regiment marched from Halfmoon aforesaid for Bennington aforesaid which latter place it reached just after the defeat of the said colonel Baum and the capture of his corps – That the said regiment was discharged in the early part of the month of September in the same year one thousand seven hundred and seventy seven – That he however was retained to take care of Josiah Ward one of the privates of the company to which he belonged the said Josiah Ward having been severely wounded in the battle of Bennington fought between the Americans under General Stark and the said corps under the said colonel Baum [...] that the said Josiah Ward did not recover sufficiently of his wound so as to be able to return to the said town of Southberry in the county of Worchester and State of Massachusetts before the twenty seventh day of October in the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy seven"

when he returned with Ward to Southbury, CT.

Born 4 November 1760, Watson served his first militia tour as a 15-year-old in Southbury on 1 July 1776, fights in the Battle of White Plains and is three months shy of his 17th birthday when he fights in the Battle of Bennington.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Massachusetts Militia, Capt. Newell
Benjamin Weed

Pension Application of Benjamin Weed S 111715

“Shortly after my return home as last mentioned the alarm came that Co. Baum was coming with his German troops & we were ordered to help defend the Country – I then belonged to Captain Newell’s Company, and was orderly Sergeant of the same – I think it was on the 13th day of August in the said year 1777 that I left Lanesboro with said Company under the command of Capt. Newell for Bennington – we arrived on the morning of the 16th of August at Bennington and joined Gen^l Stark’s troops who were then stationed there – and on the same day we arrived the battle commonly called the battle of Bennington took place – and I with my company was engaged in it.

Four out of my Company were killed – Lieut. Nash, Lieut. Smidell, Wateman Eels & Silas Ensign were killed.

At the request of my Captain I lent Silas Ensign my horse, saddle & bridle & Ensign was killed - & I never got my horse saddle & bridle & I never received any compensation for them from the United States or any body else – The horse cost me £ 18 Massachusetts currency – After the battle of Bennington I was detached with a party of men to guard a number of Tories, who were prisoners & conduct them to Northampton – which I did & delivered them safe to the Goal – there was 17 prisoners – I then returned home.”

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Unit: Vermont Militia, Capt. Francis Prouty
Charles Wilder

Pension application of Charles Wilder N 22630

“and marched from Brattleboro in said Company to Bennington and arrived there the same day of the Battle with the British under Col Baum – but did not arrive at the place where the battle was fought until after the battle had cleared – he was then marched to Van Coon Schoick, ten or twelve miles from Bennington and there joined the American troops under Command of Gen^l Stark”.

After about four weeks he returns home to Brattleborough, VT but is called out again on 20 September in the militia and marched to Stillwater where he remains until after Burgoyne’s surrender.

Born in 1757, he died in 1838.