

## NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

1. Benedict Arnold who, fresh from his defection in September 1780, led a series of raids in Virginia from December 1780 to April 1781.
2. New England.
3. Mary Ogden Barber.

### 15 John C. Post, Pension Petition to the Legislature

[Department of Defense Records, 10,559, New Jersey State Library.]

Although narrowly conceived, the problem of the veteran troubled the states and the nation during and after the war. The obligation of government to the soldier was seen in limited economic terms—bounties of cash or land for enlistment, grants to widows, and pensions to Continental army officers. For the vast majority who served in the army the end of the war brought no compensation. There were no G.I. bills, no Veteran's Administration. But to men like John C. Post, a farmer of modest means who served long and well in the Bergen County Militia, military service was not its own reward. After the war such men appealed for a variety of reasons to the legislature for financial assistance, less as a reward than as compensation for time spent and hardships endured. Post's application was in vain; almost without exception, such requests were rejected.

[undated]

The Petition of John C. Post respectfully sheweth unto your Honourable Body, that your Petitioner resides in the Township of New Barbadoes<sup>1</sup> in the County of Bergen and State of New Jersey, that he was seventy one years of age on the ninth day of June last. That your Petitioner during the war of the revolution which freed our now happy Country from British bondage enlisted in the regular service under Captain David Marinus<sup>2</sup> in the regiment commanded by Col. Philip Cortlandt,<sup>3</sup> during which time he was engaged in many skirmishes, in hard fought battles, and underwent much suffering and fatigue. And your Petitioner will content himself by mentioning to your Honourable Body those still fresh and alive in his recollection, to wit the battle at Flatbush Long Island,<sup>4</sup> also the Engagement at Fort Washington<sup>5</sup> and the ever memorable battle at White Plains<sup>6</sup> in which your Petitioner was severely wounded in the knee. And that during the Encampment of the Army at White Plains, he assisted in the construction or making of the Entrenchment from the North<sup>7</sup> to the East River. That he also assisted in the erection of Fort Greene<sup>8</sup> and Fort Washington in the building of all which he laboured incessantly both night and day and underwent sufferings and privations to be properly conceived of only by those who were eye Witnesses or Actors in the scene. That

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after the Expiration of the time of his Enlistment under Capt. Marinus he enlisted under Captn. John Outwater on the lines for the Term of seven Months; and continued in the army during the war under several different officers to wit Captain Peter Ward, Captain Chrystie,<sup>9</sup> Captain David Demarest, Captain Elias Romeyn,<sup>10</sup> Captain Jeraloman,<sup>11</sup> and Captain Kinsey<sup>12</sup> [and] was in the Engagement at Egg Harbour<sup>13</sup> while under the command of the latter and suffered much and severely under the command of each and all being frequently engaged in skirmishes with scouting parties of the Enemy. He accompanied General Wayne as a guide to storm Block Fort on the North river where the Americans lost about three Hundred men<sup>14</sup> and where your Petitioner was severely wounded in the leg, and for which service he received no Compensation. During the seven years of the war which established our Independence your Petitioner spent not three months of the time at his home but was Continually in the service, and during a portion of the time having become known to the Enemy was hunted like the hare and for safety compelled to sleep in his boat on the river, and with no cover but the canopy of Heaven to protect him from the storms and chills of the season. Your Petitioner has now become old and infirm and must ere long be numbered among the Dead, but the words of the Illustrious Washington after the Engagement at White Plains still ring in his Ears "Fellow Soldiers your Country will yet recompense you for your Services." But alas it has as yet (although rich and prosperous) offered no recompence, as yet it has left unrequited the large proportion of those who suffered fought and bled and who through Providence achieved our liberties. And your Petitioner now (hoping for the verification of the words of Washington) Congress having yet neglected to fulfill them presents his case to your Honourable Body and praying that your Honourable Body in consideration of his sufferings his privations and his services during the days of peril and the times that tried mens Souls will grant him such provision or allowance either annual or otherwise as your Honourable Body shall in their wisdom think just and proper. Your Petitioner has solely by the sweat of the brow supported and sustained a large family, and while gifted with health and strength he asked not his Country for aid, but unable through age and infirmity longer to sustain himself and family by the hand of Industry, he prays Your Honourable Body so to Consider of his petition as to enable him to spend the winter of his days in Happiness, and Comfort and your Petitioner will ever pray &c.

JOHN C. POST

1. The township included Hackensack.
2. Marinus and all the other captains Post served under except Kinsey of Salem were members of the Bergen County Militia.
3. Colonel Philip Van Cortlandt, battalion commander under Brigadier General Nathaniel Heard.
4. The battle of Long Island, August 27, 1776, the British victory preliminary to the takeover of New York.
5. On November 16, 1776, General William Howe captured Fort Washington, the last American stronghold on Manhattan Island, and set in motion General George Washington's retreat across New Jersey to Pennsylvania.

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6. In a successful flanking action, Howe defeated Washington at White Plains, New York, on October 28, 1776, thus undermining the American position in the area and setting the stage for the battle of Fort Washington.

7. The Hudson River was sometimes called the North River.

8. There was no Fort Greene; Post undoubtedly has in mind Fort Lee (originally Fort Constitution) which occupied the New Jersey side of the Hudson River directly opposite Fort Washington on Harlem Heights; General Nathanael Greene was commandant at the time.

9. James Christie.

10. Elias Romine or Romeyn.

11. Jacobus Jaroloman.

12. Jonathan Kinsey.

13. The British raid on Little Egg Harbor, October 5-7, 1778.

14. The reference is to General Anthony Wayne's successful assault on Stony Point on July 16, 1779; Wayne reported fifteen men killed and eighty-three wounded in taking the strategic Hudson River fortification.

### 16 Samuel Sutphen, Wartime Experience of a New Jersey Slave

[A. Van Doren Honeyman, ed., "The Revolutionary War Record of Samuel Sutphin [*sic*], Slave," *Somerset County Historical Quarterly* (1914), 3:186-90.]

The following record of military service during the revolutionary war is an extraordinary document from several perspectives. First, as the wartime experience of an enslaved New Jersey black man, it is unique. Samuel Sutphen (b. 1747), served as a private in the First Regiment, Somerset County Militia, from 1776 to 1778 and then joined the New York militia to participate in the expedition against the Iroquois in 1779. Second, being one of several reminiscences recorded in 1834 by Dr. Lewis Condict (1773-1862), a prominent physician and politician from Somerset County, it is a rare piece of oral history dating from the revolutionary era. Third, as the recollection of a man who was eighty-seven years old, the narrative is an example of extraordinary mental recall. Although misinformation and distortions have crept into the account as the inevitable result of the passage of time, they are for the most part insignificant and do not detract from the overall reliability of the service record. Sutphen (he apparently took the surname of his most recent owner) makes no comment about his personal feelings regarding military service or his condition of servitude; yet one wonders what thoughts must have passed through the mind of this slave who risked his life in the cause of the freedom he was denied.