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Jeffrey Sill, whose enslaver was Samuel Hemenway enlisted in 1777 for three years on the condition he would return to Hemenway. Sill was supposed to take Hemenway's place in Connecticut's quota of soldiers. However, according to "Connecticut's Black Soldiers" by David O. White, Sill reenlisted without Hemenway's permission.

Hemenway then petitioned the General Assembly to emancipate Sill and compensate him for the loss. He also proposed that "as he had already obtained a substitute for himself in the army, to allow Sill's enlistment to act as a substitute for another man, Argariah Bradley," who also was enslaved. The General Assembly denied both requests. A promissory note in the Connecticut Historical Society shows Hemenway's claim.