

[Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters](#)

Pension Application of John Harris R41

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 10 Nov 2011.

[The following two documents are copies certified on 20 Mar 1835.]

Report on the claim of the devisees of Captain John Harris of the State Navy [of Virginia],  
for additional bounty land for his services

To the Governor Sir,

The following are the facts which have come to my knowledge touching this claim – viz – John Harris was commissioned 1st Lieut: of the manly [sic: *Manley*] Galley, August 3rd 1776. (See Council Journal for that Date) – He was ordered to take command of the Brig Musquetto [sic: *Mosquito*] Oct: 24. 1776 (see Journal of the Navy Board Oct: 24. 1776 p. 90) – He was recommended captain of the Brig Raleigh in the room of John Younghusband [sic: Isaac Younghusband] resign'd, Oct. 31. 1776 (See Jour. Navy B'd. p. 96 Oct: 31: 1776.) – Sundry orders respecting him were made by the Navy Board to Oct: 9. 1777. (See Journal of the Navy Board, pages–102–127–157–163–167–170–172–180–238–296.) He was captain in the Navy Novr. 28. 1776: (See Journal of the Council of that date) He was a prisoner of war in April 1778. (see Journal of the Navy Board of the 15. April 1778–p–383.) – He was reported in service until his death. (He died in March 1783) by a board of officers – James Barron president &c which sat at Richmond, in obedience to orders from the Executive – May. 15. 1784. (See Report &c on file in the 1st Auditor's office)

A certificate issued in his name, Oct: 30. 1784 (which was deliver'd to Capt: Wright [possibly Patrick Wright]) for £972.19 – the balance of pay due him on settlement &c– (See Army Register of the State Line.)

Bounty Land was allowed for his service, March 20. 1784, amounting to 5333 $\frac{1}{3}$  acres.

The facts which have been prov'd by the claimant are – that John Harris was in service as Lieutenant, from the Spring of the year 1776, (with the exception of the time when he was a prisoner) until he died. in the month of March 1783– that after he returned from captivity in the winter of 1779-80, he presented himself before the Board of War, produc'd his commission as a captain of the Navy, and requir'd service as such – That he never resign'd his commission, but steadily persever'd to serve his country. (See the copy of Col. [James] Innes' certificate, dated Williamsburg. Feby: 9. 1784.)

A memorandum has been filed, purporting to have been made by Capt. Harris, respecting occurrences which took place during his captivity.

Upon this state of facts, I report this claim to your Excellency as good for the additional bounty land ask'd for. The Heirs of Captain Harris should have been allow'd in March 1784, when bounty land was allow'd for 3 years service of Capt: Harris, bounty land for a service from the Spring of the year 1776 [changed from 1777] to Mar: 1783, or (as I think) to the end of the war. His heirs should now receive that allowance, subject to the deduction of 5333 $\frac{1}{3}$  acres which have been already received.

Respectfully submitted/ John H. Smith Com'r. &c/ July 24. 1835.

Williamsburg – Feby: 9th 1784.

In the spring year 1776 – I do certify that the late Capt. John Harris was a lieutenant in the navy of this state, and did duty in that station on board the Manly Galley on the Eastern Shore, when I acted as major of the 9th Regiment at that time stationed at Northampton Court House. In 1777, I do also know, that Captain Harris was promoted to the command of the armed Privateer called the musquito, and in the capacity of captain and Commander sailed on a cruze to the West Indies, in which I have every reason to believe he was taken and carried with his crew a prisoner to Faton [sic: Forton] Jail in the Island of Great Britain. In the winter of 1779 & eighty he returned from his captivity, at which period I was a member of

the Board of War, and I do certify that he produced his commission as a captain of the navy and required service as such. Captain Harris never resign'd his commission, but always steadily persevered to serve this country – He died in March 1783.

Jas Innes

[The following was certified on 22 Jan 1838 as being from the Naval Journal.]

Wednesday the 15th day of April 1778.

Ordered that the keeper of the public store deliver to William Plume as many necessaries not exceeding thirty pounds in value for the use of Amelia the daughter of Captain John Harris late of the Musquetto, who is now a prisoner, on his paying for the same.

From page 383

[On 15 Nov 1845 James Drew McCaw named an administrator of “the estate of Capt. John Harris of the Virginia State Navy in the War of the Revolution and of whose estate my wife Sarah or Sally was the sole devisee, and as York the County in which said testator lived is remote and inconvenient to take out letters of administration therefore, I have consented and request the said Northrop to take our Letters of administration at Washington City.”]

Sometime in the year 1779 while I was in Fortune prison in England I received a letter from a Doct'r Brehan who had made his escape from said prison, that if I should be so fortunate as to make my escape also, to apply to certain gentlemen in London who would supply me with cash to forward me to France, & when I should arrive at Paris to apply to the Hon'ble Arthur Lee Esq'r. That he would furnish me with every necessary, for he had himself received many favours from said gentlemen. When I arrived at Nantes, I wrote to Doct'r [Benjamin] Franklin, also to Doct'r. Lee in behalf of many of the prisoners who came over with me in the same Flag, that was in a distressed condition. I Received an answer by the return of the post, from Doct'r. Lee, who inform'd me of his being out of office at that time, but, that if I would draw up a remonstrance in behalf of those people he would do everything in his power that Doct'r. Franklin should relieve them, at the same time expressing himself very feelingly for those poor men who had risked & suffer'd in the cause of American Liberty. While I was in France I had an opportunity of hearing the testimony of gentlemen respecting the character of Doct'r. Lee & I must confess always heard with pleasure that he was the true friend to America & the honest man and that his honesty was the cause of his being not in office at that time, the particulars of which I heard from Commodore Gillon [Alexander Gillon of the South Carolina Navy] & many other gentlemen, but do not well recolect, but it was something respecting the public money I have since seen some american prisoners that was confined with my self that said, that when they got to Paris that Doct'r. Lee was their friend, mentioning that Silas Dean [sic: Silas Deane] was partial to his countrymen upon the whole, as I never before this present session had the honor of seeing him hope no one will suppose I have any other interest but declare what I know

John Harris

[The following was certified on 17 Apr 1850 as being a copy of a paper on file in the Executive Department in Richmond VA.]

I do hereby certify, that John Harris of Accomac [sic: Accomack] County, entered a Lieutenant in the navy of the State of Virginia, to wit, on board the gally called the Accomac [*Accomack*], and that he served in the said gally, was considered to behave well, and that he died in the County of Accomac afs'd. in the month of January whilst in the service of the Commonwealth the year 1781. To the best of my recollection, he was a cadet in my company of the 9<sup>th</sup> Virginia regiment, in the year 1776, and that he entered a Lieutenant (being a seafaring man) on board the gally aforesaid in the fall of the year 1776.

Jno. Cropper Jr [John Cropper, pension application W3781  
formerly Lt. Col. Comm'dt. 11<sup>th</sup> Virg'a. Regim't.