

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of George Catlett W2524

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

Port Royal

To his Excellency the Governor of Virginia

The memorial of Wm. Catlett, George Catlett, Collin Catlett, Harrett Catlett and Anna Catlett respectfully represent that they are the children and heirs of the late Geo. Catlett who lived and died in the town of Port Royal in Caroline County Virginia. They further represent that their father as they have always understood was an officer in the service of the United States in the revolutionary war that he entered the service in the Virginia State Navy a Lieutenant early in said war and served therein till near the close of the war, when the vessel (the Hornet [sic: *Mosquito*]) in which he sailed was captured, after which being destitute of a command he enter'd into the land service and acted as a Lutenant. The certificates of Thos. R Miller and John Robinson gentlemen of good character and of high standing for truth and honesty fully prove his service in the navy for more than three years and the certificate of the Auditor proves that he was a Leut in the land service a short time all of which fully confirms the traditionary acct in the family of the said Go. Catlett's services. Your memorialists further state they have never rec'd the land bounty allow'd by the State of Virginia to her officers in the revolutionary war – and they now ask a consideration of their case and that a warrant may issue for the proper allowance of land – they will further state that their father's notorious carlessness and neglect about pecuniary matters in not attending to interests far more important than this claim accounts for his neglecting to seek his rights in this case.

Port Royal/ Jany 2^d 1832

Wm. Catlett/ Geo. Catlett/ Collin Catlett/ Anna E. Catlett/ Haret Catlett

[Among the supporting statements the following two provide additional details of service:]

I hereby certify that I was well acquainted with the late Go. Catlett who resided in the Town of Port Royal at the time of the revolution and afterwards till his death. I lived then and since in the neighbourhood of said Town. I know that said Catlett was during the revolution a Lieutenant in the Virginia State Navy – he was in active service according to my recollection at least three years during said war and probably till the end of the war I recollect his services as Lieutenant on board a vessel called the Pocahuntas [sic: *Pocahontas*] he was taken prisoner whilst on board this vessel and I believe as such for several years

Jno. Robinson [John Robinson]

I Luke Ashburn [pension application W5649] of the County of Lancaster and State of Virginia, having known George Catlett, of the town of Port Royal, Caroline County, Virginia both before and after the Revolutionary War, do hereby certify that the said George Catlett was in the Schooner called the Hornet in the year 1776 and to the best of my knowledge and belief he served as Lieutenant, on board the said schooner, under the command of Capt Richard Taylor [pension application S25873]. I was not myself attached to the said Schooner, but was on board of her several times, & whenever I was on board I saw the said Catlett, but whether he served three years or during the war I do not know.

Given under my hand and seal this 19th April 1833.

Luke hisXmark Ashburn

To the Honorable the Governor and Council of the State of Virginia

The memorial of Colin B. Catlett, George T. Catlett, Harrett H. Catlett and Anne E. Catlett, all residents of the town of Port Royal in the County of Caroline, and State of Virginia, respectfully reprints that they are the only children and only heirs at law of the late George Catlett, who was a Lieutenant in the Va. Navy in the revolutionary war – that said Lieutenant Catlett resided in the said Town until the

day of his death, viz: in the year 1815. Your memorialists have no knowledge whatever, personally, of their father's services, nor can it be supposed they could have, except by tradition, or from information derived from others, as they were very young at the time of his death. They have long understood that he entered the naval service very early in the war, and continued in service through the whole of it, and that for a considerable time he was in a state of captivity in England – of the truth of all which, they entertain not a doubt.

Some years since your memorialists presented this claim to the consideration of the executive; it was considered and passed for three years service. The register, through mistake, it is presumed, issued a warrant for 2666 $\frac{2}{3}$ instead of 4000 acres, which quantity your memorialists are informed, a lieutenant of the navy is entitled to. Your memorialist consider themselves justly entitled to 1333 $\frac{1}{3}$ acres on this score. They consider themselves also entitled to additional land for service performed by their father over six years or to the end of the war. They believe their father entered the service in fall of the year 1775, but of this they can shew no positive proof. It is clearly proven however, that he was in service in 1776 and continued therein to the end of the war, supposing which to have happened on the 23^d dece 1783, when Genl. Washington resigned the command, will make seven (7) years & 10 months service, shewing 22 months in service for which no land bounty has been allowed. Your memorialists consider themselves entitled to 1222 $\frac{2}{3}$ acres on this score, which added to 1333 $\frac{1}{3}$ will make 2555 $\frac{2}{3}$ acres your memorialists consider themselves justly entitled to and which they respectfully ask may be allowed them

Colin B. Catlett/ George T. Catlett/ Hariet T. Catlett/ Ann E. Catlett

Saturday the 12th October 1776.

Ordered that a Warrant issue to George Catlett for the use of Captain Alexander Dick [pension application R13751; AKA Sawny Dick] for three hundred pounds upon account, to purchase necessaries and for pay of his Company of Marines [see endnote]. From page 76.

Thursday 6th February 1777.

Ordered that Capt. Dick repair immediately with the marines under his command on Board the Brig Musquitto and observe and obey such orders as he may receive from time to time, of Capt. Harris [John Harris, pension application R41] the Commander of the said Brig. From page 172.

The above entries are truly extracted from the Naval Journal./ Given under my and at the Auditors Office Richmond this 16th day of Aug't. 1837./ Jas. E. Heath/ Aud'r.

Friday October 10th 1777.

Present./ Mr. [Thomas] Whiting, Mr. [Edward] Archer & Mr. [Warner] Lewis [of the Navy Board].

Letters from Capt. Harris of the Brig Musquitto dated, Point Petre [sic: Point-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe] 16th May last, and from Robert Smith at Edenton 28th Sept. last were received read & filed. From page 296.

The above is truly extracted from the Naval Journal./ Given under my hand at the Auditor's Office Richmond this 28th day of Sept'r. 1837./ Jas. E. Heath Aud.

Petition of Capt. Alexander Dick/ Granted Nov. 22nd 1779.

Gent. It being by the particular request of the Governor and Council that I went on board the armed brig Musquito with part of my company belonging to me of the State Regiments embodied in March 1777, I hope Gentlemen for your interest with the Assembly that my pay as Capt. may be made equal to hard money, being a prisoner so long & making my escape from England has occasioned my contracting a debt in Europe of one hundred & sixty guinias: I rely entirely on your protection, & as it was by your desire that I went to sea so I hope through you to have justice done me: & whereas I embarked in February 1777 (before the Regiments were embodied) with your promise of my not being injured in rank, I ought to have been a Major of Col. Gibsons [George Gibson's] Regiment eighteen months ago, I hope

you will order me my commission; Mr. Merriweather [sic: Thomas Meriwether] who acts at present a Major to that regiment, (I am informed by Col. Gibson) only acts during my absence, & that you were pleased to preserve that post for me, but as it must be disagreeable to Mr. Merriweather to act as Capt. in the regiment in which he acted as Major, I hope if the enclosed plan meets with your approbation you will recommend it to the Assembly, & myself as Major of Marines. I am Gentlemen with the greatest respect

Your most obedient & very humble serv't.

Williamsburg Nov 2^d 1779

Alex. Dick

To the hon'l. Governor and Council of the State of Virginia

The above referred to the House of Delegates by the Governor.

Journal of Monday Nov. 22nd 1779.

Resolved, That it is the opinion of this Committee that the petition of Capt. Alexander Dick, praying to be reimbursed his expenses incurred as well while a prisoner in Great Britain as to returning to Virginia is reasonable, & that he ought to be allowed & paid the sum of two thousand seven hundred & thirty pounds for the same exclusive of his pay.

[Copy certified 16 Aug 1837]

I certify that I was acquainted with George Catlett of Port Royal in Caroline County, in the revolutionary war. Early in the revolution, but at what particular date, I would not now undertake to say, I enlisted in the marine service of Virginia for the term of twelve months, and when the term was nearly expired, I re-enlisted for the term of three years or during the war, and soon after my second enlistment, I think about one month, I was taken into service on board the musquito brig The officers on board of said brig when I entered her, were Capt. John Harris, Lt. Chamberlayne [Byrd Chamberlayne, pension application R22] Midshipman Alexander Moore, Alexander Dick Captain of Marines, and George Catlett Lieutenant of Marines; The minor officers were Timothy Laws, a man name [Edward] Eagles, whose given name I do not recollect, Wm Coleman [William Coleman], John Brock, Robert Hamilton, and some of the privates were Wm. Mitchel [William Mitchell S38221] now living in this county, Thos. Cotrill [Thomas Cotrill], Jno. Dodd [John Dodd] drummer, Wm Dowlins or Dollins [William Dowlins or William Dollins], George Spillman [or George Spellman, S37433], Tom Chandler [Thomas Chandler, possibly R24], Wm, John & Jas Dishman [William Dishman R2965; John Dishman; James Dishman W9409] and Larkin Farish. The musquito was at Norfolk when I entered her, and a short time after I went aboard, say about one week, she set sail on a cruize, and stood away for the west Indies, with a crew of about seventy five men, including all the above named, with Charles Dekay [R34], who was sailing master. We captured the Snow John and afterwards the Noble and carried the last named into Point Petre. The Snow John got away from us. At Point Petre our crew took the small pox, which detained us several weeks. When we were recovered of that we set sail on another cruize, and fell in with the British ship Ariadne, a vessel of superior size to the musquito. We surrendered to her, after having made every effort to escape, & not being able to fight her, and she took us into Barbadoes [sic: Barbados]. The Ariadne was commanded by Capt. Collier. From Barbadoes, all our officers were immediately sent over to England, and we, the seamen were put in prison at Bridgetown, Barbadoes. Here we were kept seven months and fifteen days, and were then sent over to England in the Antelope and were confined, some in prison ships & others in Fortune jail [sic: Forton prison]. Billy Mitchell aforementioned was put in jail, – I was put in a ship. Here we soon learned that all our officers were confined in Fortune Jail. Soon after our arrival in England, Ralph Horn [Ralph R. Horn, S38046] another of our seamen received a note from Capt. Dick saying that all the officers were in Fortune Jail and that he should endeavour to get all the seamen there too. Some time after getting to England, I heard that Capt. Dick had made his escape, and that Mitchel and others had escaped also. I and sundry others continued in confinement until the war ended and the treaty of peace was published in England. Two of our men Chas. Pauldin and another died in jail. Given under my hand this 22nd July 1837

Moses hisXmark Stanly [Moses Standly (Stanley) W3886]

John James and William Dishman were near relations of mine. They all lived in the same neighbourhood with me in this county in the time of the revolution, and all of them enlisted and served in the navy. I have often heard them speak of their sufferings whilst they were prisoners – which was a long time. I am now in my eightieth year, & my memory is bad, and I therefore cannot undertake to relate particulars.

James & William moved from this county nearly fifty years ago, to the west and John died in this neighbourhood about 14 years ago. I cannot recollect the name of the vessel they were in, but Sawney Dick I recollect was one of their officers. I knew Mr. Dick. He was a relation of my neighbour Mrs. Jas. M. Garnett & used to visit her family.

Sarah Beazley who now resides in this neighbourhood is the sister of the three Dishmans above named & the nearest relation they have in this quarter that I know of

Witness/ Sarah Dishman Jr/ 1st Aug 1837

Jane Dishman

I certify that I was well acquainted with George Catlett of Port Royal in the revolutionary war. I resided then in the neighbourhood of that place, and was frequently there. George Catlett went into the marine service early in the war, but at what precise time, I cannot say. In the month of March 1776 he was acting as a Lieutenant of Marines, and at that time enlisted my brother Thomas Chandler. Some time after the enlistment of my brother, about ten or twelve months as well as I remember, Lt. Catlett and my brother, with Frank Pickett [Francis Pickett], Jno, Jas & William Dishman, John Dodd, George Doggett, with sundry others, went on board the musquito Brig, then lying in the Rappahannock. Capt. John Harris and Sawney Dick, George Catlett and Charles Dekay were officers on the musquito. She sailed on a cruise in the spring of 1777, and as to what happened to her afterwards I can only speak from information derived from others, principally from Jno. Dodd & the Dishmans, all of whom returned to this country after the siege of York [Yorktown, 28 Sep - 19 Oct 1781], and resided near neighbours to me to their death, many years since, except William & Jas. Dishman who moved away many years ago to the west. They told me after their return that the musquito was captured by a British ship, and all her crew carried as prisoners to Barbadoes and thence to England, where they were confined in prison, some of them to the end of the war, and some broke jail and came home before. I have often heard, that Capt. Dick and George Catlett were of the number that made their escape before the war ended, and that they were in service at the siege of York. I recollect that after the siege of York a short time, my father, Thomas Chandler went to Port Royal upon hearing that Catlett had returned, to enquire after my brother Thom, and was informed by Catlett, that my brother died after getting out of prison. He never returned to this country, & we have always believed that he died abroad. [2 Aug 1837] Reuben hisXmark Chandler

The affidavit of William Coghill aged upwards of seventy taken before me a justice of the peace for the county of Westmoreland states – That the said witness resided in the time of the revolution in the upper end of Essex County and about six miles from Port Royal in Caroline County. He states that he was acquainted with George Catlett of Portroyal, who was an officer in the navy of Virginia in the revolution – that his near neighbours John, Jas. & Wm Dishman, Wm Thorp [William Thorp], who died many years ago, or left this par of the country, enlisted in the navy service & served under said Catlett in the Musquito Brig. In the time of the revolution it was currently reported & believed, that the Musquito was captured, and that all her crew was carried to England & put in prison. my neighbours before named after their return to this country confirmed the rumor before mention. They have often talked with me upon the subject and mentioned the circumstance of Catlett's being taken with them & confined in jail. I have often heard Mourning Richerson say, who lived at Laytons and died there about 1813, that he was captured in the time of the revolution & carried to England and put in jail there, & on entering the jail he found Captain Catlett there, as he called him. I have also heard him say how he & Catlett with several others made their escape, by bribing the jailor, and taking a little boat across to France whence they got a passage home, to the best of my recollection in the spring of 1781. I was at the siege of York in Capt.

Bohannan's Company, and understood that Lt. Catlett was there also. I cannot say positively that I saw him but I have not a doubt but he was there. I recollect distinctly that some time after the seige of York, one of my neighbours who served there, went up to Port Royal & got a certificate from said Catlett of his service there.

[11 Aug 1837]

Wm Coghill

The deposition of William Mitchel of Caroline County, taken before me the subscriber, a justice of the peace for said County to be read in evidence in the claim of the late George Catlett's heirs, for compensation for his services in the revolutionary war. The deponent, being first duly sworn, states, that he enlisted in the latter part of the year 1775 in the naval service of Virginia, for the term of one year; and served out that term in the sloop Defiance, commanded a part of the time by Capt. [Eleazer] Callender. On the expiration of that term he enlisted again in the marine service for three years or during the war, and joined the company of Capt. Alexander Dick, in which George Catlett was Lieutenant. He states that a short time after his second enlistment, and as he thinks in the spring of 1777, that Capt. Dick's Company was put on board the brig Musquito, and ordered on a cruize. The officers of the Musquito were Capt. Harris, Capt. Dick, Lt. Geo. Catlett, Lt. Chamberlayne, Midshipman Moore, Steward Jno. Brock, gunner's mate Robt. Hamilton, and Jos. Warrick [sic: Joseph Warwick] pilot or pilot's mate, the last 5 from the Defiance, where I had served with them. Some of the privates were John, Jas. & Wm. Dishman, Moses Standley, Geo. Spillman, Thos. Cattrill, Jno. Dodd, Wm. Dollins, Tom Chandler &c. In the spring of 1777 we sailed from Norfolk on a cruize and bore away for the west Indies. We captured the Snow John which got away from us. We captured also the ship Noble, both loaded with cloathing & provisions for the British Army. The latter we carried into Point Petre in the Island of Grandtier [sic: Grande-Terre] and sold her. From the crew of the Noble we took the small pox, which detained us some time at Point Petre. After recovering from the small pox we set sail on another cruize, and soon spied another sail which turned out to be the British ship Ariadne. She was a larger ship than the Musquito, & mounted more guns. We could not escape her, and we were compelled to surrender. She took us into Barbadoes, where the privates were confined as prisoners for seven months and fifteen days; when we were sent over to England and confined, some in Fortune jail and others in prison ships. After a confinement there of thirty two months or thereabouts, myself and fifteen of the privates made our escape by undermining the jail. We seized a small sloop which was near, & crossed over to France, whence we soon got a passage to the United States. Capt. Dick made his escape some time before me and returned to the United States. When I escaped, I left Lt. Catlett in jail, in another apartment, and he did not escape till some time after me, as I understand. He returned to the United States not long before the surrender at York, and joined the infantry as Capt. Dick did also; there being no naval command for them. On my return, I reported myself to Capt. Dick in Fredericksburg, and was ordered by him to join the infantry, which I did, and served in the company of Capt. Wallace until the surrender at York. Lt. Catlett was with us at the seige of York acting as an officer, and after the seige was over, many of us were permitted to return to our homes, with orders to join the army again when called on. This was the case with Catlett & myself as well as others, and we returned to our homes which were near each other. We did not again go into service, but were always ready to do so if called on. I am confident that Catlett never resigned. If he had, I certainly would have heard of it. He was a brave & meretorious officer, & was fond of military life, and his feelings of hatred towards the English, for the treatment we had received were so violent, that I am certain he would never have left the service as long as there was a chance for fighting or an opportunity to be revenged. Such were his feelings as well as my own, and all those who were confined with us in prison. After our capture before named we were carried into Barbadoes, & the seamen only, were put in Bridgetown prison. The Officers were carried off to England & put in Fortune prison at Gosport, where we found them on our arrival there, and where some of them as well as some of the privates remained to the end of the war as I heard from them after their return. [12 Jul 1837]

Wm hisXmark Mitchell

This is to certify that I was well acquainted with George Catlett of the Town of Port Royal in the revolutionary war.

In the month of February or March 1776, I enlisted in the company of marines commanded by Capt. Alexander Dick, then stationed in Fredericksburg. George Catlett was then Lieutenant in said company. George Spillman, John Dodd, George Doggett [rest of page missing from image] belonging to said company; also Wm, John and James Dishman. About twelve months after I joined Capt. Dicks company, he was ordered on board a public vessel to go on a cruize. Not desiring to go to sea, and the year for which I enlisted expiring about that time, I declined going with the company to sea, and enlisted in the infantry & went to the north. I afterwards heard that the vessel in which Capt. Dick sailed was captured & all the crew made prisoners in a foreign country for a long time. Lt. Catlett entered the brig with Capt. Dick. [20 Sep 1837] Samuel hisXmark Courtney [Samuel Courtney S39346]

Pension Office/ April 10, 1838

I certify that I have examined the claim of the Heirs of the late George Catlett, dec'd. who was a Lieut of Marines in the service of the State of Virginia during the revolutionary war; that he continued in the service until taken by the enemy at sea, and remained in captivity until some time in 1781, and after the reduction of the Virginia Navy; that he died on the 15th September 1814; that the case is embraced by the provisions of the act of July 5th 1832, entitled "an act to provide for the liquidating and paying certain claims of the State of Virginia;" that the claim should therefore be allowed at the rate of one hundred and eighty two dollars and fifty cents per annum, from the twenty second of April seventeen hundred and eighty three, when the war terminated, to the fifteenth of September eighteen hundred and fourteen, when he died; and that the amount is payable to the Hon. John Taliaferro, attorney of Lucy Catlett, administratrix of said George Catlett, deceased.

Approved/ acting Secretary of War.

Commissioner of Pensions

NOTES:

The file includes a letter to the Commissioner of Pensions from John Taliaferro dated 7 Apr 1838 that reads in part: "At my last interview with you, on the subject of the claim of Geo. Catlett as a Lieut. of Marines in the Virginia Navy, you required me to show that a marine corps was attached to the Virginia Navy, & by what authority. If you will refer to the ninth Vol. of Henings Statutes, Page 83, you will find it ordained..." The statute is then quoted and can be found at <http://vagenweb.org/hening/vol09-04.htm>.

The file contains copies of records pertaining to William Blackwell (bounty-land application BLWt1861-300) and Philip Slaughter (pension application W29886). Their cases were evidently used in deciding the meaning of "continued in service" in order to determine whether Catlett was in service until the end of the war, as required for the heirs to receive his half-pay from the end of the war until his death.

The file includes a copy of a letter to Hon. Stafford H. Parker written by Colin B. Catlett on 7 Aug 1837 with the following excerpt: "I am taking steps to prefer a claim against the government on account of my fathers services in the revolution, and as the question may arise, why has this claim laid dormant so long, I wish to shew what every body who was acquainted with my father knew viz: that he was one of the most careless & negligent men about pecuniary matters that ever lived." Parker's reply includes the following: "Among the many instances of this spirit of supineness and indifference, I recollect that shortly after his decease, I was requested by his widow to investigate a claim which he had to a large Estate in Georgia, and which had accrued to him, by the death of his nephew, a certain John Catlett, who died intestate and without lawful issue. Your father in his lifetime, had cognizance of this fact (and although not a wealthy man) had not the energy to seek this claim to which he was legally and equitably entitled, although it amounted to \$60,000 or \$70,000"

On 8 Dec 1848 Lucy Catlett, 75, applied for a pension stating that she married George Catlett on 11 May 1798, and he died 15 Sep 1814. On 5 Apr 1849 Richard Buckner and Catherine E. Buckner, who

were married to each other in 1801, stated that Lucy Catlett was the sister of Richard Buckner. On 12 May 1849 she stated that the marriage service was performed by Abner Waugh, an Episcopal clergyman, at her brother-in-law's near Port Royal. On 27 Mar 1855 Lucy Catlett, about 81, applied for bounty land.