

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of James Harris W11223 Kezilah Harris NC
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 12 May 2013.

State of Virginia }
County of Patrick } S.S.

On this 12th day of February 1835 personally appeared in open Court before the justices of the County Court of Patrick James Harriss a resident of the County of Patrick and state of Virginia aged eighty seven years the 14th day of January last past who being first being duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provision made by the act of Congress passed June 7th 1832. That he was drafted in the army of the United States in the Spring of the year 1776 in the Company of Capt. William Jamerson in the County of Orange and state of North Carolina, and was attached to the Regiment commanded by Col. Archibald Lytle at Hillsboro [sic: Hillsborough], in said County and State, and marched from Hillsboro, with said regiment through Cheraw to Charleston in South Carolina, where he was placed under the command of Col Thompson [sic: William "Danger" Thomson], who commenced immediately on his arrival, throwing up a breast work on the East Side of the Island [at Breach Inlet]. This affiant was in the battle and fought under Colo Thompson against the British at Sullivan's Island which battle he thinks was fought some where about the last of June [28 June 1776]. After he fought the said battle and resting in the Camp about two months he took up the line of march, and marched to Savannah in Georgia where he assisted in throwing up some fortifications and set out immediately to St. Augustine Florida then a province of Spain to prevent the British from landing there. When he reached Florida he found the British had already landed and were receiving reinforcements dayly from the Indians, and the Americans thought it inexpedient to attack the enemy and therefore concluded it would be better to retreat back to Savannah and from there to Campden [Camden] in South Carolina, and from thence, he being discharged, he returned home to Orange County in North Carolina. Having served six months this tour although he was drafted for but three, by volunteering for three months more after the first three months expired.

This affiant was again drafted in the County of Orange and State of North Carolina about the 13th day July 1780, rendezvouzed in Hillsboro, and marched under Capt. Jamerson in the Regiment of Colo. Lytle to Campden in South Carolina and reached there some two or three days before the battle was fought. He was with this Regiment (Colo. Lytles) was placed under Liut.[?] Gregory. During the few days before before the battle (Gates's defeat) [Battle of Camden where Gen. Horatio Gates was defeated] he was employed in doing some duties about the Camp. He thinks that Lord Cornwallis and Lord Rawdon made the attack on Sunday morning about 9 or 10 o'clock some where about the middle of August 1780 [sic: at first light on the 16th]. This affiant was in the action and saw Gen'l [Edward] Stevens from Virginia when he and his Brigade broke and ran, and in a short time, he this affiant, with the rest of the North Carolina Militia ran too – This declarant saw Gen'l Decalb [sic: Baron De Kalb] Genl Gates and a great many other officers whose names he never knew in consequence of his being a private soldier in the militia. This affiant retreated back to Hillsboro and was there placed under Capt William Guinn to complete his engagement for three months, set in pursuit of the Tories on Rocky run and [one or two illegible words] in Orange and the adjacent counties in North Carolina. He continued reconoitring in that section of the Country untill the end of the said term making another tour of full three months– This declarant was discharged from the service at the end of this tour by Capt Guinn, and by Colo Lytle in his first tour–

This affiant kept his discharges for some time but not supposing they could ever be any benefit to him suffered them to be misplaced or lost. This affiant was born in the County of Dinwidie [Dinwiddie] in the State of Virginia about the 14th of January 1748 and remained there untill the year 1775 at time he

moved to the county Orange N. Carolina. Resided Orange N. Carolina until the year 1781 and then removed to that part of the County of Henry in Virginia which now constitutes Patrick County and has resided there ever since and still resides there— This declarant has no documentary evidence, nor does he know of any living witness by whom he could prove his services— This affiant further states that his declaration upon a former occasion was drawn up just as the court was about to convene and done so hastily that he omitted to mention that he was drafted for three months by the authority of the State of North Carolina, on setting out upon both tours, and that the last three months of the first, he continued in the service by volunteering— That the first Declaration he made was left with an Attorney and suffered to be torn up or destroyed.

He hereby relinquishes every claim whatever to any pension or annuity, except the present, and he declares that his name is not on the pension roll of any Agency of any State.

Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid James hisXmark Harris

Interrogatories 1st Where and in what year were you born?

Ans— In the County of Dinwiddie and state of Virginia in the year 1748.

2. Question 2: Have you any record of your age and if so, where is it?

Ans. I have no record of my age, but I recollect that my mother told that I was born in the year 1748.

Ques 3d. Where were you living when called into the service, where have you lived since the revolutionary war, and where do you now live?

Ans— I was living then County of Orange N. Carolina when called into the service and lived there a short time after the war and removed to that part of the County of Henry in the State of Virginia, which is now Patrick County, and have lived there ever since.

Ques 4. How were you called into the service; were you drafted, did you volunteer, or were you a substitute. And if a substitute for whom?

Ans. I was no substitute. I was drafted in the North Carolina militia for two three months tours, and volunteered for one three month engagement after the expiration of my first three months tour for which I had been drafted.

Ques 5 State the names of some of the Regular Officers who were with the troops when you served: such Continental and Militia Regiments as you can recollect and the general circumstances of your services?

Ans. I knew Gen'l Gates, Gen'l DeCalb who was killed at Campden and knew several others whose names I [word illegible]. I saw Gen'l Lafayette at Charleston [see note below]. I do not remember the numbers of any of the Continental Regiments, but as well as I can recollect I belonged for a while to the 3d Regiment commanded by Colo Lytle. I do not know what was the number of the other Regiments in which I served. The gen'l circumstances of my services are as briefly recalled in the foregoing part of my declaration as I recollect them.

Ques 6 Did you ever receive a discharge from the service, and if so, by whom was it given, and what became of it?

Ans— I received three discharges, two from my Capt. (Jamerson) who either wrote them or procured them for me (I am an illiterate man) and the third discharge from Capt Guinn under whom I served against the Tories.

Ques 7 State the names of persons to whom you are known in your present neighbourhood, and who can testify as to your character for veracity, and their belief of your services as a soldier of the Revolution.

Ans. I am known to Capt Thomas Penn, John Conner and have known them for many years intimately.

Patrick C. House February 13 1836

Dr Sir Is, A Free Negro entitled to a Pension if they are not, There has been an inposition put on you, for there is one James Harriss of this County who has Just rec'd his Warrant, who I understand receiving thirty dollars per year, he is as Black as half of the Negroes in this county nothing prompts me to make this inquiry but to know if that class of the community is entitled to pensions and to detect fraud if there should be any I inquired of the Genteman who drew his declaration if he stated it that he was a free negro and his answer was no therefor think something is rong

Yours respectfully
James M. Redd

State of Virginia County of Patrick

This day personally appeared before the undersigned justice of the peace in and for the County aforesaid Anthony Foster aged seventy eight years and made oath that he himself was a soldier of the revolution is knowing that free men of Color was at the commencement of the revolution in the State of North carolina compelled to serve in the war. at some period after that a law was passed that free men of Color shoud not be compelled to bear arms but at what time that law was passed this deponant does not know I further certify that this witness (Anthony Foster) is a man highly respectable and entirely worthy of Credit sworn under my hand this 19th day of December 1836. Anthony Foster

Martin Cloud JP

I Thomas Hale of the county of Franklin and state of Virginia do swear that it is my opinion that free men of Colour did serve in the Revolution in the state of North Carolina and believe that & know that free men of colour were regularly enrolled in the state of South Carolina

[signed] Thos Hale

Sir In answer to your letter of this day – I have to inform you that from the information of members of Congress – I have no doubt that until since 1814 free people of colour served in the militia and had the right of suffrage in the state of North Carolina I infer from the act of assembly of North Carolina passed in 1814 – which you will see in the 2nd Vol Rec'd book of Laws of that state pages 1290 & 1291. that no distinction was made before as to militia service performed or to be performed – but you will see that after the passage of that Law the Captains and other returning officers in making their returns – were to put in separete columns the white & coloured militia men. The book is in the library and the case is clear – and I consider the information I have received and the inference I draw from the Law of 1814 that people of colour before had allways in N Carolina been subject to Militia Service is conclusive and I hope that you will see this matter on looking at the Law ref'd to as I do I am Sir yr mo obt

Washington 4th Feby 1837

N H Claiborne [Member of Congress]

[Harris made the following statement in support of the pension application of the widow of Hamon (Haman) Critz (W6755).]

The Affidavit of James Harris an old Soldier first being sworn says Cpt Haman Critz named in the declaration of Mrs Nancy Critz served a 3 months tower of duty mostly in North Carrolina in the fall of 1780 [see endnote] he says he knows that he did for he the s'd Harriss was cook for Capt Haman Critz at the time of service he says that is all he knows of his own knowledge but he has strong reason to believe he served many other towers he says he was well acquainted with Colo Critz for 40 or 50 years before he died and heard him tell of his services at differrent times and further this deponant sayeth not

James hisXmark Harris

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of May 1841/ Wm Critz JP

NOTES:

Lafayette was at Charleston in June 1777 on his way to join the American Army in the North, but

it is unlikely that Harris was there at the time.

James Harris could not have been the cook for Capt. Hamon Critz in the fall of 1780 if he was still in the North Carolina Militia until late in that year and did not move to Henry County until 1781.

On 10 June 1855 in Patrick County Keziah Harris applied for a pension stating that she married James Harris in Rockingham County NC in April 1802, and he died in Patrick County in 1842. In other records her name was usually spelled Keziah, and her maiden name is known to have been Minor.