

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

Bounty-Land Claim for Service of Samuel Harris VAS11

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

[From records in the Library of Virginia:](#)

Richmond Dec. 12, 1838

Sir [Gov. David Campbell], As the counsel of the Misses Harris, I beg to submit to your Excellency the accompanying documents in support of their claim to land bounty, due for the services, in the war of the Revolution, of their deceased ancestor Dr Samuel Harris. The petition sets forth in a particular manner the services rendered by Dr. Harris and also accompanying documents to shew

1st. That he was the surgeon of the 4th Virginia Regiment on continental establishment and was in service, certainly as early as September 1776. (see reference to Council Journal)

2^d. The depositions of the witnesses, all of whom were soldiers in the Revolution, whose respectability is fully sustained by the Justices who took their depositions, shew that Dr. Samuel Harris died whilst in actual service.

Should your Excellency be pleased to allow the claim, I respectfully ask that the Register be authorized to issue a warrant, from some reasonable period [illegible word] September 1776 until the close of the war, upon satisfactory proof that the Misses Harris are the only surviving heirs of the said Dr. Samuel Harris

I am very respectfully/ Yr. Obt. Servt./ Henry S. Allmand

To His Excellency David Campbell, Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia

The memorial of Mary Harris in behalf of herself & her sister Elizabeth Harris respectfully sheweth.

That their ancestor Samuel Harris was an officer of the revolution viz: a surgeon in the State of Virginia and served in that capacity as your petitioner has always been informed and verily believes with the continental troops chiefly in the towns of Norfolk and Portsmouth, and died in actual service during the said war. The said Samuel at his death left an only brother named Thomas the father of your petitioner and as his only heir is entitled to receive from the Commonwealth of Virginia the land bounty promised in such cases if in your Excellency's opinion, the evidence now submitted in support of the claim be deemed satisfactory. In which event your memorialist prays that the Register be instructed to issue a warrant for the land bounty to which the heirs of the said Dr. Harris are entitled, and to deliver the same to their Attorney Henry S. Allemand Esq. Your memorialist was born shortly after the Revolutionary war, and has ever continued unmarried. She can say nothing of the services of her uncle from personal knowledge, but speaks from what she has universally heard in the family, and from other sources and verily believes that the statements are true. Elizabeth Harris

[Certified 20 Nov 1838]

Extract from the Journal of the Council on the 26th September 1776. Harris Surg. 4th Regiment

Before the subcommittee a [illegible word] of the house in & for the county of Princess Anne personally appeared John Brown [pension application S6753] an aged and respectable citizen of said county who being duly sworn deposed & saith that he service in the war of the Revolution as a soldier in the Virginia State Troop his services being chiefly confined to the State of Virginia. During the year 1779 & 1780 he was stationed at Norfolk & Portsmouth, and at the latter period was attached to the troops quartered at Portsmouth, then commanded by Col. [Charles] Dabney. He was well acquainted with many of the officers among whom he well knew Major [Alexander] Dick & [Thomas] Mathews he also knew Dr. Samuel Harris the Surgeon of the troops stationed at the period last mentioned in the town of Portsmouth

the troops subsequently moved to the town of York where they continued during the siege which terminated in the Capture of Lord Cornwallis [19 Oct 1781]. what subsequently became of Doctor Harris he does not know personally of his own knowledge except that he has always been under the impression & verily believes that he died before the close of the war. And further this deponent saith not.

John hisXmark Brown [20 June 1838]

The affidavit of John Brown taken before Elzy Burroughs a Justice of the Peace for the County of Princess Anne.

The deponent being duly sworn according to law, states that upon due reflection he can more particularly speak fo the services of Dr. Samuel Harris than his previous Certificate taken before the undersigned. The deponant in the latter end of 1776 enrolled himself in a company of Volunteers commanded by Captain Weeks which was raised in the County of Princess Anne and at that time was in active service in norfolk and the surrounding neighbourhood. There was a detachment of regular Troops stationed at this period at Portsmouth consisting of a whole Regiment commanded by Colo. [Robert] Lawson and deponant well and distinctly knows, that the above Samuel Harris was attached to that Regiment as its regular Surgeon. Captain Thos. Mathews whom he has mentioned belonged to the same Regiment. John Rogers was his first Lieutenant and the said Company was raised as deponent well knows, in the county of Princess Anne. Early in 1777 they marched to the North including Dr. Harris where they performed service with the army and did not return to Virginia again until about the invasion of lower Norfolk by the British General Matthews at which period a large portion of our Regular troops were again stationed at Norfolk. This was in 1780 or thereabouts as deponent was himself then in the regular service, and he feels quite confident that Dr. Harris whom he had not seen since he left with Lawson's Regiment returned to Virginia and was serving with the said troops stationed at Norfolk and Portsmouth.

which aforesaid statement being reduced to writing by me at the request of the said deponant the same is here signed by him.

John hisXmark Brown

and I certify that the said John Brown is a respectable Citizen and Land holder of the County of Princess Anne and that his acts are entitled to full faith and credit. Given under my hand and seal this 7th day of March 1840.

Elzy Burroughs J.P.

State of Maryland city of Baltimore to wit

On this 19th day of March in the year of our Lord on thousand eighteen hundred & thirty eight before me the subscriber one of the Justices of the peace in & for the said city personally appears Armsted Cutty [sic: Armistead Cully, pension application S8270] a respectable citizen of said city, who being duly sworn deposeth & saith that he was born in Matthews [sic: Mathews] county Virginia, & removed to this city in the year eighteen hundred & eighteen & has since resided here. The deponent further states, that he entered the service of Virginia in a company of regulars in the early part of the Revolution commanded by (Lieutenant afterwards) Captain Wm. Smith [William Smith] & was afterwards transferred to a company of Virginia Continentals commanded by Capt. Charles Tompkis [sic: Charles Tompkies] of the County of Matthews, the deponent states that in the course of his military career which terminated with the siege of York, though he was occasionally in service afterwards, he knew a vast number of officers particularly those of the army, among whom he well knew Dr. Samuel Harris of the 4th Virginia Regiment – the last time this deponent saw him with the army was about the close of the year seventeen hundred & eighty or early in the year seventeen hundred & eighty one, from the last mentioned period the deponent has never since seen him nor can he say what ever became of his. In in answer to the question propounded to deponent as to the period when the said Harris entered the service he answereth & saith that he does not know, he had frequently seen Dr. Harris with the army he feels very confident, that he has never seen him since the year 1781, & further this deponent saith not.

Armistead Culley

State of North Carolina. Currituck county, to wit:

Before the undersigned, a justice of the peace in and for the county aforesaid, personally came and appeared Thomas Williams esquire [pension application S14843], and after being duly sworn, deposed and saith that he was born in the county of Princess Anne in the state of Virginia in the year of seventeen hundred and sixty two, and removed to this county in seventeen hundred and ninety two, and has continued to reside here ever since. The deponent served in the war of the revolution. He first served at Norfolk and Portsmouth in the commencement of the war, and was well acquainted with doctor Samuel Harris then stationed at the latter place. This deponent at a subsequent period was at Norfolk attached to company of volunteers when a skirmish took place between the Americans and English early in the year of seventeen hundred and eighty one, when the said Harris was with the troops; after which period he died in actual service, as deponent understood and verily believed, whilst he was attached to Colonel Dabney's command. And further this deponent saith not. Thos. William [1 Nov 1838]

Tuesday. December 2. 1777.

A petition of Charles Casson was presented to the house and read, setting forth that he supplied doctor Samuel Harris, surgeon of the fourth regiment, with rum and wine for the use of the hospital at Portsmouth, where the said regiment was stationed, to the amount of twenty pounds, for which he hath received no satisfaction, and therefore praying to be allowed the said sum of money.

Ordered that the said petition be referred to the committee of public claims; and that they do examine the matter thereof and report the same, with their opinion thereupon, to the house. [Certified 7 Dec 1838 as an extract from the journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia.]

Dr. Cunningham

Norfolk March 10th 1840

I presented a claim some months since to Governor Campbell on behalf of Miss Harris of Norfolk County for an allowance of Land Bounty for the services of her deceased ancestor Dr Samuel Harris who was a Surgeon in the War of the Revolution and was attached, as I thought the Testimony warranted me in supposing, to the 4th Virginia Regiment and as such served from the earliest commencement of the War until his death which occurred somewhere about the year 1780.

The accompanying record marked A, is a true copy of all the evidence and Documents duly certified by Mr Richardson Secretary of the Commonwealth, filed by me in support of the claim

It was however rejected by the Executive on the original presentation because of the supposed insufficiency of the evidence to establish the fact that Dr. Harris belonged to the regular Service.

Having now some additional evidence to offer in support of the claim and being unable to visit Richmond at this moment (being engaged as the Judge Advocate of the Naval Court Martial now sitting in Gosport) I take the liberty to transmit all the Documents to you, with a request, that you will lay them before the Governor asking a reconsideration of the subject, and if compatible with his public convenience, a new decision upon the additional evidence here submitted (in connection with the former evidence to be found in the said (A) filed herewith) and which I flatter myself will be found abundantly satisfactory to show that Dr. Samuel Harris was in the Regular Service as early as Sept. 1776 and continued actively employed therein until his death in 1780, or 1781.

As it may become necessary that you should possess a general knowledge of this case I will briefly append at the Testimony filed and now here again submitted, with my views as briefly expressed, that you may the more readily be enabled to answer any objections which may be suggested to the allowance of the claim.

First: I rely upon the Record Testimony taken from the Journal of the Council now on file in the Executive Department containing the Entry "On the 20th September 1776 – Harris Surgeon of the 4th Regiment" as showing at least that some Dr. Harris was in the service and that as early as 26th Sept. 1776 – The Christian name is true is blank, but I think it will be made clearly manifest from the "Testimony to be

presently noticed that the Surgeon Harris therein referred to, was Dr. Samuel Harris of the 4th Continental Regiment, the Ancestor of the present claimant.

Secondly. It is further shown by the accompanying Document that Charles Capon presented to the House of Delegates of Virginia on the 2^d. Dec'r. 1777 a Petition setting forth that he supplied Doctor Samuel Harris Surgeon of the 4th Virginia Regiment with rum and wine, for the use of the Hospital at Portsmouth where the said Regiment was stationed &c &c – See Certified Copy annexed from the Record at the Capitol.

Here it is clearly shown, that The Dr. Harris of the 4th Regiment previously mentioned in the Council Journal is the same Dr. Samuel Harris stationed with his Regiment (the 4th) at Portsmouth as Capon says, because he is spoken of as Dr. Harris of the 4th Regiment, therein agreeing with the listing in the Council Journal and thus leading us very easily and naturally to infer that the two were identically the same person for whose use according to Capon's deposition certain articles were furnished &c &c. Thirdly. The deposition of Armistead Cully formerly of Virginia but now of Maryland, whose respectability is well vouched (see Page 5 Record A) by the Certificate of Benj. C. Howard a distinguished Member of Congress from the Baltimore area – This Veteran says "That he entered the Service from the County of Mathus in a Company of Regulars commanded by Capt. Charles Tompkins early in the War, and that in the course of his Military Career he well knew D. Samuel Harris of the 4th Virginia Regiment, and the last time he saw him with the Army was at the close of 1780 or early in 1781." He adds that while he is unable to state when the said Harris entered the service, yet he frequently seen him with the Army &c see p.4

Fourthly. The deposits of Thomas Williams Esq. at present of North Carolina, also a Revolutionary Veteran; – Mr. Simmons the Clerk of Currituck Court represents this witness to be a highly respected gentleman and citizen and a Senator in the Legislature of N.C.

Mr. Williams represents himself as a native of Princess Anne County Virginia and to have served in the Commencement of the Revol'y. War at Norfolk and Portsmouth and was well acquainted with Dr. Sam'l. Harris when stationed at the latter place – He –(Williams) was again in service at a subsequent period and found Dr. Harris serving with the Troops, after which he died in actual service as Deponent understood and believes while attached to Col. Dabney's Command

Lastly. – I now come to the Testimony of Mr. John Brown of the County of Princess Anne (See Documents annexed marked B,) and which I think establishes beyond all question the nature and content of the Service of Dr. Harris – As the document is full clear and circumstantial, I refer you to it in-cuteneo[?], premising that the character of Mr. Brown, is well sustained for honour, integrity and verity, and that by consequence his statements are entitled to full credit – This you will discover by the concurring Testimony of many of the Justices of Princess Anne who were convenient to the Court House and place of residence of Mr. Brown and whose Certificate is appended to his deposition – Mr. Brown who was himself a soldier of the Revolution, and an eye-witness of the Services of Dr. Harris, identifies him in the same belonging to the regiment commanded by Col. Lawson, and to which his friend Capt. Thomas Mathews, and Lieut't John Rogers of the County of Princess Anne belonged. It may be urged that so much tardiness has been exhibited by the present claimant in presenting her claim at this late day as greatly to militate against its validity. – I do not know that I could better answer this objection than by quoting the language of the Report of the Select Comm'ee. on Revolutionary Claims of the Va. House of Delegates at the Dec'r. Session of 1834 in reference to this Subject, which I have now seen for the first time, and of which I am informed that Gen'l. Parker of Northampton, Chairman, was the Draftsman. – "Your Committee would rather incline to the opinion, that in consequence of the lapse of time, the rules of allowance should be rendered more liberal – Yet the reverse seems to be the fact." Page r. Again – "The delay can readily be accounted for, says this Report, in a manner that will leave no room for the imputation of [illegible word] on the part of the claimants" – See Pages 4,5 – and after tracing the causes of delay in a manner entirely satisfactory it is added "Thus Virginia by her own act put it out of the

power of her Officers and Soldiers after the 6 Jan'y 1783 to locate their Warrants, which inhibition &c was continued by the act of the General Government &c and that they have been utterly precluded from the satisfaction of their claims until the recent appropriation by Congress."

Page 6 It is said "There are other reasons of a general character why many claims have been deferred to so late a day. – At the end of the War some were in independent Circumstances, and did not care to present their claims – The Lands were at best but of little value. – Many died in the Service, whose representatives might have been unaware that they had claims to Bounty Land"

I need not apologize to you my Dr. Cunningham for the trouble which I am aware I am imposing upon you, nor would I do so but for my anxiety to have this matter adjudicated by Gov'r Campbell before his Term of Office expires particularly as this claim has been once been considered by him and is therefore familiar to him – If my views be correct I am very confident he will readily decide in favour of this claim; and I am indebted to a friend for transcribing this Communication (wishing to retain the rough drafts and finding it utterly impossible to do it myself.

Very [illegible] Y'r Friend

Henry S. Allmand

N.B. To test the accuracy of Mr. Brown's testimony it will be well, to ascertain from the records at the Capitol ([illegible word] I am sure Mr. Donington[?] will cheerfully assist you in obtaining) whether the several officers named by him, belonged to the Regular Army & if any indication is made of the Regiment or Corps to which they or either of them belonged – H.S. A.