

## Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Bounty Land Warrant information relating to William Johnston VAS1262

[vsl 26VA](#)

Transcribed by Will Graves

1/9/14

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Where the meaning is not compromised by adhering to the spelling, punctuation or grammar, no change has been made. Corrections or additional notes have been inserted within brackets or footnotes. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. A bracketed question mark indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. The word 'illegible' or 'indcipherable' appearing in brackets indicates that at the time I made the transcription, I was unable to decipher the word or phrase in question. Only materials pertinent to the military service of the veteran and to contemporary events have been transcribed. Affidavits that provide additional information on these events are included and genealogical information is abstracted, while standard, 'boilerplate' affidavits and attestations related solely to the application, and later nineteenth and twentieth century research requests for information have been omitted. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading skills fail to catch all misinterpretations. Also, dates or numbers which the software treats as numerals rather than words are not corrected: for example, the software transcribes "the eighth of June one thousand eighty six" as "the 8<sup>th</sup> of June 1786." Please call material errors or omissions to my attention.]

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

[p 2]

Philadelphia June 10<sup>th</sup> 1851

To his Excellency Governor Floyd  
And the Executive Council of Virginia

In behalf of the heirs of Dr. William Johnston, a Surgeon in the State Navy of Virginia during the Revolutionary War, I beg respectfully to submit their claim to Land Bounty on the laws of Virginia.

In addition to the affidavit of Colonel Stephen Wright who was himself an officer of the Revolutionary War here with enclosed, I have other testimony both parole in record which I hope to have completed in a few days and I well submit it to your Excellency.

I have the honor to be with high respect

Ned Vincent

Attorney for the Heirs

[p 4]

In the matter of the heirs of Dr. William Johnston, late of Elizabeth City County for Land Bounty as a Surgeon in the Virginia State Navy, the following brief is respectfully submitted.

The evidence filed, consists of several affidavits of Col. Stephen Wright of Norfolk Virginia, an officer of the Revolution No. 1, Jonathan Kay of Portsmouth No. 2 Mrs. Ann Payne No. 3 extracted from the Virginia Historical record an article signed F. B. and identified by the affidavit of Mr. Maxwell has the production of the late Commodore James Barron No. 4

This evidence fully sustains the continuous and meritorious services of Dr. Johnston as a Surgeon of the Virginia State Navy from an early period of the Revolutionary War until shortly after the Siege of York when Dr. Johnson was taken prisoner by the Enemy and kept closely confined as a Prisoner of War until the close of the War.

The high character of Col. Wright is amply sustained by the accompanying testimonials of General Millson [John Singleton Millson] the member of Congress from Norfolk – Honorable Richard H Baker, Judge of the Norfolk Superior Court and Colonel William Garrett collector of the Court of Norfolk. (Documents 4 and 5)

That of Mr. J. Kay is fully endorsed by Samuel Watson Esquire of Portsmouth No. 6 and the respectability of Mrs. Payne and of her entire claim to veracity by John Tabb Esquire the

Presiding Justice of Elizabeth City County.

The roll of the Cruiser "*Defiance*" and official copy of which is annexed shows that Doctor Johnston was the surgeon of that vessel and entered the Service as early as in the year 1776.

With high respect &c &c  
Nedrick [?] Vincent  
for the heirs

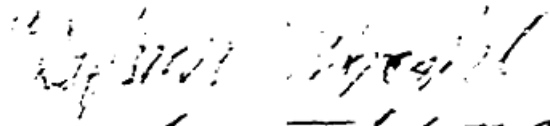
Received August 29, 1851

[pp 7-9: What appears to be the original petition of the heirs but the image of it is too faint to be legible as posted online]

[p 10]

Before me Nathaniel Whitehead a Justice of the peace for the City of Norfolk personally appeared Colonel Stephen Wright of said City and made oath that he was well acquainted with Dr. William Johnston who was a Surgeon in the State Navy of Virginia during the war of the Revolution – and entered the said service at an early period of said war – At a subsequent period Dr. Johnston served as the Surgeon of one of the galleys commanded by Captain Wright Westcott<sup>1</sup> well known officer of said Navy and was afterwards detached to some other vessel and Deponent can say with [word too faint to discern] from his certain knowledge that Dr. Johnston continued actively employed as Surgeon until shortly after the siege of York [October 19, 1781]. Deponent was himself taken prisoner by the enemy at or about the period last mentioned and was kept closely confined as a prisoner of War at Bermuda until after the close of the War. The last Deponent saw all of Dr. Johnson was about two years after the old Chesapeake war and to the best of the recollection, he died he thinks in the summer of the year 1809

S/ Stephen Wright



[Attested June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1851]

[p 12]

State of Virginia Elizabeth City County: to wit

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"WESTCOTT [WESCOTT], WRIGHT VA Wright Westcott [Stewart, 265] (Wescott) [NOAR, 332] was commissioned on 18 June 1776 to command the Virginia Navy Sloop *Scorpion*, on the Potomac River. On 7 September 1776 he was ordered to Portsmouth, and then to join Commodore BOUCHER in Chesapeake Bay. On 11 September he was ordered to transport troops to New York. [NOAR, 332] He was aboard the *Scorpion* in December 1776. [Stewart, 265] Westcott later commanded the Virginia Navy Galley *Norfolk Revenge*. On 28 May 1778 the *Norfolk Revenge* was sunk in Nansmond River with a loss of prisoners, including Lieutenant EDWARD MORTON. [Stewart, 53] Westcott and the members of the crew who escaped were ordered by the Virginia Navy Board to proceed to Jamestown for reassignment. [Stewart, 53] After the *Norfolk Revenge* was sunk Westcott transferred to the Virginia Navy Galley *Henry*. He was one of the retained officers of the Navy. He was the guardian and near relative of Stephen Wright, who started with him to Martinique. They were captured by HMS *Cerberus* and put in prison [Stewart, 265] Westcott died 1 February 1784. [Stewart, 266]." Posted by Ken Kellow at <http://www.awiatsea.com/Officers/Officers%20W.html> [viewed 1/9/14]

The affidavit of Ann Payne taken before me Thomas O. Pelk a Notary Public within and for the County & State aforesaid this 19<sup>th</sup> day of July A.D. 1851

Ann Payne an aged and respectable lady of Hampton in the County aforesaid being duly sworn according to law deposeth & saith: That she knew and was well acquainted with Dr. William Johnston who was a surgeon in the Virginia State Navy during the Revolutionary War; that he was detached to one of the Cruisers belonging to this Station in the early part of the war and was cruising off and on for more than two years. The name of the officer who commanded said cruiser she does not recollect, but, that the names of the 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant of said Cruiser was John Crew, who at a late period of the war was taken prisoner by the British. In the year 1780 (she fixes this date in her memory by the unusual severity of the winter of that year which has ever been memorable) the said Dr. William Johnston was attached to the Schooner "*Nicholson*" commanded by Lieutenant Jennings, and that he, the said Dr. Johnston continued so attached in the capacity of a surgeon until the said schooner was captured by a British frigate late in the year 1781. At the time said Schooner *Nicholson* was captured, Alexander Massenburg<sup>2</sup> was the Master and he together with the rest of her officers continued prisoners of war for some months and until immediately after the peace in 1783, when they were released. As a Ball which was held in this place in commemoration of the restoration of peace just after that event, which was called the "Liberty Ball" and at which many officers both French & Americans were present she remembers distinctly to have seen the before mentioned officers Alexander Massenburg and Dr. Johnston dressed in their respective uniforms. In testimony whereof affiant has hereunto caused her name to be written and has made her mark to the same.

S/Ann Payne, X her mark

[Attested July 19, 1851 in Elizabeth City County Virginia]

[p 16: Appears to be extracts from the naval journals certified by the First Auditor but the image is of such poor quality as to be illegible.]

[p 20: Again it appears to be extracts from the Navy Journal or register but the image is so poor as to be illegible as posted.]

[Note: all of the balance of the documents in this file are either in illegible as posted or are of non-substantive nature disclosing or containing no information about the services or life of the veteran.]

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<sup>2</sup> MASSENBURG [MASINBURG], ALEXANDER VA Third Lieutenant, Virginia Navy Alexander Massenburg was a resident of Hampton, Virginia. [Stewart, 222-223] (or Masinburg) was aboard the Virginia Navy Brig *Liberty* (Captain THOMAS LILLY) by 30 July 1776 [NOAR, 198, where he is said o have commanded the brig.] as a Midshipman. [Stewart, 222-223] On 11 October 1776, a number of officers aboard the *Liberty* complained about Captain Lilly. Massenburg, now said to be a Master, was among the complainants. [Stewart, 45] He was listed as a Third Lieutenant aboard Virginia Navy Brig *Liberty* late in 1776. [Stewart, 45 note] He was captured with the *Liberty* (now under Captain JOHN ROGERS) in 1778, by a British vessel and taken to Halifax. He returned to Virginia in 1780. He also served on the *Henry* (Tompkins) and the *Nicholson*. He was captured and imprisoned until 1783. He was listed in a pay roll excerpt from the *Liberty* on 30 July 1777. [Stewart, 222-223] <http://www.awiatsea.com/Officers/Officers%20M.html> [viewed 1/9/14]