

present week, consider this claim, while the evidence is still retained in the [illegible word]

Yours Respectfully/ James Murdaugh

NOTE:

Robert Armistead Stewart gave the following account of the sinking of the *Dolphin* in *History of Virginia's Navy Of the Revolution* (1934; reprinted 1993 by Genealogical Publishing C., Baltimore. p72):
“And now came the final episode in the career of the Dolphin, with a crew of seventy-five men, commanded by Captain John Cowper, of Nansemond County. The vessel ready for sea, the intrepid captain set sail from Nansemond Creek in search of outlying privateers. Yet before weighing anchor he had deliberately nailed his flag to the mast, vowing, cost what it might, never to strike it to an enemy. He shaped the course of his vessel over the broad expanse of Hampton Roads, stood away towards Cape Henry, and passed out into the ocean. As the Dolphin's sails became shadowy in the distance watchers at the Cape observed three other vessels take shape on the horizon. Suspense as to the nature of the strangers was brief. Captain Cowper, before he left home, had solemnly resolved that, no matter what the odds against him, he would without hesitation assume the offensive. The Dolphin was accordingly now seen bearing down upon the newcomers, who as promptly closed in to meet the attack. The action which now began was, according to witnesses, a long and apparently doubtful one. Finally, however, the three hostile tenders sheered off and bore away to the eastward, leaving, to the watchers' eyes, no sign of the fourth. It had been a death struggle against hopeless odds. The Dolphin with all on board had gone to her doom.”

A document in the file states that Jane Cowper married Edward Norfleet and died leaving four children: Nathaniel, Wilson, Ann, and Jane. It states that Horatio Cowper, son of John Cowper, Sr., died in 1802, and that Horatio Cowper, son of John Cowper, Jr., died in 1836 leaving no widow or child.