

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Virginia documents pertaining to Jacob Cohen VAS3053
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris.

[The following are from [bounty-land records in the Library of Virginia.](#)]

The affidavit of Reubin Puryear [Reuben Puryear (Puryers) W5587] taken before me in the County of Buckingham this 20th day of April 1831. this affiant being first duly sworn on the Holy Evangelists of almighty God says, that he was acquainted with Jacob Cohen soon after the Revolutionary War, and that he was Dessed [dressed] in the uniform of an officer with an appolet [sic: epaulet] on one Sholder, and understood he was an officer in the Cavelry on horse back and further this affiant says not. Given under my hand this day and dat firs written

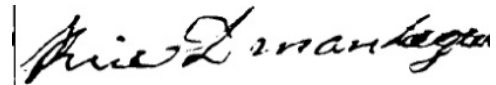


The affidavit of James Falwell [James Falwell W7247] seventy two years of age taken before me John S Mills a justice of the peace for the county of Buckingham this 22nd day of April 1831
This affiant being first duly sworn on the Holy Evangelist of Almighty God says that in the year seventeen hundred & eighty he knew Jacob Cohen who was then a Captain of the light horse first at Cabin point [on James River in Surry County] & from thence to Portsmouth this affiant believes the said Jacob Cohen lived in Cumberland county about the above stated time and went from said county into the army & when I knew him and became acquainted first with him he was a captain of light horse in the army. This affiant says he went from Buckingham County himself as a soldier about the year 1780 – the 13th of January; and joined the Army about the 24th or 25th at Cabin point a which time the said Cohen was Captain of the light horse. This affiant remained three months as a soldier & left the said Jacob Cohen in command as captain of Light horse. This affiant states that he himself, was commanded by Captain Charles Pattison [Charles Patterson] from the County of Buckingham at the same time above stated. This affiant believes [undeciphered word] at the time the said Jacob Cohen was Captain of the Light horse in the Continental service. This affiant is at this time blind & further this affiant saith not.

James hisXmark Falwell

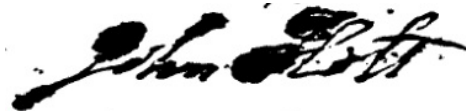
The affidavit of Captain William Walker of lawful age sworn and subscribed in presence of me Allen Wilson a Justice of the peace in and for the County of Cumberland in the State of Virginia at his own house this 28th day of April 1831 Saith that Captain Jacob Cohen raised a troop of Cavelry in this County in the war of the Revolution & my Brother Warren Walker was a member of that troop under Capt. Cohen who march from this county in the year 1780 and was in the Battle at Jamestown [Green Springs Plantation, 6 Jul 1781] as I under stood from my Brother and others and verrily Believes. I also state that I knew Capt. Jacob Cohen in 1779 in military uniform after [sic] the Battle of Jamestown I saw him In Service under General Stuben [sic: Baron von Steuben] as an officer and my acquaintance with him Justifies me in saying that he was an active & useful officer [signed] William Walker

The affidavit of Rice D Montague [W2416] of Lawfull age sworn to and subscribed to before me a Justice of the peace of Cumberland County in the state of Virginia at his own house in the said County the 3 day of May 1831 saith that he knew Capt Jacob Cohen during the revolutionary war, and thinks he was a Capt of a troop of horse and he beleaves that he from what he understood that he searved in the contintelal service



The affidavit of John Holt of Lawfull age taken and sworn to and subscribe in the presence of Merit H Booker a justice of the peace of the county of Cumberland in the of Virginia taken at his own house in said county on on the third day of May 1831. Saith that he well knew Capt Jacob Cohen in 1781 that he was a Capt of a troop of light horse at this time & was in the army at the time that Capt Jacob Cohen commanded the said troop, though in a different company – that the said Cohen was under the command of Gen [Anthony] Wayne & he thinks Layfayette [sic], at the battle of James Town that the said Jacob Cohen had in possession two horses – that he undersood was taken from the British about that time. And when this affiant left the army the said Capt Cohen was sill under the command of Gens Wayne & Lafayette.

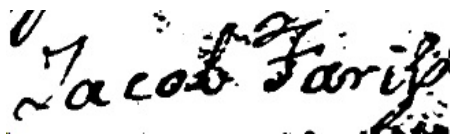
And further this affiant sayeth not



The affidavit of John Winfree of the age of seventy seven years old of the county of Powhatan and state of Virginia taken before me Jos. B. Davis a Justice of the peace for the said county on the seventh day of May one thousand eight hundred and thirty one at the house of the said John Winfree in the said county this affiant after being first sworn upon the holy Evangellist of almighty God deposeth and saith that he served five years in the revolutionary war and was well acquainted with Capt. Jacob Cohen who was in service at the same time that this affiant was in the years 1776 and 1777 the latter year Capt. Cohen were sent to another station and this affiant believe as he have always understood that the said Capt Cohen served during the war he commanded a company of Calvary and discharged his duty faithfully he was under the Command of Col. Smith [see endnote] and served in the same briggade with this affiant the said Capt Jacob Cohen served in the continental service as well as in the service of the State of Virginia and further this affiant saith not.



The affidavit of Jacob Fariss [S8453] of lawfull age sworn to and subscribed in presence of me Peter T. Phillips a Justice off the peace in and for the County of Cumberland in the state of Virginia at his own house in said County the 11th day of May 1831 saith that he was acquainted with Capt. Jacob Cohen and that he saw the said Capt Cohen in the summer of 1780 or 81 at Cumberland Courthouse Dressed in the uniform of a Cavalry officer, and had a Cavalry Sword, at which time himself and the said Cohen had some conversation about the War; and that the said Cohen told him that he should join his company in a few days. And further this affiant saith not



The affidavit of James Taylor who is now about seventy five years old who sayeth that he was a Soldier in the war of the revolution from the year seventy five until the termination of the war excepting a few months and in the course of said war he was acquainted with Jacob Cohen who served in a Company of Cavalry but as to what office he bore this affiant does not at present recollect but remembers he was in the battle of Gilford [sic: Guilford Courthouse NC, 15 Mar 1781] and served some years in the Army but how many I dont recollected at present but his present impression is that 1779 and 1780 was a part of the time that he the said Cohen served and further sayeth not
[Prince Edward County, 14 May 1831]



The affidavit of James Falwell of Lawful age, sworne to & subscribed in presence of Mr J S Mills a Justice of the peace for the County of Buckingham in the state of Virginia this 2nd day of March 1832 saith—That he knew Capt. Jacob Cohem was in the regular service in the war of the revolution – also he certifies that there came an express for the regular light horse while stationed at Suffolk Town & Capt Jacob Cohen went on with others to the battle of Gilford & I also knew him to be a regular officer at that time in the regular service & after the battle of Gilford he return'd back to the same station he went from & continued in the same Batalion he was in before & when this affiants time was up, the said Jacob Cohen remained in the Army as an officer in the regular line – This being the second affidavit given by James Falwell, that he well recollects the above stated facts which was omitted in his other affidavit as I myself was commanded by Capt Charles Patteson from Buckingham at the above state time. given under my hand the day & date above.

James hisXmark Falwell

Alexandria July the 20 1832

Dear Sir [Thomas W Gilmer, Charlottesville] in your publication you now would undertake for a moderate commission on the amount recovered to establish the individual claims so that they may be paid at the Treasury department or you will take pleasure in communicateing such information as you possess to the officers or their proper representatives Sir I would thank you for your information on the amount Due to a captain of cavelry who served 6 years in the Revolutionary War from 1776 down to 1781 for which I have obtained certificates proveing his service in the war Some of the certificates certify that he was in the battle of Gilford and at the battle of James Town and was commanded by General Waine[?] and by Genl. Layfayette and he is also said to be in the continentle service and in the regular service I also wish to know everry ammanity [amenity] that he is entitle to boath in land and money and whether his heirs is not entitled to interest on any amount of money that is due to his heirs he departed this life in 1798 I wish to know on what termes you will see after this business so as I can get this claim I wish you to be particular in communicateing the correct statement to me so as I may give you answer weather I will get you to see after the claim or not please answer this as soone as possible and oblige yours

[signed] William Cohen

My address is William Cohen Silver Smith Alexandria

The affidavit of John Boatright [sic: John Boatwright S5290] of lawful age taken at Prince Edward Court House Virg'a this 15th day of October 1832

This affiant being duly sworn saith That he was intimately acquainted with Jacob Cohen in Cumberland County in this state about the year 1781 that he was at that time a Captain of Cavalry, that under the Command of Gen'l Lafayette, he went to Yorktown and at Jamestown on his way he had and engagement with the enemy & lost one man. that Jacob Cohen was in said engagement. this deponent says he was in the army with him & from thence went to Yorktown, where he remained till the Enemy surrendered [19 Oct 1781]: after that he returned home, and did not enter the Service any more within the knowledge of this affiant: this affiant was under the command of Cap. Seymor Scott [Seymour Scott?] at the above stated time

John hisXmark Boatright

Alexandria December the 17 1832

Mr Thomas W Gilmer Sir I wish you to see after the claim for the Heirs of Jacob Cohen for five years full pay in money with the interest on the money agreeable to his Grade as a captain of cavalry he Ranks in pay with a Major which entitles the Heirs to five thousand three hundred and thirty three and two thirds of an acres of Land from the State of virginia and three hundred acres from the General Government

I also inclose you a list of the officers and soldiers pay and their inlistments at different times in the war so as you may have some insight in the buisness if you have never seen it before

Sir please to Liquiate this buisness for me as soon as possible and get all the necessary papers that is wanting then write to me and I will come on to Richmond and Receive them and bring on my proof of Heirship and my power of attorney to Receive them

you will please to let me know when you write to me what you will charge me for seeing after and to get all the necessary papers that is wanting to get my claim

Sir I am yours with Due Respeck William Cohen
please direct to Wm Cohen Silver Smith Alexandria

March the 19 1833

Dear Sir I understand the assembly has adjourned and I am very anxious to hear from you to know whether you have seen after the cash claim I wish to know whether the cash claim is to be paid at the City of Washington or at Richmond for the cash claim is a different claim from the Land claim, there is no dispute in the cash claim and I wish you to see after that as soon as possible I have been advised to administer which I shall do in a few days time the contract which we made in Richmond was not Witnessed and I wish to have that done as I am acting for others as well as my self please answer this letter as soon as possible and oblige yours William Cohen

Virginia Buckingham County to wit [11 May 1833]

I do certify that about the year One thousand 1[?][?] in examining the several Reports of the Continental & State Officers of the Virginia Line I saw in one list of Officers of the Continental Cavalry I believe among the names of the Officers was the Name of Capt Jacob Cohen. I did know Jacob Cohen of the City of Richmond who was a Partner with Isaiah Isaacs I was satisfied from the [several undeciphered words] in the Continental & state Service knew no other person of the same Name

Some time afterwards a Mr William Cohen a silver smith of [undeciphered word] who was, he said a son of Captain Cohen came to my House & showed me sundry Affidavits to prove his Fathers claim, one of them stated that Capt. Jacob Cohen served during one period of the Revolutionary War under Colo Gregory Smith. he informed me that the Auditor s'd there was no Field Officer of the Name of Smith in the Regular Army. I told the [undeciphered] that the Auditor of Virginia was mistaken [see endnote], that I knew him. I think he lived below Richmond. I promised Mr. Cohen I would Examine all the Reports which were in the keeping of the [one or two undeciphered words] of the Rolls for the Paper that contained Capt Jacob Cohens Name. I did carefully do so, but the Paper was lost or mislaid. I examined the Manuscript Journal of the House of Delegates & found that Lieut Col Gregory Smith was elected to that Rank in 1776 under a Law of the Virginia Convention at their Meeting in Richmond in December 1775. The Report of the Names of the Officers in Crokets Regiment was lost for many years, but was found about 1832 & his Heirs drew his half pay for life. I have no Interest or Commission in this case.
William DuVal [S8362]

Richmond April 13th 1834

Sir I have received your letter of the [?]th and regret that I cannot give the information you request. There was not much intercourse between the cavalry and the infantry during the war of our revolution, and this may account for my being totally unacquainted with Capt. Cohen. I do not recollect ever to have seen him. I have [undeciphered word] the Auditors office in which is a list of all the officers in the Virginia line who have drawn their depreciation and I do not find the name of Capt Cohen named therein.

I am Sir [undeciphered] your obed't [illegible signature possibly of John Marshall S5731]

Petition for bounty land.

The Heirs of Jacob Cohen – Capt. State line.

There is a great deal of testimony fil'd in this case. But, although very voluminous, it does not satisfactorily prove a continued service, at any one [undeciphered word] of three years. Some witnesses say, that Cohen was an officer, both in the continental & state line. One says, that he knew him in service in 1776 & 1777, and believes he serv'd to the end of the war. another witness says, that after the surrender of Lord Cornwallis, at york Town, Captain Cohen retir'd from the service, went home, and never, as the witness believes, enter'd the Service afterwards. Another witness knew Cohen, in service, (he believes) in

1778 & 1779. As I before remark'd, there is no satisfactory proof of continued service for three years and no proof whatever of service for & during the war.

I have look'd, in vain, for the name of Captain Jacob Cohen, on the army Registers, both of the Continental & State lines; and on the Rolls of officers of the Revolutionary army, and returns to, & Reports of, Boards of Field Officers, which were made from time to time, and have been kept on file in the 1st auditors office.

It is very improbable, and almost impossible, that an officer, of the grade of Captain, should have serv'd through the whole of the Revolutionary war, or even for three years; and that his name should not appear ever on the Army Register, or on some of the Rolls of the Army, or returns of regiments &c.

With deference, I report the claim doubtful. The Executive has already twice rejected it; and there is nothing now in the case, which seems to authorize, or require, an allowance of it.

Respectfully submitted/ John H. Smith Com'r. &c

April 23rd 1834

To his Excellency/ Gov'r Tazewell

Alex'a. D.C. Feb. 6th 1835

To His Excellency/ Littleton W. Tazewell, Governor of Virginia.

Sir: Whereas by an instrument of writing bearing date January 31st 1835 from under my hand and seal certain powers were by me given to John A. Lee, and which instrument is in the words following – "I this day bargained with John A. Lee to settle all & every claim I may have against the United States or State of Virginia or either of them for the services of Jacob Cohen, an Officer in the Revolutionary Army, and bind myself, my heirs &c to allow the said John A. Lee one thousand dollars, he paying all necessary expences incurred by himself, and no other shall hereafter have power in the premises." Now I do hereby advise you that I have revoked & annulled the powers thus granted to the said John A. Lee, and have forbidden him to act for me in any manner whatsoever in reference to any claims which I may have against the General Government or the State of Virginia.

And I do hereby request of your excellency that you will cause this notice of a revocation of said Lee's powers in my behalf to be filed with any papers already on file, in the proper office for the investigation of Revolutionary claims on the State of Virginia.

I am your Excellency's Most Ob't. humble Serv't./ William Cohen

About ten or twelve years after the Revolutionary War, my Father was sitting at his desk looking over and examining his papers, and in pulling out the papers he pulled out his Commission with them. I was standing by him he told me that was his Captains commission in the Revolutionary war. He opened it and read it over after he read it over I asked my Father to let me look at it. he handed it to me I observed to my Father, why Father this is not paper. he said no it is parchment, such as they write commissions on. I looked at the writing and it was a beautiful hand writing like unto copy plate, and there was an Eagle impression upon the head of the parchment after looking until I was satisfied, I then handed it back to him again, and I never saw it afterwards. I have hunted for it to see if I could possibly find it, but the search was all in vain. I could not find it nor do I know what has become of it. I also certify that about three or four months to the best of my recollection before my father departed this life, I heard him say that he thought [it] hard that the government had never made any arrangement to pay off the Officers & Soldiers for their services rendered in the Revolutionary War. My Father Jacob Cohen departed this life June the 2nd 1798.

[signed] William Cohen

[District of Columbia, County of Alexandria, 25 Feb 1837]

Richmond Va December 1st 1837

Sir I beg leave once more to present for your decision the case of Matthew Nightingales heirs for bounty Land and also the claim of Jacob cohens heirs. The papers in these two cases are on file in the proper Departments and both cases have been rejected by the Executive, but I most respectfully represent as their agent and attorney contrary to the evidence in the cases and that great injustice has been done

them. I therefore ask, you, to reexamine these claims and if you do, I am satisfied you will allow them.
1st as to Matthew Nightengales claim.

It appears from the report made by the Commissioner Mr. Smith that he recommends their claim to be rejected, because he says he can find no Law, which ranks a boatswain with a commissioned officer of the infantry as to the quantity of bounty Land to be allowed him, but he says "It has been the practice of the Executive to allow 2666 $\frac{2}{3}$ acres of bounty Land to Boatswains. This practice may have been founded on reason & Law. I Do not say it is not." Here is an admission that the practice has been to allow Boatswains 2666 $\frac{2}{3}$ acres, and that it may be founded on reason & Law and the Commissioner continues by saying "I do not say it is not" – and yet this case is rejected, after the practice has been so established and the Law so construed and interpreted in every case before Matthew Nightengales. It is just, is it fair, to deprive his heirs of what has been allowed to the heirs of others. Will your State act partially in this case, or will you not give the same to Matthew Nightengale, that has been given to others. What injury to the Country can result from this just and equal act by the Executive. Besides Nightengales heirs Perhaps but few, if any exist with a simular claim. I have conversed with officers of the Navy and they all inform me that the Boatswain's station[?] according to the rules of service entitles him to the 2666 $\frac{2}{3}$ acres. His pay & emoluments equal those of a Lieutenat in the Land service?

2^{ndly} Jacob Cohen's claim appears to have been rejected on the ground, that the case is "doubtful" – a most astonishing ground to be applied to a revolutionary soldier's heirs asking for what their country had promised. I hold the reverse of the principle in this case decided. If it be "doubtful" that doubt ought to give the heirs of the old soldier his bounty Land. It is nothing to the Country, The government loses nothing by giving her land to her own citizens, but the claimant loses much, if he loses his right and if through "a doubt" the claimant does not get his land, great and crying[?] injustice is done to him, if he is entitled to it, therefore a "doubt" ought to decide the case in favor of the old soldier.

1st It is proven by Wm Cohen that he seen and read his father's commission as Capt of cavalry during the revolution and that it is lost and cannot now be found

2^{ndly} It is proven by William Duval that he saw the name of Capt. Jacob Cohen on an old list of Officers of the Continental cavalry of the Va Line and that upon search that list has been not found.

Gen'l Lafayette [affidavit not in file] also swears that "the name of Capt. Jacob Cohen, as an officer in the continental army, is well remembered by him" when he commanded the Virginia division in 1777-1778 [sic: 1781].

3^{rdly} It is proven by half dozen respectable witnesses that Capt Jacob Cohen was in the continental service as Capt of Cavalry in 1776-77-78-79-80-81. Here are witnesses establishing the fact, that he was in service in each of these years, as Capt [undeciphered] and yet the Commissioner says the evidence is "doubtful" as to whether he was in the public service for three years at a time. The words of the Commissioner are, "with deference I report the claim doubtful" and it was rejected. If he was in the public service in each of these years as Capt of Cavalry, is not the presumption that he was during the whole time, until the contrary be shewn? will you require him to prove, his daily, weekly or monthly service in every year of the three years to entitle him to his bounty and pay, both of which is asked? Such a requisition would be preposterous and impossible, for the nature of the service he was acting in, that of cavaly, which required him one second to be here and another 100 miles of. He died when his children were minors and they know nothing of the case except what others have told them.

Again The affidavit of William Duval does not appear to have been before the executive when the claim was rejected and it is now offered. It is new testimony and very strong.

I most respectfully ask you to examine these two cases upon the testimony offered and to allow the to the heirs of these two old [the rest missing]

Washington City, DC/ 14 feb'y. 1838

My dear Sir [Gov. David Campbell] [undeciphered word], as I know you must be, by the session of your Legislature at this moment and by the business necessarily attendant thereon, I feel reluctant to remind you of the claim of Capt. Jacob Cohen's heirs for his revolutionary bounty Land, submitted to you

when I was at Richmond in the last of November or the beginning of December. I think a few minutes given by yourself to the examination of the papers in his case will satisfy you that the warrant ought to issue.

His heirs are poor and in want, their father faithfully served the state, as proven by half dozen witnesses or more during the whole revolutionary war and they ask the reward promised. It was rejected upon the ground only, that it was "doubtful." This doubt ought to have resolved itself in favor of the Old officer. The amount is every thing to him and nothing to the Country.

Since the rejection upon the ground of "doubt" additional testimony is offered to you, viz, the testimony of Major Duvall, proving the fact that he had seen the name of "Capt. Jacob Cohen of the Cavalry" on a muster roll in the Department of yr state, but that it is now lost. This additional testimony, seen with my friend Governor Tazwell, ought to remove a "doubt."

first we prove that his name has been seen on the rolls; Secondly that the roll containing it, is lost, as were other rolls, and either by fire or otherwise and thirdly we prove a service from early in the war for more than three years – added to the fact of his name being on the rolls now lost, is the fact proven by Gen'l Lafayette's letter, which you have among the papers, that he well recollects the name of "Capt. Jacob Cohen of the Cavalry" among those he commanded in the state of Virginia.

May I ask your decision on this case and I feel assured, if you will examine the evidence and take every thing into consideration you will not hesitate to allow it. It is all important to the destitute heirs, who are Citizens of yr state, to have it as soon as possible.

I refer you to my letter stating the case when I first laid it before you.

Yrs with great esteem and respect/ Wm. L. Brent

NOTE:

Lt. Col. Gregory Smith was in the 3rd Regiment of the Virginia State Line from 20 Dec 1776 to July 1777 when he was promoted to Colonel and transferred to the 2nd Regiment of the Virginia State Line. Smith had previously served in the militia and then in the Virginia Continental (regular) army, but as a Captain rather than a Colonel.

Like Commissioner Smith, I could find no record of a Jacob Cohen in the Continental Army or in the Virginia State line. No pension application mentions a Captain Cohen.

The subject of some of the above affidavits may be confused with Jacob I. Cohen, (1744 - 1822) who served in the Charleston SC Militia and after the war formed a partnership in Richmond VA with Isaiah Isaacs, who had also been a Charleston militiaman. Jacob I. Cohen subsequently moved to Philadelphia where he died in 1822, but the Jacob Cohen who is the subject of the above application died in 1798, according to his son, William Cohen.

Other affidavits may refer to a Jacob Cohen who was held aboard the prison ship *Forbay* in Charleston Harbor (<http://revwarapps.org/b70.pdf>). This Jacob Cohen may have been exchanged with other prisoners near Jamestown VA in the summer of 1781, and it is conceivable that he then commanded a cavalry company in the Cumberland County VA Militia. Militia service, however, did not entitle a soldier to bounty land from Virginia.

Baroway, Aaron. The Cohens of Maryland. Maryland Historical Magazine 17(1) 1922. pp 359-362.

Available of Google Books.

Brownfield, Peter Egill. From Private to Colonel: Jewish Service in the Revolutionary War. American Council for Judaism, Spring 2006. http://www.acjna.org/acjna/articles_detail.aspx?id=405

Holz, Rabbi Anthony D. Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, Charleston, SC. Generations 11(1) May 2005. p8 <https://images.shulcloud.com/1240/uploads/Documents/Museum-Archives/Celebrate-350-Generations.pdf>

Hühner, Leon. The Jews of Virginia from the Earliest Times to the Close of the Eighteenth Century.

Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society No. 20 (1911), p97

https://www.jstor.org/stable/43057876?seq=13#metadata_info_tab_contents

An account of some of Jacob Cohen's descendants can be found in *Missouri's Silver Age* by Norman Mack (Carbondale IL: Southern Illinois University Press. 2005. pp 33-36), available on Google Books.

The following is from *Virginia Soldiers of 1776*, Vol. 3, Louis A. Burgess, Ed. Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 1973.

Exec. Dept. Mar. 13, 1838. The heirs of Jacob Cohen are allowed land for his service as a Captain of Cavalry in the Contl. line. David Campbell, Governor.

At a court held District of Columbia, Washington Co. before the Hon. Samuel Chase, Judge of the Orphans court; evidence was adduced proving that Robert Cohen, William Cohen, Margaret Reynolds, and Thomas Cohen are the only surviving children and heirs at law to Captain Jacob Cohen, dec'd. That Jacob Cohen died within the year 1798 in the town of Alexandria, now in D. C., then in Fairfax Co. Va. Certified as from records of the court, Edward N. Roach, Clerk. Mar. 10, 1838.

Received of Register, warrant No. 8531 for 4000 acres, Signed, William Cohen. Witness, John Armistead....

Washington, D. C. 16 Ma., 1838. Thomas Jacobs, aged 68 made oath that he knew Capt. Jacob Cohen of Va. Contl. line, that Capt. Cohen died in Alexandria, 1798, leaving Robert and William Cohen, Margaret Reynolds (died since) and Thomas Cohen. His wife was living at the time of his death, when she left Alexandria and has not been heard of since, undoubtedly long since dead.