

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Virginia documents pertaining to George Ralls VAS4161
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris.

[From [rejected claims in the Library of Virginia.](#)]

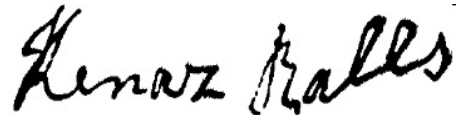
Prince William County to Wit

This day personally appeared before [undeciphered] Foster a Justice of the Peace for s'd County, Captain Charles B. Atwell [Charles B. Atwell (Atwell) S10064] of the county aforesaid aged about 67 years, And being duly sworn. says he was well acquainted with Captain George Ralls belonging to the Navy of the State of Virginia during the Revolutionary Way who Commanded a Vessel as Captain [several illegible words] in the year 1775 and on seeing him [several undeciphered words] and does verily believe he served to the end of the war – Given under my hand this seventh day of May 1833

Dr Helm informed by letter that he saw in Commissioner Smith's office in a small book where George Ralls was appointed Capt in the Continental navy of Va by the proper authorities a certificate to that effect will be necessary to Lay before the Governor & Council with the papers which Patton will [undeciphered word] you. also if it can be ascertained the period at which his pay discontinued which I think can be ascertained some where among the public archives, it will be necessary to apprise the Council that Atwell was a revolutionary officer

This is to Certify that I was well acquainted with Capt George Ralls who was a Captain in the American Navy during the American Revolution (he being a son of John Ralls of Stafford County Va and Father, whose name was Edward Ralls being a [undeciphered word] Brother of the said John) The said Capt George Ralls had command of a Schooner at the mouth of Quantico Creek; I was on board of a sloop at the same time commanded by George Neal[?] who sailed to Back Creek, said to be eleven miles from Delaware River, I being then about 16 years old. I understood that Cap. George Ralls went on a cruise from Quantico Creek, was taken prisoner by the British, was carried to the Tower in London, stayed there 18 months; and by disguise made his escape, got to Scotland thence to France, and so came home. My informant I cannot name - it might be himself, as I saw him and was repeatedly in his company after his return. he had a severe spell of sickness after his return, was confined at Charles Ralls's (his brother) in the upper end of Stafford County. had the white swelling, which caused him to go lame the balance of his days, he settled himself in Centreville and died there or near that place. I well know that he always bore the title of Capt Ralls and Visited him at Centreville.

Kenaz Ralls [S18561]



State of Virginia }
Fauquier County } Ss.

Kenaz Ralls about the seventy first year of his age, made Oath in due form of Law before me a Justice of the peace, in and for the County aforesaid, that the above certificate to which he subscribed his name contains a true statement of facts to the best of his knowledge

Given under my hand this 15th day of July 1834 Wm Thompson

City of Richmond Jany 30th 1835/

At the request of Capt. French Strother who is the friend & agent of a part of the descendants of Capt George Ralls a Captain I suppose & believe in the State Navy during the war of the Revolution, I make the following statement; Certain papers were sent me whilst in the Congress of the united states for the

purpose of obtaining pay for the heirs of Capt Ralls from the United States or the Commonwealth of Virginia. These papers all tended to prove that Capt. Ralls was in the Service of Virginia & in her State Navy. also that he was captured, carried to London & confined in the Tower, that he made his escape & afterwards reached Paris, where he called upon Dr. [Benjamin] Franklin for aid in accomplishing his return to America. I have a distinct recollection that the note or letter from Doctor Franklin to Capt. Ralls made it a point of his support in advancing him [undeciphered] money that he (Dr. F) was the Minister of the United States & that Ralls was in State service, that he sent him a small sum notwithstanding that difficulty. The signature of Dr. Franklin I believed to be genuine, by comparison to my recollection of that signature, with others said to be genuine & among those that I have seen [part missing from bottom of page] at Washington. These papers so sent me were either returned by me to the parties interested, or filed in some of the offices or bureau's at Washington City; or they were lost or mislaid by me. I am well persuaded that I cannot be mistaken as to the substance of Dr Franklins note or letter to Capt Ralls written in France, as it was the subject of conversation between some of those concerned soon after & frequently since that time.

J. S. Barbour

Henrico County

John S. Barbour of Culpeper County made oath before me in due form of law that the foregoing Statement by him [illegible] the truth to the best of his knowledge & belief. Given under my in my official capacity as hereto subscribed, this 30th Jany in the year of Christ 1835 Jno B. Mosby J.P.

At a Court held for Loudoun County 9th November 1835

On the motion of John Dunkum and Margaret A. his wife formerly Margaret A. Ralls, the Court doth order that it be Certified to the Register of the Virginia Land Office, that it satisfactorily appears to this court, that George Ralls late of this County, and who was reputed to be a Captain of The Navy of Virginia, during the War of the Revolution, departed this life, in this County on the [blank] day of [blank] Seventeen hundred and ninety five, that George Calvert[?], was on the 8th day of April, Seventeen hundred and ninety nine appointed his adm'r with the [undeciphered], who also departed this life, sometime in the year Eighteen hundred and Twenty, leaving the Estate of the said Geo Ralls unrepresented until this day, when French Strother has been and is appointed administrator de bonis non, with the Will annexed, in due Form of Law, on said estate.

That it also satisfactorily appears to the Court, that at the date of the death of the said George Ralls, he left these Children – George N. Ralls, Charles Ralls and Margaret A. Ralls his sole and only heirs at Law; the said Margaret hath intermarried with the said John Dunkum and is now alive; the said George N. since the death of his [part missing at bottom of page] William Smith; John W, Alexander P, Edward O. Nathaniel L, George N, and Margaret S. Ralls, the last six of whom, are infants under the age of Twenty one.

The affidavit of James Burk [S6649] taken this 25th day of Nov. 1835 before me a Justice of the Peace in and for the county of Elizabeth City – the said Burke being sworn deposeth & saith that he knew well captain george Ralls of the State Navy of virginia in the war of the revolution – that the said Ralls commanded an armed vessel of said navy, & sailed from Hampton roads early in the war for the West Indies – that this affiant has often heard said Ralls speak of his vessel being captured by the enemy and himself sent a prisoner to England – that after the return of said Ralls, this affiant frequently saw said Ralls and in command of a [undeciphered word] vessel which was much about Hampton and neighboring waters. Further this affiant saith not. Sworn to this 25th day of Nov 1835 Wm Hope JP

Virginia Stafford County To Wit

This day [5 Nov 1835] Personally appeared before me Nath P Williams a Justice of the Peace for the County aforesaid Lewis Williams a man of good report and who would be considered a creditable Witness in any Court in our County and made Oath according to Law that George Ralls with whom he

was Personally acquainted many years since was in the service of the State of Virginia and the said Lewis Williams was called out as Minute Man to Hamton [sic: Hampton] in this State and there found the said Ralls commander of a Lookout Vessel and he has just cause to believe that the said Ralls captured a Bittish Merchant Vessel and afterward recaptured and Himsef and his Vessel taken and he carried to great Brittain and there confined [part missing at bottom of page] several years and further this Deponant [the rest missing]

1837 May 17. This claim rejected [Gov.] David Campbell

NOTES:

George Ralls wrote a narrative of his capture and imprisonment that is now in the manuscript collection of the New-York Historical Society. According to Sheldon Samuel Cohen, *Yankee Sailors in British Gaols: Prisoners of War at Forton and Mill, 1777-1783* (University of Delaware Press, 1995, pp 52-53), Ralls was captured by HMS *Seaford* at St. Eustace on 24 May 1777 and transported to Mill prison. For more on the capture of the *Jenny* and the character of Capt. George Ralls, see "The Capture of the Jenny Boat, Dutch Unrest, and the Reverse of Van Bibber," Chap. 3 of *The History of Virginia's Navy of the Revolution*, by Robert Armistead Stewart (1934; 1993 reprint Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co.)

According to E. M. Sanchez-Saavedra, *A Guide to Virginia Military Organizations in the American Revolution*, p 152, the boat *Jenny* "may have been a privateer rather than a state-owned boat. However, it was fitted out and armed at public expense."

The site American War of Independence - At Sea (<https://awiatsea.com/>) has the following regarding the *Jenny*.

VANavy:152, ND9:194, ND10:508, 510, ND11:891, 924, American privateer schooner/boat, Capt George Ralls, fitted out at St. Eustatius, seized a British ship as it left the harbor there, then was captured along with the prize in June 1777 by the *Seaford*, Capt John Colpoys, condemned at Antigua 25 June 1777. <https://www.awiatsea.com/Hough/Hough%20List%20J-K.html>