

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Virginia documents pertaining to John Stevens VAS4484  
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris.

[From bounty-land records in the Library of Virginia. The original petition by the heirs is mostly illegible.]

1776 Dr Capt John Stevens of the Contin'l Schooner Lewis  
Sept 2 To 1 lb Sulp: 2 lbs Twine} By the Commissioners of the}  
p Journal 162 } £0.7.0 Navy Ch'd U States } £0.7.0  
The above account is truly copied from Continental Ledger No 20. page 121.  
Given under my hand at the Auditors Office Richmond this 29th day of March 1838.  
Jas E Heath Aud'r

Rece'd 19<sup>th</sup> June 1778 of John Stevens the Sum of Seventy Pounds Currency as advanced wages in the  
Schooner Gen'l Arnold pr Gayer Gardner

Recd 20 June 1778 of Capt John Stevens the sum of one Hundred and forty Pounds Currency for wages  
due me in the Continental Brig Chance[?] James hisXmark [illegible]  
£140 Charles Town

I was well acquainted with John Stephens in the revolutionary war, of Caroline County. I belonged to the  
Tempest, and John Stephens was captain of the look out boar belonging to the Tempest, called the Fly –  
when I entered the service in the fall of 1778, I found s'd Stephens then in service. In the fall of 1779 the  
Fly was [illegible] on Cape Henry Point by two of the enemy's ships & taken. Capt. Stephens left the Fly  
before the enemy took her, & went to Norfolk. What became of him afterwards, I know not.  
[Fauquier County, 31 Oct 1834] John Cannday [S9161]



Caroline County } To wit:  
State of Virginia }

This day personally appeared before me, a justice of the peace in and for said County, John Sutton  
[S6178] who after having been duly sworn saith, that he is now upwards of eighty years of age, that he  
entered the service of the United States in the war of the revolution in the year 1776 as purchasing  
Commissary became a Pay master; and acted as such until he was taken prisoner; that he was well  
acquainted with Captain John Stevens of this County before and after the war. That he recollects well that  
report said that Capt Stevens was in the State Navy, commanding a vessel during the war; that said Stevens  
has told him Sutton that he had a Commission, as Capt, in the Navy; and that from his knowledge of  
Stevens, as a Gentleman and a man [illegible] veracity, proven by a long and intimate acquaintance with  
said Stevens, he never had, nor has he at present, a doubt of his holding said Commission as above stated.  
I do furthermore certify that from a long and intimate acquaintance with said Sutton that his statement is  
entitled to full credit. Given under my hand and seal this the 14<sup>th</sup> day of May 1835.

[signed] Warner W. Grey J.P.

To his excellency Littleton W Tazewell governor of Virginia

The memorial of Harriet Corr formerly Harriet Stevens Charlotte Cannon formerly Charlotte  
Stevens of the County of Caroline Frances Coleman formerly Frances Stevens of the State of Tennessee  
Respectfully represent that they are the only heirs at law of the late Captain John Stevens of said  
county who was a Captain during the Revolutionary war in the State Navy. Your memorialists respectfully

state that they know nothing of the service of their Father but believe he entered the Navy very early in the year 1777 and continued nearly or quite to the close of the war in said service. Your memorialists state that as one of the heirs is in Tennessee and her residence not known they hope your excellency will take into consideration the almost impossibility of complying with an exact fulfilment of that order which requires that all the heirs shall sign this memorial and which order if rigidly enforced would so delay the proceedings as positively to exclude them from all the benefits of an appropriation made by Congress to pay the officers and soldiers who served an enlistment in the revolutionary war which appropriation they understand will be the last. Your memorialist beg leave to refer your excellency to two affidavits and two receipts accompanying this memorial one of the affidavits is of an individual who served with said Stevens and the receipts was found with the papers of said Stevens after his death. Your memorialists know that he had his com [commission?] but have not been able to find it they beg leave also respectfully to refer your excellency to Com'r Smiths report. Respectfully, yours

[15 July 1835]

[signed] Harriet Corr Charlotte Cannon

Report on the claim of the heirs of Capt John Stevens, of the state navy, for bounty land for his services.

To the Governor/ Sir, The name of John Stevens, a Captain in the state navy, has not been found on the Army register of the State line. I have seen no proof of record, that he ever commanded the Tempest, or any other vessel belonging to the navy of Virginia, in the war of the Revolution.

The following orders may be seen in the [undeciphered] navy journal viz –

“ordered that Mr. Thomas [undeciphered] deliver unto Capt John Stevens two barrels of Pork for the use of the Schooner Lewis, to be replac’d[?] by Genl [Andrew] Lewis” – a similar order for six bbls of beef for the use of the Schooner Lewis. (see [undeciphered] navy Journal p 142 date Dec’r 31 1776) The Schooner Lewis was a different vessel from the Lewis Galley. The latter was always call’d in the navy Journals the “Lewis Galley” – I have not seen any proof that the schooner Lewis belong’d to the Navy. She probably was a vessel in the service of the board of Trade, under the influence of this opinion, I reported Capt Stevens, in 1833, as having been employ’d in trade and not entitled to bounty land. (See a List of officers of the state navy &c &c book No 38 p 8. Journals of the House of Delegates Session 1833-34) I am still of the same opinion, notwithstanding the testimony of living witnesses which is herein after referd to. These witnesses knew him in service, but that service was probably not render’d in the navy. In this opinion, however, I may be mistaken. The witnesses speak positively & with confidence.

The facts which have been prov’d by witnesses are as follows viz –

John Cannaday a man “of excellent character,” says that he belong’d to the Tempest, that John Stevens (with whom he was well acquainted) was Captain of the look out boat belonging to the Tempest, call’d the Fly – that when he the said Cannaday entered the service in 1778, he found the said Stevens in service – that in the fall of 1779 the said vessel Fly was driven on shore at Cape Henry by two of the Enemy’s ships & taken, & that Capt Stevens left the Fly before the enemy took her, and went to Norfolk – what became of him afterwards the witness knows not (see aff’t of John Cannaday)

John Sutton, an officer of the Revolution, and whose statements are said to be entitled to “full credit,” says that he was well acquainted with Capt John Stevens of Caroline County before & after the war of the Revolution – that it was reported, that the s’d Stevens was in the state navy commanding a vessel during the war; that the s’d Stevens told him that he held a Commission of Captain in the navy; that the said Stevens was a man of good character, and he has no doubt of his holding the said Commission. (see the aff’t of John Sutton)

Two receipts have been fil’d by the claimants. They bear date June 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> 1778 and were given by James Galling[?] & Gayer Gardner, for wages in the Continental Brig Chance, and in the Schooner Gen’l Arnold respectively.

I report the above state of facts, and have nothing to add to them

Respectfully submitted/ John H Smith Com’r &c/ July 27<sup>th</sup> 1835

1835 July 29 Rejected

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

The certificate of William White of Caroline County and State of Virginia. The s'd White states that John Stevens and himself were born and raised in the same neighborhood and that he has known s'd Stevens from a boy. Said Stevens went into the army in the revolutionary war, about the time that Governor Dunmore absconded from Williamsburg [8 Jun 1775], and was in the battle which took place near Guinn's Island on that occasion [Gwinn Island, 8-10 Jul 1776]. After that, John Stevens entered into the navy of Virginia, having obtained the commission of a captain. Whilst in the navy, he was sent to France for arms, and on his return from France, he was taken prisoner, in attempting to get into Charlestown [SC]. He was sent by the enemy to St Augustine, where he was detained a prisoner for a long while. The s'd White thinks that Stevens was released as a prisoner by exchange, and got to Virginia in December 1779, where he remained till the close of the war. The s'd White cannot say whether Stevens was actually in service again, but thinks that he retained his commission as an officer, & was waiting till the close of the war for another vessel to be fitted up for his command. Given under my hand this 17th day of May 1834  
[signed] William White

To the Executive of Virginia The petition of Francis V Sutton of Caroline County respectfully states, that he is the attorney in fact of the heirs of the late capt Jno Stevens who was a captain in the Va State navy in the revolutionary war; that the claim of the s'd heirs for bounty lands, on account of the services of capt Jno Stevens was presented & considered & rejected some time since. your petitioner has been furnished with additional evidence of the services of capt Stevens, which he thinks will be sufficient. He therefore asks a reconsideration of the case. All which is respectfully submitted  
Aug 27<sup>th</sup> 1835  
[signed] Fran's V Sutton