

after the present Constitution of the United States went into operation, being appointed one of the associate judges of the supreme court, and strongly urged by the President. General Washington,, to the acceptance thereof, on his way to the seat of Government, in an exhausted state, he was taken ill, compelled to return home, and died in a few weeks after. (March. 1790.) That for these services, he never received from Congress other compensation than the depreciated paper.

That your memorialists were left young at their fathers death, and that at the decease of their mother, his valuable papers, which had been preserved with great care, were lost, and have never since been recovered: although much pains have been taken to ascertain what became of them. It is believed, that among these were many other letters from General Washington to him, which might more fully show the connexion which still existed between them, and the cause and condition on which he withdrew from his family. In full confidence of the justice of their claim, your petitioners now pray your honorable body that they may receive, in virtue of their father's services, what they think he was so eminently entitled to, viz. the commutation of half-pay, and the bounty in lands provided by Congress for the officers and soldiers of the Revolutionary Army.

And your memorialists will pray, &c./ SARAH EASTON/ DOROTHY STORER.

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ACCOMPANY THE MEMORIAL OF SARAH EASTON AND DORATHY STORER.

THE services rendered by the late Col. Robert H. Harrison, in our revolutionary war, were of that distinguished character, to be known to the whole army, to the Congress who conducted the affairs of the revolution, and in general to the American people. In the commencement of the war, being a neighbor of General Washington's, and well known to him, he was invited by the general to join him as aid de camp and principal secretary, and he served in that station with as pure and unsullied a fame as any person ever enjoyed. In all the actions in which General Washington commanded, Colonel Harrison was present, near the person of the General, and exposed with him to equal danger. He assisted, as I have always understood, in the councils of war, where his opinions were highly respected. He was the faithful depository of the secret councils of the General, of the confidential communications to him from Congress, of the military movements that were intended to be made, and of all those secret councils, on the preservation of which the success of the army, and of the revolution itself, depended: and he was a most virtuous, able, and active agent in promoting every measure that was decided on.

In the most gloomy periods of the revolution, he was firm, persevering, and undaunted. I particularly remember that in the ever memorable retreat through Jersey, his example, in aid of that of the illustrious commander in chief, cheered the drooping spirits of others, and animated them to action. No person was more brave than Colonel Harrison, none more faithful, and I say with confidence, that few, very few, rendered more important services to their country. Had he sought promotion in the army, there can be no doubt that he might easily have obtained it; but he had no such ambition. To be eminently useful in the station which he held, was the sole object of his heart. It is impossible to look back to this eventful period, and especially to the great achievements of the army, in which he sustained so distinguished and useful a part, by the various, important and complicated duties he had to perform, without being deeply impressed with a sense of his rare merit, and acknowledging, with gratitude, his very important services. He did not leave the army until the liberties of his country were secured; nor then, till his constitution had received a severe shock. No sooner, however, was an opportunity afforded to the late commander in chief, than he seized it, to bestow on him a new and strong proof of his confidence and attachment, as well as of his high respect for his merit. On the adoption of the present constitution of the United States, when General Washington was called to the head of the government, he appointed Colonel Harrison a Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States. His constitution, however, was too far exhausted to permit him to enter on the duties of that office. He set out to undertake them, but did not survive the effort.

I certify these facts from a personal knowledge of them, in their most important circumstances, having served myself in our revolutionary war three campaigns, those of 1776—'7, and '8; in the first as

a lieutenant in the third Virginia regiment, and in the two last, as aid de camp to Major General Lord Sterling [sic: William Alexander, Lord Stirling], and they were afterwards known to me in common with other citizens who enjoyed public trusts, by which they became acquainted with public affairs. The documents, however, of the late army, and of the Congress, will sufficiently prove the facts. Of the recompense which Colonel Harrison received for his important services, I can say little: I have no doubt, however, that he received nothing more than his pay by the month, depreciated as it was when received. He was among the most diffident and modest of men, and the last to set up a pretension, or to make any claim for his services.

Given under my hand, at Washington, this [blank] JAS. MONROE. [James Monroe]

{The following letters, which were found among the papers of Colonel R. H. Harrison, will establish some of the important facts set forth in the Memorial, and stated in the above certificate and particularly the great confidence reposed in Colonel Harrison by General Washington. They form a small portion only of the correspondence which took place between them, as nearly the whole of the valuable papers of the former were unfortunately lost after the death of his widow, Mrs. H.}

MORRISTOWN, January 9th, 1777.

My dear Harrison,—I often intended, but before I had it in my power forgot, to ask you whether your brother in-law, Major Johnson, would not, in your opinion, make a good aid de camp to me: I know it is a question that will involve you in some difficulty, but I bef you will not consider the connexion between you in answering of it. I have heard that Major Johnson is a man of education, I believe him to be a man of sense; these are two very necessary qualifications: but how is his temper? As to military knowledge, I do not expect to find gentlemen much skilled in it; if they can write a good letter, write quick, are methodical and diligent, it is all I expect to find in my aids. Do not, therefore, if Major Johnson possesses these qualities, and a good disposition, refrain, (from false modesty,) to withhold your recommendation, because, in that case you will do him injustice and me a disservice.

I thank you for your kind congratulations on the capitulation of Cornwallis [19 Oct 1781]. It is an interesting event, and may be productive of much good, if properly improved; but if it should be the means of relaxation, and sink us into supineness and security, it had better not have happened. Great Britain, for some time past, has been encouraged, by the impolicy of our conduct, to continue the war; and should there be an interference of European politics in her favor, peace may be further removed from us than we expect; while one thing we are sure of, and that is, that the only certain way to obtain peace is to be prepared for war. Policy, interest, economy, all unite to stimulate the states to fill the continental battalions, and provide the means of supporting them. I hope the present favorable moment for doing it will not be neglected.

Mr. Custis's death, has given much distress in this family. I congratulate you on your late change, and am, dear sir, your most obedient and affectionate servant,
Robert H. Harrison, Esquire. GEORGE WASHINGTON

MOUNT VERNON, July 3d, 1785.

Dear Sir—In the interval between your leaving this, and the arrival of Mr. Briscoe, Mr. Montgomery, of Dumfries, recommended a young man whom he thought would answer my purpose; and being desired to speak to him, he accepted my offer, and will be with me in the course of a few days. Had it not been for this, the good character given of Mr. Briscoe, by you, and others, would have induced me, without hesitation, to have accepted his services. I thank you very sincerely, for the ready and early attention you paid to my inquiries. To assure you of the very great esteem and regard I have for you, is unnecessary, because you must be convinced of it; I shall only add, therefore, that I am, very affectionately, your obedient and obliged humble servant,

Robert H. Harrison, Esquire. GEORGE WASHINGTON.

NEW YORK, September 28th, 1789.

Dear Sir — It would be unnecessary to remark to you, that the administration of justice is the strongest cement of good government, did it not follow, as a consequence, that the first organization of the Federal judiciary is essential to the happiness of our country, and to the stability of our political system.

Under this impression, it has been the invariable object of my anxious solicitude, to select the fittest characters to expound the laws and dispense justice. To tell you that this sentiment has ruled me in your nomination to a seat on the supreme bench of the United States, would be but to repeat opinions with which you are already well acquainted; opinions which meet a just coincidence in the public mind.

Your friends and your fellow citizens, anxious for the respect of the court to which you are appointed, will be happy to learn your acceptance; and no one among them will be more so than myself.

As soon as the acts, which are necessary accompaniments of these appointments, can be got ready, you will receive official notice of the latter. This letter is only to be considered as an early communication of my sentiments, on this occasion, and as a testimony of the sincere esteem and regard, with which I am, dear Sir, your most obedient and affectionate humble servant,

The Honorable Robert H. Harrison.

GEORGE WASHINGTON

New YORK, November 23, 1789.

My Dear Sir—Since my return from my tour through the Eastern states, I have received your two letters, dated the 27th of last month, together with the commission which had been sent to you as a judge of the supreme court of the United States

I find that one of the reasons which induced you to decline the appointment, rests on an idea that the judicial act will remain unaltered. But in respect to that circumstance, I may suggest to you, that such a change in the system is contemplated, and deemed expedient, by many in, as well as out of Congress, as would permit you to pay as much attention to your private affairs, as your present station does.

As the first court will not sit until the first Monday in February, I have thought proper to return your commission, not for the sake of urging you to accept it, contrary to your interest or convenience, but with a view of giving you a further opportunity of informing yourself of the nature and probability of the change alluded to. This you would be able to do, with the less risque of mistake, if you should find it convenient to pass some time here, when a considerable number of members of both houses of Congress shall have assembled; and this might be done before it would become indispensable to fill the place offered to you. If, on the other hand, your determination is absolutely fixed, you can, without much trouble, send back the commission under cover.

Knowing, as you do, the candid part which I wish to act on all occasions, you will, I am persuaded, do me the justice to attribute my conduct in this particular instance to the proper motives, when I assure you that I would not have written this letter if I had imagined it would produce any new embarrassments. On the contrary, you may rest assured, that I shall be perfectly satisfied with whatever determination may be consonant to your best judgment and most agreeable to yourself.

I am, dear Sir, with sentiments of real esteem and regard, your most obedient and affectionate servant,
GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S. As it may be satisfactory to you to know the determination of the other associate judges of the supreme court, I have the pleasure to inform you that all of them have accepted their appointments.

BLADENSBURG, January 21, 1790.

My dear Sir, —I left home on the 14th inst. with a view of making a journey to New York, and after being several days detained at Alexandria, by indisposition, came thus far on the way. I now unhappily find myself in such a situation as not to be able to proceed farther. From this unfortunate event, and the apprehension that my indisposition may continue, I pray you to consider that I cannot accept the appointment of associate judge, with which I have been honored. What I do, my dear Sir, is the result of the most painful and distressing necessity.

I entreat that you will receive the warmest returns of my gratitude, for the distinguished proofs I have had of your flattering and invaluable esteem and confidence, and that you will believe that I am and shall always remain, with the most affectionate attachment, my dear Sir,

Your most obedient and obliged friend and servant,
(Endorsed private)

ROBERT H. HARRISON.

The President of the United States.

Mr. Harrison lived to return home, and died in March following,

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICES.

No. 500. To Lieutenant Colonel Robert Hanson Harrison.

I certify, that Robert Hanson Harrison, Esquire, Lieutenant Colonel in the continental army, entered the service in the month of October, 1775, as one of my aids de camp, and in May following became my secretary; the duties of which offices he discharged with conspicuous abilities: That his whole conduct, during all the interesting periods of the war, has been marked by the strictest integrity, and the most attentive and faithful services, while by personal bravery he has been distinguished on several occasions.

Given at head quarters this twenty fifth day of March, 1781. GEO. WASHINGTON.

I certify, that the above is a true copy taken from a volume in my possession, containing private letters from General Washington, from January, 1780, to December 18, 1782. Marked P. vol. 2, page 201.

BUSH. WASHINGTON.

Copy of a letter from Major General the Marquis De la Fayette, dated

LA GRANGE, October 28, 1821.

Dear Sir — I was lately in town, when I had the honor to receive your much esteemed letter, and hasten to forward my answer with the paper of which the enclosed is a duplicate. I hope it will arrive in time, and beg you to accept my thanks for the opportunity you have given me to express affectionate remembrances. Happy indeed I would be to flatter myself that I have, in some degree, contributed to the success of the wishes of a family, to whom I shall ever think myself bound by the ties of high regard and tender friendship, which united me to my dear companion in arms "and patriotism. Colonel Harrison. I beg you to receive, and present to the other members of the family, my sincere and affectionate regard.

D. Easton, Esq.

LA FAYETTE.

I know that the above is the hand writing of Major General La Fayette.

Washington, January 4th, 1822.

JAMES MONROE.

Of the exalted merit of Colonel Harrison, and of his long and faithful services, I have already borne, from my own personal knowledge, ample testimony. JAMES MONROE.

Copy of the paper referred to in Major General La Fayette's letter above.

My happy intimacy at head quarters during the revolutionary war, and a mutual friendship with Colonel R. H. Harrison, have enabled me to witness his high virtues, distinguished abilities, important services, as well as the very great share he had in the confidence, affection, and gratitude of General Washington.

While I have lived in, and during my ensuing intercourse with, the military family of which I am proud to have ever been considered as a member, I have seen Colonel Harrison entrusted with every secret, consulted in every emergency, employed on opportunities where patriotism and talents were most required; and although, at the time of the Colonel's retreat, I was employed on a separate command in Virginia, I may attest that his brother soldiers regarded him as an officer on furlough, ready to re-assume his post in case his health would allow it. So far at least goes my general recollection, and the remembrance of General Washington's own expressions, that if I had the honor of a seat in Congress, I should not hesitate to give a favorable vote on that subject.

And, in case there is an application made before the State Legislature in behalf of Colonel Harrison's children, I wish it may not appear too presuming from a survivor of the head quarters of those early times, to say, that a mark of satisfaction to the memory of their excellent father, gratifying, as it cannot fail to be, to the actual veterans of the revolutionary army, would not have been less gratefully applauded by those who are departed, namely, by our venerated commander in chief.

LA FAYETTE.

Copy of a letter from the late President Jefferson.

MONTICELLO, January 14, 1822.

Sir,—I am truly sorry it is not within my power to give you any information on the subject of the enquiries in your letter of the 9th. During the revolutionary war, Col. Harrison's services were employed in the army—mine chiefly in the cabinet, and very much within my own state, so that I never had an opportunity of acquaintance with Col Harrison. At the close of the war, I was sent to Europe, and did not return and join the government until March, 1790, in which month, I believe, Colonel Harrison died. I recollect the general expression of regret on that event. I should have been much gratified by the communication of anything within my knowledge which might have been useful to his family, and feel considerable relief that nothing could add to the weight of the testimony of the President and General La Fayette, as to the facts they attest.

Accept the assurance of my great respect,
D. Easton, Esq.

TH: JEFFERSON.

Copy of a letter from the Honorable John Jay, dated

BEDFORD, West Chester Co. (N. Y) 8th Jan. 1822.

Sir,—I received by the last mail, your letter of the 29th ultimo, respecting the character and serving of Colonel Robert H. Harrison, and expressing a desire that I would communicate to you my knowledge and sentiments on those topics.

I remember to have heard that gentleman frequently spoken of, and always in terms of respect and commendation. His occupation in the army, and mine in the Congress, and in the Convention of this state, keeping us separate from each other, we met only occasionally, and consequently our acquaintance was less intimate than it would otherwise have been.

I went to Europe in 1779, and did not return until after peace had been concluded. Subsequent to that period, the distance between his and my residence impeded that personal intercourse between us which my esteem and respect for his character would have induced me to cultivate.

Although it is to be regretted that a particular account of his virtues and military conduct had not been obtained from those of his respectable associates in the army who are now dead, yet it appears to me that his worth and services are rendered unquestionable by the esteem and affectionate attachment which the letters of General Washington to him clearly indicate. That great and good man long had daily opportunities to discern, and sincerely to express his real opinion of the merits of that valuable officer.

It also appears to me that the explicit testimony of President Monroe, and of the Marquis de La. Fayette. in favor of Colonel Harrison's patriotism and services, combined with the letters of General Washington, exclude the necessity of further evidence to manifest the gratitude and the tender regard for his children, which Colonel Harrison so well deserved of his country.

I have honor to be, Sir, your obedient servant,
David Easton, Esq.

JOHN JAY.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, Register's Office, 24th Dec. 1822.

I certify that having carefully examined the records of the Treasury, in relation to the commutation to the officers and soldiers of the revolutionary army, it is ascertained that Colonel Robert Hanson Harrison, secretary and aid de camp to his Excellency General Washington, did not receive commutation for five years full pay.

JOSEPH NOURSE, Register.

WAR DEPARTMENT, January 15, 1823.

I certify that the records of this office do not furnish any information relative to the resignation of Colonel Robert H. Harrison, who was aid de camp and secretary to General Washington during the revolutionary war.
C. VANDEVENTER, Chief Clerk, War Department

Relative view of the cases of

Col. A. Hamilton [Alexander Hamilton]
Entered the military family of General Washington, not before 1777 as one of his aids de camp, with the pay, &c. of a Lieutenant Colonel.

Colonel Hamilton retired from the army early in March, 1782—settled his account at this period, and same year became Receiver General of continental taxes for the state of New York—did not rejoin the army again

Colonel Hamilton—There is no evidence on record that he resigned his commission when he settled his account in March, 1782; and Colonel McHenry (formerly Secretary of War) says, in a letter to Mrs. Hamilton, that if he *had* resigned, officers of that grade were on record in the War Office, and if not found there, it was conclusive evidence that he had never resigned.

Colonel Hamilton—A warrant for the bounty lands due a Lieutenant Colonel in the continental army, was issued to the widow and children of Colonel H. in July, 1813 and subsequently (1816) a law was passed granting to his heirs the commutation of half pay, which in virtue of his services they claimed.

It may not be improper to observe, that General Washington, on resigning his commission into the hands of Congress, recommended his military family to their especial protection; and the Congress, by their President, assure him that they will attend to his request. Colonel Harrison was senior member of his family.

{COPY.}

WAR DEPARTMENT. December 14, 1814.

By the records in this Department, it appears that a warrant for four hundred and fifty acres of land, to satisfy the claim to United States' military bounty land, in right of "Alexander Hamilton," who was a lieutenant colonel in the revolutionary army of the United States, was issued to "Elizabeth Hamilton, widow, and the other heirs at law under the No, "622," dated "30th July, 1813."

(Signed)

NAT. CUTTING.

An Act for the relief of Elizabeth Hamilton.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the proper accounting officers of the Treasury be, and they are hereby, required to settle the account of Elizabeth Hamilton, widow, and representative of Alexander Hamilton, deceased, and to allow her five years' full pay for the services of her deceased husband, as a lieutenant

Col. R. H. Harrison

Entered the military family of General Washington in year 1775 as one of his aids de camp— in the following year, was appointed secretary to the commander in chief—pay fixed by a special resolve. 1st April. 1777.

Colonel Harrison retired from the army, in ill health, the latter end of March, 1781; became a judicial officer of the state of Maryland—did not rejoin the army again.

Colonel Harrison—There is no evidence on record that he ever resigned his commission. On the contrary, from the best living testimony, (Major General La Fayette,) there is the strongest grounds, if not positive proof, for believing that he retired on furlough—such power being lodged with the commander in chief.

Colonel Harrison—His daughters have never received, either the bounty in lands, the commutation of half pay, nor any consideration whatever from Congress, in virtue of their father's services.

colonel in the revolutionary war; which five years' full pay is the commutation of his half pay for life; to be paid out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated.

Approved, April 29, 1816.

[The following are from [rejected claims in the Library of Virginia](#). The file includes a petition to the Governor and Council of Virginia by David Easton for Sarah Easton and Dorothy Storer, which is not transcribed here, because it adds no new information. There are also several letters on behalf of their claim by James Monroe, only one of which is transcribed here.]

I have read the memorial signed by the representatives of the late Colonel Robt. H. Harrison addressed to the governor & council of the State of Virginia, and know that all the facts stated in it are perfectly correct. In the campaigns 1776, 7, & 8 I personally knew Col. Harrison, in the office of Secretary & Aid de Camp to the commander in chief, and had many opportunities of witnessing his important services, & becoming acquainted with his great & distinguished worth. I know that he left home, at the invitation of the Commander in Chief in the commencement of the revolution & continued in service in the same station to the period stated in the memorial. I have no doubt that he might have risen to any rank in the army which he might have wished, and that it was owing only to his attachment to Gen'l. Washington, & to the General's unbounded confidence in him, & knowledge of his merit, that he remained always in his family, employed in [several words missing from the online image] of the army & of the nation that [unknown number of words missing from the online image] documents belonging to the army of the revolution, and likewise by those of the congress during that period. They are indeed of such general notoriety, that no officer now living, who had the honor & satisfaction of serving his country in that conflict, or political character, who cannot attest them. From my personal knowledge of his service & merit, I always consider'd him one of those, who, next to the Commander in Chief, had contributed more to the success of the revolution, & of the establishment of our free government, than all others. I have always thought that he had a strong claim on the gratitude of his country while living & I now think that his children ought to receive the recompense to which he was entitled.

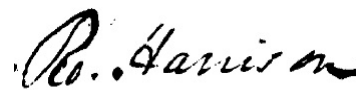
It is proper for me to add that Col. Harrison stood on the same ground in relation Virg'a that I did, in the campaigns of 1777 & 8, after I received the appointment of Aid de Camp to Major General Lord Sterling. I ceased to belong to the Virginia line, & lord Sterling did not command the troops of that ste, but of Jersey & Pensyl'a., yet the State of Virginia [part missing from the online image] of that State. Given under my hand at Washington this 9 nov'r. 1811

[James Monroe]



[From the date of the following memorandum it is clear that it does not pertain to Lt. Col. Robert Hanson Harrison.]

Memo. January 19th 1815: There remains, at Camp Powells Creek some plank which was carrid from the heights at Petersburg. this plank in my opinon is not worth more than \$50. a guard is sent up from Fort Powhatan weekly to guard s'd plank consisting of a noncomissioned officer and from 6 to 10 privates at least. Ro. Harrison



These men are much exposed, & dissatisfied with their situation.
Que. would not a sale of the plank (or a removal) be desirable?

NOTE: Sarah Easton was the former widow of John Jordan, pension application W24098. Dorothy Storer was the former widow of John Courts Jones, pension application W25166.