

[Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters](#)

Bounty Land application of John Laurens BLWt781-450

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Transcribed by Will Graves

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Know all Men by these Presents -- That we Francis Henderson and Frances Eleanor Henderson, the only in Legitimate Heir at law, of Lieutenant Colonel John Laurens deceased do hereby make constitute and appoint the Honorable Thomas Tudor Tucker, of the City of Washington, in the United States of North America, our true and lawful Attorney for us and in our name and for our use to receive from the Honorable the Secretary of War of the United States, the Warrant for the Military Bounty Land due us in right of the said Lieutenant Colonel John Laurens, deceased -- in conformity to our Claim duly substantiated, approved by the Secretary of War and on record in the War department. In witness whereof We have subscribed these Presence & affixed our seals this fifth day of May in the year of our Lord 1817.

S/ Fras. Henderson

S/ Frances Eleanor Henderson

To all to whom these presents may come, Greeting:

I certify, that the annexed writings contained in Eight and a half pages are true copies from the original papers on file in the Department of State.

In faith whereof, I James Monroe Secretary for the Department of State of the United States of America, have signed these presents, and caused the seal of my office to be affixed thereto, at the City of Washington, this 17th day of November A.D. 1812 and in the 37th year of the Independence of said States.

S/ Jas. Monroe

To the United States of America

In Congress Assembled.

The Memorial & Petition of Henry Laurens, on behalf of Frances Eleanor Laurens, an orphan daughter of John Laurens, late a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army of the United States & some time Commissioned by Congress Special Minister to the Court of France.

Humbly sheweth

That the said John Laurens entered as a volunteer in the service of the United States & acted as Aid de Camp Extra: to His Excellency General Washington in the month of August 1777.

That immediately or, very shortly, after the battle of Brandywine in September 1777, he was given in public orders as an Aid de Camp to the Commander in Chief with the Rank &, as the memorialist believes, Commission of Lieutenant Colonel.

That the said Lieutenant Colonel John Laurens continued to act in the Army & so far

gained the attention of Congress as to obtain from them in August or September 1778 a resolution, unsolicited, for his promotion; which he declined.

That in December 1780, the said John Laurens was unanimously elected by Congress, Special Minister, to the Court of Versailles, and in obedience to the Instructions of Congress, he without delay, proceeded to France accomplished the duties of his mission & returned to America in August 1781.

That early in September following he petitioned Congress for leave to rejoin the Army, which was granted with the addition of a Testimonial from Congress, of their approbation of his conduct.

That the said John Laurens immediately repaired to his post of Duty & persevered therein until the 27th day of August 1782, when -- He was slain in Battle.

The Memorialist has been informed & believes, the said John Laurens never received any part of his pay, as Lieutenant Colonel nor any Salary or allow wants under his Commission of Special Minister, excepting certain sums which appear charged to his account in the Treasurers Books viz.: 8400 Livres paid to him by Monsieur Grand in Paris by order from Doctor Franklin in April, May & June 1781. And 720 Spanish Dollars paid to him the 8th September 1781, by an order from the Honorable Robert Morris Esquire superintendent of Finance, amounting in the whole to about five hundred and twenty pounds sterling. These sums the Memorialist, upon good grounds, supposes, were expended in defraying part of the charges which the deceased had incurred in the active & expensive service in which he had been employed in France & on his return from thence by the way of Boston. Because, he knows, that for paying some part of expenses in France, the deceased, had taken up a considerable sum of money in Europe upon his credit.

But the Memorialist does not know, whether the said John Laurens intended to demand either pay or salary from the United States, having found no minutes of charge among such of the papers of the deceased as have hitherto come to his hands.

Wherefore the Memorialist, Humbly Prays, Congress will be pleased to take the premises under their consideration & make such order, as may inform him, whether he is to regard the above mentioned account standing in the public Books, as a debt due by the said John Laurens, or otherwise, to act therein, as to the Wisdom of Congress shall seem right.

Trenton in New Jersey
8th November 1784
S/ Henry Laurens

The Committee consisting of Mr. Read, Mr. Williamson and Mr. Holten to whom was referred the Memorial & Petition of Henry Laurens Esquire, in behalf of Frances Eleanor Laurens the orphan daughter of John Laurens Esquire, deceased late a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army of the United States and some time Commissioned by Congress Special Minister to the Court of France

Beg leave to submit the following report

Your Committee find that the said Lieutenant Colonel John Laurens, deceased sometime in the month of August 1777 entered as a Volunteer in the service of the United States & acted as an Aid de Camp Extra., to His Excellency General Washington.

That shortly after the battle of Brandywine in September 1777 he was given in public orders as an Aid de Camp to the Commander in Chief with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

That the said Lieutenant Colonel John Laurens continued to act in the Army and so far

gained the attention of Congress that unsolicited by him Congress on the 5th of November 1778 Resolved,

"That John Laurens Esquire Aid de Camp to General Washington, be presented with a Continental Commission of Lieutenant Colonel in testimony of the sense which Congress entertained of his Patriotic and Spirited services as a volunteer in the American Army, and of his brave conduct in several actions, particularly in that of Rhode Island on the 29th of August last: and that General Washington be directed whenever an opportunity shall all for to give Lieutenant Colonel Laurens Command agreeable to his rank."

"Which promotion and Commission he refused for the reasons set forth in his letter contained in the Journals of Congress of the 6th of November 1778, and contained on the day last mentioned the high approbation of the United States in Congress assembled for his disinterested and Patriotic principles manifested on that occasion.

"That on the 29th March 1779 a Commission of Lieutenant Colonel was granted to the said John Laurens who had till that period acted only as an Aid de Camp to the Commander in chief.

That in December 1780, the said Lieutenant Colonel Laurens was unanimously elected by the United States in Congress assembled Special Minister to the Court of Versailles, and in obedience to the Instructions of Congress he without delay proceeded to France accomplished the duties of his mission and returned to America in August 1781.

That on the 5th day of September 1781 Congress Resolved,

"That the conduct of Lieutenant Colonel Laurens in his mission to the Court of Versailles as special Minister of the United States is highly agreeable to Congress and entitles him to public approbation," and at the same time at his request granted him leave to join the Army.

That the said Lieutenant Colonel Laurens immediately repaired to his post of duty -- was present and eminently serviceable at the siege and reduction of the British Army under the Command of Lieutenant General The Earl Cornwallis at York Town in Virginia in October 1781, where he acted as the Commissioner from his Excellency the Commander in Chief for settling the terms of Capitulation with the British General.

That the said Lieutenant Colonel John Laurens afterwards joined the Army under Major General Greene in South Carolina where he was particularly active -- had the Command of the light Troops and Advanced Corps of the Southern Army, and finally fell in bravely endeavoring with a small force to repel a considerable detachment of the British Army who were foraging on the River Combahee in the State of South Carolina on the 27th of August 1782.

Your Committee are informed and believes that the said Lieutenant Colonel John Laurens never received any part of his pay as Lieutenant Colonel; nor any salary or allowance during his Commission of Special Minister excepting certain sums which appear charged to his account in the Treasurers Books viz: 8400 Livres paid him by Monsr. Grand in Paris by orders of Doctor Benjamin Franklin in the Spring of 1781 -- and 720 Spanish Dollars paid to him the 8th September 1781 by an order from the Honorable Robert Morris Esquire Superintendent of Finance -- amounting in the whole to about £520 Sterling -- That there is good grounds suppose these sums were expended in defraying part of the charges which the deceased had incurred in the active and expensive service in which he had been employed in France and on his return from thence by the way of Boston. Because it further appears that for paying some part of his expenses in France the deceased took up a considerable sum of money on the credit of his father the Honorable Henry Laurens Esquire.

That although it does not appear whether the said Lieutenant Colonel John Laurens intended to demand either pay or salary from the United States, no minutes or documents of charge having as yet been found among his papers or come to the hands of the Honorable Henry Laurens his father.

Yet your Committee are of opinion that as the deceased gallant and meritorious officer has left an orphan daughter -- the United States should consider themselves as bound to pay to the legal representative of the said Lieutenant Colonel John Laurens for his child's use all which sums as were in equity and justice do the Father.

Your Committee therefore recommend that it be Resolved,

That the accounts of the late Lieutenant Colonel John Laurens be settled according to the rate he held in the Army of the United States to the time of his death.

That it be recommended to the State of South Carolina to allow the half pay of a Lieutenant Colonel to the Orphan child of the late Lieutenant Colonel Laurens for the Term of seven years and pass the same to the account of the United States according to the Act of the 24th of August 1780.

That in settling the Accounts of the late Lieutenant Colonel Laurens as Special Minister to the Court of Versailles he be allowed the same pay that was given at that period to the Ministers of the United States at foreign Courts for the time of his appointment to that Embassy until his return, and that the balance remaining do you for his services as Minister be paid to his representative.

Endorsed on the Back of the Report of the Committee as follows

"Ent'd 23 Feby 1785 read:

Passed 1 March 1785."

State of South Carolina

By the Honorable Elihu Hall Bay One of the Associate Judges of the Superior Courts of Law in the State of South Carolina.

These are to certify, That on this the 13th day of July in the year of our Lord 1813. Personally appeared before me, The Honorable David Ramsay of the City of Charleston in the said State, Physician, who being duly sworn on the Holy Evangelist of Almighty God did depose & say, that he the said deponent is well acquainted with Frances Henderson wife of Francis Henderson Esquire formerly of London Merchant. That said Frances Henderson was the daughter and only orphan child of Lieutenant Colonel John Laurens of South Carolina, who was killed in the late revolutionary war between the United States & Great Britain, and that she is the Legitimate & only heiress of the said John Laurens, the said John Laurens having died intestate. That this deponent married the Aunt of the said Frances Henderson, and that the said Frances Henderson lived for many years in said deponent's family, and that her age to the best of this deponent's knowledge & belief is thirty-six years old or thereabouts, and further this deponent cannot say.

Sworn to this 13th of July 1813 before me

S/ E. H. Bay

S/ David Ramsay