

[Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters](#)

Pension Application of George Chamberlaine R23 VA
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 21 Apr 2015.

[From [Library of Virginia Legislative Petitions Digital Collection](#)/ Norfolk (City)]

Norfolk Jan. 10th 1830

To the Honourable the General Assembly of Virginia,

Your petitioner would represent to your honourable body that George Chamberlaine was an officer in the State Navy during the Revolutionary War, and served until the termination thereof; and became thereby entitled to commutation pay; Your petitioner would farther state that he is the sole heir of the said George Chamberlaine, and trusts that your honourable body will do him that justice which you have heretofore done in similar cases, by granting to your petitioner the said commutation pay to which his deceased grandfather was entitled.

Rich'd. H Chamberlaine

Jan'y 21st 1830 ref'd to R[evolutionar]y C[lai]ms

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

George Chamberlaine was a Captain in the Virginia State Troops during the War of the revolution and (as appears by the Journal of the Navy board of 1779 on file in the Council Chamber) had command of the "Dolphin" – See the Journal named of the 8th and 12th of May & the 16th of June 1779 P35 &c – where Chamberlayne obtained a warrant for 4000 acres of land the bounty allowed a Lieutenant in the Navy – J W Murdaugh on behalf of the only heir Richard H Chamberlayne, begs that the additional quantity of land may be allowed him which together with what has been recd. may make his bounty equal to that of a Captain – Dec'r 15th 1830

J W Murdaugh

[The following is from [bounty-land records in the Library of Virginia](#). The online image is poor.]

This Certifies that Mr. George Chamberlaine formerly a Lieut in the Navy of this State, served from Dec'r one thousand seven hundred & seventy six untill he resigned as Com[?] In January one thousand seven hundred and eighty.

Given Under my hand this 20th May 1783

Jas. Barron Com'd S.N.

[James Barron, Commodore State Navy]

[The following are from the federal pension file.]

Pension Office/ December 22, 1842

Sir, I have examined and filed the papers in the case of Lieut. George Chamberlain, dec'd. on account of whose service half pay is claimed under the act of July 5, 1832. It appears from the Journal of the Navy board that he was appointed a Second Lieutenant in the Virginia State Navy on the 2^d. of December 1776; that on the 28th. January 1777 he was recommended as 2^d. Lieutenant in the brig *Musquito* [sic: *Mosquito*], and on the 12th. of August 1777 he was recommended as a First Lieutenant. No evidence of a positive character appears on the Journal relative to him after that date. The journal shews that there was a Lieutenant Chamberlayne (no christian name given) [Byrd Chamberlayne, pension application R22] in service in 1779. In September of that year he was ordered to take command of the brigantine Jefferson. George Chamberlain received a certificate for the balance of his full pay in August 1783, amounting to £334:19:6, Virginia Currency. This amount, if for pay alone, would have paid him for more than three years service. Two witnesses, seamen on board of the brig *Musquito*, swear that Lieut. George Chamberlain sailed in her in the Spring of 1777 on a cruise to the West Indies, in the course of which cruise the brig was captured, and the officers and men sent prisoners to England. One of the witnesses swears that to the best of his recollection he left England by escape, the 23^d. January 1779, and that he

left George Chamberlain there, where he remained till peace. The account given by all the witnesses is that the Musquito sailed from Norfolk in the Spring of 1777 on a cruise to the West Indies; that in the course of the cruise the Musquito captured two vessels [21 March], one of which escaped [the snow *John*], and the other [the *Noble*] was taken into Point Petre [sic: Pointe-à-Pitre in Guadeloupe] and sold. Here, the witnesses say, they took the small pox, and after recovering from it they sailed on another cruise, and were taken by the Ariadne and carried in Barbadoes [sic: Barbados] and thence sent as prisoners to England; Another witness makes a similar statement, but does not give the christian name of Chamberlain. This is all the proof in the case.

It appears by the acts of the Virginia Assembly that the Navy of the State was ordered to be reduced by an act passed October Session 1779, and that the ships Tartar and Dragon, the Galleys Henry, Manly [sic: *Manley*], Hero, Page, Lewis and Safe-Guard [*Safeguard*] were directed to be sold by public vendue; and further that the Ship Thetis, the brig Jefferson, the Accomack and Diligence Galleys, the Liberty and Patriot Boats were retained in the service of the State. The Navy was again reduced at the November Session of 1781. If I were satisfied that George Chamberlain was in the service at the last reduction I should have no hesitation in allowing his claim; but it appears doubtful to me whether he was in the service till that time. My opinion is that the witnesses are mistaken in supposing that Chamberlain was a prisoner in England to the end of the war. I should presume from the statements of the witnesses that the crew of the Musquito were in prison in August 1777, and if so, George Chamberlain was not with them, because at that time he was promoted to the First Lieutenantcy, and if he had been in captivity it is not probable that he would have been promoted. Such a course was not consistent with the practice in those days. The Navy Journal shews that there were two other officers of the name of Chamberlain on board of the Musquito, viz. Byrd Chamberlain [sic], First Lieutenant, and Edward Chamberlain [sic: Edward Pye Chamberlayne R21]. Probably they mistook one of those for George Chamberlain. Byrd Chamberlain was unquestionably a prisoner of war in England, but he returned from captivity in 1778, for it appears from the Navy Journal that on the 26th June 1778 Byrd Chamberlain applied for a renewal of his commission, and the record shews that the application was made in consequence of the loss of the original commission while the applicant was in captivity in England. The same officer resigned on the 21st of August 1778. What became of Edward Chamberlain we cannot ascertain. He was appointed Midshipman to the Musquito brig 21st. November 1776; but there is nothing to shew that he sailed in that vessel in the Spring of 1777. None of the witnesses who testify as to the sailing of the Musquito in the Spring of 1777, or her capture, or the names of her officers, speak of Edward [sic] Chamberlain as being one of the captured officers, yet they all mention a number of other officers of various grades.

It seems to me a matter of uncertainty as to the precise time when Edward [sic] Chamberlain left the service, and therefore I cannot allow the claim.

I have the honor to be/
Very respectfully
Your Obt. servt./ J. L. Edwards

Pension Office/ February 28, 1843

I hereby certify that from an examination of the claim presented at this Office in the case of George Chamberlain, dec'd. I am satisfied that he served to the end of the revolutionary war as a Lieutenant in the Virginia State Navy; that he died on or about the 27th of April eighteen hundred and nineteen [sic: see below]; that the case is embraced by the provisions of the act of the 5th of July 1832 entitled "an act to provide for the liquidating and paying certain claims of the State of Virginia;" that the claim should therefore be allowed at the rate of one hundred and eighty two dollars and fifty cents per annum, from the twenty second of April seventeen hundred and eighty three, when the war terminated, to the twenty seventh of April eighteen hundred and nineteen, and that the amount is payable to the Hon. John Taliaferro, member of Congress from Virginia, attorney of Thomas J. Stella, administrator of said George Chamberlain, deceased.

Commissioner of Pension

Approved/ Secretary of War.

Norfolk Jan'y 27, 1845

Thos L. Edwards [sic: James L. Edwards]/ Com'r of Pensions Sir

Some two or three years ago I was applied to by a Mr Thos Hord who induced me to appoint him my agent to prosecute the claim of my Grandfather Geo. Chamberlaine for his services as a Lt in the Virginia State Navy during the War of the Revolution he stated that he had in his possession the proofs of his services to the end of the war & that at the time of its close he Geo Chamberlaine was a prisoner in Fortin [sic: Forton] Jail England That my grandfather had been, an officer of merit in Revolutionary War, & had been, a prisoner in Fortun Jail was a fact well known by tradition to my family I therefore did not doubt the justice of the claim & constituted him my agent to prosecute it. All the proof required of me, was, my affidavit of heirship & such proof as would establish the length of time he served after the war. This I furnished stating that he died on the 10th day of January 1792, which was a matter of record in our family bible, & this bible was also handed to an agent appointed by Hord who obtained it, a certificate of the Court of Elizabeth City County both of which were forwarded to Hord to be filed in the Case. The claim was finally allowed & I received from Hord & his colleague the sum of \$4157.66 this happened in the month of March 1843. since that time, some circumstances have transpired (which will be explained at length if necessary) which induces me to fear, that some deception has been practiced on the department and thereby a larger sum was paid than by the rules of the department, was justly due, & I beg of you to cause the case to be enquired into as a I am very unwilling to hold any sum to which I am not equitably entitled. The only agency I had in the prosecution of the claim was, to furnish the affidavit & the family record of the death of my ancestor as before stated & as am not acquainted with the Law & rules of the Department in relation to it I beg you will give it your attention & Let me know the facts, that I may have an opportunity of rectifying any error, or be satisfied that none has been committed I will offer no apology for this troubling your, tho a stranger, being satisfied, that with me you will be equally anxious that justice should be done as well to the Government as to myself

I am Very Respectfully/ Your Obt Servant/ R H Chamberlaine

If I have sent this to the wrong department please excuse my ignorance & give it the right direction & oblige
yrs RHC.

NOTE: On 7 Jan 1850 Richard H. Chamberlaine, "next of kin to George Chamberlaine the elder," became administrator of the estate.