

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of John Catesby Cocke R28

VA Sea Service

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

[The federal file contains 142 pages, only the most informative of which are transcribed here. The first are transcripts of copies of contemporaneous documents, followed by depositions obtained by Cocke's heirs. There are also documents similar to the latter in the [Revolutionary bounty-warrant](#) and [rejected-claims](#) files in the Library of Virginia. Most of the documents were solicited in an unsuccessful effort to establish that Cocke served to the end of the war and was therefore entitled to half pay for life from Virginia and later from the United States.]

Memo. of Marine Officers referred to, in Council Journal in 1776 & 7.

Names	Rank	When appointed		
Sam'l. Arrell [Samuel Arell]	Capt	17 Decr '76	resigned 17 Mar '77	
John Catesby Cocke	Capt	29 Aug '76		
Sam'l. Carr [Samuel Carr]	Capt	20 Nov '76	rec'd orders 2 Decr '76	
Alex. Dick [Alexander Dick R13751]	Capt	24 July '76	" " 30 Oct '76	
James Davis	3 rd Lieut	2 Nov '76		
Richard Hogg	Lieut	19 Aug '76		
Samuel Hanway [R4583]	Capt	4 Decr '76	resigned	
Thos. Hamilton [Thomas Hamilton]	1 st Lieut	19 Decr '76	Capt 15 Mar '77	
Wm. Mitchell [William Mitchell]	Capt	26 July '76	resigned 25 Nov '76	
James Meriwether	2 nd Lieut	28 Nov '76		returned his [?] money 4 May
Ben. Pollard [Benjamin Pollard]	Lieut	19 Aug '76	Capt 4 Decr '76	
Jas. Quarles [James Quarles]	1 st Lieut	3 aug '76		
John Shields	Lieut	14 Jany '77		

The Council Journal from which the above memo'a. were take – ends with May 1777

Here then are 13 Officers of Marines appointed in eleven months ending May '77

of the 13 aforesaid, three appear to have resigned – so that 10 of them were there 1 June '77

Thursday August the 29th 1776

Captain John Catesby Cocke of a company of Marines, attended, was sworn, subscribed the articles of war, and received his Commission from the President, dated this day.

Saturday November 16th 1776.

Ordered that a Warrant issue to Captain John Catesby Cocke for Fifty pounds, upon account to purchase necessaries for the use of his Company./ From page 109 [of the Naval Journal].

Tuesday November 19th 1776

Ordered that the Commissary of Stores receive into his care six and twenty coats and jackets that will be delivered to him by Capt. John C. Cocke for the use of the Commonwealth.

Thursday November 21st 1776.

Ordered that a Warrant Issue to Captain John Catesby Cocke for two hundred & sixty two pounds one shilling and six pence for the pay his Company of Marines to the thirty first day of October last pr Pay

Roll this day settled./ From page 112 [of the Naval Journal].

Monday December 2nd 1776.

Ordered that a warrant issue to Jonathan Prosser for sixteen pounds fifteen shillings for dying and making a parcel of coats and vests for Capt. John C. Coke's company of Marines as per account certified by the Commissioners.

State of Virginia Culpeper County to wit

I Zachariah Griffin [pension application W7585] a soldier of the American Revolution and now in the 75th year of my age, do certify that I was in the service in a three months militia tour just before the siege of York [28 Sep - 19 Oct] in the year 1781 and while I was in the service I there saw Captain John Catesby Cock in the service in command of a company of soldiers and I left him in service. Given under my hand and seal this 3^d. day of June 1834

Zachariah Griffin

State of Virginia Fauquier County sct – William Payne [pension application S8938]

Personally appeared before me a Justice of the peace in & for the county aforesaid, William Payne a Revolutionary soldier, in his eightieth year, who being first sworn according to law - sayeth - that he knew Captain John Catesby Cock, and that he was attached to the Marine service, but he is ignorant of the length of his service, that to the best of his recollection he was in service in the year 1776, but that he is not certain as to the time. Given from under my hand & seal this 23^d day of July 1834.

I James Green [pension application W7563] do certify that while I was a Midshipman in the Virginia State Navy I frequently saw John Catesby Cocke in service as a Captain of Marines. I saw him frequently in command of his company between the years 1778 and 1781 and as well as I now remember I left him in service when I became a supernumerary [had insufficient troops to command] in 1780 I will not be positive that he continued in the service till the end of the War, I think it quite likely he became supernumerary. I never understood that he resigned indeed I am quite certain he did not for I was well acquainted with him from the close of the war until his death and if he had resigned I am sure I should have known it. Captain Cock settled in the County of Culpeper after the close of the war of the Revolution and died as well as I remember about the year 1812. Given under my hand and seal this 15th day of September 1834.

James Green

[The following is in the [Revolutionary bounty-warrant papers in the Library of Virginia](#), certified 31 Oct 1834.]

To his excellency L W Tazwell [sic: Littleton Waller Tazewell] Governor of the State of Virginia

The Subscribers to this petition are Children and Grand Children of the late John Catesby Cocke formerly a Captain of Marines in the revolutionary war in the Service of the State of Virginia.

They represent to your excellency that their ancestor aforesaid entered the said Service in the month of August 1776 – that he continued in said service until after the seige of York in 1781 – that the said John Catesby Cocke mentioned to one of his children (namely Prestley Thornton Cocke that he was in Service at the seige of York and that he commanded for some time a flotilla on York River, that he was driven off with his little command by the enemy and afterwards came under the order of General Lafayette on land. That after the surrender of the enemy at York the said John Catesby Cocke was out of command but never did resign his commission and was at all time ready to enter the service again if required so to do, but never was called upon. That he never did receive land for his military services but allways said he was entitled to them and proposed giving them to one of his children. Possessing until very late in life immense estate in lands [illegible word] regardless of wealth did not want them until the Warrants for state service were of little or no value, scarcely as much so as the Registers fee and tax for their issue. That

besides the service in the marines the said John Catesby Cocke was one of the Company marched with Patrick Henry in April 1775 to rescue the deposits of Gun Powder removed by Governor Dunmore [on 21 April]. That he was near being shot by one of the Spring Guns fired in the Magazine or arsenal at Williamsburg, and that he was also one of the minute men late in 1775 and was in the battle with the British at the Long or [A page or more appears to be missing here. This appears to be a reference to the Battle of Great Bridge VA, 9 Dec 1775.]

Chickahominy and in his absence the British burnt up the buildings, destroyed his flocks and stock took off many valuable Negroes and did great damage to the estate. He died about the year 1810 leaving the following children Prestley T Cocke, Peter Prestley Cocke, Catherine Tennison and Lucy Cocke who is since dead without issue. That he also left Grand Children as follows Prestley, George T, Catherine, William C, James, Lucy, Eliza Louisa and Maria Fitzhugh, children of his daughter Elizabeth Fitzhugh who married William Fitzhugh both of whom are now dead, and the said Elizabeth departed this life before her father. also John, Alice, Peggy and Helen Edmunds children of Alice Edmunds who was Alice Cocke and who also died before her father, and these are all the heirs at law of the said John Catesby Cocke they ask lands for the war and in the state line
Prestley Cocke

[14 May 1835] I James Green formerly a Midshipman in the Virginia State Navy do certify in addition to what I have certified heretofore, that I distinctly remember that John Catesby Cocke was a Captain of the Marine Corps, I repeatedly saw him in service in command of a Company of Marines, and also remember that at one time stationed at the Navy yard at Chicohominy [sic: on Chickahominy River]. In conclusion I will state, that I well remember to have left the said Captain Cocke in command of a company of marines in 1781 at the time I left the service and firmly believe he never resigned his commission during the Revolutionary war.
James Green

On the 25th Aug. 1835, a warrant no 8373 for 5333 $\frac{1}{3}$ acres of Land issued to Presley T. Cocke, Peter P. Cocke, Catherine Tenison, Alice Edmonds, Will C Fitzhugh, Presley Fitzhugh, Geo. T. Fitzhugh, Catherine Fitzhugh, Jane Cutler, Maria Stewart, Lucy Sulcer, Louisa Head, & Elizabeth Crouch, heirs heirs & distributees of John C Cocke

State of Virginia, } SS.
Fauquier County, }

The deposition of William Payne Esq. formerly a Captain of Militia in the War of the Revolution, taken at his house in the county aforesaid, on the 13th day of April 1837, to be read and used as evidence in a certain case now depending in the Superior Court of Law and chancery for Henrico County, in which Daniel Ward administrator of John Catesby Cocke is plaintiff, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, defendant.

1st Question by Daniel Ward.

Were you acquainted with John Catesby Cocke in the war of the revolution? Do you know, of your own knowledge, that he served in the war of the revolution? If so, state what length of time, in what capacity, and where you, of your own knowledge, know him to have served? When and where did he die?

1st Answer by Capt. William Payne.

I was very intimately acquainted with John Catesby Cocke before the war of the revolution, during the war, and from that time until his death. He was a Captain of Marines early in the war of the Revolution and I think served on bord the Dragon with Captain [Eleazer] Callender. I lived near Leeds in Westmoreland County and frequently saw Captain Cocke in service, and it is now my impression that he served as Captain of Marines, until the gallies were disbanded and then became supernumerary and so continued until the close of the war. I have understood he died in Portroyal [sic: Port Royal] in Caroline

County. I cannot remember what year he died in.

2nd question by Daniel Ward.

You say it is your impression that Captain Cocke became supernumerary officer, when the State Navy was disbanded, and continued Supernumerary until the close of the war. On what ground or for what reasons do you express this opinion?

2nd Answer by Capt. Payne.

My reasons for saying that Captain Cocke became a supernumerary Captain are these. He served as a captain from 1776 until the galleys were disbanded, in high credit as an officer, and having served that length of time, he had a right to retire as a supernumerary, particularly as the order for disbanding the Navy put him out of Command, and further it was my impression then and yet is.

And further the deponent saith not./ William Payne.

In Culpeper County court 21st May 1839

On the motion of Daniel Ward adm'r of John Catesby Cocke dec'd. it is ordered that the following testimony of Capt Zachariah Griffin given on interrogatories and answers in open court, be certified:

Question by the court at the request of Mr Ward. Relate if you please your knowledge of the late Capt John Catesby Cocke and his military services in the war of the revolution? And your own age and residence? Answer I was born in this county where I have lived ever since, and am now seventy nine years of age. I marched in the Militia in 1781 on a tour of duty against the British and I saw in that time John Catesby Cocke a captain of marines on his way to Malvern hills and Yorktown; it was said then that he had recruited up here four men that was to be regulated when they got down to the main army. And we left Capt Cocke in service. We returned home after our tour was served out.

Question again by the court at Mr Wards request. How do you know that Capt Cocke was a captain of marines? and do you know if he resigned his commission? or what else about him. Answer He was said at the time to be a captain of marines and I judged so from his dress and his commanding a company. I could not know from anything else as I was then only a common soldier, tho' I have since been a captain in militia many years ago and know very well who commands a company. I don't believe that Capt Cocke ever resigned because I knew him long afterwards and always heard so; and he was a fierce brave man, and every body that knew Cocke, knew that he would not lose a chance for a fight if he could get one, and he would certainly rather fight as a captain than a common soldier and in them times every body had to fight the British some how or another. I knew Capt Cocke a great many years after the old war and always knew him a true, brave gentleman. He wasn't a resigning man when any fight was going on, or other duty to be done by a true fierce man.

And the court ordered it to be further certified that the said Zachariah Griffin is known to the court to be a man of honesty probity and veracity and they give full credence to his testimony

Fauquier County Court, 28th April 1851

It was this day proved to the satisfaction of the Court by evidence produced before it, that John Catesby Cocke, formerly of Culpeper County, Virginia, who was a Captain of Marines in the Virginia State Navy, died in the lower part of the state of Virginia, after the year 1807, intestate – that at the time of his death, said Cocke resided in that portion of the (then) County of Culpeper, which by an act of the Legislature of Virginia, passed in the year 1832, was made, and has since continued to be, the County of Rappahannock that the said John Catesby Cocke, at his death, left the following children his sole heirs and distributees, him surviving, to wit: Thornton Cocke, Peter Cocke, Alice Edmonds, wife of Elias Edmonds, _____ Cocke, who afterwards intermarried with _____ Fitzhugh. That Thornton Cocke removed from the County of Culpeper, Virginia, where he had previously resided, to the state of Mississippi in the year 1835 or 1836, and then died, leaving Henry Cocke, his son, his only heir surviving.

That Peter Cocke removed from the County of Loudoun Virginia, to the State of Ohio, or Indiana, in the year 1837 or 1838, and has since died, leaving Children, whose number and names are not known. That Elias Edmonds, and Alice, his wife aforesaid, are dead. That Alice Edmonds aforesaid, died in Fauquier County, Virginia, about the year 1807, leaving Alice Edmonds, now the wife of Alexander Edmonds, both of whom reside in said County – Helen Edmonds, who afterwards intermarried with B. R. Bradford, and has since died, leaving a son (B. H. Bradford), and her said husband, both of whom now reside in said county, her surviving Margaret B Edmonds, widow of Sydnor Edmonds dec'd, who lives in said County, and John F Edmonds, now believed to be living in the state of Missouri, her heirs and distributees. That Joshua Tennison and _____ his wife, aforesaid, are both dead, leaving a daughter, Margaret A Tennison, who resides, alternately in Fauquier and Loudoun Counties, Virginia, a daughter _____ who had intermarried with _____ Myers, both residing in Washington City, and a son _____ Tennison, now a lieutenant in the United States Navy, her only heirs and distributees, her surviving. That _____ Fitzhugh and _____ his wife, aforesaid, are both dead, and that her distributees whose names are not known, are believed to reside in Ohio – that the aforesaid Children, (or their descendants) of said John Catesby Cocke, dec'd, are the only heirs and distributees of said Cocke dec'd – and that under the Rules and regulations of the department of the Interior, in the matter of settlement of half pay claims of Virginia, arising under the act of Congress, passed July 5th 1832, said Alice Edmonds, wife of Alexander Edmonds, or said Alexander Edmonds, in right of his said wife, are entitled to administration of the Estate of said John Catesby Cocke, dec'd – all which is ordered to be certified.

A Copy – teste/ William H Jennings c.c.

Some time since I stated to Dr. Helms my strong impression that a Captain Cocke, of the State Navy had resigned, recollecting so to have seen in the course of my examination of the Navy Records at Richmond. I did not state the Christian name of the resigned officer; but hearing that D. H. was prosecuting the halfpay claim of Capt. John Catesby Cocke, I very naturally located the resignation upon that officer.

I have today examined the records, at the request of Dr. H. and find, clearly, that I was mistaken. I find from the Navy Journal P. 164, that Capt. James Cocke, of the Manly [sic: *Manley*] Galley, resigned on the 28th day of January 1777. I am entirely satisfied I mistook Capt. James Cocke for Capt. John C. Cocke, and I am the more certain of the fact, because I have looked through the Navy Journals, so far as the Index enabled me, and can find no resignation of Capt John C. Cocke. I make this explanation, lest my former vague recollection & statement of the matter may do Dr. H. & his clients injustice & injury.

Richmond, July 12, 1851

Jos. Segar