

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Pension Application of Joseph Harborn R4587  
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris.

PA Sea Service

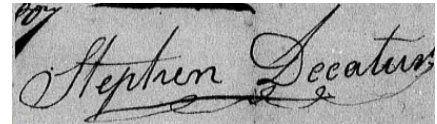
Joseph Harborn is afflicted with a rupture which unfits him for labor, and militia duty. He wishes upon the amount of it, to be exempted from paying taxes.

Aug't 11 1804

Benj'n Rush

This doth Certify that Joseph Harbourne served with me on board the Brig Fair American [see endnote] in the year one thousand seven Hundred and Eighty: during which time he conducted himself with Propriety Millsdale September 3<sup>d</sup> 1807

Stephen Decatur

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen Decatur". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured paper. The name "Stephen" is written in a larger, more prominent hand than "Decatur".

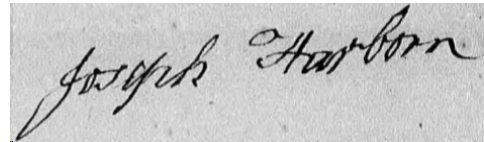
To the Sec'y of the Navy/ Washington  
Philadelphia Nov 6<sup>th</sup> 1824

Your partioner is an old revolutioner born in Philad'a 1749 Dec. 27: I shipt on board Polly Cap. Long [the *Polly* under Capt. Long?] bound to St. Croix in the year 1774 nothing particular happened that voyage after this I sailed agin in the same vessel bound to St Croix The third voyage in said vessel I was taken by Capt John Phillips in Sloop Revenge of Anteigua [sic: Antigua] and coming through Sail Rock passage [now Virgin Passage W of St. Thomas, US Virgin Islands] was retaken by Capt [Thomas] Waters in the Baltimore Hero amount [mounting] 10 guns he set me ashore at Dehais [Deshaies?] from there I got up to Bastare [sic: Basse-Terre] then I got down to St Croix and there I met Capt John Beans in Sloop Liberty with 10 guns who wanted me to enter but I being apprehensive that he would keep me some length of time I signed the articles when he promised me upon his honour to give me my discharge at the first port we make on the continent of America, then I went to work we took in salt for Balance some rum some chests of d[?]s a quantity of gun power Cant tell how much then I proceeded on our home & passage we met two small privateers we beat them of as our orders was not to chase them we saw no more them till we got to Bermuda where we fell in with the 74 she was calmed and they highst out their boat and lowered one of the quarter deck guns into the boat then the came to us with the boat full of men & they hove a signal for us to show our colours our Capt would not show them our Colours till they fired a gun the we swept her broad side around to the boat & fired grape shot as far as would reach them and then fired round shot, a breeze started up about the middle of the night & we cleared them in the dark we were chased from one day to another till we got of Cape Fear to the Southern we got up then to Adenton [sic: Edenton] N.C. I was apprehended to take thos of legions [the oath of allegiance?] to the Country which I complied with, then I travelled by Land to Williamsburg Va there were I was brought a four [before] Colenal Mason there to take those of Legions again then I travelled down towards Philadelphia were I remained till the English landed at the head of Elk [now Elkton MD], then I went off to Baltimore when the English got into Philadelphia [26 Sep 1777], I remained there as Barkeeper with Jacob Myers Tavern keeper corner of Gay St. there I married & when Lord Howe went out of Philadelphia [Gen. William Howe, 18 Jun 1778] I came in & brought my wife, & I looked for another vessel to get satisfaction, I shipt with Capt Harmitage [probably James Armitage] in the year 79 & went out to Sea the 3rd day we were out we met with three privateers belonging to Gutrage, we engaged them two hours and a half and there I was taken & carried to New York, there I lay a prisoner that winter when I saw David Sprout come aboard of the old Jersey as he was commisary of American prisnors, I begged of him to get me exchanged as soon as possible in about a week after that there was a Flag Ship came along side the old Jersey a Boat load went ashore dead every morning to be buried in the sand Mr Sprout sent his Flag Ship along side & took 300 of us in which I was among and I came up to Philadelphia. I went to one Blair &

McClenahan [sic: Blair McClenachan] a noted merchant to return him thanks for kindness to my family while I was a prisoner, while I was there old Stephen Decatur came in & asked me if I was one of the men that got exchanged I told him I was he asked me if I would try it again I said I would. he said if you come with me you what it is I went with him the fair American was then upon her Stocks. I shipt with him and went out with 150 of us aboard & took 13 sail of English vessels & got them all safe in we broke up her cruse then for the honour of 13 States & then we went out again & took 7 more & then we went out again & fell in with the Hulker [sic: *Holker*] and crused together of [off] Charleston Bar where we took some fine prizes, we fell in with the Ship Richmond, we engaged her from 12 OClock at night till 4 OClock next day in the afternoon when her colours came down, We brough the Capt of the Richmond & all the well men with us, to Philadelphia but we had the misfortune to lose the prize

The Honourable board will be so god as to let me have a pension for it to live upon in my old days.

I am now 75 years old

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph Harbourn". The ink is dark and the paper appears slightly aged.

Shippen St no. 11

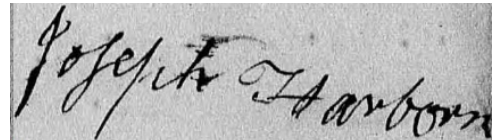
Philad'a County SS

And now personally came the above named Joseph Harbourn who being duly sworn saith the foregoing statement of his Revolutionary Services and Sufferings is correct and true

Sworn and Subscribed before me this 8 day of Nov 1824

John Thompson

Justice of Peace

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph Harbourn". The ink is dark and the paper appears slightly aged.

NOTE:

For more on the Pennsylvania Privateer Brig *Fair American* see <http://www.awiatsea.com/Privateers/F/Fair%20American%20Pennsylvania%20Brig%20%5bDecatur%20J%20akways%20Eldridge%5d.html>

No reason is given for the rejection of Harbourn's petition for a pension, but it is likely that it was because he served aboard privateers rather than in a regular navy.