

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

Pension Application of James Harris R4653

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Last revised 8 Nov 2011.

[Capitalization partly corrected.]

State of North Carolina Wake County This day may 20th 1850 Henry Hamlin Harris of Said County Dep. Sheriff Came in open Court who being first duly Sworn according to law and made this his declaration in order to obtain the benefits of the act of Congress passed the 7 day of July 1838 and the acts Sublimentary made and provided in Such Cases in order to obtain a pension for the Revolutionary services of his Father James Harris who was Born and raised in the County of Macklenburg [sic: Mecklenburg, formed from Lunenburg County in 1765] Virginia and moved to Nottaway [sic: Nottoway] County Va & in the later County married a Miss Elizabeth Winfree in the late 1791 and in the said year he moved to the County of Wake North Carolina and died on the 13 day of November 1823 [sic: see note below] leaving his Widow who died on the 20 day of July 1847 Eighteen hundred & forty seven, who remained his widow to the day of her death and left surviving her lawful heirs by her said husband James Harris to Wit. Elizabeth Crenshaw. John W Harris. Louisa T. Crawford. Henry H Harris. Robert Harris. Polly W Phillops (Susanna Ann Harris.) Ann E Harris.) and (Fredrick L B Harris); he declares that the above are all of the Children known or believed to be living or that survived his said mother above named. He declares that his said Father James Harris was a Captain in the War of the Revolution in the State of Virginia and in the Continental line and served fourteen months and ten days in said State and after his said services he joined the Melitia in the State of Virginia and marched to the State of North Carolina and served in said State in the Melitia & in the Capacity and grade of first Major and he thinks to the best of his belief & information from his father he served as major 4 years & upwards in NC he served to the close of the war and in the melitia & he was also in Halifax County N. C. He Declares, that after he got in said State of North Carolina he was exchanged and was appointed or promoted, either, in Virginia or North Carolina as first Major. he further declares that his said fathers widow, the declarants mother, made a decleration several years before her death in order to get this pension but for the want of the family record here annexed important evidence in this case which was then or at that time supposed to be lost caused the claim to be delaid or nearly suspended. and since the said record has verry recently ben found among old papers in the family which is annexed, His said mothers Decleration and evidence all is lost and after diligent search and Enquiry cannot be found he therefore makes this his decleration and application in behalf of himself Brothers and Sisters. he declares that the family record No. 8 and No. 9 two pages annexed is in the hand Writing of his said father containing the names & ages of his 14 children by his said mother and the two first older names and ages on said paper No. 8 is that of his father James Harris dated 1763 and Elizabeth his wife age and date 1772 and their first child born was Ann Easley Harris the 20 day of Sept 1792 and that the sixth child name on said paper is that of his own name and age to wit Henry Hamlin Harris Born 12 July 1802 and the marriage of his said father and mother is also registered on said paper No. 8 in his fathers hand writing to wit May the 12 the 1791 as perproted and believed to be the year and date of there marriage. he declares that his said father was at the Battles at gilford Court House in the State of North Carolina [sic: Guilford Courthouse, 15 Mar 1781] and some time afterwards was at or near Saulsbury [sic: Salisbury] N. Carolina and in Macklenburg [sic: Mecklenburg] County N. Carolina and his services in said State of N. Carolina were in the melitia as Major faithfully rendered in said war of the Revolution as aforesaid. He further declares that his said father never held a pension before his death and neither did his said foregowing Widow Decd. he therefore makes this his application revoking all others heretofore made.

Sworn to & subscribed in open court this 20th of May 1850

[signed] H. H. Harris LS

No 8

James Harris was born the 24th Day of October 1763 Died 13th Nov 182[?] [see note below]

Elizabeth his Wife was born 11 day of January 1772

Was married the 12th day of May 1791

[Handwriting in the following entry differs from the others.]

Ann Easley Harris Daughter of the above James & Elizabeth was born the 20th day of September 1792 –
Decd the 13th day of February 180[?]

Elizabeth Winfree Harris was born the 19th day of Oct 179[?]

John Worsham Harris was born the 5th May 1796

James Cheatham Harris was born the 2nd of July 1798

Louisa Talbot Harris was bo[rm] the 14th July 1800

Henry Hamlin Harris was born the 12th day of July 1802

No. 9

Robert Harris was born the 16th day of March 1804

Sophia Western Harris was born the 21st day of November 1805, – Died the 19th Sep'r 1812

Susanna Ann Harris was born the 15th day of February 1807

Polley Williams Harris was born the 18th day of May 1808

A twin born with her on this same day, died on the 22 of the same month

Ann Easley Harris was born the 24th day of December 1809

[The following entry Xed out] Frederick Lewis [illegible] was born the 21st day of April 1811

[Third page of family register on back of No. 9]

Frederick Lewis Brodie Harris was born the 21st day of April 1811

Charles Hawkins Harris was born the 9th day of January 1813 – Died on the 4th day of May (11 at night)
1815

State of North Carolina Wake County This day May 25th 1850 –

Sherdrick Harris aged 96, a credible witness came before me the undersigned an acting Justice of the Court of please and quarter session for said County and State aforesaid who being first duly sworn according to law depose as follows to wit that he was born and raised in the County of Halifax N. Carolina, and that he sood [sic: stood] two drafts to go in the war of the Revolution & was drawn clear each time. that he was verry often in company with the officers & soldiers and would sell them Eggs chickens – butter & many other tings in camp by which means become acquainted with a great many officers & soldiers. he declares that he saw Major James Harris in actual service at several diferent times in the command of a horse company and about halifax town N. Carolina and that he saw him when he left halifax who took the right hand fork of the road this side of Quankey[?] Bridge this side of halifax and marched with his company towards Raleigh NC and he saw him no more until he this declarant moved from halifax to Wake County N. Carolina which was about forty one years ago, and that he found said Identical James Harris who he saw in service in Halifax County N. Carolina moved and settled in the county of Wake N. Carolina who declarant recognised as the same person aluded to who died about the date 1823 and left his widow surviving him Elizabeth who died in the year 1847 leaving surviving her Elizabeth Crenshaw John W Harris Louisa S Crawford Henry H Harris Robert Harris Polly W. Phillops Susanna N Harris Ann E Harris and Fredrick L B Harris – the above are the lawfull heirs of said Identical old soldier James Harris and his wife Elizabeth and that they are all of the Children Living to the best of his knowlege and belief
Shedrick hisXmark Harris

State of North Carolina Wake County this day May the 29th 1850 Personally appeared before me the undersigned an acting Justice of the Court of please and quarter sessions for said county and state aforesaid to wit old Mr. Benjamin Baines aged Eighty five years old a Credable Witness who being first

duly sworn according to law depose as follows to wit, that he is a resident of said County and was born in the County of Nancymond [sic: Nansemond] in the State of Virginia and moved and settled in the County of Nash in said State of North Carolina with his father Henry Baines just before the Revolutionary war and in said County of Nash he stood two drafts to go in the War of the Revolution and was drawn clear each time he declares that [illegible] Harris did serve 4 years. He declares that his said father Henry Baines was in service he thinks under one Wowel [Howell?] Tatum.

He the declarant states that he saw at several diferent times sd James Harris in actual service in the melitia as major in the Revolutionary War in Nash County and franklin County North Carolina, and was a while in the said war and a brave officer. He declares that at one time when lord Corn Wallace [sic: Cornwallis] was in the state of N.C. [Feb and Mar 1781] he naturally became some what Excited being one day alone in the road on his way to the town of Louisburg in said County of Franklin with a two horse waggon load of wheat for sale and before him some distance off saw advancing a very large number of Militia Cavalry when they advanced near he saw amediately his friend James Harris who was Major of said Troop he then felt safe and all fears removed thinking it was Lord Corn Wallace at first sight. all hands made a halt in the road and this declarant conversed a short time with the said Major James Harris and about the load of wheat and the way I was gowing & he requested me to turn to the right or left of the Road and stop until his troops which was a very large Body of them could pass by which request was Redily obeyed he saw the said James Harris as Major of a Cavalry Company some time before this march and several times after this march aluded to at several diferent times in said counties of Nash and Franklin and some time after the close of said War and settled in the County of Wake North Carolina near the line of Franklin county in said state where he died about the date 1823 and left surviving him his wife Elizabeth who died his widow in the year 1847 who left surviving her their lawful and only Chiling living to wit Elizabeth Crenshaw John W Harris, Louisa T. Crawford Henry H Harris, Robert H Harris Polly W Phillops, Susanna Ann Harris Ann E Harris and Fredrick L B Harris The above are the identical heirs who are now claiming a pension for the their said Fathers service in the Revolutionary War as Major James Harris this the 29 day of May 1850 Subscribed and sworn to before me C B Root JP

Benjamin hisXmark Baines

State of North Carolina Chatam [sic: Chatham] County This day July 3th 1850 Randol Rowe a credible witness of said County aged Ninety years old who personally appeared before us two acting Justices of the Court of please and quarter session for said county and state aforesaid and who being first duly sworn according to law depose as follows to wit on his said oath that he was born in the County of King and queen in the State of Virginia & moved when but a small boy with his mother to the county of macklenburg Varginia and settled in the County of Macklenburg in three miles of James Harris who was then living in said County This witnes further declares that he saw the said James Harris in actual Service in the Continental line in the War of the Revolution in the State of Virginia and in Service as a Captain in the Counties of Brunswick Macklenburg and Waren in said state of Virginia [sic: probably Warren County NC] and with whome he was verry often with while he was in said service he being his Intimate and personal friend he further states about Forty years ago he moved from the State of Virginia to the County of Wake in North Carolina and settled in the amediate neighbourhood of his said Friend James Harris who did first move to Wake County N. Carolina, and that he continued to live in his neighbourhood until his death who died about the date of 1823 and left surviving him his Widow who was Elizabeth Winfree her maden name and their children their lawful heirs to wit. Elizabeth. John W Harris. Louisa. Henry H Harris. Robert Harris. Polly. Susan. Fredrick L B Harris. —. Ann E Harris all of whome ware living at the time witness left Wake County N. Carolina and then this deponent moved from said County of Wake to the County of Chatam about 20 years ago he further declares that after the said Continental Services of said James Harris aforesaid as a Capt Expired he Joined the melitia line of said Revolutionary War in Virginia and marched tot he State of North Carolina in the Service of the

Revolutionary War and he never returned to Macklenburg County Va until after the final close of said War and after his return he often stated in witnesses presents that he served in the State of North Carolina as Major to the close of the War he further states in conclusion that he declares to his certain knowledgte that the said James Harris is the Identical person who did perfoim the Identical alledged Service of the fourteen months and ten days as a Capt in the State of Virginia as Stated by his Son, Henry H Harris in his Declaration, here annexed dated the 20 of may 1850 and that he was from his verry Earliest recollection verry Intermately acquainted with the said James Harris and his Wife Elizabeth & their children above and aforesaid Expressed all of whome ware his personal friends and that the said services in Virginia as Capt was faithfully renderd by him as alledged by J E Heath certificate. Sworn to and duly entered before us two in due form of law
Randol hisXmark Rowe
R. Hatley[?] JP/ Thos Lambeth JP

Raleigh N.C.
Sept. 17th 1850
Compt Office

I William J. Collins Comptroller of Public Accounts in and for the State of North Carolina do hereby certify that the name of James Harris appears of record in this office as having been paid in specie certificates and in case the following sums for military service (viz) [not transcribed]

I further certify there is on record in this office a petition to his Excellency the Gov of the State dated 12 June 1781 to which petition is affixed the name of James Harris 1st Major of the 1st Batallion of Mecklenburg Militia Signed by many of the officers in behalf of the District of Salisbury, given under my hand and seal this 17th day September 1850. Wm. Collins Compt

Pension Office/ Dec'r. 7th 1850

Sir:/ The declaration in the case of Elizabeth Harris dc'd has been received. The excuse for the non-assertion of her claim by the deceased widow is a very clumsy one, and the claimant has forgotten to account for the mysterious disappearance of the family record and its equally mysterious and very opportune recovery. Nor has he shown how his father, who resided in Virginia till 1791, omitting the opportunities for distinction which his position in the Virginia Continental Line afforded him, transferred his service to N. Carolina and there became a militia officer. But serious discussion of the particulars set up in this case would be wasted. Its further prosecution will be useless unless the claimant can explain the discrepanceis in his present statement; exhibit a full list of all the credits to be found in the books of the Comptroller of N.C. to the name of James Harris; & show by the evidence of witnesses who served with him which of those credits should properly assigned to his father.

As there is nothing in the office to show any interest you have in the case of Elizabeth [illegible word], that case cannot be reported to you.
[written in margin: addressee] J. H. Kirkham Esq Raleigh

[17 Feb 1851] The Amended Decleration of Henry H Harris and Robert Harris of Wake County State of North Carolina now made in their own right and in behalf of their Brothers and Sisters to wit Elizabeth Crenshaw John W Harris Susanna Ann Harris Ann E Harris and Fredrick L. B. Harris surviving Children and only heirs at Law of James & Elizabeth Harris Deced. now hereby made to the Pension office, in reply to the report of the Commissioner of Pensions in the case of the application heretofore made by the above named Henry H Harris and now in file in said office for the benefit of a pension claimed to be due the children of their said mother as the widow of the above named James Harris who was a Captain in the army in the State of Virginia and afterwards a Major in the army in North Carolina several years in the war of the Revolution & as much as 4 years. Who died leaving his said wife and children surviving, and his said widow now being dead, their said children now claim by the said

original and this amended Declaration, the pension allotted by Congress for the Militia services of their said Father as Captain Major. And for the Averment of said application the said Henry H Harris and Robert Harris personally this day appeared in open Court to wit the Court of please and quarter session of the said County of Wake, in the State of North Carolina and being first duly sworn to say the Truth say on their said oath that their said Mother Elizabeth Harris in her life time, placed her claim to said pension for presentment to the Commissioner of pensions, in the hands of an old neighbour who failed to take the proper steps to collect it for her & who did little more than procure the affidavit of one old Mrs Young by way of Proving the marriage between the said James and Elizabeth Harris. These affiants further say on their oath that about that time the family record of their said Father and mother were supposed to be finally lost – but after their said mother's death, who died the 20 day of July 1847 Eighteen hundred & forty seven, her administrator in ransacking a large number of papers belonging to the family, their said father having been some time Sheriff of Nottaway County Va while he resided there in order to ascertain and settle understandingly, her estate, he found the supposed lost family record containing the Births &c of their children which record was in the hand writing of their said Father and which also contained the date of their marriage and which is the same record heretofore sent to the Pension office by their agent J H Kirkham in attestation of their Claim. These affiants further say on their oath that their said mother was satisfied if her children ever should apply for her right to a Pension for her said husbands Revolutionary Militia services as a Capt and afterwards as a Major in the army, services so well known and distinguished they would assuredly succeed in getting it, they further say, that, after the close of said war, their said Father, was elected high Sheriff of Nottaway County in Virginia and that he held said office until he resigned it and removed to Wake County in North Carolina and lived a retired life and died on the 13 day of Nov 1823 a wealthy man leaving a large family and a Considerable estate for each of his children, which they presume can be no just barrier to their claiming and receiving such pension as the Justice of their Country has provided for those who perilled their all in the army of the Revolution as did their father. These affiants further say on their oath that they verily believe that the Credits mentioned in the certificate of the Comptroler of Public accounts of North Carolina herewith forwarded, to Major James Harris of upwards of thirteen hundred pounds was paid to their said Father for his military services aforesaid – and said Comptrolers Certificate furthermore show that some at least of the Virginia Soldiers of the Revolutionary war were paid in this State, as was their said father reference being had to the Comptrolers certificate herewith sent and the one heretofore sent and now on file in the pension office at Washington will more fully show, and these affiants further say on oath that the reason of their father leaving Virginia for North Carolina as did many other patriots before and subsequent to the close of the war of the revolution was because his and their services were more needed in the later than in the former State as they have heard their father say when speaking of his exposure in the Battle of gilford Court house. And they verily believe their would be as much reason to question the reality and truth of the military services of General Washington himself in that war, as there would be to question those of their said father in it. all of which is most respectfully submitted with special reference to the evidence of three affidavits on file in Washington City in the pension office in support of this claim. the affidavits refered to are Randol Rowe Shedrick Harris and Benjamin Bains 3 highly respectable Cittizens of N. Carolina. Subscribed to in open court & sworn to [signed] H H Harris [signed] R. E. Harris James J Mumitt CC/ [illegible signature] D.C.

NOTES:

The service claimed by Henry Hamlin Harris for his father is actually that of two other soldiers named James Harris. The first James Harris received pay as a Captain from 1 Jan 1777 until 10 Mar 1778, precisely the interval of 14 months and 10 days claimed in the declaration. This James Harris could not have been the father of Henry Hamlin Harris, however, because he had been commissioned a Lieutenant in the 15th Virginia Continental Regiment on 25 Nov 1776, when Henry Hamlin Harris's father was only

13 years old according to the family record. In addition, Capt. James Harris was from Chesterfield County where he served as Lt. Col. in the militia after resigning as Captain in the Continental Line on 11 Mar 1778. The second James Harris was a Captain in the Mecklenburg County NC Militia by late 1775 and was promoted to First Major in 1778, according to the pension application R1391 of John Buckaloe. Maj. James Harris was in active service in North Carolina at the same time the James Harris from Virginia was a Lt. Col. in the Chesterfield County Militia, and at the same time Henry Hamlin Harris stated that his father was still living in Virginia. The most likely explanation for the false claim is that Henry Hamlin Harris found records of the two soldiers named James Harris and presented them as the service of his father.

Contrary to doubts expressed by the Pension Office, however, the family register appears to be authentic. The paper is worn, and entries were clearly made at different times. James Harris's year of death is unclear. It appears to be 1820 but was evidently misread as 1823. His will was probated in Nov 1820.

Mrs. Susan Young deposed that she was present at the wedding of James and Elizabeth Harris at the home of Mrs. Ann Winfree in Nottoway County VA about 12 May 1793. In the file is a copy of a receipt for \$25 from the estate of Elizabeth Harris to John Young for making her coffin.