

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of William E. Johnson [Johnston]¹ R49

f7VA

Transcribed and annotated by Will Graves

1/5/14: rev'd 1/23/24

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Where the meaning is not compromised by adhering to the spelling, punctuation or grammar, no change has been made. Corrections or additional notes have been inserted within brackets or footnotes. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. A bracketed question mark indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. The word 'illegible' or 'indecipherable' or 'undeciphered' appearing in brackets indicates that at the time I made the transcription, I was unable to decipher the word or phrase in question. Only materials pertinent to the military service of the veteran and to contemporary events have been transcribed. Affidavits that provide additional information on these events are included and genealogical information is abstracted, while standard, 'boilerplate' affidavits and attestations related solely to the application, and later nineteenth and twentieth century research requests for information have been omitted. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading skills fail to catch all misinterpretations. Also, dates or numbers which the software treats as numerals rather than words are not corrected: for example, the software transcribes "the eighth of June one thousand eighty six" as "the 8th of June 1786." Please call material errors or omissions to my attention. Researchers should not rely solely on the transcripts but should review the originals for themselves. These transcripts are intended as an aid to research, not to be used in lieu thereof.]

This is to certify, that it appears from a list in this office of such Officers and Soldiers of the Virginia Continental Line as settled their accounts and received certificates for the balance of their full pay, according to an act of assembly, passed the November session 1781, directing the Auditors of Public Accounts to settle and adjust the pay and accounts of said Officers and Soldiers from the first January 1777 to 31st December 1781, (see Hening's Statutes at Large, vol. 10, p. 462,) that a settlement was made on the 25th day of May 1784 in the name of William E Johnson as Surgeons Mate and evidence of the indebtedness of the State to him was £259.18.3, delivered to Col. Sherwin and was given, as appears by a copy of the settlement on file in this office, for services from the 10th of April 1778 to the 16 of January 1780.

Given under my hand at the First Auditor's Office, Richmond, this 30th day of September 1851.

S/ Ro Johnston
First Auditor

[No Seal of Office]

New Lisbon Ohio September 6, 1853

Dear Sir: –

I wish to obtain some information from your Department relative to a claim [indecipherable word or words] the United States, to the heirs of Dr. Johnson, a Surgeon in the Navy of Virginia, during the Revolutionary War. I have been informed that this claim had been allowed, and collected by the man named Vaughn of Hampton Virginia and that said Vaughn had made an arrangement with some of the heirs to collect the claim for one half, the whole amount. I am directly interested in that claim, as my wife is one of the heirs, and we have not been consulted on the subject. Where you be kind enough to inform me the amount of money allowed, and also the amount of land, and where the land is situated &c.

Dr. Johnson, it appears, had no children of his own but left his estate to a niece who married a gentleman named Tompkins. They had several children, one of whom was married to a gentleman named Tabb of Gloucester County Virginia. Mr. Tabb's son John L Tabb was the father of my wife, she being his only child. He deceased some years since, his wife having died

¹ Va. Half Pay Va. Sea Service See N. A. Acct. No. 837—Virginia State Navy William "Johnston" OYS File Half Pay which appears to be the same officer.

Note: Will Graves: I looked to see if there were another file under the name William Johnston for whom half pay was claimed against the US—I found no such file in the pension records.

before him.

An early reply will very much oblige,
Dear Sir, your Obedient Servant

S/ Nathl. Mitchell [Nathaniel Mitchell]



[From [Virginia Half-Pay record on Fold3.com](https://www.fold3.com)]
<https://www.fold3.com/image/616521574> 111-page file

[p 4]

At a County Court held for Elizabeth City County, July 25th 1851

On the motion of Robert H Vaughan who made oath according to law and together with Frederick Vincent his security, entered into and acknowledged a bond in the penalty of five thousand dollars conditioned according to law, certificate is granted him for obtaining letters of administration on the estate of Dr. William Johnston deceased, who was a Surgeon in the State Navy of Virginia during the war of the revolution in due form – And this administration is granted with the consent of Robert Tompkins, Christopher Tompkins, John D Moreland and James Tompkins, heirs of the said William Johnston deceased for the purpose of enabling the said administrator to recover the half pay due the said William Johnston as a Surgeon in the State Navy of Virginia during the war of the revolution under the Act of Congress of July 5th, 1832.

A copy

Test L. L. Howard, Clerk

[p 6]

The petition of Jonathan Kay of the County of Norfolk to his Excellency the Governor and to the Executive Council of Virginia.

Your petitioner sets forth and humbly represents that he is now in his 83rd year and has resided cheaply in Norfolk County aforesaid. Though too young himself to take part in the Revolutionary contest subsisting between the United States and Great Britain, yet he has a distinct and positive recollection of the events of that war, as well as a personal knowledge of many of the officers engaged in that contest.

Your petitioner adverst that his father John Kay was an officer in the Army in the division of troops attached to the command of General Thomas Matthews, stationed in and about the town of Portsmouth and its vicinity, known as Fort Nelson, at which time he held the rank of Ensign. That he was subsequently transferred to the Naval Service of Virginia, as an officer of Marines, and in the early part of Arnold's [Benedict Arnold's] invasion of Virginia, was attached to the Galley belonging to the Navy of Virginia called the "Henry" commanded by Captain Michael James. That at a more remote period, near the close of the year 1781, he was attached to the armed cruiser "Nicholson,"² which vessel was shortly thereafter captured by the enemy. Your

² *Nicholson*. Coggins:102, ND8:389, VANavy:152, Selby:171, armed boat in VA Navy, 1777-1780, Capt John Sinclair, a trading vessel operating between Virginia and St. Eustatius. It captured a British schooner in Apr 1777. ND11:1168 shows Capts Joseph Speake and Isaac Mercer. Dandridge:186, shows a schooner. Eller:269, it was scuttled in the Nansemond River, but later refloated for use. It was finally captured and destroyed by

petitioner's father & surgeon William Johnson, officers of the Navy were attached to the said vessel at the time of her aforesaid capture: there were others, but he does not recollect their names. Your petitioner's aforesaid father died somewhere in the year __ and left children of whom your petitioner is the eldest surviving = Should it appear that his said father, under the laws of Virginia is entitled to land bounty, he humbly prays that the same may be awarded. As witness my hand this 27th day of December, in the year of our Lord 1848 – and as in duty bound, your petitioner will ever pray &c

Jonathan Kay

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Executive Department Richmond, August 29th, 1851

The Heirs of William Johnston are allowed Land Bounty for his services as a Surgeon in the State Navy three years.

The register will issue a warrant accordingly, if not heretofore drawn.

Jno. F. Wily, Lt. Gov.

[p 11]

At a County Court held for Elizabeth City County, July 25th

The Court orders it to be certified that it has been made to appear by satisfactory evidence this day produced before it that William Johnston who was a Surgeon in the State Navy of Virginia during the War of the Revolution, died intestate in the County of Elizabeth City on the __ day of August in the year 1809 and that Robert Tompkins a resident of this County, Christopher Tompkins of Norfolk, Julia, wife of John D. Moreland and James Tompkins are the surviving heirs and next of kin of the said William Johnston deceased claiming as such under their Grandmother Anna Tompkins deceased formerly Anna Johnston of York County, the niece and only surviving heir of said Doctor William Johnston.

A Copy

Test

L. L. Howard, Clerk

[p 22]

State of Virginia Elizabeth City County } to wit

The affidavit of Ann Payne taken before me Thomas C Peek a Notary Public with in and for the County and State aforesaid this 19th day of July A.D. 1851.

Ann Payne an aged and respected lady of the Town of Hampton in the county aforesaid being duly sworn according to law deposeth and saith: That she knew and was well acquainted with Dr. William Johnston who was a Surgeon in the Virginia State Navy during the Revolutionary War; that he was attached to one of the Cruisers belonging to this Station in the early part of the war, and was cruising off and on for more than two years. The name of the officer who commanded said cruiser she does not recollect, but, that the name of the first Lieutenant of said cruiser was John Crew, who at a late period of the war was taken prisoner by the British. In the year 1780 (she fixes this date in her memory by the unusual severity of the winter of that year which has ever been memorable) the said Dr. William Johnston was attached to the Schooner "Nicholson" commanded by Lieutenant Jennings and that he the said Dr. Johnston continued so attached in the capacity of a Surgeon until the said Schooner was captured

by a British frigate late in the year 1781. At the time said Schooner Nicholson was captured, Alexander Mapenburg was the Master, and he together with the rest of her officers, continued prisoners of war for some months and until immediately after the peace in 1783, when they were released. At a Ball which was held in this place in commemoration of the restoration of peace just after that event, which was called the "Liberty Ball" and at which many officers, both French and Americans, were present, she remembers distinctly to have seen the before mentioned officers Alexander Mapenburg and Dr. Johnston, dressed in their respective uniforms. In testimony whereof affiant has hereunto caused her name to be written and has made her mark to the same.

Ann Payne, X her mark

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Before me Nathan C Whitehead a Justice of the peace for the City of Norfolk, personally appeared Col. Stephen Wright³ of said City, and made oath that he was well acquainted with Dr. William Johnston, who was a Surgeon in the State Navy of Virginia, during the war of the Revolution, and entered the said Navy at an early period of the war. At a subsequent period Dr. Johnston served as the Surgeon of one of the Galleys commanded by Captain Wright Westcott, a well known officer of said Navy, and was afterwards detached to some other vessel – and deponent can say with positiveness, from his certain knowledge, that Dr. Johnston continued actively employed as Surgeon until shortly after the siege of York [October 19, 1781]. Deponent was himself taken prisoner by the enemy, at or about the period last mentioned, and was kept closely confined as a prisoner of war at Bermuda, until after the close of the war. The last deponent saw of Dr. Johnston was about two years after the old Chesapeake war, and to the best of his recollection, he died he thinks in the summer of the year 1809.

Stephen Wright

[p 38]

The deposition of Mrs. Ann Payne a resident of the Town of Hampton in the County of Elizabeth City State of Virginia taken before me Thomas C Peek a notary public duly commissioned and qualified within and for the County & State aforesaid on this 17th day of October A.D. 1851 This deponent being first duly sworn according to law deposeth and saith by way of questions & answers as follows:

Question. In what year were you born?

Answer. I do not know exactly.

Question. How old do you think you are?

Answer. I cannot state certainly, but I reckon if I live to see the Sixth of next March, I shall be 86 or 87. I was christened in the old Church of this place and my name and date of birth was registered, but all the old records of the Church having been destroyed I am unable to know with certainty the year in which I was born.

Question. Did you, or did you not come reside with Captain Pascow Herbert⁴ a naval officer, during the Revolutionary war?

Answer. I did live with Captain Pascow Herbert during the Revolutionary war.

Question. Where did Captain Pascow Herbert then reside?

Answer. At the place called "West Point" in this County near the mouth of Hampton Creek,

³ [Stephen Wright R11907](#)

⁴ [Pascow \(Pasco\) Herbert R43](#)

where Mr. Fayette Jones now lives.

Question. Did you ever hear the officers of the Navy converse together during the war, upon the subject and operations of the war?

Answer. I frequently heard them.

Question. Did you, or did you not come here Dr. William Johnston speak of his capture and imprisonment, after his return?

Answer. I frequently heard him and Captain Herbert talk of it together, and further this deponent saith not.

Ann Payne, X her mark

[p 57]

Dr. Johnston's case

Extract from the Navy Board Journal

[p 58]

Thursday 24th of October 1776

Ordered that a Warrant issued to Dr. William Johnston for Five pounds seven Shillings and three pence for Medicine and attendance on the Sailors belonging to the Sloop *Defiance*.⁵

(from page 90)

The above is truly copied from the Naval Journal

[p 103]

City of Norfolk to wit

Before me N. C. Whitehead a Justice of the peace in & for the City aforesaid personally appeared Colonel Stephen Wright, and aged & respectable Citizen of said City & being duly sworn deposeth & saith that he performed military service at various periods during the War of the Revolution in the Towns of Norfolk & Portsmouth, and was regularly enrolled in a company of the Militia commanded by Capt. Charles Conner. The post of Ensign becoming vacant, deponent was duly appointed to fill the vacancy, & in the fall of 1781 was dispatched to York Town with a detachment of men which he commanded in his capacity of Ensign, & crossed over in one of the small cruisers commanded by Capt. John Archer of the Virginia & reached York, just as the British under Lord Cornwallis surrendered to the American Troops. Deponent with his command after was returned to Portsmouth, & continued in service until the troops raised for the defense of the Commonwealth were generally discharged. Subsequently deponent was invited by his near relative & acquaintance Capt. W. Westcott, one of the retained officers of the Virginia State Navy to join his vessel, one of the small cruisers retained in that branch of the public service, then about to sail for the West Indies, which invitation deponent accepted, & volunteered as a sort of aid to Capt. Westcott. They sailed from Hampton Roads direct for the Island of Martinique & in the prosecution of the cruise they fell in with the British frigate *Cerherus* commanded by Sir Jacob Wheat & after being chased from sunrise to sunset were captured & taken to Bermuda, where the officers and men were thrown into the hulks (prison ships) & confined, as prisoners of War until the close of the War. Among the Officers taken prisoners & then confined were the commander Capt. Westcott, Lieut. John crew, Sailing master Joseph

⁵ *Defiance*. Dandridge:186, VANavy:163, ND6:1450, ND7:12, ship in VA Navy, Captains Eleazar Callender and William Greene in 1776, built as a sloop, schooner-rigged when captured May, 1778.

<https://www.awiatsea.com/Hough/Hough%20List%20C-D.html>

Marshall, and deponent, all of whom were retained as prisoners of War and not discharged until the peace in April 1783. The said Marshall died Early in the last war with Great Britain, & the said Crew somewhere about or during the year 1810 & further deponent saith not

Stephen Wright

[certified October 24th, 1850]