

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Pension Application of Joseph Speake R95

VA Half Pay

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 23 Aug 2021.

[The following half-pay claim is from Fold3.com starting at <https://www.fold3.com/image/616522466>. Only the most informative documents in the 78-page file are transcribed here. One that is not transcribed is a long argument by Thomas Hord, agent for the heirs of Joseph Speake, that Speake ranked as a Captain rather than a Lieutenant.]

To Commodore Brooke [Walter Brooke R14].

Sir. We have sent you by Capt Speake ten Barrels of Flour and ten Barrels of Beef and should have sent you some spirits but have none at present, as soon as we have shall send you some down.

Signed/ Thomas Whiting 1st Com [Commissioner of the Navy Board]

Navy Board/ 31st July 1777

I certify that the name of Joseph Speake does not appear in the minutes of the Board of War either on or after the 5th day of July 1779 when the order was made to dismantle the Safeguard Galley.

Given under my hand at the Aud[ito]r's office Va the 18 March 1846/ Jas E. Heath Aud

Charles County Orphans Court, June Term 1834.

At an orphan's court begun and held at the Court House in Port Tobacco on the 5th day of August 1834 and among the Records of the proceedings were the following to wit

On the motion of Elizabeth Chunn, and satisfactory evidence being produced before the Court, it is ordered to be certified and recorded that the said Elizabeth Chunn is a surviving daughter, and John A Matthews, Henrietta Speake and Joseph H Cooksey are the only Grand children of Captain Joseph H Speake (commonly written Joseph Speake) late of Charles County in the State of Maryland dec'd and who is reputed to have been an officer in the Virg'a State Navy during the War of the Revolution, and they the said Elizabeth Chunn John A Matthews Henrietta Speake and Joseph H Cooksey are the sole heirs at law of the s'd Cap Joseph Speake. And it is further ordered to be certified and recorded that the s'd Joseph H Speake died testate, and that his last will and testament is of record in the orphans Court of Charles County. And It further ordered that the evidence of the above acts be recorded amongst the record of proceedings of this Court

State of Maryland Charles County To wit

Personally came before me Charles McCann a Justice of the peace in & for the County afor'd Martha Pine a citizen of s'd County aged 71 yrs years & upwards and being a person of respectability & whose statement is entitled to full faith & credit and she having affirmed, the truth to Speake [sic], deposeth that she was well acquainted with Cap Joseph Speake from the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty two until the time of his decease which took place thirty eight years ago. The affiant states that she has always understood that the said Joseph Speake went from Charles County to Alexandria in the state of virginia where he entered the Virginia navy as an officer And that he the s'd Joseph Speake she well recollects returned home from the s'd service & married in the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty two in the month of August said affiant further states that when he returned home he bore the rank & title of Captain & to the period of his death bore that title. She further states that said officer married a relation of hers and this affiant was married herself in May 1782 and as above stated the s'd Joseph Speake was married in the month of August thereafter & that he had returned from the s'd service a very short time before his marriage took place. Affi[ant] never heard of s'd Cap Joseph Speake resigning his commission. Affiant further states that s'd Cap Joseph Speake was the same identical person who died in Charles County and whose will she believes stands recorded in the orphans Court of s'd County. There

was during the War of the Revolution no other person of that name who was in the she knows or ever heard of, and only one other person of that name who was a nephew of s'd Cap Joseph Speake, and he was a boy at that time, the above Cap Joseph Speake was the same who left the following heirs & devisees to wit, The late Mrs Amelia Matthews the late Mrs Charlotte G Cooksey, Mrs Elizabeth Chunn widow of Zechariah Chunn Joseph Thos Speake, late of Chas County, & Alexander I Speake who died under age, without issue. Affiant further states that Mrs Cordelia Speake the widow of the s'd officer remained the widow of her s'd husband during her natural life, That Amelia Matthews died leaving issue John A Matthews, That Mrs Charlotte G Cooksey died leaving issue Joseph Henry Cooksey, Joseph Thomas Speake died leaving issue Henrietta Speake and said Elizabeth Chunn still living, and that the said persons are now the sole surviving heirs of the s'd Cap Speake and reside in the County of Charles in the state afors'd except said Henrietta Speake who is deaf & dumb and is at this time at the assylum at Philadelphia, obtaining an education. Affiant is not certain that s'd officer died thirty eight years ago, it might have been more or less. And further she saith not. Subscribed and affirmed before me this 4th day of Aug't 1834.

Martha H Price

County of Alex[andri]a Dist. of Columbia Towit

This day personally came before the subscriber a justice of the peace in & for the county afors'd Dan'l Payne [Daniel Payne] (the same whose affidavit has heretofore been taken before me as touching the services of Cap. Joseph Speake in the War of the Revolution) and he being duly sworn according to law, deposeth & saith, by way of addendum to his s'd former aff't that the s'd Captain Joseph Speake had command of the Sloop of War called the Washington. He does not recollect the number of Guns she mounted and further he saith not. Given under my hand this 13th day of Nov'r 1834.

[Jonathan] Shillaber

United States – D

To Lieutenant Joseph Speake of the Virginia State Navy.

For his Half pay from the 11th of April 1783 to the 28th March 1795. 11 years & 352 days @ \$182⁵²/₁₀₀ p Annum} \$2183⁵⁰/₁₀₀

Allowed by the Secretary of War under the act of Congress of 5th May 1832 pr annexed decision dated 13th of February 1836.

[The following documents from the pension application are certified copies of excerpts from the Naval Journal, "an old Book" in the Auditor's Office in Richmond.]

Wednesday 19th March 1777.

Joseph Speake is recommended to his Excellency the Governor and the Hon'ble the Council as a proper person to be appointed first Lieutenant of the Safeguard Galley. From page 192.

Tuesday 24th June 1777.

Ordered that Mr. William Holt deliver to Lieut Joseph Speake two hundred pounds of Bacon, two Barrells of Bread, half a bushell of peas, Ten Gallons of Whiskey and five Gallons of Rum

From page 240.

Thursday 10th July 1777.

Ordered that Mr. William Holt deliver unto Capt Joseph Speake twenty barrells of Bread, ten barrells of Flour, five barrells of Beef and two thousand pounds of Bacon for the use of the Hero and Norfolk Revenge Gallies

From page 246.

Tuesday 15th July 1777.

Ordered that William Holt deliver unto Capt Joseph Speake one hogshead of Rum and one bushell of Salt for the use of the Norfolk Revenge Galley.

Ordered that William Hold deliver unto Capt Joseph Speake one bbl of Rum, one Box of Candles and one bushell of Salt for the use of the Hero Galley.

From page 248

Wednesday the 19th day of November 1777.

Ordered that Mr. William Holt deliver to Lieutenant Joseph Speake one barrell of Bread and one ditto of pork for the use of the Boat Nicholson. From page 316.

Friday the 28th day of November 1777.

Ordered that the Keeper of the public Store deliver to Lieutenant Joseph Speake three pairs of Stockings for the use of the people on Board the Boat Nicholson upon his paying for the same

From page 321

Monday the 5th day of July 1779. [Copy certified 4 Oct 1834.]

Present James Innes, William Nelson and Samuel Griffin esquires.

The Manley, Safeguard, Hero, Lewis and Page Gallies, and the Ship Gloucester, being represented to this Board as useless and inadequate to the purposes of defence, it is ordered that the said Gallies and Ship be immediately dismantled, and that their men with such of their Stores, as may be necessary, be consigned to the use of the other armed Vessells, and that their hulls be exposed to public sale.

Extracted from Minutes of the Board of War page 3. Bound in 1st Vol of papers concerning the army of the Revolution.

[The following is part of a table certified as a copy "Extracted from a Roll of the Safeguard Galley Bound in 1st Vol of papers concerning the State Navy."]

George Elliott [pension application R38]	Capt	1 st Mar'h.
Jo's Speake	1 st Lt.	19 D[itt]o

Know all men by these presents that I Joseph H Cooksey of Charles County and State of Maryland administrator De Bonis non in the Estate of Joseph Speake late of said County Deceased a Lieutenant of the Virginia State Navy in the War of the Revolution do hereby constitute and appoint Henry Northrup of Washington City my true and lawfull attorney with powers of substitution for me and in my name to prepare papers and collect proofs and vouchers to enable me as administrator aforesaid to obtain a further amount of half pay from the United States in right of the services of the said Deceased beyond the sum of \$2183.50 heretofore received in right of the proper officers or department at Washington City and if allowed to ask demand and receive such further allowance the same being payable under the Third Section of the Act of Congress of the 5th of July 1832 intituled an act to remunerate Virginia – and my said attorney is hereby authorised to do and perform all manner of things touching the same which I myself might do were I personally present In witness of which I have set my hand and seal at Washington City this Eleventh day of August 1845

Joseph H Cooksey

Washington 19 Aug't. 1845.

Sir, On behalf of Joseph H. Speak's adm'r. Joseph H. Cooksey, I have the honor to present his claim for a balance of half pay under the Act 5th July 1832. Lt. Speake was the Lt. of the Safeguard Galley. See roll of that Vessel filed in case of Charles S. Boush [R12]. That vessel was among three ordered to be sold when the Navy was reduced, see 10 vol. Hening p. 217 [ships *Tartar* and *Dragon*, and the gallies *Henry*, *Manley*, *Hero*, *Page*, *Lewis*, and *Safeguard*; *Hening's Statutes at Large*, <http://vagenweb.org/hening/vol10-10.htm>]. When you allowed the claim you allowed it only from the 22^d April 1783 because of having no evidence that it should commence at an earlier date. I beg leave to refer you to the papers filed in the 3^d Auditors Office and ask you to enquire of Mr. Heath whether he was called into service after the reduction.

Enclosed is evidence of Administration and a power of Attorney.

Yours very respectfully/ Francis A. Dickins

James L Edwards Esq/ Com'r. of Pensions.

Pension Office/ June 8, 1846

I certify that I have examined the claim of the administrator of Joseph Speake, dec'd. who was a Lieutenant in the Virginia State Navy during the revolution, and it appears that under the act of July 5, 1832, half-pay has been allowed from the from the first of January 1782, when it was supposed he left the service. It now appears that he left the service on the 5 of July 1779. Half-pay from July 5, 1779 to January 1, 1782 is therefore still due, and it should be paid at the rate of one hundred and eighty two dollars and fifty cents per annum, for that period. The amount is payable to Henry Northrup, attorney of Joseph H. Cooksey, administrator of Joseph Speake, deceased. Commissioner of Pensions
Approved/ Secretary of War

[From [bounty-land records in the Library of Virginia.](#)]

Upon the Petition of the Heirs of Joseph Speake Captain in the state navy, for bounty land.

Joseph Speake was recommended as 1st Lieutenant of the Safeguard Galley, March 19th 1777 (see Journal of the Navy Board p 192) There were sundry orders made by the navy Board respecting him, from that time to the 28th of november of that year. on the 10th July 1777 an order of the navy Board was made for the delivery to Captain Joseph Speake of provisions for the Hero & Norfolk Revenge Gallies. (also Journal N. B'd. p. 246) He was again recongnized as Captain, by the navy board, in two orders made on the 15th July 1777. (see Journal N. B. p. 248.) He was afterwards in the Boat Nicholson, and was call'd Lieutenant. (See Journal N. B. p. 259-263 - 289 - 300 - 304 - 316 - 327.)

It does not appear by the Navy Journals & Papers, that Captain (or Lieutenant) Speake resign'd his commission:

The Safeguard Galley & the Boat Nicholson were both in service until after July 1779. But, how long after, does not appear. The Safeguard was order'd to be dismantles, July 9th 1779. The Boat Nicholson was in service longer - as there is no evidence of the resignation of Joseph Speake, (and it is believ'd the Navy Journals were faithful records of the Resignations of the officers of the navy) I have thought the presumption fair & rationale, that he serv'd as long as the Safe-guard, or the Boat Nicholson, was in service. He probably belonged to one of them.) – and that he was supernumerary, when those vessels (or that one of them to which he belongd) were left out of service by the reduction of the navy – and that he remain'd supernumerary to the end of the war. I have therefore reported him, in the printed list of officers of the navy &c No. 5. entitled to land for three years service; “perhaps, for the war.”

The following facts are provd by the Petitioners – that Joseph Speake, who was a native of the state of maryland enterd the Virginia navy as an officer, in the war of the Revolution – that he return'd from the said service a short time before his marriage, which took place in the month of August 1782 – that he bore the rank & title of Captain in the said navy – that he (according to the best information & belief of the witnesses) did not resign his Commission, but remain'd in service, until the close of the war, or until about that time. (see the affidavits of Abraham Bowin – Martha Price and Walter Milstead, which have been fil'd with the Petition.)

To Gov Tazewell

Respectfully submitted

John H Smith Com'r &c/ 8th Oct 1834

NOTE: The half-pay file includes a copy of the will of Joseph Speake, dated 28 March 1795 and proved on 1 June 1795, which names his wife, Cordelia and children Joseph Thomas Speake and Charlotte G. Speake, as well as his son, Alexander S. Speake.