

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Pension Application of John Mayrant S32390

SC Sea Service

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris and Will Graves with assistance of Dennis Conrad.

Revised 26 July 2017.

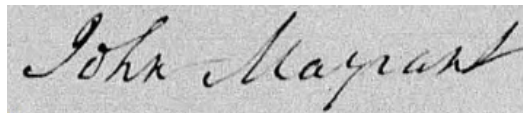
South Carolina } In the Court of Equity  
Fairfield District }

On this Fourteenth day of July in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty two, personally appeared in open court before the Honorable Henry Wm Desassure one the Chancellors of the said State in the Court of Equity now sitting Captain John Mayrant Senior a resident of the High Hills of Santee in the District of Sumter and State aforesaid, who will during this month attain the age of seventy years, and who being duly sworn according to law doth on his oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the Act of Congress passed 7 June 1832; That he the said John Mayrant Senior was born in the year Seventeen hundred and sixty two (1762) in the Parish of St. James Santee, Charleston District; that after the death of his parents, he removed to Charleston where he was raised by his Aunt Mrs. Judith Pringle the mother of the former Attorney General of South Carolina, John Julius Pringle, now alive and residing in Charleston, in whose possession deponent believes that the family Bible containing the record of his age now is to be found. That the deponent is the brother of William Mayrant member of Congress from South Carolina in 1816, who died during the present year. That the deponent resided in Charleston till 1778, when at the age of about sixteen he entered the naval service of South Carolina. That in the winter 1777. 1778 the Legislature of South Carolina passed an act to raise a naval force, and appointed Alexander Gillon [W25629] Commodore and three Port Captains William Robertson, John Joyner and John McQueen, who were directed to go to France and build or buy three Frigates and man and equip them. That Commodore Gillon was to command the whole with power to appoint his officers. That the deponent procured from Commodore Gillon the appointment of midshipman through the intervention of his friends Thomas Lynch, Elias Horry and William Bull Junior, the nephew of the Lieut. Governor Wm. Bull [William Bull] who took the side of the British when the Revolution broke out. This was about the month of May 1778, and in August following the deponent sailed with Commodore Gillon for Havanna [sic: Havana] in the Sloop Tartar 14 Guns which had been purchased by the Commodore for the State. At the Havanna they separated; that deponent was sent with Capt. Robertson to France in the French letter of Marque the Gustavus, and landed at Nantes. That Commodore Gillon went in a Spanish Packet to Spain, and came over land to Nantes. That the Indigo shipped by the state of South Carolina to Commodore Gillon and remittance was for the most part captured, and he had to delay fitting out his force, until he could negotiate a loan in France. That at this time deponent learnt that Commodore Paul Jones was at L'Orient [now Lorient; about six months beginning 4 Feb 1779] preparing an armament for sea, and that the deponent got permission of Commodore Gillon to seek service in his Squadron. That accordingly deponent set out for L'Orient, and aided by a letter of introduction from Dr. Franklin which Commodore Gillon procured for him he succeeded in his object. That Commodore Jones received him kindly, and appointed him midshipman & Aid. This was in June 1779. That they sailed in July or about 1 August as well as deponent remembers; the following vessels composing the squadron. The Bonhomme Richard, Commodore Jones, 44 [guns], Frigate Alliance 36 Capt. [Pierre] Landais, Pallas 26 Capt Cuttino [Denis-Nicolas Cottineau de Kerloguen], Vengeance Brig 16 guns, Capt Ricault [Philippe-Nicolas Ricot]. That they sailed up the British Channel and back, went through the Irish Channel, passed between Scotland and Ireland and went round Scotland into the German Ocean. That they would have laid Leith [near Edinburgh] under contribution, but were driven off by a gale. That in a few days afterwards [23 Sep 1779] Paul Jones fought his battle with the Serapis & Countess [of] Scarborough, the particulars of which are matters of history & will not be repeated here. That in boarding the Serapis the deponent (who closely followed Lieut. Dale [see note below]) received a pike wound through his leg, and after the fight was over gave him great pain, and he was unable to put his foot to the ground for three

months. That the prizes were carried into the Texel [West Frisian Islands, The Netherlands], where soon after their arrival the deponent received orders from Commodore Gillon to join him at Amsterdam, where he was fitting out the Frigate South Carolina, which he had purchased. That deponent joined him immediately (in October or November 1779) and Commodore Gillon was pleased to promote him to a Lieutenancy, and deponent was commissioned accordingly. That the Commodore put to sea in the South Carolina, sailed into the German Ocean, round Scotland, thence to Spain, went into Corunna, thence to Teneriffe [Tenerife], thence to Charleston, off which they cruised [31 Dec 1781], it being in possession of the English [since 12 May 1780]. Sailed thence to the West Indies Captured five Jamaica ships in the Gulph & carried them to Havannah [12 Jan 1782] – convoyed the Governor of Havannah with 70 transports to the Bahamas, which they took [8 May 1782]. Thence they sailed to Philadelphia, refitted there and Commodore Gillon dropped down to New Castle. That at this time it was expected daily that Charleston would be evacuated by the British, and Commodore Gillon sent deponent and Capt. Kalteisen [Michael Kalteissen] to Philadelphia supplied with money to buy a carriage & horses and proceed to Charleston, and it evacuated [14 Dec 1782], to open a rendezvous for marines and seamen of whom he wanted about 100. That they reached Charleston soon after the evacuation. That shortly after their arrival they learnt that the Frigate South Carolina in attempting to get to sea had been captured by three British frigates. And the deponent states that his commission and papers and all that he owned were taken in her, and lost to him forever. That the deponent was then ordered by Commodore Gillon to remain in Charleston, and by his direction and that of Governor Guerard [Benjamin Guerard, Governor 4 Feb 1783 - 11 Feb 1785] to receive prisoners, make exchanges &c. That he continued there under the orders of Commodore Gillon until the peace in 1783, where by an act of the Legislature of South Carolina the naval force was discharged. That the act which discharged them allowed the officers of the Frigate South Carolina a twelve months pay, which the deponent received, that is to say, he received an indent, which he was obliged to sell at what it would bring. It brought at the rate of Ten pounds for every hundred. That when discharged after the peace of 1783 the deponent was a commissioned 3<sup>d</sup> Lieutenant of the Frigate South Carolina; that his regular pay as such was Twelve pounds Sterling (£12) a month, exclusive of rations. That in the Fall after the deponent married, and removed to the High Hills of Santee where he has ever since resided. That he has never applied for, or received a pension from this State or the United States heretofore. That of his brother officers and even of the crew of the Frigate South Carolina not a human being but himself survives to the knowledge of the deponent. That his friends and neighbours the late Gen'l [Thomas] Sumter and Judge Waties [sic: Thomas Waities] (who served with [Gen. Francis] Marion) are gone. That Mr. Thomas Sumter [Jr] late minister of the United States to the Court of Rio, who is his very next neighbour, can certify to his character and standing, and that he has always enjoyed the reputation in his neighbourhood and throughout the State of having served as a Lieutenant under Commodore Gillon in the Frigate South Carolina, and of having fought under Paul Jones the battle of the Bonhomme Richard. The same facts can be certified by Capt. Reuben Long [S46457] his neighbour, who now receives a pension from the U. States for services as Lieutenant in the Virginia Line under Gen'l. [Nathanael] Greene. So also Honorable Warren R Davis & the Honorable Senator [Stephen D.] Miller Members of Congress. It must be known also to these latter Gentlemen that when certain persons presented claim to the Legislature of South Carolina for the arrears of pay of part of the Crew of the Frigate South Carolina, claimant under powers of Attorney which were not believed to be genuine, the deponent was summoned as a witness by the state, and that partly in consequence of the testimony furnished by him these claims were rejected. That deponent having omitted to state above who were the officers on board the South Carolina when she left Amsterdam now adds that Commodore Gillon was commodore. Peter Amiel [see endnote] was first Lieutenant, Nicholas Bartlett [S33986] 2<sup>d</sup> Lieutenant and Powers 3<sup>d</sup> Lieut. that deponent remained at Amsterdam about 18 months, and that deponent was promoted to the Lieutenancy in about three months before they sailed. that when the Frigate was at Philadelphia just before the capture Thomas White was 1<sup>st</sup> Lieut. in place of Peter Amiel who had been cashiered for holding a correspondence with Sir Joseph York [sic: Joseph Yorke] the British Ambassador at the Hague – 2 Lieut. Nathaniel Marston in place of Bartlett, who had resigned and left the ship at Corunna. This

deponent was the 3<sup>d</sup> Lieut. Thos. Fitzgerald [Thomas Fitzgerald] was the fourth and Robert Coram the 5<sup>th</sup>.

That the deponent hereby relinquishes all claim whatever to a pension or annuity except the present and declares that his name is not on the pension roll of the agency of any State. Sworn to and subscribed the day and year aforesaid.



By his Excellency Rawlins Lowndes Esquire President and Commander in Chief of the State of South Carolina

To Mr John Mayrant Gentleman Greeting

I Reposing special trust and Confidence in the Ability valour patriotism and prudence of you the said John Mayrant Have by virtue of the Powers in me vested Commissionated, Constituted and Appointed and by these presents do Commissionate Constitute and Appoint you the said John Mayrant to be a Fifth Lieutenant in the Navy of this State now or hereafter to be filled out. You are therefore diligently and faithfully, to execute and perform the Duty of Fifth Lieutenant of any Ship or other vessel belonging to the said Navy to which you shall or may be Appointed by any your Superiour Officer agreeable to the rules and Articles which have or may be Established in this State for the Regulation of the Navy thereof and the Custom and Usage of nations in that respect, and to perform and execute all such matters and Things which to the Office and duty of Fifth Lieutenant do belong [two undeciphered words] observing Such orders and Instructions as you shall from time to time receive from me or the Commander in Chief of this State for the time being and other your Superior Officers and all Inferiour Officers and others belonging to the said Navy are Hereby required and Commanded to obey you as Fifth Lieutenant thereof according to the rules and Discipline of War in such Cases Established.

By his Excellency's Command.  
Jos Huger Fleming

Given under my hand and seal at Charlestown this [blank] day of  
[blank] In the year of our Lord One thousand Seven hundred and  
Seventy Eight.

[other side]

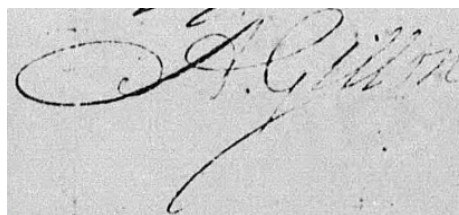
In consequence of my order of the nineteenth day of July 1778 from His Excellency Rawlins Lowndes Esquire President and Commander in Chief of the State of South Carolina I now Issue this Commission to John Mayrant Esquire as Fifth Lieutenant on board of this Ship South Carolina which rank commenced on the Thirteenth day of July last the said John Mayrant having been Midshipman in this Service from the Twenty third day of May One Thousand Seven Hundred & Seventy Eight

Texel the first day of August One Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty One

John Nixon

A. Gillon Commodore of the Navy of the State of South Carolina

Secretary



Additional materials contained in the file relating to the  
Pension application of John Mayrant S323 90 fn50SC

Transcribed by Will Graves 6/19/09

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Also, the handwriting of the original scribes often lends itself to varying interpretations. Users of this database are urged to view the original and to make their own decision as to how to decipher what the original scribe actually wrote. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original.]

[fn p. 46]

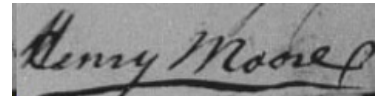
Fairfield District

Personally appeared Major Henry Moore [S46010], who being duly sworn, testifies, that he was an Officer in the 4th or Artillery Regiment of the South Carolina line of Continental Troops during the Revolutionary War, and served to the end of the war. He was captured at Charleston, when it was surrendered in May 1780, to the British troops under Sir Henry Clinton, and being detained a Prisoner many months, he was sent away in a Cartel, and reached the city of Philadelphia in the Summer or autumn the year 1781. This Deponent after the peace, settled in South Carolina, and has been for many years a resident in the District of Fairfield, where he filled the Offices of Major of Battalion of Militia, Artillery, Sheriff, & Judge of the County Court. This Deponent testifies that he is personally acquainted with Captain John Mayrant, who is now applying for a pension. He knows from Information on which he relies, that he was sent to the State of South Carolina, as a Midshipman from Commodore Gillon who was dispatched to Europe to set out a Naval force in Holland and that during the time that force was fitting out, Captain John Mayrant served as a volunteer with Captain John Paul Jones, who commanded the Frigate Bon Homme Richard, and was in the severe action with the British Frigate Serapis – Captain Pearson which was captured -- Captain Mayrant from information was wounded in the action. This Deponent further testifies that Captain John Mayrant afterwards rejoined Commodore Gillon & was appointed and served as a Lieutenant on board the Frigate South Carolina in the service of the State of South Carolina and after a successful cruise in the West Indies came into the Court of Philadelphia in the summer or autumn of 1781. There this Deponent saw & became personally acquainted for the first time with Captain Mayrant. He was then serving as a Lieutenant on board the Frigate South Carolina, as was universally known, but this Deponent never saw his Commission. This Deponent has ever understood that Captain Mayrant was ever since the Revolution, born the character of a respectable man & Citizen, & has been several times a member of the legislature & born other Honorable Offices.

At a recent meeting in Winnsborough for the first time since the Revolution this deponent and Captain Mayrant promptly recognized each other, and recalled the circumstances of their meeting in Philadelphia. This Deponent has himself received a pension from the United States since the year 1828 to obtain which he forwarded his commission to Washington.

Sworn in open Court July 19 1832

S/ John Buchanan, C.E.F. D.



#### NOTES:

Lt. Richard Dale wrote a detailed account of the engagement with the Serapis including the following: “Midshipman Mayrant followed with a party of men and was immediately run through the thigh with a boarding pike by some of the enemy stationed in the waist, who were not informed of the surrender of their ship.” Commager, H. S. and R. B. Morris. *The Spirit of ‘Seventy-Six*. New York: Harper & Row, 1967, p. 949. For additional details see James A. Lewis’s *Neptune’s Militia: The Frigate South Carolina during the American Revolution* (Kent State University Press, 1999) and Patrick O’Kelley’s *Nothing but Blood and Slaughter* Vols. 3 and 4 (Booklocker.com, 2005).

On 23 June 1778 Peter Amiel signed the Oath of Allegiance to the United States (<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Adams/06-06-02-0173>), and he was a companion of John Adams in France. According to Alan Merryweather, however, by 1781 Amiel had joined the Royal Marines. More on Peter Amiel can be found in Mr. Merryweather’s book, *Share My Harvest*. For further information Alan Merryweather may be reached at [iopas@btinternet.com](mailto:iopas@btinternet.com).

The file contains an application dated 11 June 1836 for a transfer to Alabama of the pension of John Mayrant, who had moved to Washington County “in order to be more comfortably situated with his son,” John Mayrant, Jr. A certificate added to the application refers to Major John Mayrant.

Also in the file is the following document from Winston County MS: “I Wm B Smith Judge of the Probate court of Winston County holden at Louisville in and for the State and County aforesaid do hereby certify that satisfactory evidence has been exhibited to said court that John Mayrant Senr was a pensioner

of the United States at the rate of three hundred and sixty dollars a year was a resident of Sumpter District in the state of South Carolina and died at Siloa the house of Col'n Alfred Russell near the warm springs in Green County in the State of Tennessee on the first day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty six that he left no widow his wife Isabella Mayrant having died at her own residence in Sumpter District in the State of South Carolina on the third day of January AD one thousand eight hundred and thirty three that he left two children whose names are John Mayrant Jr of Hinds County and Jas N Mayrant of Winston Cty in the State of Mississippi and that they are the only lawful heirs and distributees of the said John Mayrant Senr."

The file contains a letter to the Secretary of War from James N. Mayrant of of Louisville MS dated 12 June 1845 stating that before leaving for Tennessee his father, John Mayrant, told him that 12 months of pension was still due to him. The file also contains a power of attorney dated 17 Oct 1845 by John Mayrant of Hinds County MS to obtain any pension due his deceased father.