

## Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension application of John Cowen S43402

f57R.I. [Navy]

Transcribed and annotated by Will Graves

10/1/23

[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 8<sup>th</sup> 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.]

[p 4]

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantation Kin SS To the Honourable Henry Remington Esquire one of the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court –

I John Cowen of Gloucester in the County Providence & Resident Citizen of the United States do Hereby for the Purpose of obtaining the benefit of an act of the Congress of the United States of America Entitled to an Act to Provide for Certain Persons Engaged in the land and naval Service of the United States in the revolutionary war make application and State to Your Honour on oath that I entered the Service of said War against the Common enemy on the twenty Sixth day of August 1776 in the Capacity of an Ensign in the Eight Company in the Second Regiment of the Brigade raised By the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations agreeable to the Commission now before you honour and Under Captain Benjamin Hopkin of Providence & was Honourably discharged in 1777 – And that I entered in the Navy the last of September or first of October 1779 on board of the frigate *Boston*<sup>1</sup> commanded by Captain Tucker [Samuel Tucker]<sup>2</sup> in the capacity of a [undeciphered word or words]<sup>3</sup> and Sailed from Boston to Bermuda & from thence to Charleston in South Carolina and remained there until we were Captured by the British<sup>4</sup> and from there were Sent by the British in a Cartel to Philadelphia and there Exchanged and Honourably discharged sometime in July 1780 = I further represent to your honor that owing to the frequent and various changes of my residence Since that Period and to the Common Casualty of Time and Accident the above mentioned discharge have been lost I also represent to your honour that by reason of my reduced Circumstances in life I have need of Assistance from my Country for Support being far advanced in life and entirely destitute of Property without Provision or Pension from the Government and Principally dependent on my friends for Support –

Warwick July 10, 1818

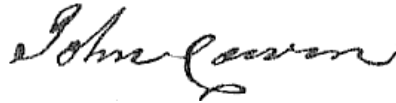
John Cowen

<sup>1</sup> [https://threedecks.org/index.php?display\\_type=show\\_ship&id=2391](https://threedecks.org/index.php?display_type=show_ship&id=2391)

<sup>2</sup> [https://threedecks.org/index.php?display\\_type=show\\_crewman&id=678](https://threedecks.org/index.php?display_type=show_crewman&id=678)



<sup>4</sup> May 12, 1780 Battle of Charleston <http://www.myrevolutionarywar.com/battles/800401-charleston/> & <https://allthingsliberty.com/2020/10/britains-last-throw-of-the-dice-begins-the-charlestown-campaign-of-1780/>



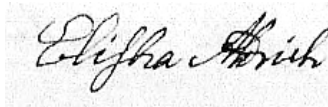
[p 8: Is a barely visible document dated June 12, 1820 which is the schedule of the veteran's property as required by the 1820 Act. In this document the veteran states that he served as an Officer in Col. Lippitt's Regiment of the Rhode Island Line for about 6 months and on board the *Boston* about 10 months. I have not attempted to decipher the listing of property but the document goes on to state as follows:

“And this declarant further saith that he is [word too faint to discern] in debt owing upwards of Seventy Dollars and that he has due to him upwards of a hundred Dollars that he is by occupation a Labourer, that owing to infirmities he is unable to do but little work, that he has a Wife and Six Children, that his wife is a very weakly woman, and that his Wife and three of his Children depend upon him for support and should he not have his pension continued to him he must depend upon the Charity and kindness of others for support.”]

[p 46]

The deposition of Elisha Aldrich<sup>5</sup> of Foster and the County of Providence in the State of Rhode Island who being engaged according to law testifies & says, that in the month of September 1779 he entered on board the Frigate *Providence* then lying in Boston, under the command of Abraham Whipple Esquire as a marine – continued on board said Frigate until her capture at Charleston when he was made a prisoner of War, & so remained until he was exchanged in July 1780 – And this deponent further says, that he well remembers John Cowen, who was a Marine on board the *Boston*, then lying in Boston also = this deponent was personally acquainted with said John before the war = they both went to Boston very near the same time to enlist = and said John enlisted on board the *Boston* at or very near the same time he enlisted on board the *Providence* – In November the Fleet sailed on a cruise consisting of the Frigates *Providence*, *Boston*, *Queen of France* & the *Ranger* Sloop of War, After cruising several months we arrived in Charleston (S.C.) – where we remained until that City was taken by the enemy when we were all made prisoners of war, = We remain prisoners of war until July 1780 – when said John & myself & many others were put on board a Cartel & sent to Philadelphia to be exchanged – After our arrival at Philadelphia we were exchanged & had liberty to go home, = This deponent left him at Philadelphia, & came home & saw no more of him until after the War –

Elisha Aldrich



Rhode Island District  
In Providence 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1822  
Sworn to before David Howell District Judge

[p 55]

I William Merithew<sup>6</sup> of Foster in the County of Providence and State of Rhode Island of lawful age and Engaged according to Law do testify and say That in the year 1779 about the first of

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<sup>5</sup> [Elisha Aldrich \(Aldrick\) W20811](#)

<sup>6</sup> W20251

September I Entered on board the Ship *Providence* then Lying in Boston and about the same time John Warner and John Cowen Entered on board of the ship *Boston* then Lying in Boston I was on board of the Ship *Boston* a number of times and saw said Cowen and Warner there and about the first of December following we sailed from Boston in company to Charleston in the State of South Carolina and was there taken and made prisoners of war and I was often in Company with the said Warner and Cowen in Charleston as I was well acquainted with them being Neighbors when we were at home and about the last of July A.D. 1780 we were discharged.

William Meirthew, X his mark

[Attested March 12, 1823 [last digit unclear]]

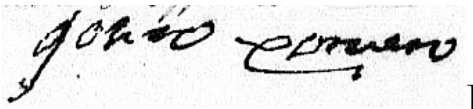
[p 9: On March 10, 1827 in Tolland Connecticut, the veteran applied for the transfer of his pension payments to the Connecticut agency describing himself as being the person who formally belonged to the *Boston* frigate commanded by Captain Samuel Tucker in the Fleet commanded by Commodore Abraham Whipple.<sup>7</sup> He describes his reason for moving to Connecticut is “that his sons on whom he is dependent removed here & he lives in a family with them.” p. 10: Eddy Cowen, relationship if any not stated, gave a supporting affidavit as to the identity of the veteran.]

[p 12]

Elijah Armstrong of Gloucester and the Rhode Island District being duly sworn deposed & saith that he was Administrator of James Cowen late of said Gloucester deceased, Said James was the father of John Cowen, a pensioner of the United States who removed to Connecticut a few years cents. Said James died thirteen years ago in the year 1814 aged about 92 – When he died what property he had was personal property & that was divided among his daughters the said John’s sisters, the said John having received his portion before his father’s death by a deed of gift subject to a life lease of his father – And this deponent further saith that to his knowledge the said John did not receive any property whatever upon the death of his father and he further knows that what property he did receive from his father before was all expended in support of his family which was a large one, & whose wife had always been a very infirm & weakly woman unable to assist in the maintenance of his family – The right and title which he did received from his father was given him about thirty years ago & to this deponent’s knowledge was sold before his father’s death so that on his father’s death he did not receive any thing all these facts are within the deponent’s knowledge he having been administrator as aforementioned And this deponent further states that said John is now poor & has been supported by his children except what Assistance he has received by way of a pension and he removed to Connecticut for the purpose of living with a relation.

Elijah Armstrong

[p 15: In the State of New York, County of Chautauqua, on July 21, 1851, John Cowen, child of John Cowen, a pensioner, filed a claim for the balance of pension due to his father as a Sergeant & officer.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John Cowen", written in dark ink on a light-colored background. The signature is enclosed in a small rectangular box with a closing bracket on the right side.

<sup>7</sup> <http://gaspee.org/AbrahamWhipple.html>

[p 34: Certificate issued by the clerk of Cattaraugus County New York December 4, 1851 that John Cowen, a pensioner of the United States and resident of said County and State died in said County January 8, 1843 leaving no widow but leaving the following named children surviving: to wit: John, Sally, Esther, Walter Cowen.]

[p 45: Image of the original Commission dated August 26, 1776 appointing John Cowen, Gentlemen, an Ensign in the 8<sup>th</sup> Company of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of the Brigade raised by the State of Rhode Island. The commission is signed by John Hancock president of the Continental Congress.]

[Veteran was pension at the rate of \$8 per month commencing July 10, 1818, for service as a Marine in the Continental Navy from Rhode Island.]