

Southern Campaign American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Pension Application of John Harris W24391

Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 15 Mar 2012.

State of Illinois Ss

County of Adams

On the 9th day of April in the year one thousand eight hundred and fifty one personally appeared before me a Judge of the County Court within and for the county and State aforesaid, Martha Harris widow of John Harris, aged 87 years a resident of the County of Adams and State of Illinois, who being duly sworn according to Law doth on her oath make the following declaration in order to obtain the benefit of the provisions made by the acts of Congress the 4th July AD 1836, March 3rd 1837, July 7 1838, March 3rd 1843, June 17th 1844, Feb 3rd 1848 and July 29th 1848. That she is the widow of John Harris Dec'd who was a private in the Revolutionary war, that he left his fathers residence in Granville County North Carolina and enlisted in the Continental Line at Halifax Va or Hillsboro [sic: Hillsborough] NC. about the 15th of July AD 1775 for the term of one year, that he was at the Battles of Brandywine [11 Sep 1777] Trenton [26 Dec 1776] and Germantown [4 Oct 1777], that he continued in said service for the term of 3 years and was honorably discharged at some point in Virginia under two men by the name of Campbell as a Colo. and the other holding a superior or an inferior Grade [William Campbell and Arthur Campbell of Washington County VA], that he was also in the Battle of the Cowpens [17 Jan 1781] Kings mountain [7 Oct 1780] and Guilford Court House [15 Mar 1781] for which service she has no documentary evidence. That he also served 18 months in the Regiment of Virginia troops commanded by Col. John Montgomery as will appear by his original certificate of discharge herewith presented. [See endnote.] that he was wounded in the right hip slightly in some of the engagements above mentioned.

She further declares that she was married to the said John Harris on the 31st day of October AD 1781 as will appear by her original certificate of marriage herewith presented, by one Thomas Woolzy a baptist minister at Abington Va. and that her said husband died at Bolingreen [sic: Bowling Green] Warren County Ky on the 18th day of August AD 1816 and she further swears that she has continued a widow ever since and has never before made application for a pension.

[signed] Martha Harris

This is to Certifi that the Bearer hereof John Harris has Served as A soldier in my Reigement on the westron of Virginia Eighteen Month now discharged. Given Under my hand this Eighteenth Day of May 1780
John Montgomery

I do heare by Sertify that that I have Been aquainted with John Harris about twenfive years and knew him to go two Campain in the american Servis and never heard of his Being in any wise disafected to the american Cause neither do I believe he Ever was as far as I Can Judg from SirCumstances given under my hand this 29th of April 1803
Elijah Whitney

[Certified on 11 March 1854 by Elijah Harriss (as he signed), 67, of Massac County IL, son of John and Martha Harris.]

State of Illinois Ss

County of Adams

On the tenth day of June AD one thousand eight hundred and fiftyfive personally appeared before me a Justice of the Peace within and for the County and State aforesaid, Martha Harris a resident of the county and state aforesaid aged Ninety One years who being duly sworn according to Law declares that she is the widow of John Harris deceased who was a private in the Company com'd by Capt

Cambell in the Regiment of Va Regulars Commanded by Col. Montgomery in the Revolutionary War, or in western Virginia Line, and continued in actual service in said Regiment for the period of 18 months, as will appear by a certificate of Discharge from Col. Montgomery that will be found on file in the Pension office in the case of the application for Pension which papers are spectfully referred to.

She further states that she was married to the said John Harris on the 31st day of October AD 1781 in Washington County Va by Thomas Wolsey a minister of the gospel, that her name before said marriage was Martha Thomas, that her said husband died on the 18th day of August 1816 near Bolingreen Ky and that she is still a widow.

She makes this declaration for the purpose of obtaining the bounty land to which she may be entitled under the act approved 3rd of March 1855. She also declares that she has never received any bounty land or made application therefor but the one now presented Martha herXmark Harris

NOTES:

In April 1779 Col. John Montgomery and Col. Evan Shelby destroyed the towns of the Chicamauga band of Cherokee Indians in Tennessee. The date of Harris's discharge suggests that he was on this expedition.

In addition to the marriage certificate described in her declaration, the file contains the following: "July 26 1783 it being Church Meeting Day the Church being assembled brother John Harris aplide for a Leter of Dismission Inquirey being maid and No objection was Dismist [one or two illegible words] fellowship when joyn'd any Church of the Same order Daniel Ramey Clk"

"To any baptist church where these presents may come Greeting whereas our beloved Sister Martha Harris belonging to brother Robet Elkins's church at Sinclairs bottom [St. Clair Bottom now in Smyth County] not having an Oppertunity of having a proper Dismission has now moved To kentucky and desires to be recommended to any church of the same Order we therefore testifie so far as we know she has Lived a Cristian Life and Conduct and as such we Recommend her, as witness our hand this Last of August 1789"

On 3 Sep 1851 John Harriss (as he signed) certified that the family record of John Thomas owned by his mother, Martha Harris, has the following entry: "Martha Thomas was born March the 28th and the 4 day of the week anno. 1764."

On 20 March 1854 Thomas Harriss (as he signed), 56, of Wayne County IL, stated that he had heard his father, John Harris, discuss the war with Elijah Whitney, who had moved from Virginia to Kentucky with his father.

On 21 March 1854 Enoch Harris, 70, of Warren County KY, stated that his father, John Harris, moved from Virginia to Garrard County KY around 1789 and lived there until 1807 or 1808, when he moved to Warren County KY. He stated that he believed the following were in service with John Harris: Elijah Whitney, who had lived on his father's land in Garrard and Warren counties; Gideon Martin (probably pension application S32232); James Fletcher; and Joseph Brown. He also stated that "one old man by the name of Philip Romans was likewise in s'd service used frequently to converse my Father on subjects relating to s'd war. that s'd Romans had taken from the Federal Government some five hundred dollars in the old continental money which perished or became worth nothing on his hands. he said he gave it for a wool hat which seemed to grieve the old man as long as he lived."

On 9 April 1855 Abijah Harriss (as he signed) and Martha Atherton stated that Abijah Harriss's mother, Martha Harris, had lived in his family since becoming a widow. Abijah Harriss further stated that John Harris was survived by seven children, the first three of which were recorded on a page in a small New Testament printed in 1745, transcribed as follows:

Enoch haris was born In the year of our lord November the 21 1783 [last digit not clear]

Thomas Lewis [in large script]

Elijah harris Was Bornd in the year of our Lord the forth day of March in the year one 1787

Mary harris was bornd in the year of our lord March the Second day 2 1789

The births of the other four children were recorded on a page that could not be removed, but Abijah Harris gave the information as follows: Thomas Harris, 12 Sep 1791; Martha Harris, 23 Dec 1795; John Harris, 20 June 1799; Abijah Harris, 17 Nov 1803.

A letter written in 1854 from Abingdon VA refers to "the Sister of John Harris living some 18 miles from here, a very old & respectable Lady, whose mind is impaired," the wife of a Mr. McPhatridge.