Pension Application of William Steele R96
Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris

[The following two “vouchers” are copies certified on 14 Jan 1834.]

These are to Certify that Mr William Steele a Lieutenant in the Navy of this State was continued in the Service with the Capt’n that was appointed by the Act of Assembly May 1780 to be continued in the Service, was taken in the State Ship Tempest. Given under my hand this 1st day of June 1783
James Barron Com[mandant]

I do certify upon Honor that I acted as a Lieut in the state Navy from Aug’t 20, 1776 till April 26th 1781, when taken Prisoner by Arnold. [See endnote.] Given under my hand this 26th Aug’t. 1783
Wm. Steele Leout

Pension Office
Feb. 6 1836

I certify that from an examination of the proof exhibited in support of the claim of the heirs of the late William Steele, dec’d. I am satisfied that he served as Lieutenant in the Virginia State Navy; that he left the service in the latter end of the year seventeen hundred and eighty one, after the reduction of the said Navy and that he died in the winter of 1792-3; that William Govan Steele and John Andrew Steele [elsewhere referred to as John Anderson Steele] of Charleston, S. C., are the sons and only heirs of said William Steele, dec’d. that the case comes within the provisions of the act of July 5, 1832; And I do therefore give it as my opinion that they are entitled to the pay due under said act at the rate of one hundred and eighty two dollars and fifty cents per annum from the Thirty first of December seventeen hundred and eighty one to the first of December seventeen hundred and ninety two; and that William H. Todd, the attorney [of] the heirs is entitled to receive the amount.

[The handwriting in the following document is difficult to read, and this transcription should be used with more than usual caution.]

Memorandum
Wm Steele was a Lt of the Virginia State Navy and and in service to the end of the war, he being a Prichioner on Perol [sic: prisoner on parole] and all Prisoner have been decided by the Courts of Va in sirvise to the end of the war and paid commutation and interest and also been thus recognized and paid without a decision of the Courts. Reference is had to the case Valentine Thomas Dalton [pension application W3610] a Prisoner with the Indians paid Commutation and interest through a Judgement of the Court of appeals of Va. To Churchill gibbs [sic: Churchill Gibbs, S46002] a Lt & Prisioneer Paid through a Judgement of the Court of appials commutation and intrest in 1792 or 3, To Issac Holmes [sic: Isaac Holmes, R15233] a Lt & Paymaster paid Commutation & interest as Lt by Va without the intervension of the Courts in 1794 he being a Prisionere of war. Again of Capt Edwd Travis [Edward Travis, R103] Paid by the departments at this place Commutation and interest as a Capt of Va State Navy., He being a Prisionier On Parole –
The claim of Lt Wm Steele is now Prisented Claiming the Commutation and interest as Lt of the Navy – deducting therefrom the sum received in Feby 1836 at this place by Wm H Todd the Atty of the administra[tor of the estate]
for evidence of his being in captivity see the certificate of the Clerk of the house of delegates herewith. and also the decision of the Court of appials in 1830 in the Case of James Markham [R72]. Stating him to have been a Prisoner of war and in service to the end of the war (as all prisoners since (Virginia if she
would could not make exchanges) for any further evidence which may be deemed necessary the commissioner is refered to the Vouchers on file in the third Auditores office on which the half pay Claim was allowed and paid in Feby 1836, It is requested that this Claim be taken up and disposed of as early as practicable. It will be seen that the Admin has refered me to his friend Exgovernor [William H.] Seward of New York and Judge Butler of South Carolina both now in the Senate of the US. But I wish neither collision or difficulty or to cost[?] on those questons[?]. I only want the case disposed of at the earliest [illegible word] and the unnecessary delay which it is wished to avoid Henry Van Thorp Washington 1st of March 1850 Agent for the Admin.

[The following was certified on 27 Feb 1850 as being an extract from the Journal of the House of Delegates of 5 Dec 1783.]
A Petition of James Markham, William Steel and John Kautzman [pension application R59] was presented to the House and read setting forth that at the dissolution of the Navy they were Prisoners of war: that no provision hath been made by law for persons in their situation and praying relief

NOTES:
On 27 Apr 1781 at Osborne’s on James River, 20 mi below Richmond, Gen. Benedict Arnold destroyed or captured a large number of vessels of the Virginia Navy, including the *Tempest*.

The file includes a copy of the last will and testament of William Steel signed on 10 Oct 1792 in Orangeburg District SC naming as heirs his wife “Rachell Steel” and his children, including William Govin Steele and the child with whom his wife was thought to be pregnant. He named his wife and Daniel Govin executors.

A letter dated 13 Feb 1835 refers to Colo. John Steele of Woodford KY and to Robert Steele of Franklin County.