

## REPORT

*Of the Committee on Pensions and Revolutionary Claims on the petition of Sarah Easton and Dorothy Storer.*

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MARCH 19, 1822.

Read, and ordered to lie on the table.

APRIL 12, 1822.

Committed to a committee of the whole House.

DECEMBER 12, 1822.

Reprinted by order of the House of Representatives.

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The Committee on Pensions and Revolutionary Claims, to whom, on the 28th of February, 1822, was referred the petition of Sarah Easton and Dorothy Storer,

## REPORT THEREON:

The petitioners state that their father, the late Colonel Robert H. Harrison, entered the service of the United States in the month of October, 1775, in the capacity of aid-de-camp to General Washington; and that, in the spring of the following year, 1776, he was appointed, in addition thereto, principal secretary to the commander in chief; that he served, as they state, in these high and responsible stations, until his health became so much impaired, that it became necessary to retire, on furlough, from active service, (1781,) which is presumed to have been in March, in the said year 1781. The petitioners further state, that their father, aforesaid, did not rejoin the army again, nor ever recover his health; that, soon after the present constitution of the United States went into operation, being appointed one of the associate judges of the Supreme Court, and strongly urged by the President, General Washington, to the acceptance thereof, on his way to the seat of government, in an exhausted state, he was taken ill on the road, compelled to return home, and died in a few weeks after, March, 1790.

The committee further report, that the said petition is accompanied with several papers, going to show the zeal, and fidelity, and patriotism, of the father of the petitioners, during the time he was, and acted as, aid-de-camp to the commander in chief, until, in March,

1781, he retired from said service, on account of his ill state of health; but, otherwise, apparently irrelevant to the claim of the petitioners, who now claim that they may receive, in virtue of their father's services, what, by the laws of their country, their venerated parent was so eminently entitled to, had he ever demanded it, viz. the commutation of half pay, and the bounty in land, provided by Congress for the officers and soldiers of the Revolutionary war, which they now pray may be extended to them, the only legal representatives of their father, aforesaid.

The committee further report, that Congress, on the 5th June, 1776, resolved, that Robert Hanson Harrison have the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the continental army, and that the aid-de-camps of the commander in chief rank as lieutenant colonels; that, on the 15th of May, 1778, Congress resolved, that all military officers, commissioned by Congress, who now are, or hereafter may be, in the service of the United States, and shall continue therein during the war, shall, after the conclusion of the war, be entitled to receive, annually, for the term of seven years, if they live so long, one half of the present pay of such officers, &c.; that, on the 3d day of October, 1780, Congress resolved, that such of the sixteen additional regiments as have not been annexed to the line of any particular state, and all the several light corps of the army, both of horse and foot, and also the German battalion, be reduced on the 1st day of January next; that the non-commissioned officers and privates in those several corps be incorporated with the troops of their respective states, and that such of them as do not belong to any particular state, be annexed to such corps as the commander in chief shall direct; and whereas, by the foregoing arrangement, many deserving officers must become supernumerary, and it is proper that regard be had to them, resolved, that, from the time the reform of the army takes place, they be entitled to half pay, for seven years, in specie, or other current money equivalent, and also grants of land, at the close of the war, agreeable to the resolution of the 16th of September, 1776; that the regular army of the United States, from and after the first day of January next, consist of four regiments of cavalry, or light dragoons, &c. as stated in said resolution.

The committee, in applying the said resolution of the 3d day of October, 1780, to the case and claim of the petitioners, observe, that, under the said resolution, they have not any right to claim either commutation of half pay or bounty land, inasmuch as their father, Colonel Robert H. Harrison, as aid-de-camp to the commander in chief, and ranking as Lieutenant Colonel in the line of the army of the United States, does not appear to have been deranged from the army in virtue of the said resolution, but continued in service, as appears by the petition of said petitioners and accompanying documents, until in March, 1781; and, in this particular, reference is had to the accompanying certificate of General Washington, given at head-quarters, on the 25th of March, 1781; and, in respect to said certificate, it may be observed, that it does not appear to have been intended to operate

as a furlough, but rather as a certificate of the fidelity and good conduct and bravery of Colonel Robert H. Harrison, given to him on his voluntarily retiring from the army on account of ill health; and this inference is confirmed by this, to wit: that he did not again rejoin the army, and, therefore, did not continue in the service of the United States to the end of the war; that, on the 21st of October, 1780, Congress, by resolution, adopted further regulations for the army, and "resolved, that the whole of the troops be enlisted during the war, and join their respective corps by the 1st day of January next;" and, also, resolved, "that the commander in chief, and commanding officer in the southern department, direct the officers in each state to meet and agree upon the officers for the regiments to be raised by their respective states, from those who incline to continue in service, and where it cannot be done by agreement, to be determined by seniority, and make return of those who are to remain, which is to be transmitted to Congress, together with the names of the officers reduced, who are to be allowed half pay for life;" "that the officers who shall continue in the service to the end of the war, shall also be entitled to half pay during life, to commence from the time of their reduction." This committee will here observe, that the said resolution of the 21st of October, 1780, provided, that the officers who were entitled thereto, should have half pay for life in place of half pay for seven years, as was promised by the resolution of 3d of October, 1780, and the resolution of the 21st of October, 1780, provided, that the officers who were reduced in consequence of the provisions of the said two resolutions, should have half pay for life; and that the officers who continued in the service to the end of the war, should also be entitled to half pay during life, to commence from the time of their reduction; that, on the 8th of March, 1785, Congress resolved, "that the officers who retired under the resolve of the 31st of December, 1781, are equally entitled to half pay or commutation with those officers who retired under the resolves of the 5d and 21st of October, 1780;" that, on the 22d of March, 1783, Congress, by resolution, provided, that commutation of half pay for life, for five years full pay, might be made by officers to whom half pay for life had, by resolutions of Congress, been promised; and, on the 26th of January, 1784, Congress "resolved, that half pay cannot be allowed to any officer, or to any class or denomination of officers, to whom it has not heretofore been expressly promised;" that it does not appear that Colonel Robert H. Harrison was included in any class or denomination of officers, to whom half pay was expressly promised by any act or resolution of Congress; that Congress, on the 16th of September, 1776, "resolved, that eighty-eight battalions be enlisted as soon as possible, to serve during the present war; that Congress make provision for granting lands, in the following proportions: to the officers and soldiers who shall so engage in the service, and continue therein to the close of the war, or until discharged by Congress, and to the representatives of such officers and soldiers as shall be slain by the enemy;" that in this case of the petitioners, it does not appear that Colonel Robert H.

Harrison was discharged from the service, or reduced by any act or resolution of Congress, and therefore is presumed not to have been included in any class or denomination of officers entitled to bounty land. The case of the legal representatives of the celebrated Colonel Knolton, is one to be regretted: he commanded a company at the battle of Bunker's Hill, and was among the last in quitting the lines when the retreat was ordered; he was afterwards appointed a major in Colonel Durkee's regiment, and on the 10th of August, 1776, was appointed by Congress Lieutenant Colonel of the 20th regiment; that, in September following, he was appointed to command a regiment of rangers, as stated by his representatives, and on the 15th day of that month he fell in battle fighting for his country; that on the 16th of that month, Congress passed the resolution granting bounty lands to the officers and soldiers of the continental army; that afterwards, the legal representatives of Colonel Knolton petitioned Congress to grant to them bounty land on account of the revolutionary services of their father, and their prayer was not granted; their brave father had fallen in battle on the day before the resolution granting bounty land was passed by Congress. This committee, for information in this case of the petitioners, have had recourse to the Treasury Department, and have, in pursuance thereof, received from the Secretary of the Treasury a report, containing a report of the Register of the Treasury, as follows:

“TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

“*Register's Office, 7th March, 1822.*

“SIR: I beg leave to transmit to you the memorial and papers of the representatives of the late Col. Robert H. Harrison, military secretary and aid-de-camp to Gen. Washington, with the rank of Lieut. Colonel, in the continental army, under a resolution of Congress, of 5th June, 1776. Upon an examination of the records of this office, we cannot discover any settlement of the account of Col. Harrison, of the Revolutionary army.

“JOSEPH NOURSE.

“PETER HAGNER, Esq.

“*Third Auditor of the Treasury.*”

That, in pursuance of that reference, the Third Auditor transmitted a report to the Secretary of the Treasury, which accompanies this report, and is referred to, dated Third Auditor's Office, March 9th, 1822, in which the Third Auditor states his answers to inquiries made by the Chairman of the Committee on Pensions and Revolutionary Claims, as follows:

“It appears by a resolve of Congress, on the 5th of June, 1776, that the rank of Robert Hanson Harrison was fixed at that of a Lieut. Colonel in the continental army; that he was the aid-de-camp and secretary to the commander in chief, appears by the account on the books of the late commissioner of army accounts, an extract from



which is herewith, marked A. It does not appear by any evidence in this office, that Col. Harrison retired from the service under authority of any act or resolution of Congress."

The following inquiry was made, to wit: "Does the name of Col. R. H. Harrison appear on the list of officers entitled to commutation of half pay for five years full pay, or on the list of officers entitled to bounty land?" Answer by the Third Auditor: "The name of Col. R. H. Harrison does not appear on either of the lists alluded to." Answer to another inquiry, as follows: "There is no record evidence in this office of the time Col. Harrison left the service. From the certificate of the commander in chief, dated the 25th of March, 1781, filed with the petition, it is presumed he left the service about that time, and as, by the resolves of Congress, commutation of half pay, for five years full pay and land, were only allowed to officers serving to the end of the war, or to those who became supernumerary under particular resolves of Congress making that grant, no evidence presents itself that Col. Harrison was entitled to commutation or bounty land."

By the statement A before referred to, it will be seen, that no settlement of the account of Col. Harrison appears to have been made, and that the moneys advanced to him from time to time, as therein stated, have been passed to his credit by a general account, without specifying any items. That it appears by the account A, referred to, that Robert Hanson Harrison, Esq. aid-de-camp and secretary, is charged with several sums of money, amounting to \$10,776 25, and that he is credited by the United States for that amount, to which the 3d Auditor has subjoined the following note :

"TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

"3d Auditor's Office, March 8th, 1822.

"The above is a true copy from the ledger of accounts during the Revolutionary war; the journals of the time have all been destroyed; the particular purpose for which the money was advanced, therefore, cannot be ascertained. There is no record to be found of any settlement made of the accounts of Col. Harrison, though in that respect, the records are so entirely deficient, that no positive testimony can be offered. The credit above appears to be a mere form by which many of the accounts were closed without any particulars.

"PETER HAGNER, Auditor."

This committee further report, that the petitioners state, that their father, Col. Harrison, lived until in March 1790, some years after the constitution of the United States was adopted, and in the time that General Washington was President of the United States; and it does not appear to this committee that Col. Harrison, in his life time, made any claim for commutation or bounty land. This committee, after examination of this case of the petitioners, are of opinion that this claim of the petitioners ought not to be allowed, and therefore submit the following resolution:

*Resolved*, That the prayer of the petitioners be not granted.

## TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

12th March, 1822.

SIR: I have the honor to return the petition of Sarah Easton and Dorothy Storer, together with such evidence as the records of the Treasury afford, which is applicable to the case.

I remain, with respect,

Your most obedient servant,

WM. H. CRAWFORD.

Honorable JOHN RHEA,

*Chairman Committee of Pensions  
and Revolutionary Claims.*

## TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

Register's Office, 7th March, 1822.

SIR: I beg leave to transmit to you the memorial and papers of the representatives of the late Col. Robert H. Harrison, Military Secretary and aid-de-camp to General Washington, with the rank of lieutenant colonel in the continental army, under a resolution of Congress of the 5th June, 1776.

Upon an examination of the records of this office, we cannot discover any settlement of the account of Col. Harrison, of the Revolutionary army.

I have the honor to be,

With great respect, sir,

Your obedient servant,

JOSEPH NOURSE, *Register.*

PETER HAGNER, Esq.

*3d Auditor of the Treasury.*

## TREASURY DEPARTMENT,

Third Auditor's Office, March 9, 1822.

SIR: I have the honor to return the letter of the Hon. John Rhea, Chairman of the Committee on Pensions and Revolutionary Claims, enclosing the petition and accompanying documents relative to the services of the late Robert H. Harrison, Esq. as aid-de-camp and secretary to the commander in chief, during the Revolutionary war, with the following answers to his inquiries, viz:

1. Was the late Robert H. Harrison an aid-de-camp to the commander in chief, with the rank of a lieutenant colonel, by a resolution of Congress, passed some time in the year 1776?

*Answer.* It appears, by a resolve of Congress, on the 5th of June, 1776, that the rank of Robert Hanson Harrison was fixed at that of a lieutenant colonel in the continental army. That he was the aide-de-camp and secretary to the commander in chief, appears by the account on the books of the late Commissioner of Army Accounts, an extract from which is herewith, marked A.

2. Does it appear that Col. Robert Hanson Harrison retired from service under authority of any act or resolution of Congress?

*Answer.* It does not appear, by any evidence in this office, that Colonel Harrison retired from service under authority of any act or resolution of Congress.

3. Does the name of Col. R. H. Harrison appear on the list of officers entitled to commutation of half pay for five years full pay, or on the list of officers entitled to bounty land?

*Answer.* The name of Col. R. H. Harrison does not appear on either of the lists alluded to.

4. Is there on the records of the Treasury Department any evidence that Colonel R. H. Harrison continued in the service of the United States until the end of the war, or otherwise to be entitled to commutation of half pay for five years full pay, and to bounty land?

*Answer.* There is no record evidence in this office of the time Col. Harrison left the service. From the certificate of the commander in chief, dated the 25th March, 1781, filed with the petition, it is presumed he left the service about that time; and as, by the resolves of Congress, commutation of half pay for five years full pay, and land, were only allowed to officers serving to the end of the war, or to those who became supernumerary under particular resolves of Congress making that grant, no evidence presents itself that Col. Harrison was entitled to commutation or bounty land.

By the statement A, before referred to, it will be seen that no settlement of the account of Col. Harrison appears to have been made, and that the moneys advanced to him from time to time, as therein stated, have been passed to his credit by a general account, without specifying any items.

With great respect, I am, sir,

Your obedient servant,

PETER HAGNER, *Auditor.*

Hon. W. H. CRAWFORD,

*Secretary of the Treasury.*

DR.

*Robert Hanson Harrison, Esq. Aid-de-Camp and Secretary, in account with the United States.*

CR.

1776. February	To James Warren	-	-	80 $\frac{1}{2}$ <sub>7<math>\frac{1}{2}</math></sub>	By the United States	\$10,776 25
May	William Palfrey			132		
July	Do.	-	-	168 $\frac{4}{7}$ <sub>7<math>\frac{1}{2}</math></sub>		
September	Do.	-	-	200		
May	Do.	-	-	500		
August	Do.	-	-	300		
February	Do.	-	-	600		
June	Do.	-	-	479 $\frac{4}{9}$ <sub>0</sub>		
1778. October	Do.	-	-	400		
December	Do.	-	-	786 $\frac{6}{9}$ <sub>0</sub>		
1776. December 9	Richard Dallam	-	-	300		
No date	John Pierce	-	-	840		
No date	Do.	-	-	3,449 30		
No date	Do.	-	-	2,500		
				\$10,776 25		

The above is a true copy from the ledger of accounts during the Revolutionary war. The journals for the time have all been destroyed; the particular purpose for which the money was advanced, therefore, cannot be ascertained. There is no record to be found of any settlement made of the account of Colonel Harrison, though, in that respect, the records are so entirely deficient, that no positive testimony can be offered. The credit above appears to be a mere form, by which many of the accounts were closed, without any particulars.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT, *Third Auditor's Office, March 8, 1822.*PETER HAGNER, *Auditor.*



*To the Honorable the Congress of the United States, the petition of Sarah Easton and Dorothy Storer,*

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH :

That their father, the late Col. Robert H. Harrison, entered the service of the United States in the month of October, 1775, in the capacity of Aid-de-Camp to General Washington; and that in the spring of the following year, 1776, he was appointed, in addition thereto, principal secretary to the commander in chief.

That he served in these high and responsible stations, and performed all the duties of them with bravery, fidelity, and ability, through the most trying and perilous scenes of the revolutionary conflict, until his health became so much impaired, by the laborious duties he had to perform, that it became necessary to retire on furlough from active service, (1781.)

That their father aforesaid did not rejoin the army again, nor ever recover his former state of health, but that a feeble and delicate state thereof was the consequence during the remainder of his life; and finally, that he fell a sacrifice to that duty he conceived he at all times owed to his country, for, soon after the present Constitution of the United States went into operation, being appointed one of the Associate Judges of the Supreme Court, and strongly urged by the President, General Washington, to the acceptance thereof, on his way to the seat of government, in an exhausted state, he was taken ill on the road, compelled to return home, and died in a few weeks after. (March, 1790.)

That your memorialists were left young at their father's death, and that, at the decease of their mother, which followed about two years after that of their father, his valuable papers, which had been preserved with great care, were purloined or otherwise lost, and have never since been recovered, although much pains has been taken to ascertain what became of them.

This unfortunate circumstance has considerably retarded the claim your petitioners now confidently make on your honorable body that they may receive, in virtue of their father's services, what, by the laws of their country, their venerated parent was so eminently entitled to, had he ever demanded it, viz: the commutation of half pay and the bounty in lands, provided by Congress for the officers and soldiers of the revolutionary army, and which they now pray may be extended to them, the only legal representatives of their father aforesaid. And your petitioners will pray, &c. &c.

SARAH EASTON,  
DOROTHY STORER.

## DOCUMENTS

*Accompanying the memorial of Sarah Easton and Dorothy Storer.*

The services rendered by the late Col. Robert H. Harrison in our Revolutionary war, were of that distinguished character to be known to the whole army, to the Congress who conducted the affairs of the Revolution, and, in general, to the American people. In the commencement of the war, being a neighbor of General Washington's, and well known to him, he was invited by the General to join him as aid-de-camp and principal secretary, and he served in that station with as pure and unsullied a fame as any person ever enjoyed. In all the actions in which General Washington commanded, Colonel Harrison was present, near the person of the General, and exposed with him to equal danger. He assisted, as I have always understood, in the councils of war, where his opinions were highly respected. He was the faithful depository of the secret councils of the General, of the confidential communications to him from Congress, of the military movements that were intended to be made, and of all those secret councils, on the preservation of which the success of the army and of the Revolution itself depended; and he was a most virtuous, able, and active agent in promoting every measure that was decided on.

In the most gloomy periods of the Revolution, he was firm, persevering, and undaunted. I particularly remember that, in the ever memorable retreat through Jersey, his example, in aid of that of the illustrious commander in chief, cheered the drooping spirits of others, and animated them to action. No person was more brave than Col. Harrison, none more faithful, and I say, with confidence, that few, very few, rendered more important services to their country. Had he sought promotion in the army, there can be no doubt but he might easily have obtained it; but he had no such ambition. To be eminently useful in the station which he held, was the sole object of his heart. It is impossible to look back to this eventful period, and especially to the great achievements of the army, in which he sustained so distinguished and useful a part, by the various, important, and complicated duties he had to perform, without being deeply impressed with a sense of his rare merit, and acknowledging with gratitude his very important services. He did not leave the army until the liberties of his country were secured; nor then, till his constitution had received a severe shock. No sooner, however, was an opportunity afforded to the late commander in chief, than he seized it to bestow on him a new and strong proof of his confidence and attachment, as well as of his high respect for his merit. On the adoption of the present constitution of the United States, when General Washington was called to the head of the government, he appointed Col. Harrison a judge of the supreme court of the United States. His constitution, however, was too far exhausted to permit him to enter on the duties of that office. He set out to undertake them, but did not survive the effort.

I certify these facts from a personal knowledge of them, in their most important circumstances, having served, myself, in our Revolutionary war, three campaigns, those of 1776, 1777, and 1778; in the first, as a lieutenant in the third Virginia regiment, and, in the two last, as aid-de-camp to Major General Lord Sterling, and they were afterwards known to me in common with other citizens who enjoyed public trusts, by which they became acquainted with public affairs. The documents, however, of the late army, and of the Congress, will sufficiently prove the facts. Of the recompense which Col. Harrison received for his important services, I can say little. I have no doubt, however, that he received nothing more than his pay, by the month, depreciated as it was when received. He was among the most diffident and modest of men, and the last to set up a pretension, or to make any claim for his services.

Given under my hand, at Washington.

JAS. MONROE.

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[The following letters, which were found among the papers of Colonel R. H. Harrison, will establish some of the important facts set forth in the memorial, and stated in the above certificate, and particularly the great confidence reposed in Col. Harrison by Gen. Washington. They form a small portion only of the correspondence which took place between them, as nearly the whole of the valuable papers of the former were unfortunately lost after the death of his widow, Mrs. H.]

MORRISTOWN, January 9, 1777.

MY DEAR HARRISON: I often intended, but before I had it in my power forgot, to ask you whether your brother-in-law, Major Johnson, would not, in your opinion, make a good aid-de-camp to me. I know it is a question that will involve you in some difficulty, but I beg you will not consider the connexion between you in answering of it. I have heard that Major Johnson is a man of education; I believe him to be a man of sense. These are two very necessary qualifications; but how is his temper? As to military knowledge, I do not expect to find gentlemen much skilled in it; if they can write a good letter, write quick, are methodical and diligent, it is all I expect to find in my aids. Do not, therefore, if Major Johnson possesses these qualities, and a good disposition, refrain (from false modesty,) to withhold your recommendation, because, in that case, you will do him injustice, and me a disservice.

If you think Mr. Johnson will suit me as well as any other, I should prefer him, and therefore beg that he may be sent hither immediately, as Webb only waits the arrival of another aid to set out for Connecticut.

I am, ever, your affectionate friend,

And obedient servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

MORRISTOWN, *January 10, 1777.*

MY DEAR SIR: Enclosed are unsealed letters for Baylor and Major Clough; let every thing be put in motion agreeably to them, as speedily as possible; and Clough, or Starke, or both, set off as speedily as possible for Virginia.

If Grayson accepts the offer of a regiment, he should set out immediately to raise it; in doing which, he will, I expect, derive great assistance from Levin Powell, if he inclines to serve as lieutenant colonel. The other officers, under the reserve of a negative, I leave to themselves to name. Young Ross I shall put into Gist's regiment.

Let me have a copy of the instructions given to Sheldon; and if you could let me know exactly how the matter stands with respect to the exchange of prisoners, I should be glad to be furnished with it as soon as possible, as I am blamed, it seems, for not facilitating that matter more. Take the most speedy and effectual measures to communicate the releasements that have come out, in order that the several officers concerned may be under no doubt or embarrassment with respect to the part they are to act.

The enclosed came to me from Richard Henry Lee, Esq. I send it, that, if Grayson thinks proper to make use of Capt. Kendall, he may. Col. Lee gives a good character of him. I shall add no more, at present, than that I am, most sincerely, yours,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S. Send me a copy of that resolution of Congress relative to Gen. Lee, I hear they are about to try him as a deserter. G. W.

MORRISTOWN, *January 20, 1777.*

MY DEAR SIR: Mr. Johnson (who is now become a member of my family,) delivered me your letter of the 18th last night.

I beg of you to consult, and in my name advise and direct, such measures as shall appear most effectual to stop the progress of the small pox. When I recal to mind the unhappy situation of our northern army, last year, I shudder at the consequences of this disorder, if some vigorous steps are not taken to stop the spreading of it. Vigorous measures must be adopted (however disagreeable and inconvenient to individuals) to remove the infected and infection before we feel too sensibly the effect.

I wish to Heaven the expected reinforcements were joined. Under the rose, I say it, my situation, with respect to numbers, is more distressing than it has ever been yet; and at a time when the enemy are assembling their force from all quarters, no doubt with a view either to rout this army or to move towards Philadelphia, as I cannot suppose them so much uninformed of our strength as to believe they are acting upon a defensive plan at this hour.



I am exceeding glad to hear you are getting better of your complaints. I would not wish you to come out too soon; that may only occasion a relapse, which may add length of time to your confinement.

Be so good as to forward the enclosed to captain Hamilton.

Most affectionately, I am yours,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S. Doctor Cochran will set out to-morrow for New-Town, and will assist you in the matters before mentioned relative to the small-pox people.

MOUNT VERNON,

November 18th, 1781.

DEAR SIR: A few days previous to my leaving the camp before York, I was favored with your letter of the — ultimo. Thinking I should see you on my return, I postponed acknowledging the receipt of it till now that I despair of that pleasure, being on the eve of my departure for Philadelphia, without making any stay upon the road, except one day at Annapolis, if the governor should be there.

I desired Doctor Draper, who came to this place with me on Tuesday last, and proposed being at Port Tobacco next day, to let you know I should stay a few days at home, and should be glad to see you. He possibly did not go there, or you might be attending the courts.

I thank you for your kind congratulations on the capitulation of Cornwallis. It is an interesting event, and may be productive of much good, if properly improved; but if it should be the means of relaxation, and sink us into supineness and security, it had better not have happened. Great Britain for some time past has been encouraged by the impolicy of our conduct, to continue the war; and should there be an interference of European politics in her favor, peace may be further removed from us than we expect; while one thing we are sure of, and that is, that the only certain way to obtain peace is to be prepared for war. Policy, interest, economy, all unite to stimulate the states to fill the continental battalions, and provide the means of supporting them. I hope the present favorable moment for doing it will not be neglected.

Mr. Custis' death has given much distress in this family. I congratulate you on your late change, and am, dear sir, your most obedient and affectionate servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

ROBERT H. HARRISON, Esq.

MOUNT VERNON,

*July 3rd, 1785.*

DEAR SIR: In the interval between your leaving this and the arrival of Mr. Briscoe, Mr. Montgomery, (of Dumfries,) recommended a young man whom he thought would answer my purpose; and being desired to speak to him, he accepted my offer, and will be with me in the course of a few days. Had it not been for this, the good character given of Mr. Briscoe by you, and others, would have induced me, without hesitation, to have accepted his services. I thank you very sincerely, for the ready and early attention you paid to my inquiries. To assure you of the great esteem and regard I have for you, is unnecessary, because you must be convinced of it; I shall only add, therefore, that I am, very affectionately, your obedient and obliged humble servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

ROBERT H. HARRISON, Esq.

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 NEW YORK, *September 28th, 1789.*

DEAR SIR: It would be unnecessary to remark to you, that the administration of justice is the strongest cement of good government, did it not follow as a consequence that the first organization of the Federal judiciary is essential to the happiness of our country, and to the stability of our political system.

Under this impression it has been the invariable object of my anxious solicitude, to select the fittest characters to expound the laws and dispense justice. To tell you that this sentiment has ruled me in your nomination to a seat on the supreme bench of the United States, would be but to repeat opinions with which you are already well acquainted; opinions which meet a just coincidence in the public mind.

Your friends, and your fellow citizens, anxious for the respect of the court to which you are appointed, will be happy to learn your acceptance, and no one among them will be more so than myself.

As soon as the acts which are necessary accompaniments of these appointments can be got ready, you will receive official notice of the latter. This letter is only to be considered as an early communication of my sentiments on this occasion, and as a testimony of the sincere esteem and regard with which, I am, dear sir, your most obedient and affectionate humble servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

The Honorable

ROBERT H. HARRISON.

NEW YORK, *November 25th*, 1789.

MY DEAR SIR: Since my return from my tour through the Eastern states, I have received your two letters, dated the 27th of last month, together with the commission which had been sent to you as a judge of the supreme court of the United States.

I find that one of the reasons which induced you to decline the appointment, rests on an idea that the judicial act will remain unaltered. But, in respect to that circumstance, I may suggest to you, that such change in the system is contemplated, and deemed expedient by many in, as well as out of Congress, as would permit you to pay as much attention to your private affairs, as your present station does.

As the first court will not sit until the first Monday in February, I have thought proper to return your commission, not for the sake of urging you to accept it contrary to your interest or convenience, but with a view of giving you a further opportunity of informing yourself of the nature and probability of the change alluded to. This you would be able to do, with the less risk of mistake, if you should find it convenient to pass some time here, when a considerable number of members of both houses of Congress shall have assembled; and this might be done before it would become indispensable to fill the place offered to you. If, on the other hand, your determination is absolutely fixed, you can, without much trouble, send back the commission under cover.

Knowing as you do the candid part which I wish to act on all occasions, you will, I am persuaded, do me the justice to attribute my conduct, in this particular instance, to the proper motives, when I assure you that I would not have written this letter if I had imagined it would produce any new embarrassments. On the contrary, you may rest assured, that I shall be perfectly satisfied with whatever determination may be consonant to your best judgment, and most agreeable to yourself.

I am, dear sir, with sentiments of real esteem and regard,

Your most obedient and affectionate servant,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

P. S. As it may be satisfactory to you to know the determination of the other associate judges of the supreme court, I have the pleasure to inform you that all of them have accepted their appointments.

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BLADENSBURG, *January 21*, 1790.

MY DEAR SIR: I left home on the 14th instant, with the view of making a journey to New-York, and after being several days detained at Alexandria, by indisposition, came thus far on the way. I now unhappily find myself in such a situation as not to be able to proceed farther. From this unfortunate event, and the apprehension

that my indisposition may continue, I pray you to consider that I cannot accept the appointment of associate judge, with which I have been honored. What I do, my dear sir, is the result of the most painful and distressing necessity.

I intreat that you will receive the warmest returns of my gratitude for the distinguished proofs I have had of your flattering and invaluable esteem and confidence, and that you will believe that I am, and shall always remain, with the most affectionate attachment,

My dear sir, your most obedient,

And obliged friend and servant,

[Endorsed private.]

ROBERT H. HARRISON.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

Mr. Harrison lived to return home, and died in March following.

No. 300.

*Certificate of Services.*

TO LIEUT. COL. ROBERT HANSON HARRISON:

I certify that Robert Hanson Harrison, Esquire, lieutenant colonel in the continental army, entered the service in the month of October, 1775, as one of my aids-de-camp, and in May following became my secretary, the duties of which offices he discharged with "conspicuous abilities;" that his whole conduct, during all the interesting periods of the war, has been marked by the strictest integrity, and the most attentive and faithful services, while, by personal bravery he has been distinguished on several occasions.

Given at head quarters, this twenty-fifth day of March, 1781.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

I certify that the above is a true copy taken from a volume in my possession, containing private letters from General Washington, from January, 1780, to December 18, 1782. Marked P. vol. 2, page 201.

BUSH. WASHINGTON.

LA GRANGE, October 28th, 1821.

DEAR SIR: I was lately in town, where I had the honor to receive your much esteemed letter, and hastened to forward my answer with the paper of which the enclosed is a duplicate. I hope it will arrive in time, and beg you to accept my thanks for the opportunity you have given me to express affectionate remembrances. Happy I would be to flatter myself that I have, in some degree, contributed to the success of the wishes of a family, to whom I shall ever think myself bound by the ties of high regard and tender friendship, which united



me to my dear companion in arms and patriotism, Colonel Harrison. I beg you to receive, and present to the other members of the family, my sincere and affectionate regard.

LA FAYETTE.

TO DAVID EASTON,

*Washington City.*

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LA GRANGE, *October 28, 1821.*

My happy intimacy at head quarters, during the Revolutionary war, and a mutual friendship with Colonel Robert H. Harrison, have enabled me to witness his high virtues, distinguished abilities, important services, as well as the very great share he had in the confidence, affection, and gratitude of General Washington.

While I have lived in, and during my ensuing intercourse with, the military family, of which I am proud to have ever been considered as a member, I have seen Colonel Harrison entrusted with every secret, consulted on every emergency, employed on opportunities where patriotism and talents were most required; and, although at the time of the colonel's retreat I was employed in a separate command in Virginia, I may attest that his brother soldiers regarded him as an officer on furlough, ready to reassume his post in case his health would allow it. So far, at least, goes my general recollection, and the remembrance of General Washington's own expressions, that if I had the honor of a seat in Congress, I should not hesitate to give a favorable vote on that subject.

And in case there is an application made before the state legislature in behalf of Colonel Harrison's children, I wish it may not appear too presuming, from a survivor of the head quarters of those early times, to say, that a mark of satisfaction to the memory of their excellent father, gratifying as it cannot fail to be to the actual veterans of the Revolutionary army, would not have been less gratefully applauded by those who are departed, namely, by our venerated commander in chief.

LA FAYETTE.

