

## Georgians in the Frederica Naval Action- April 1778

Gordon B. Smith, *Morningstars of Liberty:  
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**James Allen** was an ordinary seaman in the Georgia Continental Navy. He signed a receipt for rations on board the galley *Washington* in October of 1778.

**John Bacon** and his wife Obedience (Hobson) Bacon resided in St. Paul's Parish, Georgia, by 1767. John accepted a commission as lieutenant in the Georgia Continental Navy. By 1779 he had succeeded Thomas Maxwell as captain commanding the galley *Bulloch*. He beached his galley on Ossabaw Island along with CPT Gilbert Harrison's galley *Washington* in January of 1779. During the latter part of the Revolutionary War, John Bacon operated the ferry at Augusta. He died in Augusta in 1785. One of his children was the famous Edmund Bacon, forever memorialized as "Ned Brace" in Judge Augustus Baldwin Longstreet's *Georgia Scenes*.

**Oliver Bowen**, a native of Providence, Rhode Island, was the son of Dr. Ephraim Bowen and his first wife Mary (Fenner) Bowen. Oliver moved to Savannah, Georgia, a few years before the Revolution, becoming a planter in that place. In 1772 he accepted a commission as a subaltern in CPT Samuel Elbert's grenadier company in the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Foot, Georgia Militia. In July of 1775 he and Joseph Habersham commanded the *Liberty* at her capture of the *Phillipa* in Tybee Roads, the first naval capture in southern waters during the American Revolution. In January of 1776 Oliver accepted a commission as captain in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line, but the following January he received the commission as commodore of the Georgia Continental Navy. He commanded the Georgia Continental Navy during the Third Florida Expedition, and the Radicals in the Georgia Assembly wrongly blamed him for the failure of that campaign. The Assembly suspended him from command, and he returned to Rhode Island. There, he continued his service, taking out letters of marque as commander of the sloop *Argo*. Following the close of the war he returned to Georgia, accepted the appointment as United States marshal for the District of Georgia in 1795. He died in Augusta in July of 1800.

**John Cutler Braddock**, a native of Beaufort, South Carolina, was the son of CPT David Cutler Braddock, a distinguished naval commander during the French and Indian Wars. John received a commission as lieutenant in the Georgia Continental Navy in 1776. He received a promotion to captain the following year. In April of 1778 he commanded the galley *Lee* in support of the Third Florida Expedition. Having lost his galley to the British, Braddock subsequently commanded a privateer against the British along the Atlantic coast. He resided in Glynn County following the close of the Revolutionary War, and in 1793 accepted a commission as captain commanding the

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Glynn County Troop of Horse. He died the following year. His wife was Lucy Ann Cook, of St. Matthew's Parish, Georgia.

**James Carpenter** served as a private in the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line in 1778.

**Alexander Daniel Cuthbert** accepted a commission as second lieutenant in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line in 1776. He received a promotion to captain in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line in 1777. The British captured him at Briar Creek in 1779. They subsequently exchanged him, but COR Martin Weatherford and a detachment of the Augusta Loyalists captured him again in 1782. Cuthbert resided in Bryan County after the war, but he died in Liberty County in 1804.

**Joseph M. Day** was the son of William Day of St. Bartholomew's Parish, Colleton County, South Carolina. Joseph received a commission as captain in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line in 1777. He subsequently transferred to the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line, in which command he served during the Third Florida Expedition. The British captured him at the fall of Savannah. Upon his exchange he received a brevet as major in the Georgia Line, 1783. He became a planter on the Great Ogeechee River in Chatham County after the war, dying there in January of 1793.

**Hull Doty** served as a commissary to the North Carolina Militia in 1776. Later that same year he accepted an appointment as commissary to a company stationed on the seacoast. He subsequently received an appointment as lieutenant in the Georgia Continental Navy, being posted to the galley *Congress*. In October of 1778 he commanded a detachment aboard the galley *Washington*. He died between 1786 and 1793.

**Samuel Elbert** was born in Georgia in 1740, the son of a Baptist minister. He received a commission as captain of a company of grenadiers in the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Foot, Georgia Militia, in 1772, and became a member of the Council of Safety three years later. In January of 1776 he received a commission as lieutenant colonel of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line, subsequently receiving a promotion to colonel commanding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line. The British captured him at Briar Creek in 1779, and held him as a prisoner within their lines in Savannah during the Franco-American Storm of that place in October of that same year. After his exchange, Elbert commanded a brigade at Yorktown, receiving a Continental brevet as brigadier general in November of 1783. He also received a dual commission as brigadier general in the Georgia Militia by 1779, subsequently receiving a promotion to major general in the Georgia Militia. In 1783 he became vice president of the Georgia Society of the Cincinnati. He also served as grand master of the Grand Lodge of Georgia, F. & A.M. The electorate chose him governor of the state in 1785, and he subsequently became sheriff of Chatham County. He died in 1788 at Great Ogeechee, and was buried with his

family on top of Irene Indian mound at Rae's Hall on the Savannah River. He married Elizabeth Rae, daughter of John Rae, in 1769.

**John Habersham**, son of James Habersham (I) and his wife Mary (Bolton) Habersham, was born in Savannah in 1754. John received a commission as first lieutenant in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line in 1776. That same year he received a promotion to captain in the same battalion, and the following year accepted an appointment as brigade major to General Howe. Effective 1 April 1778, he received a full promotion to his majority. Unable to swim, he as senior officer of the Continentals trapped in Savannah surrendered to the British. The British soon exchanged him, but captured him a second time at Briar Creek. He received his exchange a second time in November of 1779. Upon the re-establishment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line in 1782, John Habersham accepted its command and served to the close of the war. After the Revolutionary War he was a planter at Dean Forest Plantation, served in Congress, and acted as collector for the Port of Savannah. He died in 1799.

**Joseph Habersham**, son of James Habersham (I) and his wife Mary (Bolton) Habersham, was born in Savannah in 1751. After attending the College of New Jersey (later Princeton), he completed his education at Woolwich Academy in England. After a three-year business apprenticeship in that country, Joseph returned to Savannah, where he entered business with his brother James and, later with his cousin Joseph Clay. An early Liberty Boy and subaltern in the grenadier company in Savannah, Joseph took Governor James Wright prisoner. He accepted a commission as major of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line in January 1776, received a promotion to lieutenant colonel that July, and another to colonel that September. Running afoul of the Radical faction of the Whigs, led by Button Gwinnett, Joseph attempted to challenge an improper ballot during an election, resulting in a fight with Nathaniel Hughes in which the latter was killed. A jury acquitted Joseph in the matter, and he served as General Lachlan McIntosh's second in his fatal duel with Button Gwinnett. In March of 1778 Joseph resigned his continental commission in order to offer for the General Assembly in opposition to the Radicals, serving on the Executive Council. He also led a detachment of mounted volunteers during the Third Florida Expedition. He and his family fled to Virginia after the fall of Savannah, but he returned to take part in the Franco-American siege of that place, acting as guide to D'Estaing's forces landing at Beaulieu. After the Revolutionary War he served as speaker of the Georgia General Assembly, a member of the convention that ratified the federal Constitution, and in 1795 accepted the appointment as postmaster general. In 1802 he became the first president of the Savannah Branch of the United States Bank. He died in Savannah in 1815. His wife was Isabella Rae, daughter of John Rae (Sr.).

**John Hardy** was a carpenter and vintner of Sunbury. In May of 1776 he received a commission as captain of a volunteer company of artillery at that town. Subsequently, he received a commission as captain in the Georgia Continental Navy. In April of 1778 he commanded the

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galley *Washington* in support of the Third Florida Expedition, taking part in the capture of the *Hinchinbrook, Rebecca, and Hope*. Subsequently, Hardy commanded the galley *Congress*, and the British captured him at the fall of Sunbury. In March of 1779 he and others escaped from a British prison ship in the Savannah River. Following the close of the American Revolution he represented Liberty County in the Georgia Legislature. He drowned in St. Catherine's Creek in February 1790.

**Archibald Hatcher** commanded the Georgia Continental galley *Bulloch* in April of 1778, and was active in the capture of the *Hinchinbrook, Rebecca, and Hope*. He died in commission later that same year.

**Arthur Hayes** received a commission as second lieutenant in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line in October of 1777. He transferred to the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line, and was involved in the capture of the *Hinchinbrook, Rebecca, and Hope* in 1778. The British sloop *Mermaid* captured LT Hayes and his detachment of 16 men in January of 1779. Hayes remained on parole through 1780. He died in 1790 at MAJ Joseph M. Day's place on the Great Ogeechee River.

**George Melvin** received a commission in March of 1777 as captain in the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line. In April of 1778 he commanded a detachment of soldiers acting as marines in the opening maneuver of the Third Florida Expedition. Just before the Storm of Savannah, CPT Melvin was a member of COL John White's detachment that captured CPT Thomas French's command (1<sup>st</sup> Battalion DeLancey's Corps) at Savage's Point on the Great Ogeechee. The British took him prisoner at the fall of Charleston, and exchanged him in Philadelphia in April of 1782. He and his wife Martha Matthews (Loyd) Melvin resided in Savannah after the close of the Revolutionary War. He died in that place in 1788.

**Thomas Myers** was an ordinary seaman on the Georgia Continental galleys. He apparently resided in Liberty County, Georgia, after the close of the American Revolution.

**Barnard Patty** received a commission as lieutenant in the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line in 1777, and soon began recruiting efforts in Virginia. In April of 1778 he acted as detachment commander of Georgia Continentals acting as Marines in the galley *Bulloch*. Lieutenant Patty apparently died in commission, as there is no further mention of him after the Florida Expedition of 1778.

**Job Pray** received a commission in 1776 as captain in the Georgia, subsequently Continental, Navy. He commanded the galley *Lee*, 1776 to 1777. In 1777 he took command of the Georgia state sloop *Revenge*. Shortly before the British capture of Savannah, Pray took command of the *Hinchinbrook* in the Savannah River. After the Revolution, CPT Pray was a merchant in

Sunbury. He became the only known Continental Navy officer to become a member of the Georgia Society of the Cincinnati. He was a member of the Executive Council of Georgia at his death, which took place in Savannah in April of 1789. His son John Pray served as lieutenant colonel commanding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment Georgia Volunteers in federal service during the War of 1812.

**Robert Rae**, a native of Ireland, received a commission as lieutenant colonel of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line in 1776. Following COL Joseph Habersham's resignation, Rae received a promotion to colonel in command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line, effective 1 April 1778. He died in Augusta in November of 1779 of a "painful illness." His widow Rebecca married second Samuel Hammond.

**Daniel Roberts**, a native of Wales, became a "dissenting Preacher" (that is, a non-Anglican minister of the Gospel), and resided in St. John's Parish in Georgia by 1774. An early Liberty Boy, Roberts received a commission as lieutenant of the St. John's Rangers, a volunteer company that he accompanied to Savannah during the Battle of the Riceboats. The British retained him as a prisoner for a time during this confrontation. In May of 1776 he received a commission as major of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line, and effective 2 April 1778 he received a promotion to lieutenant colonel of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line. After the fall of Savannah and Sunbury, Roberts acted as chairman of a group of Georgia refugees in South Carolina who attempted to reorganize the Georgia government in resistance to the British. He died in commission at Dorchester, South Carolina, in November of 1779.

**John White**, a native of England, served as a surgeon in the Royal Navy. After the outbreak of the American Revolution he received a commission as major in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment North Carolina Continental Line in 1776, serving with a detachment from that command in the First (1776) Florida Expedition. In early 1777 he accepted a commission as colonel commanding the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion Georgia Continental Line, raised at Peekskill, New York. Most of his command having died during the Third Florida Expedition, White commanded the Georgia Navy at the fall of Savannah in December of 1778, successfully getting the two remaining Georgia Continental galleys up the Savannah River and keeping them out of British hands. Just days before the Storm of Savannah in 1779, he commanded a small detachment that captured CPT Thomas French's command (from the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion DeLancey's Corps) at Savage's Point on the Great Ogeechee River. At the Storm, the British severely wounded COL White and took him prisoner. They exchanged him, and he died shortly thereafter in Virginia. After the Revolution, the Georgia government confiscated his home in Savannah, wrongly claiming he had been a Tory during the war—an incredible mistake. COL John White and his wife Thomasin had only one child, Catherine Proctor White, who married twice, but had no children. She died in Savannah in 1865, having bequeathed her earthly estate to St. John's Episcopal Church and the sick and wounded Confederate soldiers and their families.

**George Young** received an appointment as captain-lieutenant of CPT Alexander Phoenix's Company of Volunteer Artillery at Savannah in 1776. Subsequently, this company went on the Continental establishment. Following CPT Phoenix's death, Young received a promotion to captain commanding the unit. During the Third Florida Expedition, CPT Young commanded an artillery detachment of two guns aboard a flatboat, taking part in the capture of the *Hinchinbrook*, *Rebecca*, and *Hope*. Captain Young subsequently died in commission.

### **Corrections Concerning the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ship, named *Hope* - 1778**

The so-called "armed watering brig" Elbert and his command captured with H.M. *Hinchinbrook* and sloop *Rebecca* was, in fact, not an "armed watering brig." It was CPT John Hatter's privateer *Hope*, earlier named the *Port Henderson*. The real story of this vessel is extremely interesting, especially since it involved Charles-François Sevelinges de Brétigny and his French comrades, who came to North America to organize a regiment for Whig service. De Brétigny escaped to Saint-Dominique, thence to Philadelphia, where he persuaded the Continental Congress to approve the Third (1778) Florida Expedition to rescue his comrades in St. Augustine. Up to that time, General Robert Howe had strongly opposed Continental participation in that ill-advised campaign, originally conceived by the Georgia Radicals. However, when Congress approved de Brétigny's petition, Howe acceded to the plan. The campaign resulted in the death of much of the Continental Line—so much so that Savannah was easy prey for LTC Archibald Campbell's forces in December.

Briefly stated, the history of the South Carolina privateer *Hope* is as follows. In July of 1775 in Charleston harbor the Liberty Boys seized the ship *Port Henderson*, commanded by CPT Henry Atkins, and renamed her the *Hope*. John Hatter was a Charleston mariner who in 1775 had been a crewman in Clement Lemprière's sloop *Commerce* during the capture off St. Augustine bar of CPT Alvara Lofthouse's brigantine *Betsy*. In November of 1776 South Carolina issued Hatter a commission as captain with a letter of marque for the privateer *Hope*. His ship loaded with rice and indigo, CPT Hatter sailed to Nantes, France, arriving there in March of 1777. Hatter sold his cargo, and on his return to Charleston, carried aboard the *Hope* Charles-François Sevelinges de Brétigny, who claimed the title Marquis or Chevalier de Brétigny, with "fifteen chosen Officers and what was necessary to Arm and Equip one hundred and thirty Men"—130 sets of uniforms and 130 arms purchased at de Brétigny's own expense, along with 200 Frenchmen. De Brétigny intended to request Congress to accept his service as colonel commanding a corps of light infantry composed "only of foreigners" recruited in Maryland and Virginia. The uniforms and weapons would clothe and arm them. (The figures for the number of uniforms and weapons vary from 130 to 300 in different reports, and other reports do not mention the 200 French enlisted men.)

Captain Hatter brought his ship into Charleston harbor on 9 October 1777. De Brétigny quickly applied for money with which he could finance his adventure. That November CPT

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Hatter sailed for North Carolina, carrying de Brétigny and his party, along with the Baron de Randrode de Thuillière and others. Their ultimate destination was Congress. H.M.S. *Carysfort*, CPT Robert Fanshawe, captured CPT Hatter and the privateer *Hope* off Charleston bar as she sailed outward bound, carrying de Brétigny, his officers and men, de Thuillière, the uniforms, and the weapons. Fanshawe brought his prisoners and booty to St. Augustine. Their capture was a great embarrassment to the French government, since there had been no declaration of war by France, nor had Congress yet ratified the treaty of alliance between France and the United States.

When it became apparent that H.M.S. *Carysfort* would capture the *Hope*, de Brétigny threw overboard his letters of recommendation. Not wearing a military uniform, he affected the character of a merchant, and after they had detained him for several months, the British permitted him to go to Saint-Dominique. From there de Brétigny made his way to Congress, where he reported on the bad treatment his imprisoned countrymen were receiving from the British in St. Augustine, and presented plans for the capture of that city.

De Brétigny was successful in persuading Congress to approve what became the Third (1778) Florida Expedition, during which the Whigs recaptured the privateer *Hope*, still carrying his uniforms. (They were not intended for Pinckney, as reported in numerous accounts later.)