

PETER FRANCISCO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

APPLICATION FOR SCHOLARSHIP

PERSONAL INFORMATION

First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Home Address: _____

Email Address: _____

COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY/TECHNICAL SCHOOL YOU WILL BE ATTENDING IN THE FALL

Name of College/University/Technical School : _____

Registrar's Name: _____

School Mailing Address: _____

Intended Major/Minor: _____

HIGH SCHOOL STATUS INFORMATION

Grade Level: _____ Class standing: _____

G.P.A. (3.0 or higher): _____ SAT/ACT Scores: _____

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

I understand that this application for the Peter Francisco Memorial Scholarship is a one-time, merit-based \$500.00 award. I understand that I must complete all the criteria required by the Society of the Descendants of Peter Francisco in order to submit my application.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

PETER FRANCISCO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

DEADLINE DATE AND MAILING INSTRUCTIONS

1. ****Completed application and criteria due to SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE by April 15****
2. Email completed application and criteria to: jane@jmcroskey.com
or mail completed application and criteria to Jane B. McCroskey at
16 Horse Pen Road, Newport News, VA 23602.

SCHOLARSHIP CRITERIA AND CHECKLIST

- ❖ Completed and signed application
- ❖ One Signed Teacher Recommendation
- ❖ One Signed Other Reference Recommendation
- ❖ Signed Pledge Statement
- ❖ 300-500 word essay on “Rights and Responsibilities of a U.S. Citizen”
- ❖ List of extra-curricular school and community activities

REQUIREMENTS

- ❖ Must be a U.S. Citizen
- ❖ Must be accepted to a college, university, technical school in fall of current year
- ❖ Must be a High School Senior to apply

PETER FRANCISCO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

HISTORY OF PETER FRANCISCO

Early Life

On June 23, 1765, a small boy was abandoned on a wharf at City Point (now Hopewell, Virginia). The eyewitness account of James Durell of Petersburg, Virginia states:

"... A foreign ship sailed up the James River, dropped anchor opposite the dock, and lowered a longboat to the water with two sailors in it. Then a boy of about five years was handed down and rowed to the wharf, where he was deposited and abandoned. The boat returned, quickly, to its ship. The ship weighed anchor at once, sailed back down the James River, and was never heard from again." The child did not speak English and no one understood what he said, except that he kept repeating "Pedro Francisco." Thus, the local citizens called him Peter Francisco.

He was described as handsome, of dark complexion, probably from Italy or Portugal. His clothing, though disheveled from the long ocean voyage, was of the best quality and his shoes had silver buckles engraved with the initials "P. F." Though confused, sad and lonely, his demeanor and bearing were courageous and engaging which led the local citizens to believe he was from a wealthy family – perhaps nobility.

At first the authorities gave Peter a bed in which to sleep in a warehouse on the wharf; and the local housewives saw to it that he was well-fed. Later in the year he was taken to the Prince George County Poor House where he remained until Judge Anthony Winston took him to his home, "Hunting Tower Plantation" in Buckingham County, Virginia. Peter worked as an indentured servant in the fields and the blacksmith shop for eleven years. He gained in strength and stature – reaching the height of six feet six inches and the weight of two hundred sixty pounds by the age of fifteen!

Judge Winston was a prominent planter and a dedicated patriot who vigorously opposed the tyranny of the King of England. In fact, many conferences were held at Hunting Tower where resentment brewed toward England. While living in this atmosphere, Peter understood at an early age the real importance of the growing struggle for independence of the colonies.

In the spring of 1775, Peter accompanied Judge Winston to Richmond, Virginia, where he stood outside St. John's Church and heard Patrick Henry deliver his famous "Give me liberty, or give me death" speech. Peter was so inspired that he wanted to enlist in the army at once! However, since he was only fourteen year old, Judge Winston made him wait until 1776 when he was sixteen. At that time, Peter was released from bondage and in December 1776 enlisted in the Tenth Virginia Regiment of the Continental Army under Colonel Hugh Woodson of Prince Edward County.

There are many accounts of Peter's bravery, strength and heroism during the American Revolution, including the Battles of Brandywine, Stony Point, Camden, Guilford Courthouse, his confrontation with Tarleton's Raiders, and Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown.

PETER FRANCISCO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

Captain William Evans, who served with Peter in all the Northern campaigns, had this to say: Francisco "was the second man who entered the fort and distinguished himself by numerous acts of bravery and intrepidity – in a charge which was ordered to be made around the flag staff, he killed three British grenadiers and was the first man who laid hold of the flagstaff and being badly wounded laid on it that night and in the morning delivered it to Colonel Fleury. These circumstances brought Mr. Francisco into great notice and his name was reiterated throughout the whole army."

Perhaps it was stated best by General George Washington, himself, who stated that "without him we would have lost two crucial battles, perhaps the War, and with it our freedom. He was truly a One Army.

Military Service

Battle of Brandywine

Near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, British General Cornwallis' troops flanked General George Washington's troops and were routing the Americans. It was during this battle on September 11, 1777 that Peter stood his ground at Sandy Hollow Gap and inspired the other soldiers to do likewise. This enabled Washington to have time for an orderly retreat. Peter was wounded in the leg and the Marquis de Lafayette was wounded, as well. On Sunday, September 21, the wounded Marquis arrived in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania for medical treatment. He was hospitalized at the Sun Inn and then housed at the home of George Frederick Boeckle. It is not clear if Peter was with him there, but records indicate that they recuperated together and became good friends. Peter healed quickly and was able to rejoin his regiment.

Battle of Stony Point

General George Washington appointed General Anthony Wayne to command an army handpicked from the Light Infantry for the assault on the British fortress at Stony Point. This elite unit of "commandos" was selected personally by General Washington – Peter was one of the elite! Twenty, including Peter, were chosen to clear a path with axes through two heavy rows of abates, ascend the steep stone cliff, and lead the others into the fort. Lieutenant Gibbon was the first over the wall and Peter was second! Seventeen of the twenty "commandos" were killed or wounded. Peter received a 9-inch stomach wound, but killed his adversary and two others.

Battle of Camden

After his three-year enlistment expired, Peter re-enlisted – this time with the Virginia Militia under Colonel Mayo. At Camden on August 16, 1780, British Generals Webster and Rawdon and Colonel Tarleton attacked and drove the Colonials back in disorder. Colonel Mayo and Peter tried to rally the Virginians, but to no avail, and they were forced to join in the retreat. Peter shot a grenadier who tried to bayonet Colonel Mayo and stood his ground against a British cavalryman, sidestepping two sword attacks, and then lifted the cavalryman out of his saddle with his bayonet. Peter then mounted the horse, rode through enemy lines, caught up with Colonel Mayo and insisted

PETER FRANCISCO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

that he take the horse and hurry on. (Colonel Mayo never forgot Peter for his bravery and for saving his life, and later presented Peter with his dress sword.)

As Colonel Mayo left, Peter noticed that the artillery horses which had been pulling a cannon had been killed. Knowing that the cannon would be captured if left, Peter loosened the 1,100-pound cannon, shouldered it and carried it to safety! (This miraculous feat of strength was immortalized in 1975 by the issuing of a commemorative, 18-cent stamp by the U. S. Post Office.)

Battle of Guilford Courthouse

The Battle of Guilford Courthouse, fought on March 15, 1781, was considered the bloodiest and most decisive of the Revolutionary War. It was related that here, Peter Francisco performed deeds without parallel. He cut down eleven men with his broadsword; had his leg pinned to a horse by the bayonet of a guardsmen – but, as the soldier turned and fled, Peter made a blow with his sword and managed to "cleft the fellow's head down to his shoulder before he fell." The broadsword Peter used was six feet long with a five foot blade. It had been ordered especially for him by General George Washington after Peter had complained that the one he had been using was far too small for him.

During Colonel William Washington's cavalry charge, with Peter in the forefront, the Colonials were driving back the British. Cornwallis ordered his artillery to fire grape shot directly into the center of the fight, thus killing many British as well as Colonials. It was then that Peter received his second serious wound of this battle, and fell from his horse. He was left for dead on the battlefield until a Quaker named Robinson found him, took him to his home and nursed him back to health.

Tarleton's Raiders

After recovering from his wounds from the Battle of Guilford Courthouse in North Carolina, Peter walked back to Cumberland County, Virginia and finished his recuperation until given a special assignment to reconnoiter Tarleton's Raiders. At Amelia, Virginia, Peter outwitted nine of the raiders, killing three of them, routing the others, and confiscated their horses. The story is best told by Henry Howe, who wrote in 1845:

"While the British army was spreading havoc ... in Virginia, in 1781, Francisco had been reconnoitering, and while stopping at the house of a Mr. Ward ... in Amelia ... nine of Tarleton's cavalry came up ... and told him he was their prisoner... Believing him to be very peaceable, they all went into the house, leaving him and the paymaster together. 'Give up ... all you possess,' said the latter ... 'or prepare to die.' 'I have nothing ...' said Francisco... 'Deliver ... those massive silver buckles which you wear on your shoes.' 'They were a present from a valued friend ... give them into our hands I never will'... The soldier put his saber under his arm, and bent down to take them. Francisco ... stepped one pace in his rear, drew the sword ... and instantly gave him a blow across the scull. 'My enemy,' observed Francisco, 'was brave and though severely wounded, drew a pistol, and, in the same moment that he pulled the trigger, I cut his hand nearly off. The bullet grazed my

PETER FRANCISCO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

side. Ben Ward (the man of the house) ... brought out a musket, and gave it to one of the British soldiers... He mounted the only horse they could get, and presented it at my breast. It missed fire ... A short struggle ensued. I disarmed and wounded him ... Tarleton's troops of four hundred were in sight. All was hurry and confusion, which I increased by repeatedly hallooing ... 'Come on, my brave boys, now's your time; we will soon dispatch these few, and then attack the main body!' The wounded men flew to the troop; the others were panic struck, and fled. I seized Ward ... but the poor wretch begged for his life... The eight horses that were left behind, I gave him to conceal for me... Tarleton had dispatched ten more in pursuit of me, I made off. I evaded their vigilance. I ... fell on their rear. I went the next day to Ward for my horses; he demanded two... Finding my situation dangerous and surrounded by enemies ... I went off with my six horses. I intended to avenge myself on Ward ... but ... I should not be his executioner, for he broke his neck by a fall from one of the very horses."

Cornwallis' Surrender at Yorktown

On October 19, 1781, Peter joined his friend Marquis de Lafayette at Yorktown, Virginia, and witnessed the surrender of General Cornwallis. Final treaties were signed in 1783 and the war was over!

PLEDGE STATEMENT

PETER FRANCISCO MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

I, _____ , pledge my support to the Society of the Descendants of Peter Francisco and to help promote its purpose, “to compile and maintain the documented records of Peter Francisco and his descendants and to give him his rightful place in history.” I have read the history of Peter Francisco and the efforts he made in the fight for American Independence.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____