

Corporal Hugh Harris, Patriot and Christian

As a member of the Cemetery Survey Team, I've seen many unusual tombstones, but the marker for Hugh Haris caught the whole team by surprise. The original marker was badly worn and it took us a while to extract the inscription,

HUGH HARIS

A Revolutionary Soldier

3 years under Gen Washington

was 48 years a member of the

Baptist Church died a

Christian Feb 1st 1855

Aged 106 Years



What? He fought with General Washington? Died at age 106 years?? These two items were the most intriguing and piqued our interest, but our cemetery work called and we moved on, but none of us forgot about Hugh Haris.

It was my idea to work up the property of Hugh Haris for our new project, "Early Landowners of Northeast Tennessee," but we soon found out that Hugh's land grant was in modern-day Unicoi

County, having received a land grant on Indian Creek, near the Flagpond area. His property there had been already been platted by researchers.

With that knowledge, we decided not to focus on the early land grants, but we wondered how he came to be buried in the New Salem Cemetery, thirty miles from Flagpond. It was time to do some research on Hugh Harris.

In 1803, after the Revolutionary War, he settled in western North Carolina (Burke County) and received land grants there. Sometime prior to 1824, he made the move over the mountain into northeast Tennessee, first settling on Indian Creek in modern-day Unicoi County (land warrant 10461). Harris is found for the first time on the 1826 tax list in Washington County (Barnet's Company), which proves he had established residency in the county by then. Another land warrant (# 17246) was granted in 1828. The only deed that we could find in Washington County was where Hugh sold his land on Indian Creek to George Harris, his son for \$50. The image below shows Hugh Harris Jun, and Hugh Harris Sen^r on the 1826 tax list.

Select the four Male Inhabitants of each Barnet's Company for the year 1826

1	Thomas A. Harris	32
2	Joseph A. Harris	33
3	George A. Harris	34
4	John A. Harris	35
5	James A. Harris	36
6	John A. Harris	37

Thomas A. Harris 32
Charles A. Harris 33
John A. Harris 34
Hugh Harris Senr 35
Hugh Harris Junr 36
Christopher Harris 37

John A. Harris 38
William A. Harris 39
Richard A. Harris 40
John A. Harris 41
James A. Harris 42
John A. Harris 43
John A. Harris 44
John A. Harris 45
John A. Harris 46
John A. Harris 47
John A. Harris 48
John A. Harris 49
John A. Harris 50
John A. Harris 51
John A. Harris 52
John A. Harris 53
John A. Harris 54
John A. Harris 55
John A. Harris 56
John A. Harris 57
John A. Harris 58
John A. Harris 59
John A. Harris 60
John A. Harris 61
John A. Harris 62
John A. Harris 63
John A. Harris 64
John A. Harris 65
John A. Harris 66
John A. Harris 67
John A. Harris 68
John A. Harris 69
John A. Harris 70
John A. Harris 71
John A. Harris 72
John A. Harris 73
John A. Harris 74
John A. Harris 75
John A. Harris 76
John A. Harris 77
John A. Harris 78
John A. Harris 79
John A. Harris 80
John A. Harris 81
John A. Harris 82
John A. Harris 83
John A. Harris 84
John A. Harris 85
John A. Harris 86
John A. Harris 87
John A. Harris 88
John A. Harris 89
John A. Harris 90
John A. Harris 91
John A. Harris 92
John A. Harris 93
John A. Harris 94
John A. Harris 95
John A. Harris 96
John A. Harris 97
John A. Harris 98
John A. Harris 99
John A. Harris 100

Now List of the four Male Inhabitants of each Barnet's Company for the year 1826

1	Thomas A. Harris	32
2	Joseph A. Harris	33
3	George A. Harris	34
4	John A. Harris	35
5	James A. Harris	36
6	John A. Harris	37

Thomas A. Harris 32
Charles A. Harris 33
John A. Harris 34
Hugh Harris Senr 35
Hugh Harris Junr 36
Christopher Harris 37

John A. Harris 38
William A. Harris 39
Richard A. Harris 40
John A. Harris 41
James A. Harris 42
John A. Harris 43
John A. Harris 44
John A. Harris 45
John A. Harris 46
John A. Harris 47
John A. Harris 48
John A. Harris 49
John A. Harris 50
John A. Harris 51
John A. Harris 52
John A. Harris 53
John A. Harris 54
John A. Harris 55
John A. Harris 56
John A. Harris 57
John A. Harris 58
John A. Harris 59
John A. Harris 60
John A. Harris 61
John A. Harris 62
John A. Harris 63
John A. Harris 64
John A. Harris 65
John A. Harris 66
John A. Harris 67
John A. Harris 68
John A. Harris 69
John A. Harris 70
John A. Harris 71
John A. Harris 72
John A. Harris 73
John A. Harris 74
John A. Harris 75
John A. Harris 76
John A. Harris 77
John A. Harris 78
John A. Harris 79
John A. Harris 80
John A. Harris 81
John A. Harris 82
John A. Harris 83
John A. Harris 84
John A. Harris 85
John A. Harris 86
John A. Harris 87
John A. Harris 88
John A. Harris 89
John A. Harris 90
John A. Harris 91
John A. Harris 92
John A. Harris 93
John A. Harris 94
John A. Harris 95
John A. Harris 96
John A. Harris 97
John A. Harris 98
John A. Harris 99
John A. Harris 100

Next, let's look at the claim that he was 106. The 1850 Federal Census for Washington County, Tennessee showed that Hugh was born in Virginia¹ and listed his age as 92. This would place his birth at 1758. It is common knowledge among genealogical researchers that you look for the earliest record listing an age or birthdate, as the older a person gets, the more likely that the age will become "padded." The earliest statement of his age was in 1823 when he made application for a pension. This document declared his age to be 68 years. This would put his birth at 1755. Hugh's date of birth was consistently put back into the mid 1750's. In the 1840 census, his age was listed at 84 which still kept his birth year sometime in the mid 1750's. If this is true, he surely would have been around 100 years old at the time of his death!

His pension records give a very brief description of his military service and show that he enlisted in Orange County, NC, (May in the 4th NC Regiment, Continental Army. The regiment fought at the Battles of Brandywine, Germantown and Monmouth. They camped at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania from 1777 - 1778.

General George Washington was present at the Battles of Brandywine (11 Sept 1777), Germantown (4 Oct 1777) and the Battle of Monmouth (28 Jun 1778). George Washington also camped with his troops at Valley Forge during the winter of 1777 into 1778. This certainly mirrors the movements of the 4th NC Regiment and it seems that Hugh Harris did indeed serve under General Washington. I found it a bit odd, though, that the deposition did not mention that he fought with George Washington.

Hugh wrote a will on October 8, 1853 and it is on file in the Washington County Archives. It states, "I give and bequeath to my beloved with Elizabeth all the property of evry (sic) sort and discription (sic) that I may bee (sic) in possession of at my Death as a compensation for her kindness to me in my old days..."

So, was Hugh 106 years old when he died? Probably not 106, but he was likely close to 100. Did he fight with General George Washington? I believe it is extremely likely that he did!

###