



New York State Archives

**New York State Comptroller's Office Revolutionary War
Accounts and Claims A0200**

New York State Archives
222 Madison Avenue
Albany, NY 12230
archref@nysed.gov
URL: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/>

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series consists of documents compiled by auditors related to liquidating financial obligations incurred by New York State during the Revolutionary War. The records document the service of and compensation due to soldiers and others who provided goods or services to the State during the war. Most documents are financial in nature but also included are certificates by commanding officers, assignments of land bounty rights, several muster and pay rolls, and documentation of the seizure and sale of loyalists' lands.
Creator:	New York (State). Comptroller's Office
Title:	Revolutionary War accounts and claims
Quantity:	36.5 cubic feet
Inclusive Date:	1775-1808
Bulk Date:	bulk 1782-1799
Series:	A0200

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Administrative History

When hostilities broke out between British and American troops in 1775, New York had no provision for the regular compensation of its troops. The Provincial Congress adopted a militia bill on August 22, 1775 providing for payment to New York State Militia troops equal to that of Continental Army troops. The treasurer, first appointed by the Provincial Congress in 1775 and continued by the State constitution of 1777, was empowered to collect revenues as necessary and disburse funds in payment of the State's obligations. The office of auditor-general, responsible for maintaining and reconciling the public accounts of the State, was established by resolution of the Provincial Convention on July 24, 1776. The first Pay Master for the Militia was appointed by a resolution of April 4, 1777.

The mechanism for paying troops was in place, but the payments quickly fell far behind or had to be made with inflated State and Continental currency. In 1780, the governor appointed three special auditors to settle accounts for back pay. The auditors issued certificates of debt bearing five percent interest. Soldiers or other creditors could use the certificates as payment

for estates forfeited by loyalists, unappropriated lands, or taxes. A schedule was set up to calculate depreciated and real pay due creditors.

In 1781, the continuing lack of funds led to compensation for war service in land rights. Officers and privates were granted bounty rights to unappropriated lands (a "right" being 500 acres) according to rank. In 1782, each "class" (fifteen or thirty-five man subdivision of a Militia regiment) was granted a 200-acre bounty for furnishing one man for service in the Levies (drafts from Militia regiments who could be called on to serve outside the state for the entire term of their service) as required by law. The man enlisted for service in the Levies received a 500-acre bounty right. The 200-acre bounty granted to the class could be assigned to the enlisted man or any other person.

The State Auditor, permanently established by statute in 1782, was empowered to receive from civil and military officers all accounts, vouchers, and other records needed to settle the State's accounts. In 1784, special auditors were directed to settle the accounts of New York troops in service of the United States and to issue printed certificates dated January 1, 1782 entitling the holder to receive a specified sum. Officers of the Militia and Levies whose regiments saw actual service in the war submitted unpaid accounts to the State Auditor for settlement. The State Treasurer was to issue certificates bearing five percent interest to each person named on the payrolls and accounts, taking a receipt for each certificate issued. Others to whom the State owed money received certificates of debt. Unappropriated lands were granted to holders of various Treasurer's certificates, and all certificates were now negotiable. The Military Tract was laid out and land granted to those eligible for bounty rights.

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Scope and Content Note

This series consists of documents compiled by specially appointed auditors for the purpose of liquidating financial obligations incurred by New York State during the Revolutionary War. The records document the service of and compensation due to soldiers and others who provided goods or services to the State during the war. Most of the documents are financial in nature, such as warrants to the state treasurer to pay creditors, account records, and receipts, and relate directly to the settlement of claims for reimbursement made between 1782 and 1794. However, certificates by commanding officers, assignments of land bounty rights, several muster and pay rolls, and documentation of the seizure and sale of loyalists' lands are also included. Few records date before 1782, and most documentation of military service pertains to the last years of the war.

Pursuant to legislation enacted in 1896, the Office of the State Comptroller organized these records by military unit, civil office, or administrative function. Nearly two-thirds of the documents were destroyed in the New York State Capitol fire of 1911, and the fire and subsequent repair work caused some disarrangement of the order of the surviving records. The

paragraphs that follow describe surviving documents in groupings assigned by the comptroller's office in the 1890s.

CONTINENTAL LINE. Four types of documents comprise most of the records relating to the Line (regiments in United States service under General Washington; also artillery and the Green Mountain Boys): 1. order to the treasurer to pay money due a veteran for military service or for "depreciation of pay" due him because of currency inflation; 2. muster roll, usually for companies, listing officers, privates, and sometimes dates of enlistment, death, desertion, transfer, sickness, or promotion; 3. enlistment or muster certificate for a "good, able bodied man," signed by the recruiting officer (few of these are extant); and 4. discharge certificate for private soldier, signed by the commanding officer and adjutant (few are extant).

ARMED VESSELS AND PRIVATEERS. These record are comprised mostly of invoices, accounts, and receipts for fitting out vessels and for arms and provisions carried by vessels in the employ of New York State. Records also include accounts of cargoes seized as prizes by New York vessels; payrolls and expense accounts for crews and vessels; and receipts for pay.

COURTS MARTIAL. Only a few records of a Court Martial held in Albany from May 21 to June 27, 1777 survived the 1911 fire, including expense accounts of persons providing services (meals, lodging, travel to summon witnesses) and a payroll of militia officers who sat on the Court Martial.

MISCELLANEOUS REGIMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS; CERTIFICATES OF ENLISTMENT, PAYROLLS, AND OTHER RECORDS OF SOLDIERS FROM OTHER STATES.

Very few of these records survived the 1911 fire. Extant documents include an expense account of Jonathan Langdon for disbursements made for food, horse keeping, cattle, etc. for General Scott's "Westchester Expedition" and a receipt for a treasurer's certificate of depreciation of pay for a sergeant.

MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS. Very few of these records survived the 1911 fire. Extant records include accounts for placing monument to General Richard Montgomery in St. Paul's Church, New York City, 1787; accounts for removal of state records in 1776; and fragments of other documents.

THE LEVIES. Many of these records are orders to the treasurer to pay money due and muster rolls similar to those for the Continental Line. Other records include abstracts of certificates issued to troops, listing names, ranks, certificate numbers, and amount due; and abstracts of pay, listing names of officers only, term of service, amount due, and totals for each captain's payroll (names of individual soldiers are not given).

THE MILITIA. These records are similar to records of the Line and the Levies described above. Assignments of treasurer's certificates entitling a Militia class to a land bounty right, signed by members of the class, are also included.

MISCELLANEOUS PAYROLLS AND DEMANDS FOR PAY. These documents include accounts of pay due for services or material furnished during the war, abstracts of pay, and treasurer's certificates.

BOUNTY PAY AND SUBSISTENCE. These records are accounts for money bounties owed to persons who recruited troops or supplied provisions during the war.

PRISONERS OF WAR (AMERICAN). These documents are lists of prisoners of war and subscribers for their relief, and copies of prisoners' receipts for food and clothing received while imprisoned by the British.

AID GIVEN TO FAMILIES OF SOLDIERS. Accounts of aid given to families of soldiers include receipts by wives with their signatures or marks.

LISTS OF PENSIONERS. These documents are lists of pensioners and accounts of money paid to pensioners pursuant to Congressional resolutions and state laws providing for payment of pensions to disabled soldiers or their widows. The lists and accounts give name, rank, and amount due. There are also a few statements of disability describing wounds or illness of soldiers applying for pensions; these are severely burned at the top and many names are gone.

APPLICATIONS FOR PENSIONS. These records are arranged alphabetically by name of pensioner and provide name, military unit, nature of applicant's disability, and other information on service (occasionally). An index to these applications is published in New York in the Revolution as Colony and State (Albany, 1904).

LAND BOUNTY RIGHTS. Two types of documents comprise the bulk of these records: 1. certificate of enlistment, giving name of man enlisted by the Militia class, name of the person (i.e. head of the class) furnishing the enlisted man, term of enlistment, date, and signature of the Commissary of Musters or the Muster Master. A few surviving typewritten regimental indexes to these certificates are filed at the beginning of the regiment to which they refer; and 2. assignment or transfer of land bounty right by members of a Militia class to the head of the class or to another person, witnessed by affidavit before a court of record. Such documents include a certification of the Muster Master that the head of the class had furnished a man for service. The certification is often all that survives of the documents because of fire damage to the upper portion.

DESERTERS AND DELINQUENTS. Only a few fragments survived the 1911 fire, preventing a full determination of the contents of the records. Some appear to be accounts of expenses incurred in capturing deserters or delinquents and turning them over to their assigned companies.

BOUNTY LAND LOCATIONS. These records suffered severe burn damage in the 1911 fire. Those that survived relate mostly to Charlotte (later Washington), Clinton, Dutchess, Montgomery, and Orange counties. Three types of documents comprise the bulk of these records: 1. certificate of location of "vacant and unappropriated lands" issued to holders of treasurer's certificates, giving bounds and acreage of lot(s) delivered. The certificate is signed by the certificate holder and delivered to the surveyor general. A few are accompanied by maps of the land granted; 2. certificate of the surveyor general addressed to the Commissioners of the Land Office stating that the person named is entitled to the described lot of land, a "location" for which had been deposited in the Land Office; and 3. notice of assignment or transfer of land location or class right certificate filed in surveyor general's office.

AUDITOR-GENERAL. Surviving documents are mainly accounts of New York with the United States, specifically accounts of William Barber, Continental Commissioner, and accounts for requisition of gold and silver (specie) for use of the United States.

TREASURER. Records include lists of holders of various types of treasurer's certificates issued during and immediately after the war; some correspondence of Treasurer Gerard Bancker; treasurer's receipts for principal and interest on certificates; receipts for window lead requisitioned during the war; some original treasurer's certificates; statements of exchange of old certificates for new ones; miscellaneous accounts and lists; warrants from the comptroller (1797-1799) to the treasurer to pay principal and interest on certificates of debt issued during the war; and accounts of certificates for state loans providing certificate numbers, date interest commenced, by whom issued (type of certificate or name of state agent), principal in pounds and dollars, and term and amount of interest due on the certificate.

STATE AGENTS AND ASSISTANT STATE AGENTS. These records include accounts of state agents and their assistants for purchase of grain, flour, beef, and other provisions for military use; and receipts for payment of certificates given by agents for purchase of provisions.

COUNTY COMMITTEES. These records are accounts of county, town, precinct, or district committees for money expended for food, ammunition, powder, cartage, guard duty, etc. The accounts often bear written receipts for money paid out by the treasurer. These records were severely damaged in the 1911 fire. Those that survive relate mostly to Dutchess, Ulster, and Westchester counties.

COMMITTEE FOR CONSPIRACIES. These records are accounts of county committees for expenses incurred in transporting, guarding, and maintaining prisoners (including American deserters). These records were severely damaged in the 1911 fire. Those that survive relate mostly to Dutchess and Ulster counties.

COMMISSIONERS OF SEQUESTRATION. The few extant accounts of the Commissioners of Sequestration, mostly from Albany County, are for leases of confiscated farms of loyalists and sale of their movable property, and for expenses of the commissioners.

COMMISSIONERS OF FORFEITURES. Accounts of the Commissioners of Forfeitures are for the sale of estates forfeited by loyalists. There are also statements by judges certifying that they have examined the "book accounts" of debts owed by owners of forfeited estates previous to their confiscation and have found them to be correct. The nature of the debts is usually specified.

PRISONERS; TORIES AND SUSPECTED PERSONS. Only fragments of accounts relating to these persons survived the 1911 fire. The few surviving fragments appear to relate to expenses incurred due to imprisonment by the British and to payments due to men sent to arrest and deliver to jail Tories and suspected persons.

DAMAGES BY THE AMERICAN ARMY; DAMAGES BY THE ENEMY. The few surviving records relating to damages include accounts, receipts, and witnessed vouchers for

reimbursement of persons whose property was damaged by the armies of either side during the war.

MILITARY STORES. The surviving records are fragmentary accounts and certificates for window lead and other articles requisitioned by the Commissioners of Military Stores.

CLOTHING; FOOD; HORSES AND CATTLE. The surviving, fire-damaged records are fragmentary accounts of purchases by commissioners appointed to procure supplies for the army.

Oversize, Damaged, and Miscellaneous Documents. These include letters to the comptroller (mid-19th century) inquiring about Revolutionary War service, abstracts of certificates, subsistence rolls, and other damaged or disarranged documents or fragments.

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Related Information

Related Material

A1363 New York State Comptroller's Office outgoing correspondence replying to inquiries about records of soldiers of the Revolutionary War

Related Publications

The Refugees of 1776 From Long Island to Connecticut, comp. Frederic G. Mather (Albany, 1913), Appendix C, contains some accounts relating to Long Island refugees, the originals of which were destroyed in the 1911 Capitol Fire.

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Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

New York in the Revolution as Colony and State (Comptroller's Office, Albany, 1904) provides name indexes, volume lists, regimental lists, and some samples of records from the original, complete record series. Users are cautioned that roughly two-thirds of the records referenced in this resource were destroyed in the State Capitol fire of 1911.

Online Index

The [index to series A0200](#) contains 64,798 entries. Each entry provides the subject's name, role, and unit.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

Users are referred to microfilm as first use copy. Documents in this series that suffered severe burn damage are closed to use.

Alternate Formats Available

Microfilm is available for use at the New York State Archives or through interlibrary loan.

Published: Some sample images of records from this series are published in "New York in the Revolution as Colony and State" (Comptroller's Office, Albany, 1904).

Alternate Formats Available

Items Online

High resolution images of selected original documents in this series are available in State Archives Digital Collections.

[Revolutionary War Accounts and Claims in Digital Collections](#)

Administrative Information

Custodial History

The documents in this series were arranged and classified by Frederic G. Mather under the direction of comptroller James A. Roberts pursuant to legislation of 1896. The arrangement reflects the military and civil organization of the state during the Revolutionary War. Often documents of different origin and type were grouped together, as is the case with documents pertaining to the regiments of the Continental Line, the Levies, and the Militia; other groups of documents were kept intact as originally created.

In 1910 the volumes of mounted documents, numbered 1-52 (several had multiple parts making the physical number of volumes 55), were transferred to the New York State Library, then located in the State Capitol Building. About 60 percent of the documents were destroyed in the Capitol Fire of 1911; many others suffered varying degrees of burn damage. Many have since been repaired, but some are severely damaged. The fire and subsequent repair work caused some disarrangement of the order established by the comptroller in the 1890s. The fire burned off folio numbers, making it impossible to fully reestablish that order. *New York in the Revolution as Colony and State* (Comptroller's Office, Albany, 1904) contains a detailed table of contents of the original 52 volumes.

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Access Terms

- United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783
- United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783--Finance
- Military history
- Finance, Public--New York (State)