

A Guide to the Records of the Virginia Commercial Agent (Revolutionary War / Government), 1780-1788.

Records of the Virginia Commercial Agent,
1780-1788.

A Collection in the Library of Virginia 200, 44318, 44319, 54345

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History

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Title Statement

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Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

200, 44318, 44319, 54345

Unit Date

1780-1788.

Creator

Commercial Agent.

Extent

6 volumes, .45 cubic feet, and 2 items.

Repository

The Library of Virginia

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Use microfilm when available.

Acquisition Information

Acquired prior to 1905.

Preferred Citation

Records of the Virginia Commercial Agent [cite specific date and accession used]. State government records collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

Arrangement

Arranged alphabetically.

Historical Information

The Office of the Commercial Agent was created by the General Assembly at its May 1780 session. The 1780 Act abolishing the Board of Trade authorized the governor, with advice of council, to appoint a commercial agent who was to discharge the several duties which shall be by the executive adjudged to appertain to the office (Chapter XXIV, 1780 May). The Agent was responsible for the procurement of military supplies, assuming these functions of the Board of Trade. These functions originated with the State Agent and then were passed to the Commissary of Stores before being assumed by the Commercial Agent.

A year later, along with other public offices, the Commercial Agent was ordered to lodge returns of the tobacco and hemp which had been either raised by taxes or allotted to his disposal with the War Office quarterly. Returns of stores both purchased and issued were likewise required (Chapter XV, 1781 May).

In October 1782, in an attempt at economy, the War Office (and thus the Commercial Agent) was abolished, with the duties pertaining thereto being transferred to executive, who delegated the duties to the office of the Quartermaster General (Chapter XIV, 1782 Oct).

William Armistead, serving as the Commissary of Stores, was appointed the first commercial agent by Governor Thomas Jefferson on July 31, 1780. He was succeeded by David Rose on February 2, 1781. William Hay, who was holding the office when it was discontinued, was appointed in May 1782.

Scope and Content

Virginia Commerical Agent records include accounts, daybooks, journals, ledgers and papers.

For additional records see the Governor's Executive Papers for this time period.

Other Descriptive Data

These records are part of the Revolutionary War / Government record group (R.G. 2)

Contents List

Daybooks, 1781-1782.

Extent

Extent: 2 v.

Scope and Content

These daybooks document the daily activities of the Commercial Agent in the procurement of supplies and services for the military, and the general public in the supplying of salt. Includes the following volumes: v. 1, March 16, 1781 - July 17, 1782; v. 2, July 18 - December 18, 1782 (84 p.). Volumes record daily dispersals within the office, indicating the department or person against whom the charge is made, the goods concerned, and the amount involved. Each entry provides the account number, name of account, items, and cost.

The number appearing in the left hand column corresponds to the page of the Journal (1781 Mar 16-Dec 18) into which the entry has been transcribed. This book was designated as WAR 28-B in the 1905 Calendar of Transcripts.

The second volume, with entries beyond the official life of the office, also contains entries regarding the settlement of accounts made by the Solicitor's Office and the Auditor's Office as late as 1786. These accounts do not necessarily concern the Commercial Agent.

Also available on Miscellaneous Reel 364.

Daybook, 1781 Mar 16-1782 July 17.

Daybook, 1782 July 18-Dec 18.

Journals, 1781-1782.

Extent

Extent: 2 v.

Scope and Content

Journal, 1781 Mar 16-1782 Dec 18, is arranged chronologically and includes accounts of dispersals within the department, indicating against what or whom the charge was made, the goods involved, and the sum. This volume corresponds to the Daybook entries and lists payments for supplies from the military store in Richmond, giving account number, name of account, items purchased and amount of payment. Purchases include items such as tobacco, rum, canvas, hemp, and delivery of arms. This volume is identified as WAR 36 in the 1905 Calendar of Transcripts. (Accession 54345)

Journal, 1781 Feb-1782 Nov, is arranged chronologically and is a record of the "Transactions by the commerical agent when abroad and from the office", identifying the persons and sums involved.

Also available on Miscellaneous Reel 364.

Journal, 1781 Mar 16-1782 Dec 18.

Journal, 1781 Feb-1782 Nov.

Ledgers, 1780-1783.

Extent

Extent: 2 v.

Scope and Content

These ledgers are arranged chronologically and provide a record of cash disbursements for both goods and services, identifying the person involved, date, nature of the transaction and the sum. They contain accounts of the military store goods and services listed by account name. (Accession 54314).

The index for the ledger covering the period 1781 Feb-1782 Nov, is erroneously bound into the Journal covering the same period. This volume is designated as WAR 38 in the 1905 Calendar of Transcripts.

Ledger of William Armistead, 1780 Aug 3-1782 May 6. Folios 82-84 provide a record of credit to commissioners of specifics in certain counties for 1781. No index. Also identified as Auditor's Item 3. (Accession 200).

Also available on Miscellaneous Reel 634.

Ledger, 1781 Feb-1782 Nov.

Ledger of William Armistead, 1780 Aug 3-1782 May 6

Papers, 1780-1782.

Extent

Extent: .45 cubic feet.

Scope and Content

Papers, 1780-1782, are arranged chronologically and consist mainly of accounts, invoices, orders, receipts and vouchers, but also include correspondence, and other types of documents such as agreements, legislation, and resolutions. These papers are related to furnishing goods and military supplies. Goods and supplies include food items (beef, flax, flour, molasses, pork, salt, sugar); clothing and personal items (belts, blankets, breeches, buckles, buttons, flannel, linen, serge, shirts, shoes, stockings, thread), office supplies (account books, ink, quills, wafers, writing paper); spirits (brandy, rum, whiskey, wine); tools and building materials (nails, pocket knives, rope, twine) and other miscellaneous items such as furniture and lead. Goods were supplied to the Board of War, Clerks of Assembly, Clothier General, and Council, as well as to apothecaries, barracks, garrisons, hospitals, lead mines, officers, regiments, ships, surgeons). Also includes receipts and orders for hires (boats, wagons, horses), removal of public tobacco, repairs (saddles,

bridles, buildings, ropewalk), shipping, shoeing horses, and travel expenses. (Accession 54345).

Papers of interest include: Agreement with George Harner for the hire of enslaved individuals, 1781 Feb; invoice of tobacco purchased by the order of David Ross for the use of the Commonwealth, 1781 Apr; Council order to impress negroes, wagons and boats to remove public tobacco, 1781 July; orders for supplies to lead mines and Point of Fork arsenal, 1781 July; correspondence and inventory related to printing press, 1781 July; correspondence and claims and an act to empower the Governor and Council to fix the value of provisions impressed for the use of the army, 1781 Aug; agreement regarding boats, 1781 Aug; prices of provisions, 1781 Aug; account of enslaved individuals hired of George Harner (includes names), 1781 Oct; correspondence and accounts Francois Joseph Paul, Count de Grasse and Jean-Baptiste de Cibon regarding the Royal Navy of France, 1781 Oct; correspondence and accounts regarding the impressment of the Schooner Game Cock, 1781 Oct; correspondence and travel expenses related to agents of the French army, 1781 Nov; hiring enslaved labor and repairing the ropewalk in Warwick, 1782 Feb; bill of lading for General Wayne, 1782 Apr; List of forfeited estates from Col. Davies, 1782 Apr; Council papers and correspondence between the Minister of France and the Speaker of the House related to supplies to be furnished to the Royal Navy of France, 1782 May; clothing for the Cherokee, 1782 May; shipping tobacco to France, 1782 May; repairing the lead mines, 1782 June; resolution of Count de Grasse, 1782 July; account with the ship Oliver Cromwell, 1782 July; correspondence and inventory of the lead mines (includes the names of enslaved laborers), 1782 Aug; quantity of pig and other iron at the Foundry at Westham, 1782 Oct; return of clothing for state negroes, artificers and wagoneers, 1782 Oct; inventory of goods on hand in the care of William Hay, Commercial Agent, 1782 Oct;

Also includes lists of tobacco received in payment of the two percent tax to raise the state's quota of troops to serve in the Continental Army, 1780-1781. Lists are in alphabetical order by locality. Frederick County list also includes the planter's name, river and warehouse, and the Orange County list also includes the name of the planter.

Papers, 1780 Nov-Dec; 1781 Jan.

Box 1

Folder 1

Papers, 1781 Feb.

Box 1

Folder 2

Papers, 1781 Mar.

Box 1

Folder 3

Papers, 1781 Apr.

Box 1

Folder 4

Papers, 1781 May.

Box 1

Folder 5

Papers, 1781 July.

Box 1

Folder 6

Papers, 1781 Aug.

Box 1

Folder 7

Papers, 1781 Sept.

Box 1

Folder 8

Papers, 1781 Oct.

Box 1

Folder 9

Papers, 1781 Nov.

Box 1

Folder 10

Papers, 1781 Dec.

Box 1

Folder 11

Papers, 1782 Jan-Mar.

Box 1

Folder 12

Papers, 1782 Apr.

Box 1

Folder 13

Papers, 1782 May.

Box 1

Folder 14

Papers, 1782 June.

Box 1

Folder 15

Papers, 1782 July.

Box 1

Folder 16

Papers, 1782 Aug.

Box 1

Folder 17

Papers, 1782 Sept.

Box 1

Folder 18

Papers, 1782 Oct.

Box 1

Folder 19

Papers, undated.

Box 1

Folder 20

Papers - Lists of tobacco received, 1780-1781.

Box 1

Folder 21

Account of William Armistead, 1780-1781.

Extent

Extent: 1 p.

Scope and Content

Contains an account of William Armistead for cloth, tea, coffee, breeches, and shoes purchased by him as Commercial Agent from Buchanan and McKeand between 13 December 1780, and 16 March 1781. (Accession 44318).

Account of John Ball, 1779-1780.

Extent

Extent: 1 p.

Scope and Content

Contains an account of John Ball, Esq., Agent for the State of Virginia at St. Eustatius, for paper, shoes, and sundries between 31 December 1779 and 28 August 1780. The account is signed by William Armistead. (Accession 44319).