

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Petition relating to William Armistead VAS1894

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Transcribed by Will Graves

4/20/15

[Methodology: Spelling, punctuation and/or grammar have been corrected in some instances for ease of reading and to facilitate searches of the database. Where the meaning is not compromised by adhering to the spelling, punctuation or grammar, no change has been made. Corrections or additional notes have been inserted within brackets or footnotes. Blanks appearing in the transcripts reflect blanks in the original. A bracketed question mark indicates that the word or words preceding it represent(s) a guess by me. The word 'illegible' or 'indecipherable' appearing in brackets indicates that at the time I made the transcription, I was unable to decipher the word or phrase in question. Only materials pertinent to the military service of the veteran and to contemporary events have been transcribed. Affidavits that provide additional information on these events are included and genealogical information is abstracted, while standard, 'boilerplate' affidavits and attestations related solely to the application, and later nineteenth and twentieth century research requests for information have been omitted. I use speech recognition software to make all my transcriptions. Such software misinterprets my southern accent with unfortunate regularity and my poor proofreading skills fail to catch all misinterpretations. Also, dates or numbers which the software treats as numerals rather than words are not corrected: for example, the software transcribes "the eighth of June one thousand eighty six" as "the 8th of June 1786." Please call material errors or omissions to my attention.]

[From [Digital Library of Virginia](#)] New Kent County Legislative Petitions

To the General Assembly of Virginia the Petition of John Dandridge Sheweth; That the Petitioner is executor of William Armistead late of New Kent County who died in the year 1793. That the said William Armistead acted as Commissary of Public Stores from some time prior to the year 1779 to the year 1782 or 1783. That his conduct in office was always singularly honest & attentive. That in January 1781 – the Council board fixed his wages as Commissary of Stores & Clothier at 35,000 pounds of tobacco by the [indecipherable word] from the 1st of May 1781 until his office expired. That during the ravages of the British Troops through Virginia in the year 1780 & 1781, the books & vouchers of the said Armistead were mostly lost & destroyed with the other public papers & property in his custody, by which means he was prevented from ever arranging & preparing his accounts of office for a regular settlement & as there appeared a charge of a considerable sum of money against him on the books of the Auditor, he was prevented from ever drawing his wages as allowed him by contract with the Council. In 1787 the Assembly passed a resolution to facilitate the settlement of the said Armistead's accounts but he could not take the benefit of it because it was not in his power from loss of books & papers to state an account. That for years before the death of the said Armistead he had declined much in his health & was not able to attend to his private or public interests. That it was only during the last fall that the petitioner became fully acquainted with the nature & merits of his testator's claim; & late in the last session of Assembly when he found the Document hereto annexed which ascertains the rate of his wages in Office. That the petitioner did immediately offer the Claim to the House of delegates who then refused to attend to its investigation. The petitioner, from some observation in attending to the prosecution & investigation of claims in the Assembly for some years past is aware of the objections, that may probably be made by them one on account of its apparent lateness & because it is not ascertained by regular settlement that no public money remained in the hands of his intestate not applied to public uses. The circumstances attending the claim as before stated excuse in a great measure the delay which has attended its prosecution & the petitioner will hazard one observation in aid of that excuse which is that the most forward & pressing claims in public life as well as private all far from being the most just although generally the most successful. As to the charge of money appearing against his testator on the public books, the petitioner can only say that as it was impossible from the loss of Books etc. to settle his testator's accounts so it is impossible to show how that money was applied to public use. The petitioner must therefore rely on the well-known character of his testator as a public

officer & the certified opinion of those who were particularly acquainted with his conduct in office & further on the economical manner in which he always lived & the little property of which [he] died possessed contrary to most instances of persons who have been largely entrusted with public money during the times in which he acted.

Upon the whole the petitioner thinks it his duty, as a friend to the widow & orphans of his testator & from a firm persuasion that his testator did never of views his office by using improperly public money & that of course he was entitled to 35,000 pounds of Tobacco by the [indecipherable word]¹ as wages from May 1, '80 to the end of his office, to offer a claim for that amount to the Assembly by whose interference alone it can be obtained.

They in their justice will consider it & do what shall seem right between the honest unfortunate officer & the Commonwealth.

S/ Jno. Dandridge, acting executor of William Armistead

[Reverse]

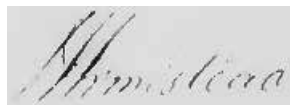
J Dandridge executor of Armistead – petition
November 12, 1796
To Claims
Reasonable
35,000 pounds Tobacco per annum allowed
Report

Richmond January 20th 1781

Sir

The discontinuance of the public Store under a late Law renders it necessary that I should be ascertained [?] of the allowance which your Excellency & your Hon. Council proposed to make me as Commissary of Stores; towards [indecipherable word or words] which I have taken the liberty of subjoining such terms as I hope will be thought Reasonable especially when it is considered that the Offices of Commissary & Clothier have been united – I have the honor of being your Excellency

Most Obedient Servant
S/ Wm Armistead



In [word too faint to discern] January 23, 1781

The [several words too faint to discern] allowed at the rate of thirty-five thousand weight of Tobacco by the year in full for his services & loans since the discontinuance of Mr. Dixon's services (say May 1, 1780) that he be appointed a commissary of stores & Clothier, and authorized to settle all transactions in the Bedding department not originated by the present Commercial agent for which he shall be allowed thirty-five thousand weight of Tobacco by the year, that Mr. Heitman be allowed from the expiration of his agreement fifteen thousand weight of Tobacco by the year for services & board and Mr. Armistead's reasonable travelling expenses

are to be allowed him.

S/ Th: Jefferson [Thomas Jefferson]

A rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to be "Th. Jefferson".

An inquiry having been this day made of me respecting my opinion of the conduct of Mr. William Armistead deceased formerly Commissary of Stores in this State, I have very great satisfaction in giving my testimony to the worth of that truly respectable Character. In the whole of my acquaintance with him, I ever found him scrupulously honest, and zealously attached to the Interest of the Commonwealth, in the conduct of the highly confidential business with which he was entrusted; and was as far as I could learn, universally esteemed and respected as a public Officer, where ever he was known.

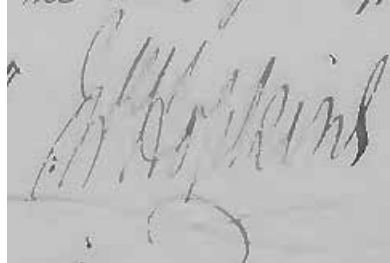
8th December 1796

[indecipherable signature]

A rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to be "W. Armistead".

In addition to what is stated above I have to observe that I acted as an assistant to Mr. Armistead for a Considerable time, and I take great pleasure in adding my testimony of the integrity, industry and attention with which he discharged the duties of his Office – And I can further with truth of serve from an intimate knowledge of his frugality: that he can never have received public money without duly accounting for it

S/ Jno. Hopkins [John Hopkins?]

A rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to be "J. Hopkins".