



Record Group: Department of Treasury
Subgroup: State Treasurer's Office
Series: Auditor's Account Books, 1776-1830
Accession #: Unknown
Series #: STSTR013
Guide Date: 9/1997; rev. 11/1998 (EC)
Volume: 1.5 c.f. [3 disbound vols., 3 folders]

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Legislative History

The responsibility for auditing state government finances was first codified during the Revolutionary War by an act of the legislature dated 22 June 1778 ([Laws of 1778](#), Chap. XXXV). This law established a three-man committee for collecting, adjusting, and settling the public accounts of the state. However, with wartime finances becoming more complicated, the legislature replaced the committee in December 1779 with an Auditor of Accounts to be elected at a joint meeting of the legislature ([Laws of 1779](#), Chap. CLXXX). The 1779 act gave the auditor the responsibility and authority to examine--by subpoena if necessary--all accounts of state expenditures and income. The law also required that the records of the former accounts committee be delivered to the new state auditor.

Subsequent legislation enacted in the 1780s defined in greater detail the auditor's authority over the accounts of a variety of officials, including county clerks, sheriffs, commissioners of forfeited estates, and army contractors and paymasters. The auditor's importance appears to have waned in the 1790s, perhaps because the coming of peace and federal assumption of state debts greatly simplified New Jersey's finances. The office of Auditor of Accounts was dissolved by the legislature in 1798 ([Laws of 1798](#), Chap. DCCXL), and its records, and most of its responsibilities, were transferred to the Secretary of State.

Content Note

This series includes three disbound State Auditor's ledgers containing accounts from the Revolutionary War period to as late as 1830. Cross-references between the first two volumes show that the ledgers are related, although they were mislabeled at some point. Book A is actually Ledger B and vice versa. This mislabeling has been retained because the volumes are cited with the incorrect titles in the Revolutionary War service cards and slips. Also included at the end of this series are two booklets of auditor's notes and two loose audited accounts. Below are general descriptions of each item followed by a detailed **Contents** list for Books A, B and C.

[Book A](#) As mentioned above, this volume was originally referred to as Ledger B. It contains a variety of records, including: rosters of Revolutionary War soldiers (returns and "after-returns"); accounts of the State of New Jersey against the United States for soldier's pay, military supplies and services; and accounts of state treasurers, county sheriffs, receivers of Continental taxes, and Continental loan officers. The records date from the period 1776-1830, and most include only a notation of the year. They are listed below by account type (thereunder chronologically) and referencing the stamped page number. The returns and after-returns

were gathered in compliance with "An Act for making compensation to the troops of this State, in the service of the United States, for the Depreciation of their pay" and were used to distribute depreciation notes (*Acts of the Fifth General Assembly of the State of New Jersey*, chap. 11, p. 32, 1781; for further information see the series: *Department of Treasury/ State Treasurer's Office/ Accounts and Receipts for Payments on Revolutionary War Depreciation Notes*). **NOTE:** The portions of this volume which document military service or contributions of services or supplies are indexed in the Revolutionary War service cards and slips. The remaining portions of the volumes are not. Also, the last several dozen pages of this volume were unused and have been discarded.

Book B As mentioned above, this volume was originally referred to as Ledger A. It was used to audit a wide variety of accounts of state and county officials from the period 1776-1799. Some were reviewed and settled by state auditors James Ewing or Aaron Dunham; others were settled by a joint committee of the legislature. The accounts are cited in the **Contents** list below by account type, and are thereunder alphabetically by official's name. In general, they identify sources of funding and give a brief description of expenditures. Certain accounts, however, provide more detailed information. Militia payroll abstracts, for example, provide the names of officers collecting the militia pay. Clothier and supply records often include specific lists of the materials purchased and to whom they were delivered. Accounts of forfeited estates list former owners and the value of property being sold. And lastly, sheriffs' accounts list the names of those fined and their offenses. **NOTE:** The portions of this volume which document military service or contributions of services or supplies are indexed in the Revolutionary War Service cards and slips. The remaining portions of the volumes are not.

Book C This volume appears to have been used to record monies owed by the United States government to the State of New Jersey for supplying and paying Revolutionary War troops. The first section (pages 1-5) is an account against the United States for payments made to the militia by county and company paymasters for the period 1776-1779. The second section (pages 9-68) is an account of bounty, subsistence, mileage and cash paid to the Jersey Brigade for the period 1 July 1776 to 3 March 1781. **NOTE:** This volume is indexed by the Revolutionary War service cards and slips. The majority of the pages, however, were not used and the blank pages have been discarded.

Item 1 This small booklet contains notes which question aspects of the accounts in Book B. In general, the entries note whose account is being reviewed followed by questions or comments about certain information.

Item 2 The first section of this small booklet, "Names of Persons, who have not accounted with the sums they have to account for," duplicates some of the information found in Book B. It includes a table of contents which provides the official's name and the (handwritten) number of the page on which his account is found. The second section is entitled "Accounts of Public Sales made of the Estates of Fugitives of the County of Sussex by Isaac Martin and Samuel Meeker by order of the Commissioners." These accounts cover the period 1777-1779 and include the name of the fugitive, date of sale, item sold, buyer's name and price paid. **NOTE:** The back page of this booklet is labeled "Continental & Militia Officers, Payment and Service, 1775-1783." It is assumed that this notation refers to the accounts of monies received by various paymasters recorded in the first part of the book. The accounts do not provide lists of soldiers being paid.

Item 3 This manuscript contains two audited accounts. The first, "Account of Notes Issued to the Troops of this State in the service of the United States for the Depreciation of their pay," is an abstract of information from the "Return" section of Book A. The second is entitled "Account of Notes issued by the Commissioners of the Several Counties of this State in the Service of the United States," and includes summary information about the total amount of "indents" issued by county commissioners (for further information on "indents" see the series: *Department of Treasury/ State Treasurer's Office/ Receipts and Registers for Interest Paid on Revolutionary War Militia Indents, 1787-1796*). Both of these accounts were audited by Aaron Dunham on 1 October 1786. (There are two copies of the manuscript.)

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Created April 2004

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