

Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements & Rosters

Petition of John Ball VAS1841

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Transcribed by Will Graves

4/6/15

[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](#)] Richmond City Legislative Papers

To the honorable the general Assembly of Virginia

The petition of John Ball late of St. Eustatius, merchant, but now of St. Thomas, in behalf of himself and Hunter Banks and company of the town of Richmond merchants, and of John Kendall, and the said Hunter Banks & Co., humbly sheweth:

That your Petitioners, Ball, Hunter Banks & co. were on the 4th day of March in the Year 1781, owners of the ship *Renown*, and your petitioners Kendall, Hunter Banks & Co. of the Brigantine, *Willing Lass*; that the said ship was then in Port in James River within this Commonwealth, commanded by Capt. William Lewis, loaded with one hundred eighty-three hogsheads of crop tobacco, from the warehouses of Shockoes and Byrd & mounting twenty guns, Provided with a considerable quantity of good muskets, ammunition, and stores, equipped for sea, according to the inventory hereto annexed¹, and destined originally to St. Eustatius, but afterwards to France, when the capture of that island was announced: That the said Brigantine also at that time was riding at anchor in James River, commanded by Thomas Williams loaded with one hundred eighty hogsheads of crop tobacco from the warehouses at Richmond, mounting four six and eight four pound carriage guns, Provided with good muskets, ammunition and stores, equipped for sea, according to the inventory hereto annexed, and destined originally for St. Eustatius, but afterwards to France upon the arrival of the account of the capture of that island: that on the said 4th day of March 1781, Thomas Jefferson Esq. then Governor, meditating a descent upon the Garrison of Portsmouth in conjunction with a French squadron then daily expected, within the capes, issued with the advice of Council of State, an order for engaging voluntarily, or impressing all the armed vessels of private property, which could be immediately collected together with the whole of their equipments, directing them to be employed in the purposes aforesaid: That the said William Lewis and Thomas Williams obeyed the impress made of the said ship and Brigantine and were assured by a letter from Gov. Jefferson dated in Council on the 8th of March 1781, and hereto annexed², that their vessels, and their loading were considered as at the risk of the state, and that a reasonable hire should be paid for the use of the said vessels and their crews: That the said Ship and Brigantine after having been first appraised by order of the Governor were actually employed in public service and with the military view of aforesaid for the space of twenty-six days, to wit, from the said 4th day of January 1781 to the

¹ the referenced inventories are not included among the papers in this file

² likewise not included among the papers in this file

30th day of the same month, in the same year: That during this time it was notorious that the said ship and Brigantine had frequent opportunities of getting out to sea, without danger of capture, since many vessels did actually sail from James River and escaped into the ocean, and afterwards arrived at their destined ports in safety, and since the British cruisers were obliged to confine themselves within Elizabeth River, from an apprehension of the French Naval armament, which remained in the neighborhood of Portsmouth for a considerable time. That on the said 30th day of March 1781, the said Ship and Brigantine being discharge from public service, could not prosecute their intended voyages, by reason of the derangement which took place in consequence of their having been impressed as aforesaid, and of the arrival of a large British fleet of ships of war in James River: that the said Ship and Brigantine attempted to elude their hostility by preceding up the said River to Osbourne's warehouses, being the highest point of navigation for vessels of their burthen: That the British fleet also moving up the said River and the British lay enforces marching to Osbourne's, the said ship and Brigantine were sometime in April 1781 captured with their rigging, tackle, apparel, furniture and cargo, and were wholly lost to your Petitioners respectively for which loss, they have hitherto received no compensation nor indeed have they as yet obtained any satisfaction for the Services rendered to the Commonwealth; by the said Ship and Brigantine, except a small Sum on account of the wages of the Mariners of the said Ship and a small Sum on account of the wages of the Mariners of the said Brigantine.

The preceding circumstances being considered to wit that the destruction of the Ship and Brigantine aforesaid was obviously and directly occasioned by the delay incurred from the assumption of them into public Service, that the Governor of the Commonwealth insured them at the time of impressing them, and that it is stipulated by the act of the general assembly, which establishes the board of Auditors, that property consumed, lost or destroyed in public service should be paid for by the public, your Petitioner's doubt not, and pray that the honorable the general assembly will give them such relief for the damages which they have sustained in these instances, as justice and equity may require

And your petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray

Ball and Hunter, Banks & Co. their petition

May 28th, 1782

Referred to Propositions