Southern Campaigns American Revolution Pension Statements and Rosters

Pension Application of William Finnie R14175 VA Half Pay Transcribed and annotated by C. Leon Harris. Revised 24 Apr 2015.

[The following are from bounty-warrant files in the Library of Virginia.]

In the House of Delegates 10th Nov'r 1784

Resolved that the petition of William Finnie late deputy Quarter master General, praying that he may be allowed the same bounty in lands, as is by law given to a Colonel, serving three years in the continental army, is reasonable,

Test, John Beckley D.H.D.

1784 November 18th

Agreed to by the Senate/ Will Drew C.S. A Copy Test/ John Beckley C.H.D.

The above is a Copy of a resolution of the Gen'l Assembly, in which it appears by the books of this Office 4 warrants issued to Wm Finnie on the 20th Novem'r. 1784 – Viz: – three for 2000 acres each, & one for 6662/3 acres.

Test, C Blagrove Reg'r.

Land Office/ 3rd Feb'y 1810

[From Library of Virginia Legislative Petitions Digital Collection/ Chesterfield County]

To the Hon'ble the Speakers and Members of the Senate and House of Delegates for the Commonwealth of Virginia;

The Memorial of William Finnie humbly represents.

That your Memorialist was appointed Quarter Master General for this State, by the Executive in 1777 and in [the] month of April 1779 in consequence of the considerable encrease of business in the Department, the Board of War granted unto him an additional allowance of Pay with the Rank and privileges of a full Colonel in the Line of the Arm – both of which grants were approved of and confirmed by the Executive

That in complyance with the tenor of [page torn] received from His Excellency Beverly Randolph, you[r Memo]rialist was, with uninterrupted attention; engaged for th[page torn] of two months in the collection of a variety of proofs in favor of divers claims of this Commonwealth upon the United States as well as Authenticating others to the amount of Fifty or Sixty thousand Pounds.

That your memorialist being in considerable advance for the late George Elliott as one of his Deputies, he was induced to take a claim upon the Public for the Amount of which, neither the said Elliott nor his Executors, nor any one else have ever received any compensation – your Memorialist being at this time possessed of the only existing vouch[er] for said claim.

That your Memorialist continued to Act as Quarter Master General from the date of his said Appointment, enjoying all the emoluments, rights and priviledges as Qr. Mr. General and a full Colonel, until the new arrangement of the Department when he Honorably became a Supernumerary Officer.

That for his labours under the requisition of the Governor, he has only received Thirty pounds – a gratification inferior to the importance of his services.

That the claim for the services rendered to his Deputy while in Office, still remains to be discharged.

That your Memorialist is possessed of a variety of documents expressive of his Conduct while in Office, which he will beg leave to lay before your Committee, as well, other Papers to evince the peculiar situation he has been place in and the losses sustained by the manner in which his Public Accounts were adjusted and discharged and which he flatters himself will place the objects of his application in a plain

and effective point of view.

Your Memorialist therefore entreats that his situation and claims may be taken into consideration and that you will be pleased to direct the proper Offi[cers] to grant Certificates, upon the principles of the Law pass[ed] by the General Assembly in the year 1790, agreeable to his established Rank. And to Issue a Warrant in Amou[nt] of the claim discharged by his Assistants and to [page torn] such additional allowance as you may in your [page torn]ments deem him entitled to for [page torn] requisition of the Governor. And your Memorial[ist as] in duty will pray &c.

8th Nov'r. 1791 Ref'd to claims

reasonable as to compensation for documents & referred to Executive – for reconsideration other parts not properly to come under the decision of the State Legislature appearing [undeciphered word] Concur

rep[orte]d 20th 9[?; Nov] 91

[Most of the 122 pages in the federal pension file deal with a legal dispute explained in the following excerpt from a 13-page printed appeal from a decision of the Pension Commissioner, James L. Edwards. Edwards decided that in May 1779 when the Legislature of Virginia provided for half-pay for life to "general officers," they meant only line officers holding the rank of General, and that Finnie was only a staff officer holding the rank of Colonel.]

CLAIM OF COL. WM. FINNIE'S ADMINISTRATOR FOR Half-pay under Act July 5th, 1832.

This Claim is for half-pay, as "Quarter Master General of the Virginia State Line," promised by the act of Virginia Assembly of May 1779, and assumed by Congress in the act of July 5, '32.

The services of Colonel Finnie, are admitted by the late commissioner Edwards, and are undeniable, they being proved by record evidence; but the claim was rejected by Mr. Edwards, on the ground, that it was not provided for, by the act of 5th July, 1832. See his letter. An appeal was taken to the Secretary of the Interior, who. upon the appointment of the present Commissioner, referred the case back for a further investigation.

The present Commissioner suggests some doubts as to the construction of the act of July 5, '32, and also, as to the construction of the act of May, 1779, promising half pay, &c.

The first question to be disposed of is, "whether a "Quarter Master General," is entitled to half-pay under the act of May, 1779? and the second question is, whether, if so entitled, the case is provided for, in the act of July 5th 1832?

Richmond Virginia the 22^d May 1783

Sundry Accounts D'r to IAT

Armv

Warrant to William Oliver for one years interest on a Cert. No 287 in part of the balance of his pay as a Captain Lieut of Art[iller]y State line £3

Warr: to Will Finnie for d[itt]o: No 290 dated this day in full of the balance of his subsistence as a Quarter Master Gen'l of this State 6.3.2

I certify that the foregoing is truly copied from the Specie Journal of 1783 now in this office.

Given under my hand at the Auditors Office Richmond this 17th July 1850

Ro Johnston/ 1st Auditor

THIS TO CERTIFY, That it appears from a list in this office of such Officers and Soldiers of the Virginia State Line as settled their accounts and received certificates for the balance of their Full Pay, according to an act of assembly, passed the November session 1781, directing the Auditors of Public Accounts to settle and adjust the pay and accounts of the said Officers and Soldiers from the 1st January 1777 to 31st December 1781, (see Hening's Statutes at Large, vol. 10, p. 462,) that a settlement was

made on the eighth day of May 1783 in the name of William Finnie as Quarter Master Gen'l and evidence of the indebtedness of the State to him for £515.1.6 delivered to himself but as the original settlements or copies thereof are not to be found in this office, the term of service embraced therein cannot be stated.

Given under my hand at the First Auditor's Office, Richmond, this 17th day of July 1850 Ro Johnston/ 1st Auditor

NOTES:

On 20 Dec 1830 it was certified that Richard H. Chamberlayne was the only legal heir of Col. William Finnie.

On 27 Feb 1850 Richard G. Broughton, one of the Editors of the Norfolk *Herald*, certified that an obituary published in that newspaper stated that William Finnie's died on 18 Oct 1804 at age 64.

The following was transcribed and annotated by F A Weyler

State of Virginia, City of Norfolk, to wit:

Know all men by these presents that I, Richard H Chamberlaine, of the said city, administrator of Colonel William Finnee deceased, formerly Quarter Master General in the Virginia State Line during the war of the Revolution, do hereby constitute and appoint Peter P. Mayo of the said city, my true and lawful agent and attorney in fact for me and in my name and head & behalf, as administrator of the said William Finnie deceased, to ask for, prosecute, and receive, any and all sum or sums of money due to or coming to me as administrator of the said Colonel William Finnie arising out of or resulting from the services of the said William Finnie as an officer in the Virginia State Line during the war of the revolution, whether the said services were rendered in the capacity of Quarter Master General, as in any other capacity, and whether the said money be due for the Half Pay or for commutation, and interest, or for any other cause, by whatever name it may be called or known. And it being fully my wish and intention to make this power of attorney as broad and as comprehensive as it is possible to be, so as to cover every demand that I have, or can have, as the administrator of said Colonel William Finnie upon the Government of the United States, or of the State of Virginia, and to authorize the said Peter P. Mayo to receive the same. I do hereby declare that this power of attorney shall be so deemed, construed, and taken, as to support and sustain him in any demand that he may [p3] make in my name, as the administrator of the said Colonel William Finnie deceased.

And I do hereby authorize the said Peter P. Mayo to appoint a substitute to act under him fully, and to every extent in the premises, and bind myself by these presents to ratify, confirm, and fully abide by whatever my said attorney or his substituted attorney, may do or cause to be done in my name in the premises and especially to grant all receipts or other necessary papers that he or his substitute may think proper to me.

In witness whereof I hereto set my hand and affix my seal this 26th day of February 1850.

R. H. Chamberlaine Adm^r of Colo Wm Fennie dec^d

Attest:

S.C. Whitehead
A. Tunstall
[routine certification
N.C.Whitehead, JP
John Williams, clerk of hastings court

[The 122 page file has records to prove that William Finnie was Quarter Master General of the Virginia militia and of the Continental Southern Army. A protracted case argued in the War Department, the

Department of Interior, and in the press was over the rank and thus the appropriate amount of pay due to the heirs of William Finnie.

Four Bounty Land Warrants to Finnie are mentioned totaling 6666 2/3 acres. No result of the case for his half pay or commutation is shown.]