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Institutional History

During the revolutionary war, the system for provisioning the Continental army was almost continually reorganized as Congress sought to ameliorate chronic shortages through administrative rearrangements. The following account briefly summarizes the history of the army's procurement system, concentrating on those periods for which the archives' holdings are most complete. For more information consult the attached bibliography and the archives' research file pertaining to this collection.

As a first step in organizing a supply apparatus, the Continental Congress created the offices of the Quartermaster General and the Commissary General on June 16, 1775. The Quartermaster General was responsible for transporting and delivering supplies, establishing the order of battle, regulating the marches and arranging camps. The Commissary General, on the other hand, was responsible for procuring food. Because of their dependency on one another they often overlapped in performing their duties.

In August 1777, following a period in which the army suffered severe shortages, Congress expanded the Commissary General's department to include two new positions: a Commissary of Purchase and a Commissary of Issues. When the army moved from Brandywine to Germantown in September 1777, the Commissary of Issues established temporary magazines along the route, giving orders for the Quartermasters to issue several days provisions to the men. Congress eliminated the use of regular soldiers as wagoners in the Quartermaster's department in 1778, in an attempt to save money. Instead, the Quartermaster General enlisted a special corps of wagoners as he needed them.

When shortages in army provisions continued to prevail, Congress appointed a supervisory board to oversee the two departments in November 1778. A resulting reorganization, finally adopted in November 1779, required the Commissary General to estimate the amount of provisions the army would need for the following year. He then divided the estimate between the states and required each state to furnish their quota of the needed provisions. The issuing section of the department was completely eliminated, leaving the Commissary General with one assistant at the department's headquarters and one assistant to deal with the states who refused to furnish their quotas.

The reorganization of the Quartermaster General's department occurred somewhat later, in January 1780. Congress appointed one assistant for the Quartermaster General, and the Quartermaster General appointed one deputy for the main army, one deputy for each separate army and one deputy for each state (when necessary).

The new system proved no more efficient than the previous ones. On February 20, 1781, Congress, in the process of its own reorganization, appointed Robert Morris as the executive head of the Treasury Department. In an effort to consolidate responsibility and improve the government's financial condition, Morris was also appointed to oversee the supply of provisions to the army. By the end of 1781, Morris had instituted a system using contractors to procure supplies. Under this arrangement, individuals signed agreements in which they promised to purchase and deliver

provisions to specific places for the following year. The existing Commissaries and Quartermasters retained their official titles, but in actuality, they simply served as some of Morris's many private contractors. The consolidation which Morris provided solved the problems of inefficient bureaucracy in the two departments. For the remainder of the war, the army's provisions were more satisfactory.

Table of Quartermaster and Commissary Generals

Quartermaster Generals

Thomas Mifflin	September 1775 - June 1776
Stephen Moylan	June 1776 - October 1776
Thomas Mifflin	October 1776 - October 1777
[vacancy]	October 1777 - March 1778
Nathaniel Greene	March 1778 - August 1780
Timothy Pickering	August 1780 - 1785

Commissary Generals

Joseph Trumbull	July 1775 - August 1777
William Buchanan	August 1777 - March 1778
Jeremiah Wadsworth	April 1778 - December 1779
Ephraim Blaine	December 1779 - 1783

Bibliography

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Hatch, Louis, C. The Administration of the American Revolutionary Army, New York:

Longmans, Green, and Company, 1904.

Johnson, Victor L. The Administration of the American Commissariat During the Revolutionary War.

Philadelphia, 1941.

Moore Furman papers. (Deputy Quartermaster General, 1778-1780). New Jersey State Archives.

Svejda, George J. Quartering, Disciplining, and Supplying the Army at Morristown, 1779-1780.

Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1970.

Content Note

The records that follow, which span the period from 1776 to 1789, were assembled from various sources by the nineteenth century Adjutant General William S. Stryker. The collection includes account books from the Quartermasters, Commissaries and other smaller departments, as well as contractor's records. The account books assume a variety of forms, reflecting different stages in the evolution of the Continental Army's organization. The first set of account books consists of commissaries' lists of stores and provisions received, issued and on hand at Pottsgrove, Middletown and Newtown, Pennsylvania, where provisions such as beef, pork, flour and salt were collected, stored and issued. These accounts span the period from September 1777, when Washington's army moved to Valley Forge, to July 1778. It was a period of transition in the Commissary's department and chaos in the Quartermaster's department.

The second set of accounts, dating from 1780, lists the stores delivered to the various regiments of the Jersey Brigade. During this period, the new system of state quotas had just been instituted. Consequently, New Jersey supplied its own regiments and submitted the accounts to the Commissary General's Department as a part of fulfilling the state quota.

The next set consists of contractor's records for the years 1780 to 1782. All of the contractors included worked in the state of New Jersey. Their records contain certificates issued for forage and provisions, expense accounts and

receipts. By 1781, Morris had instituted the system of contractors for supplying the army. Most of these records, however, are of contractors who worked for the state of New Jersey when the state quota system remained intact.

The collection further contains records of the Wagonmaster General, who worked under the Quartermaster General's department. The records date from 1778-1780, a period when wagoners no longer served as members of the regular army but instead were hired or impressed as their services were needed.

The final major account book lists clothing purchased by the State of New Jersey in the winter of 1776 and 1777. The purchase of clothing was arranged independent of both the Commissary and Quartermaster General departments.

More on the miscellaneous side, the collection includes various certificates, receipts, and accounts, most of which relate to the Quartermaster General's activities, dating from July 1778 to December 1781.

Finally, the collection holds a number of registers of certificates from the commissary, quartermaster, hospital, marine and clothing departments. These registers were compiled after the war, in 1786-87, as both state and federal governments sought to consolidate wartime debts. They list the number, amount and date of each certificate issued, as well as the names of the issuer and receiver. Although they technically belong with Treasury Department records, they have been included here because they list expenditures that were solely military in nature. All names appearing on Commissary and Quartermaster department registers have been indexed in the Archives' Revolutionary War card file.

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Box 1

Commissary Account Books of Provisions and Stores Issued and Received

1. Issues book of Newtown magazine, September-December, 1777.
2. Issues book of Pottsgrove and Middletown [Pennsylvania] magazines, January-July, 1778.
3. Issues book of Jacob Anderson, Pottsgrove and Middletown magazines, 1778 (duplicate of information in above account book with additional monthly summaries).
4. Account book of provisions and stores received, Pottsgrove and Middletown magazines, February-July, 1778.
5. See Map Case folder.

Account Books of the Jersey Brigade

6. Account book of state stores delivered to the 1st-4th Regiments, [January-July?] 1780.
7. Account book of state stores delivered to the 1st-4th Regiments, August-December 2, 1780.
8. See Box 3 [Oversize]

Wagonmaster General Accounts

9. Enlistment of Daniel Bartholomew as a wagoner for three months, Continental army, July 13, 1778.
10. Account book, March-July 1780.

Account Book of Clothing Purchased

11. Account book of clothing purchased, November 1776-December, 1777.

Contractors' Records

Peter Dumont, contractor for Somerset County:

12. Account of cash paid by Peter Dumont.

Cornelius Ludlow, contractor for Morris County:

13. Certificates for forage and provisions sold January 20-June 30, 1780, [nos. 1-10].
14. Certificates for forage and provisions sold January 20-June 30, 1780, [nos. 11-20].
15. Certificates for forage and provisions sold January 20-June 30, 1780, [nos. 21-30].
16. Certificates for forage and provisions sold January 20-June 30, 1780, [nos. 31-40].
17. Certificates for forage and provisions sold January 20-June 30, 1780, [nos. 41-50].
18. Certificates for forage and provisions sold January 20-June 30, 1780, [nos. 51-60].
19. Certificates for forage and provisions sold January 20-June 30, 1780, [nos. 61-72].
20. Receipts from Cornelius Ludlow for provisions delivered for the Army, February-May, 1780, [4 items].
21. Account of expenses for carting by Cornelius Ludlow, with receipts 3-17, February 20-May 29, 1780.
22. Account of cash disbursed by Cornelius Ludlow, March 28-June [?] 1780, [page 3 only]; with receipts 1-4, 6-16, [16 items].
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24. Remarks on Cornelius Ludlow's accounts, 1780.
25. Account of Cornelius Ludlow for expenses; certificates 3-5, [1781].

Joseph Inslee, contractor for Hunterdon County:

26. Account book of cash received and paid by Joseph Inslee, 1780-1782.

Theophilus Elmer, contractor for Cumberland County:

27. Certificates and receipts issued by Theophilus Elmer, 1780-1781.
28. Expense account and receipts of Theophilus Elmer for driving cattle from Cumberland County to Trenton, 1781, [11 items].
29. Expense account of Theophilus Elmer with the State of New Jersey, for driving cattle from Cumberland County to Trenton, November 6-14, 1781; receipts, [12 items].

Miscellaneous Receipts and Certificates

30. Account of Lewis Pintard with Luke Quick, [1778].
31. Receipt of William Hight to David Olden, of payment for carting wood, September 8, 1779.
32. Forage Certificates, 1779-1780, [4 items].
33. Account of grain delivered and ground at Daniel Carmichael's Mill, January 9, 1780.
34. Receipt of Thomas Yard to Moore Fruman, June 3, 1780.
35. Certificate for carting, Garret Schanck, Jr., September 23, 1780.
36. Stubs #387 and #388 from certificates issued by Daniel Marsh [Quartermaster at Rahway], October 2, 1780.
37. Receipts for forage, 1781.
38. Contractor's receipt issued by Abraham Sayre, receiver, October 29, 1781.
39. Receipt of the State of New Jersey to David Brant for hay delivered to state troops at Rahway, December 17, 1781.

Box 2

Registers of Certificates Received Into the Treasury

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40. Account book of certificates in the Purchasing Commissary General's Department received into the New Jersey State Treasury, July 19, 1787.
41. Account book of certificates in the Purchasing Commissary General's Department received into the New Jersey State Treasury, August 7, 1787.

Quartermaster General Department certificates:

42. Account book 'A'.
43. Account book '1', vouchers #1-1277.
44. Account book '2', vouchers # 1278-4080.
45. Duplicate of account book '2', vouchers #3334-3990.

Certificates issued by Benjamin Walker, Commissioner for Marine, Clothing and Hospital Departments:

46. Register of certificates issued by Benjamin Walker, Commissioner for the Marine Department, September 13, 1786 - September 24, 1788, nos. 247-928, 119-126; Return of certificates issued by Benjamin Walker, Commissioner for clothing department, May 24, 1786 - December 31, 1787, nos. 1-105.
47. Register of certificates issued by Benjamin Walker, Commissioner of Hospital Department, October 16, 1786 - June 13, 1787, nos. 100-166.

Miscellaneous Documents

48. Appraisal of gun lost by Noah Chamberlin, May 30, 1776.
49. Appraisal of a gun, bayonet, lost by Jesse Titus in service on Long Island, May 30, 1776.
50. Returns of Col. McDougal's Regiment, July 10, 1776.
51. Parole of honor of Michael Kearney, July 13, 1776.
52. Eyewitness account of a naval battle on Delaware River and the capture of Philadelphia, 1776-1778, [orig. & copy].
53. List of officers of 4th Battalion of Jersey arranged in companies, February 19, 1777.
54. William M. Olin to Edward C. Stokes transferring to the Adjutant General four original muster rolls of John Mott's company, Third Regiment, New Jersey Continental Line, December 21, 1907; William M. Olin to R. Heber Brintnall, December 21, 1907, [2 items].
55. Muster roll of Captain John Mott's company, Third Regiment, New Jersey Continental Line, June 5, 1777 [2 copies].
56. Muster roll of Captain John Mott's company, Third Regiment, New Jersey Continental Line, September 1 - November 1, 1777.
57. Muster roll of Captain John Mott's company, Third Regiment, New Jersey Continental Line, October 31-December 1, 1777.
58. Muster roll of Captain John Mott's company, Third Regiment, New Jersey Continental Line, November 31, 1777 - January 1, 1778.
59. Account of charges for House Room & Stable Room for Col. Baylor's Regiment of Light Dragoons... [1778], (2 copies).
60. Order for the return of officers to the 12th Pennsylvania Regiment, January 6, 1778, [draft of an advertisement].
61. Pay scale for officers of militia after June 2, 1778.
62. British order to ships supplying American prisoners of war, June 19, 1778.
63. Appraisal of a gun lost by Joseph Cadanes Hogeland when he was taken prisoner "at the Liberty Pole" on September 23, 1778.
64. List of houses in Elizabethtown fit for quarters, October 20, 1778.
65. Parole of honor of James Duncan, November 4, 1778.
66. Pay [scale] of the officers, non-commissioned officers and soldiers of the Continental Army, [ca. 1779].
67. Pass issued by Henry Broderick, Aide de Camp, allowing the bearer to proceed to New York, April 20, 1779.
68. Extract of a letter from John Fitch dated July 21, 1779 concerning the situation of the army at and near West Point.
69. Sundry Vessels Sailing, November 1779, captured or lost at sea.
70. "A classed return of Capt. James Green Company," Monmouth County [1780].
71. Appraisal of a gun lost by Richard Jones near Bordentown, sworn February 29, 1780.
72. State of the land forces of the State of New Jersey, [1780-1782].
73. [Henry Clinton?] to the [New] Jersey Brigade, January, 1781 [copy?].
74. Purchasing Commissary General's department, book 'B', [cover only, N.D.].

75. Mileage rate schedule, [N.D.].
76. Receipt of prisoners, Jacob Hampton and Joseph Oliver, Jr., at Morristown, March 20, 1781.
77. Statement of Joseph Brearly, certifying that Caleb Stout, serving in the Second Regiment, New Jersey Continental Line, did not receive any pay since May 7, 1776 when he was taken prisoner, May 25, 1781.
78. Payroll of the Canadian Old Regiment in the service of the United States... [1782].
79. List of questions concerning American troop positions and strengths, [N.D.].
80. Order of March from Camp at Valley Forge to Newburg on the North River opposite Fish Kiln, [N.D.].
81. Plan for cantoning the troops for the winter, [N.D.].
82. See Box 3 [Oversize]
83. Return of detachment detailed from the New Jersey militia, [N.D.].
84. Return of the Second Regiment [N.D.] [copy]
85. A subsistence roll in full of the men that were enlisted by Daniel Coe and had no opportunity to serve, [N.D.].
86. Pay scale for militiamen and officers, [N.D.].
87. Miscellaneous military records, [2 items].
88. Extract of a letter from Ebenezer Hazard to President of Congress, June 19, 1779.

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8. Return of commissary supplies [on hand?] in the 1st and 2nd Regiments [N.D.]
23. Accounts of Cornelius Ludlow with the State of New Jersey, June, 1780.
82. Return of Captain [?] Coles Company and Captain [?] Brooks Company [Sussex County ?, N.D.]

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5. Account book of provisions received and issued for Northern Department [upstate New York], Continental Army, April 1780.

Reel Listing - REVOLUTIONARY WAR

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If you have any questions about the information in this collection guide, please contact njarchives@sos.state.nj.us