

OF CONSIDERABLE RARITY:
A LETTER SIGNED BY TWO BLACK CONTINENTAL SOLDIERS

14. AMERICAN REVOLUTION - BLACK SOLDIERS

Letter Signed by Continental Army soldiers William Wellman, Sherry Read, William Sowers, and Cato Wilborough (the latter three with marks); folio, Camp Highlands (N.Y.), July 22, 1782. Also signed twice by Lt. Col. EBENEZER GRAY as Commanding Officer of the Fourth Connecticut Regiment. To the "Paytable" Committee.

The four Continental privates have requested that pay due to them be delivered to Miles Cook, also of the Fourth Connecticut, who has written a note on the verso assigning the duty to another man. It was common for one person to represent a number of soldiers seeking their pay in Hartford. *"Please to deliver to the Bearer...all the Ballance found due to us Soldiers whose names are underwritten at the Settlement...for service done in the 4th Connt. Regiment, Continental Army, from the 1st day of January one Thousand Seven hundred & Eighty, to the first day of January one thousand Seven hundred & Eighty two being two years..."*

Colonel Gray has signed attesting the signatures, and again certifying that the four soldiers were and continued to be in service. The Record of Connecticut Men...in the War of the Revolution shows all four men to have been members of the Fourth Connecticut.

Cato Wilbourough was clearly the black soldier from Durham, Conn., identified (with various spellings) by all the authorities on the subject (Thomas T. Moebs: Black Soldiers Black Sailors Black Ink; David O. White: Connecticut's Black Soldiers 1775-1783; and Debra L. Newman: List of Black Servicemen Compiled From The War Department Collection Of Revolutionary War Records). William (or Bill) Sowers of Milford is similarly identified. Both of these men served in the African-American unit, the 2nd Company of the 4th Regiment, for the period for which they were to be paid. Receipts are usual on such requests but there is no evidence on this paper of the eventual disposition.

The widespread interest has impelled research that has identified a number of Revolutionary War papers proving the service of black soldiers but anything actually signed by those men - even with marks - is very scarce. In fine condition. 3500.00

Camp Highlands July 22 1782

Gentlemen

Please to deliver the Brevet Miles Cook or his Order with the discharge found due to said Cook as he has been recommended at the Settlement with the Committee of the Council since for service done in the ~~1st~~ 11th Cont. Regiment, Continental Army from the 1st day of January one thousand seven hundred & Eighty to the 1st day of January one thousand seven hundred & Eighty two being the two years -

Went Gray Lt Col. ^{Witness our hands} Capt Sherry & Read
Honble Committee of the Council ^{mark} Capt & Wilboursong
Pay Table Springfield ^{William Willman}

This my Certify that Capt Wilbrough Sherry, Peter William Willman and William Sawalt was in service in the 11th Cont. Regiment before the 1st day of January 1782 and are now in actual service in the 11th Regiment and sign the above Order in my presence

Went Gray Lt Col Comd
11th Cont Regt

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Numb. 14, 184

Treasury-Office, June 1, A. D. 1780.

THE State of Connecticut doth owe unto *Samuel Johnson* *begin*

Sum of *Twenty four Dollars* *of one falling*

Being one fourth Part of the Balance found due to *him* which Sum shall be paid to *him* or

his Order at this Office in Gold or Silver, or Bills of Credit equivalent thereto, *at* *his* *choice*

on or before the first Day of June, *A. D. One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty* *two* with

Legal Interest thereon from *the* *Day of January* *last* until paid, *which* *interest* *shall*

be paid unto him or his *heirs* *or* *assigns* *at* *the* *same* *Place*, on the first Day of June, if de-

manded, pursuant to an Act of the *General Assembly* held at *Hartford*, the second Thursday

of *May* *last*.

Samuel Johnson Treasurer.

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