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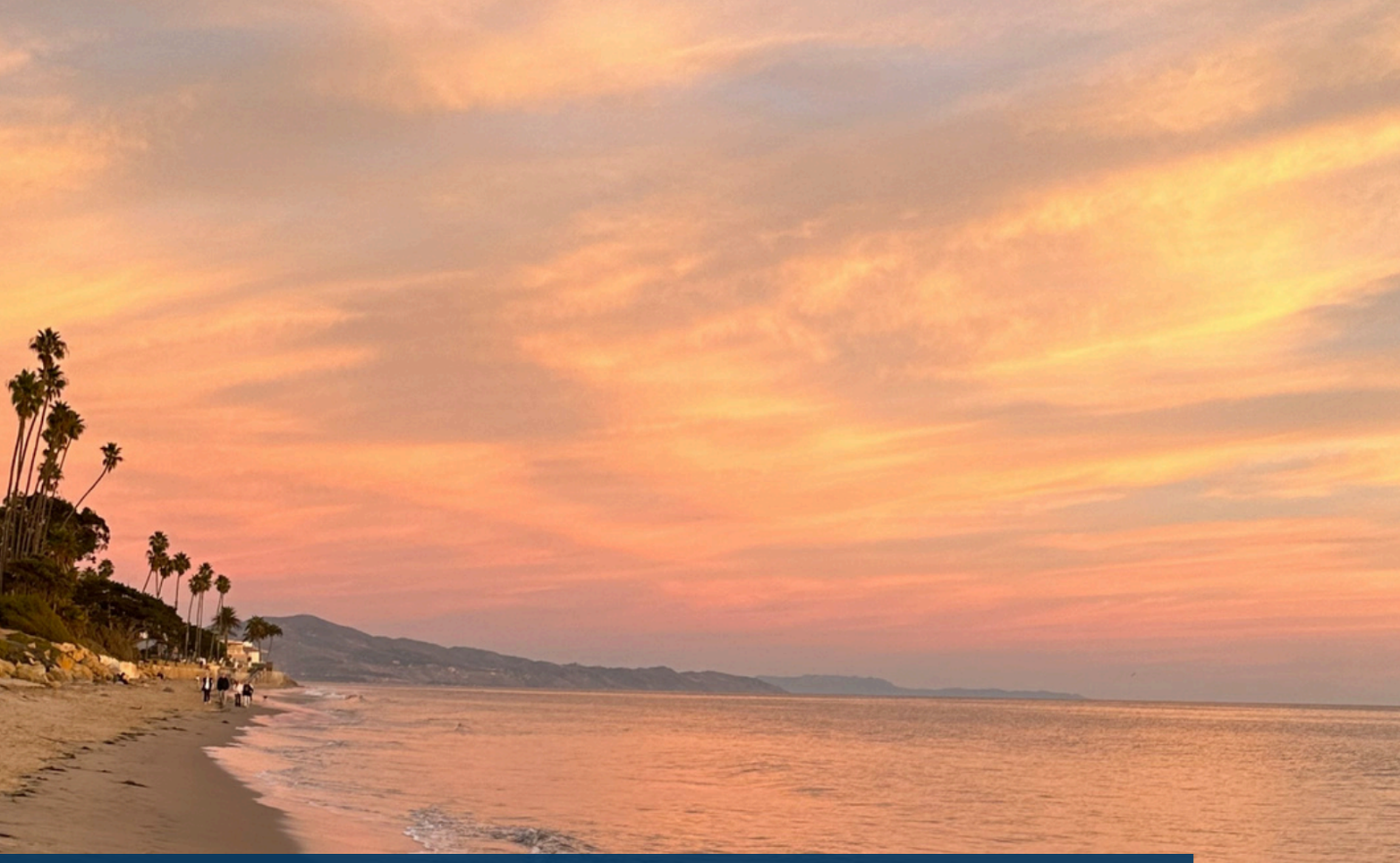
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"Paid to a Forged Order": Counterfeit Continental Pay Orders and Their Impact on Veterans in Early Republic Massachusetts

Joella Shearer[1]

On 4 March 1786, Ephraim Patch approached the Massachusetts House of Representatives in Boston to petition his legislators. His late son, Samuel, had served in the Continental Army, and Patch sought the wages the government owed him as Samuel's heir. The difficulty, however, as Ephraim told the legislature, was that Samuel's wages "had been paid upon a forged order."[2] Apparently, when the elder Patch had tried to collect his son's final army pay, he learned that one William Tucker had already fraudulently collected Samuel's money. In desperation, Patch turned to the Massachusetts legislature for relief.

The legislature formed a committee to respond to Patch's petition and, six months later, issued a resolve granting his request to collect his son's wages. Acknowledging that Patch had been defrauded of his son's final payment, the final line of the resolve read that the wages were to be paid "in the same manner as [they] would have done had not the wages heretofore been paid to William Tucker, on a forged order."[3] An examination of the archival record reveals that Ephraim Patch was not alone in his appeals to the Massachusetts legislature. In fact, his troubles receiving his son's Continental Army wages were shared by at least sixty-two others, and likely more. Between 1783 and 1800, these veterans, widows, and fathers all approached the Massachusetts House of Representatives, "praying for [...] wages which had been paid to a forged order."[4] Some veterans petitioned in groups with others from the same company whose wages had also been paid to forged orders, and several veterans petitioned multiple times.[5] These soldiers shared a unique dilemma: namely, when they had tried to collect their wages after the war, they could not do so; their pay orders had been forged and their money already

[1] Joella Shearer is a Junior at Carleton College, pursuing Bachelor's degrees in History and Cinema and Media Studies. Her historical research focuses on veterans' and modern American history.

[2] 1785-1786 Massachusetts. House Journal for Mar. 4, p. 472, vol. 6.

[3] Resolve CXXXVIIL, Acts and Resolves Passed by the General Court of Massachusetts (Boston: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1787), 90–91. Accessed via America's Historical Imprints.

[4] 1785-1786 Mass. House J. for Feb. 4, vol. 6, p. 369.

[5] 1783-1784 Mass. House J. for Feb. 20, vol. 4, p. 403; 1785-1786 Mass. House J. for Feb. 2, vol. 6, p. 357; 1784-1785 Mass. House J. for Oct. 26, vol. 5 p. 161; 1784-1785 Mass. House J. for Feb. 15, vol. 5, p. 278; 1784-1785 Mass. House J. for Feb. 15, vol. 5, p. 278; 1785-1786 Mass. House J. for June 1, vol. 6, p. 56; 1784-1785 Mass. House J. for Feb. 7, vol. 5, p. 255; 1784-1785 Mass. House J. for Feb. 15, vol. 5, p. 278; 1785-1786 Mass. House J. for Nov. 28, vol. 6, p. 337; 1784-1785 Mass. House J. for Feb. 16, vol. 5, p. 282; 1785-1786 Mass. House J. for June 1, vol. 6, p. 56.

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distributed to someone else. These widespread forgeries/fraud– an unexpected result of an unstable economy and high rates of counterfeiting, proved devastating for struggling veterans.

The epidemic of forged orders spanned two decades, multiple states, dozens of veterans, and thousands of dollars' worth of fraud. The first veteran to petition for his wages was Edward Lawrence in May 1783.[6] The last action by the Massachusetts House of Representatives granting wages was in January 1800, to one Amos Smith.[7] Over these seventeen years, The Massachusetts heard over fifty petitions, representing fifty-eight soldiers from around forty different companies, three widows, and two fathers.[8] Forged pay orders were not isolated to Massachusetts, either; a preliminary search into the records of nearby states shows that soldiers across New England were cheated out of their wages by counterfeiters. As the forgeries were only noticed once the soldier approached the treasury, granting the veterans' petitions meant that the state paid out the wages owed twice: once to the forger, once to the soldier to whom they actually belonged. As a result, Massachusetts spent thousands more dollars compensating soldiers for their service in the Continental Army than had been allocated.

Much academic scholarship has been dedicated to the study of counterfeiting in the Early Republic. However, the impact of such forgery on veterans has largely been left unnoticed, despite the frequency with which these petitions appear in the legislative record. Additionally, pay certificates functioned as legitimate currency in the same manner as specie (hard currency) and banknotes; as such, their forgery is just as concerning and noteworthy as that of other state-issued currencies. This gap is also surprising given the number of petitions to the Massachusetts House of Representatives complaining of forged orders and subsequent legislation on the matter, as well as the existence of newspaper features declaring notes known to be forged and advertising the reward for identifying the criminals in question.[9] While counterfeit pay certificates were not experienced by a majority of Massachusetts veterans, at least based on the current archival evidence, a significant number of men remained negatively affected. The decision of the Massachusetts House of Representatives to address forged orders through legislation confirms the importance of the matter. The widespread counterfeiting that was endemic to the Early Republic did not simply undermine confidence in the money supply; where the forgery of pay orders was concerned, it had an actual impact on the very

[6] 1783-1784 Mass. House J. for May 30, vol. 4. p. 24.
[7] Resolve LXXXV, Acts and Resolves Passed by the General Court of Massachusetts (Boston: Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1800), 45. Accessed via America's Historical Imprints.
[8] 1783-1784 Mass. House J., vol. 4; 1784-1785 Mass. House J., vol. 5; 1785-1786 Mass. House J., vol. 6.
[9] "In the House of Representatives, March 14, 1785," *Continental Journal, and Weekly Advertiser*, February 9, 1786, America's Historical Newspapers; "Advertisement," *Independent Chronicle*, March 22, 1792, America's Historical Newspapers; "Advertisement," *Eastern Herald*, July 27, 1783, America's Historical Newspapers; "Advertisement," *Columbian Centinel*, December 2, 1795, America's Historical Newspapers.

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veterans who most needed the new country's funds. Though the sums owed varied, this money was vital to the livelihoods of these soldiers, many of whom never escaped financial destitution. Even in the 1810s and 1820s, veterans who applied for their pensions spoke of the extreme poverty in which they lived.[10] The counterfeiting they experienced was not a victimless crime and these veterans suffered for the loss, even if it was temporary, of their wages.

The victims' identities as soldiers are emphasized in the very text of the petitions; each one either labels the petitioner as a soldier ("A Petition from Edward Lawrence, a Soldier"[11]) or specifies that the wages are owed for service in the Continental Army. Such identification sets the petitioners apart as a specific class of American, one which had given life and limb in service of the new republic. That the Massachusetts House of Representatives saw fit to highlight the men's occupation as soldiers demonstrates the value that such a label had to the state, and likely contributed to the House's speed and generosity in returning the soldiers' payments to them. This paper illustrates the process of such forgeries, and demonstrates the impact of this epidemic of counterfeiting on these Americans, whose plight has been largely ignored in favor of a focus on the criminals and counterfeits themselves.

Previous scholarship on forged compensation for veterans falls mostly into two realms of research: that of paper money and certificates in the Early Republic and that of counterfeiting. While historians have certainly studied the details of veterans' compensation after the Revolutionary War, the problem of forged orders in particular, due to its dual nature as a currency and counterfeiting issue, appears to have gone unnoticed. Several historians' work on the use and circulation of paper money and certificates in post-Revolution America has proved particularly useful in identifying the economic systems at play in establishing and exchanging forms of payment. These include James E. Ferguson's book *The Power of the Purse: A History of American Public Finance, 1776-1790*,[12] and Woody Holton's texts "From the Labours of Others: The War Bonds Controversy and the Origins of the Constitution in New England"[13] and *Liberty is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution*.[14] Ferguson and Holton discuss systems of payment in the Continental Army and the varieties of Early Republic currency, as well as the general state of the economy in the second half of the eighteenth century. In

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[10] Ezekiel Averill, Pension Application, 1819, *Case Files of Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Applications Based on Revolutionary War Service*, compiled ca. 1800 - ca. 1912, documenting the period ca. 1775 - ca. 1900. (NARA Record Group 15, M804, Catalog ID 300022), Fold3.

[11] 1783-1784 Mass. House J. for May 30, at 24, vol. 4.

[12] James E. Ferguson, *The Power of the Purse: A History of American Public Finance* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

[13] Woody Holton, "'From the Labours of Others': The War Bonds Controversy and the Origins of the Constitution in New England," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2004): pp. 271–316.

[14] Woody Holton, *Liberty is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 2022)

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doing so, they establish the instability and fluidity of currency in the period. Books and articles published by Kenneth Scott and Stephen Mihm delve into the methods, motivations, and networks of counterfeiting in colonial America and the Early Republic.[15] They conclude that the many types of currency and high levels of inflation provided openings for banknote, specie, and certificate forgeries. Further, they describe the conflicting responses to forgery from the state and the general public, the former of which treated counterfeiting as a serious offense deserving of harsh punishment and the latter of which saw forgery as a largely victimless crime. Finally, Woody Holton's *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution*, John Phillips Resch's *Suffering Soldiers: Revolutionary War Veterans, Moral Sentiment, and Political Culture in the Early Republic*, and Gary B. Nash's *The Unknown American Revolution: the Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America* discuss the plight of soldiers returning from the American Revolution.[16] These authors note that—as a result of the poor conditions in the Continental Army, a weakened economy, low and irregular payments, and physical/mental trauma—veterans were at a disadvantage to their peers. Indeed, many lived in poverty for decades after their service was complete. However, informative as all these works are, such scholarship does not make mention of the forgery of Continental pay orders. As such, the research presented in this paper fills a gap in the intersection of counterfeiting, currency, and veterans' affairs in the Early Republic.

While the counterfeiting of banknotes, which Kenneth Scott and Stephen Mihm focus on, and that of pay certificates are similar in many ways, there remain important distinctions between the two that have clear implications for the forgery of Continental pay orders. Mihm writes that colonists typically displayed ambivalence towards the work of counterfeiters, in that "most did not view counterfeiting as a threat so much as as harmless activity, if not a beneficial one."[17] For many, counterfeiters even strengthened the economy by increasing the amount of currency in circulation and providing opportunities for economic participation from otherwise impoverished individuals. The

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[15] Kenneth Scott, *Counterfeiting in Colonial America* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000); Kenneth Scott, "Counterfeiting in Colonial New York," *Numismatic Notes and Monographs*, no. 127 (1953); Kenneth Scott, "Counterfeiting in Colonial Connecticut," *Numismatic Notes and Monographs*, no. 140 (1957); Stephen Mihm, "The Alchemy of the Self: Stephen Burroughs and the Counterfeit Economy of the Early Republic," *Early American Studies* 2, no. 1 (2004); Stephen Mihm, *A Nation of Counterfeiters: Capitalists, Con Men, and the Making of the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

[16]Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2007); John Phillips Resch, *Suffering Soldiers: Revolutionary War Veterans, Moral Sentiment, and Political Culture in the Early Republic* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1999); Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America* (New York, NY: Viking, 2005).

[17] Mihm, *A Nation of Counterfeiters*, p. 34.

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entities actually victimized by banknote forgery were banks and businesses, both of which were already commonly viewed unfavorably by the public. Such conceptions of counterfeit banknotes lie in contrast with the reality of forged pay orders; rather than increasing the amount of money in circulation and benefiting the popular classes, counterfeit pay orders meant the loss of income for an already vulnerable group of Americans. Acknowledging that these forgeries had obvious and sympathetic victims meant a shift in public conceptions of crimes of counterfeiting and often resulted in more effective government responses to petitioners' complaints.

In the *Journals of the Massachusetts House of Representatives* between 1783 and 1786 are forty-nine petitions from veterans and their families, "praying relief" for wages paid to forged orders. In the *Resolves of the General Court of Massachusetts* are nearly thirty accounts of action taken by the Massachusetts House in favor of soldiers who fell victim to these forgeries. It is also possible that more such documents will come to light. Further exploration of the individuals named finds them mentioned in Massachusetts newspapers and notices printed by the General Court. These papers notified the public of the circulation of forged orders and documented the legislative attempts to remedy the issue. Much of the argument made in this paper is based upon the evidence found in these materials, with support from additional primary documents and secondary scholarship.

But before this subject of forged orders can be addressed, several points regarding the Early Republic economy and veterans' affairs must be made clear. First, currency was highly unstable and fluid following the war. Several different forms of payment circulated, and while paper money and specie certainly existed, they were not commonly seen as particularly useful currencies. The former had become extremely devalued as a result of high levels of minting and severe inflation during the Revolutionary War, and the latter was for the most part unavailable to the new states.[18] The other primary form of currency in the Early Republic was certificates, which included the pay orders under investigation, depreciation certificates, commissary certificates, and land bonds. These certificates were most often issued under the auspices of the Continental Army; as historian Woody Holton writes,

[18] Andrew D. Edwards, "Grenville's Silver Hammer," *Journal of American History* 104, no. 2 (2017): pp. 346-347; Francis Pierrepont Barnard, "Forgery of English Copper Money in the Eighteenth Century," *Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society* 6, (1926): p.359; Mihm, *A Nation of Counterfeiters*, 26. In 1695, the British Parliament had banned the importation of hard currency to the then-colonies. As a result, the only way to acquire specie was through trade, which, too, proved difficult as the colonies imported more money's worth of goods than they exported back to England. Therefore, most of the specie earned flowed directly back to Europe as payment. The requirements of the Stamp Act and other tax legislation, which were required to be paid in specie, greatly exacerbated this already prominent problem of a lack of hard British currency. This specie was accepted as currency in the United States up until 1787, at which point the use of all foreign copper coins was banned.

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"one of the most important mechanisms of war finance was the issuance of bonds, not only to people who provided cash to the government but also to army contractors and soldiers."[19] These documents represented the payment of wages (pay orders), reimbursement to soldiers whose wages in Continental currency had become devalued (depreciation certificates), money owed to citizens whose goods and services were impressed by the Continental Army during the war (commissary certificates), and bonds allocating the land that was distributed as enlistment bonuses to soldiers (land bonds). These certificates could be endorsed in favor of different individuals and in this way were commonly traded as currency themselves.[20] However, the process by which these certificates were acquired and exchanged was not regulated in any way, prompting confusion and disorganization when it came time for the bonds to be redeemed.

Second, an epidemic of counterfeiting emerged in the late 1770s and early 1780s which saw specie, paper money, and certificates forged in untold amounts. In fact, the eighteenth century was known as a golden age of counterfeiting in North America.[21] The dearth of British coins, and their high value in the American economy, encouraged colonists to falsify the specie they did have. The oversaturation of paper currency, both as bills and as certificates, made it much easier to create illegal documents. Banks, business owners, and customers were accustomed to using and accepting many different types of currency, often with evolving designs as governments issued new sets of bills. As a result, imperfections or inaccuracies in counterfeit bills went easily unnoticed. While some of this forgery was certainly motivated by poverty, especially among those communities devastated by the destruction left in the revolution's wake, many other perpetrators were compelled by the desire for rapid and substantial economic gain.

These issues of unstable forms of money and high levels of counterfeiting are reflected in the third factor of the Early Republican context: Continental veterans' payment. In order to combat rising inflation and reduce government expenditures on an already expensive war, soldiers in the Continental Army were frequently paid with certificates – the pay orders under examination. To delay the payment of wages until funds could be amassed, the certificates were often not redeemable until a certain period of time had passed. As a result, these pay orders entered the economy as methods of payment and the distribution of Continental Army payment became a chaotic and nonuniform process. Matters were not helped by the fact that payments were often distributed long after they were promised, leaving soldiers without access to the wages that they and their families relied upon.[22] Prior to 1780, organizing and carrying out the payment of soldiers was under the purview of the fledgling federal government. Beginning that year, however, states took on all payments owed to soldiers, as well as compensation

[19] Holton, "From the Labours of Others," p. 272.
[20] Holton, "From the Labours of Others," p. 277.
[21] Barnard, "Forgery of English Copper Money," p. 345.
[22] Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution*, pp. 370-71.

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owed for previous pay given in depreciated currency; this was part of a general transition to the states providing material support for the war, rather than the federal government.[23] While such a maneuver was necessary given the extreme poverty of the Continental Congress, the transition of power created yet another opportunity for instability and confusion in the payment of wages. Currency, counterfeiting, and Continental payments converge in a situation that reflects other aspects of the state in this historical moment. Namely, the relative weakness of the state under the Articles of Confederation to control its economy and properly manage its obligations to those who had just fought for their country. That said, it must be noted that Massachusetts ensured that those veterans who approached the legislature were compensated for their losses. In this way, the forged Continental pay orders found in Massachusetts after the Revolution and the government's response to them further illuminates the tensions between veterans and the state, wherein the state favored military service more than the general public, but was often unable to adequately care for its soldiers and veterans.

The fourth element of the postwar reality, and that which results in forged orders becoming such a pressing issue for former soldiers, is the general vulnerability of veterans as a class. The men most likely to serve as soldiers often came from impoverished backgrounds, eliminating the possibility of financial stability on which to fall back in hard times. Gary B. Nash describes the American Revolution as a "poor man's fight" and notes that what enlisted men had in common was "their youth, their poverty, and their tenuous attachment to any particular community."[24] The declining living conditions in the military and weakening economy in the late 1770s and early 1780s did not help matters: Continental soldiers rarely received their wages on time or in the coveted specie, regiments were plagued by a dearth of supplies, and exorbitant inflation prevented the purchase of goods with what money the soldiers did have. These conditions did not necessarily improve with the war's end. Returning with little money, typically in the form of certificates or paper currency, having lived in poverty and danger for much of their lives, and with scars both physical and mental, America's first veterans came home to a struggling economy. In an attempt to pay back the high debts taken on during the war, Massachusetts implemented high taxes, pushing another financial burden onto veterans.[25] The result was a wide demographic of men who, due to months or years in the Continental Army, lacked the fiscal stability of their peers as well as the economic and, at times, physical capability to move up the economic ladder.

In addition to material woes, veterans also returned to a society that did not conceptualize military service in the same way as Americans have in the past century. John Phillips Resch argues that

[23] Ferguson, *The Power of the Purse*, pp. 48-51.
[24] Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution*, p. 283.; pp. 218-19.
[25] Holton, *Unruly Americans*, p. 29.

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the American Revolution was popularly conceived of as a "people's war,"meaning that the conflict was one both fought and won by ordinary people, rather than a regular army.[26] Furthermore, this concept "reinforced the republican ideal that military service was a citizen's duty and that fighting for the cause of liberty was its own reward."[27] Stemming from negative associations with the British army and assumptions that unsavory individuals congregated in military spaces, the idea of a war fought by all Americans, soldier and civilian, rather than a traditional army, was appealing to the new country. This, in combination with the conception of military service as an obligation of citizenship, lessened societal impulses to laud and care for returning veterans. Pension legislation was not passed until 1818, and then only to veterans who could prove their poverty, and it was not until the early 1800s that the image of the suffering soldier became mobilized to aid veteran populations.[28] In the meantime, many veterans struggled to get by on depreciated currency and certificates awarded in place of their wages. It is within this context that forged pay certificates became a problem with potentially dire consequences.

The crime itself began with Continental soldiers' pay orders. At the end of their service, soldiers were not necessarily given their wages immediately. Rather, Continental paymasters distributed payment certificates to be redeemed in the future. Either depreciation or specie certificates, these pieces of paper essentially served as 'IOUs' to be cashed in at state treasuries once the war had reached its conclusion. They contained the soldier's name, a note number, and the date of issuance. In many cases, soldiers could not immediately exchange these orders for currency. Instead, they were required to wait two to four years before their certificates were eligible to be returned to the treasury.[29] The waiting period between the date of issuance and the date of redemption allowed the government to acquire the necessary funds to pay the bonds out. The certificates also often accumulated interest, both as compensation for the continuing depreciation of Continental currency and because the certificates functioned much as government bonds do today.[30] Though the soldiers were promised their wages, the money was for a period 'on loan' to the government, which then repaid it with interest to the lender, the soldier. In the interim, pay orders joined specie, paper money, and the various other

[26] Resch, *Suffering Soldiers*, p. 2; Colonists were accustomed to the British model of military service and organization, in which a standing army of trained and enlisted soldiers stood ready to enter a conflict at any time. This is in opposition to a militia model, in which men were called up to serve only when they were needed for active duty. Providing housing and regular wages, service in the military often attracted men who were unable to find other employment, promoting stereotypes that the army was full of unsavory individuals. American colonists also associated the British regular army with the oppression and tyranny of the king, as the constant readiness of a trained military created a persistent threat of violence.

[27] Resch, *Suffering Soldiers*, p. 2.

[28] Resch, *Suffering Soldiers*, p. 65.

[29] Resolve XVIII, 1792 Mass. Acts 10, America's Historical Imprints.

[30] Ferguson, *The Power of the Purse*, p. 180.

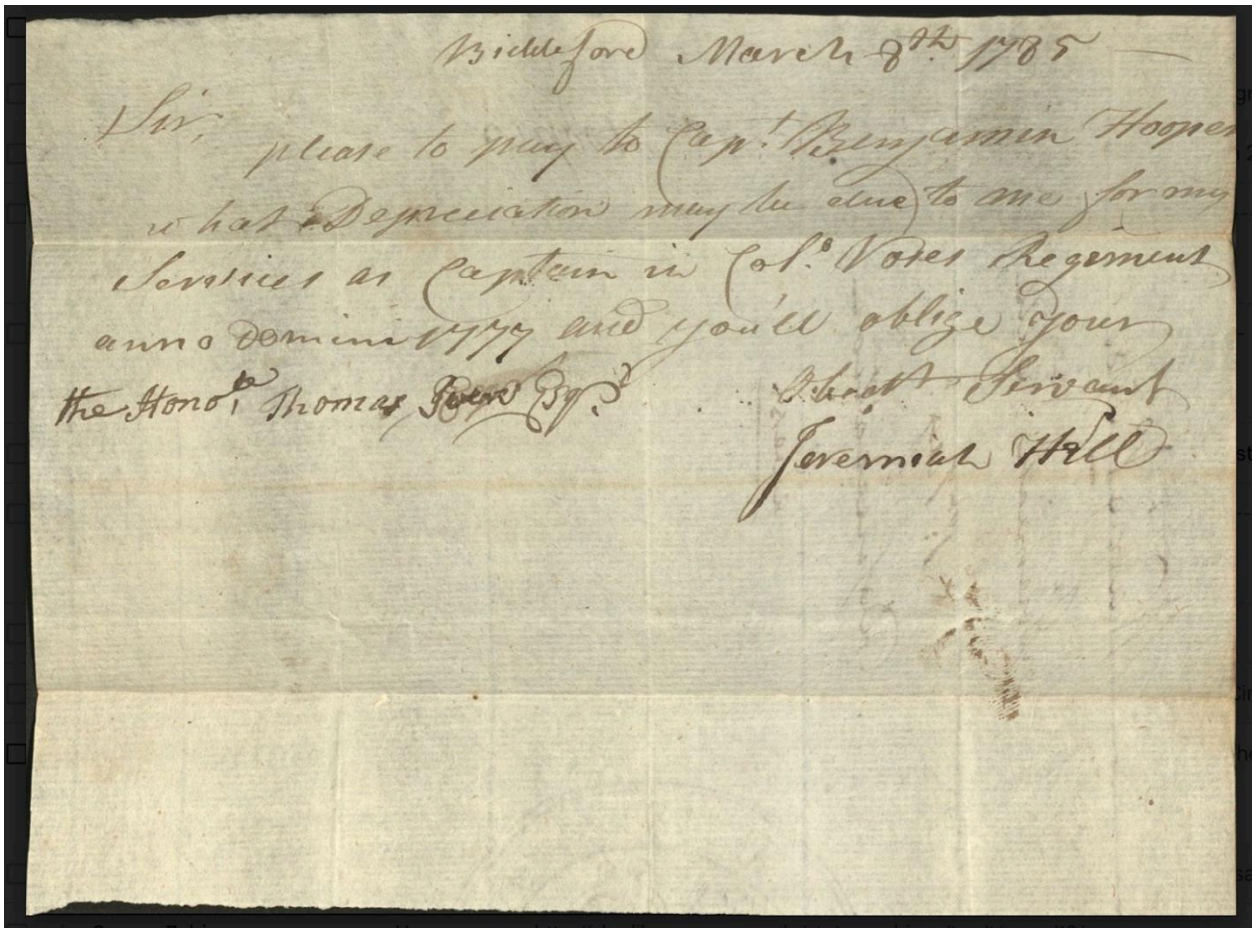
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certificates functioning as legitimate currency in the Early Republic economy. This system of exchange, in addition to the waiting period before pay orders could be redeemed, opened up opportunities for a new type of forgery.

Essential to understanding the exchange and forgery of these certificates is the fact that they could be signed over to another person, similar to how a modern check is endorsed. If a soldier wished for another person to collect his wages, or if he had traded his certificate as currency, then he simply had to write that person's name onto his pay order. Figure 1 is an example of this, showing Jeremiah Hill's authorization for his payment to be collected by Benjamin Hooper: "Please to pay to Capt. Benjamin Hooper what Depreciation may be due to me for my Services as Captain in Col. Voses Regiment ... your Obedient Servant, Jeremiah Hill."[31] When the system of payment functioned as it was intended to, returning veterans could authorize their wages to be picked up by a fellow soldier, relative, or trusted friend. This also allowed them to use their certificates as money, signing over their wages in exchange for goods and services. However, the records would indicate that this method of Continental payment did not in fact function perfectly, particularly so when it came to the collection of wages.

[31] Jeremiah Hill, pay order, 8 March 1785, box 16, folder 1, subseries 2: Treasurer Thomas Ivers, Orders and warrants for depreciation notes for service in the Continental Army, 1780-1789, Massachusetts State Archives.

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Biddeford March 8th 1785

Sir, please to pay to Capt. Benjamin Hooper what Depreciation may be due to me for my Services as Captain in Col. Vose's Regement anno domini 1779 and you'll oblige your

the Hono. Thomas Ivers Esq.

Obedt Servant

Jeremiah Hill

Figure 1. Order for Depreciation Pay to Jeremiah Hill, 1785.[32]

In the example of Ephraim Patch, for instance, the Massachusetts House's decision on the petition states that Samuel's wages had "heretofore been paid to William Tucker, on a forged order."[33] This language, which matches that of other documentation of forged orders, indicates that the fraud that petitioners such as Ephraim Patch complained of came about as a result of criminals falsely copying and endorsing the said certificates to themselves, allowing them to collect the wages owed to another. Though the Massachusetts government did not respond to the issue until veterans approached them to petition for redress, once notified, it pursued multiple avenues of response until a solution was found and the problem put to rest.

Looking at the language of the petitions and resolutions surrounding forged payment orders in Massachusetts, one phrase begins to stand out. Nearly every entry refers to wages which were paid or "drawn" to a forged order. Given the fact that wages could be legally signed over to an individual other than the veteran to whom they originally belonged, it follows that this phrasing of "payment to a

[32] Jeremiah Hill, pay order, Treasurer Thomas Ivers, Orders and warrants for depreciation notes for service in the Continental Army, 1780-1789, Massachusetts State Archives.

[33] Resolve CXXXVIIL, 1787 Mass. Acts 90-91, America's Historical Imprints.

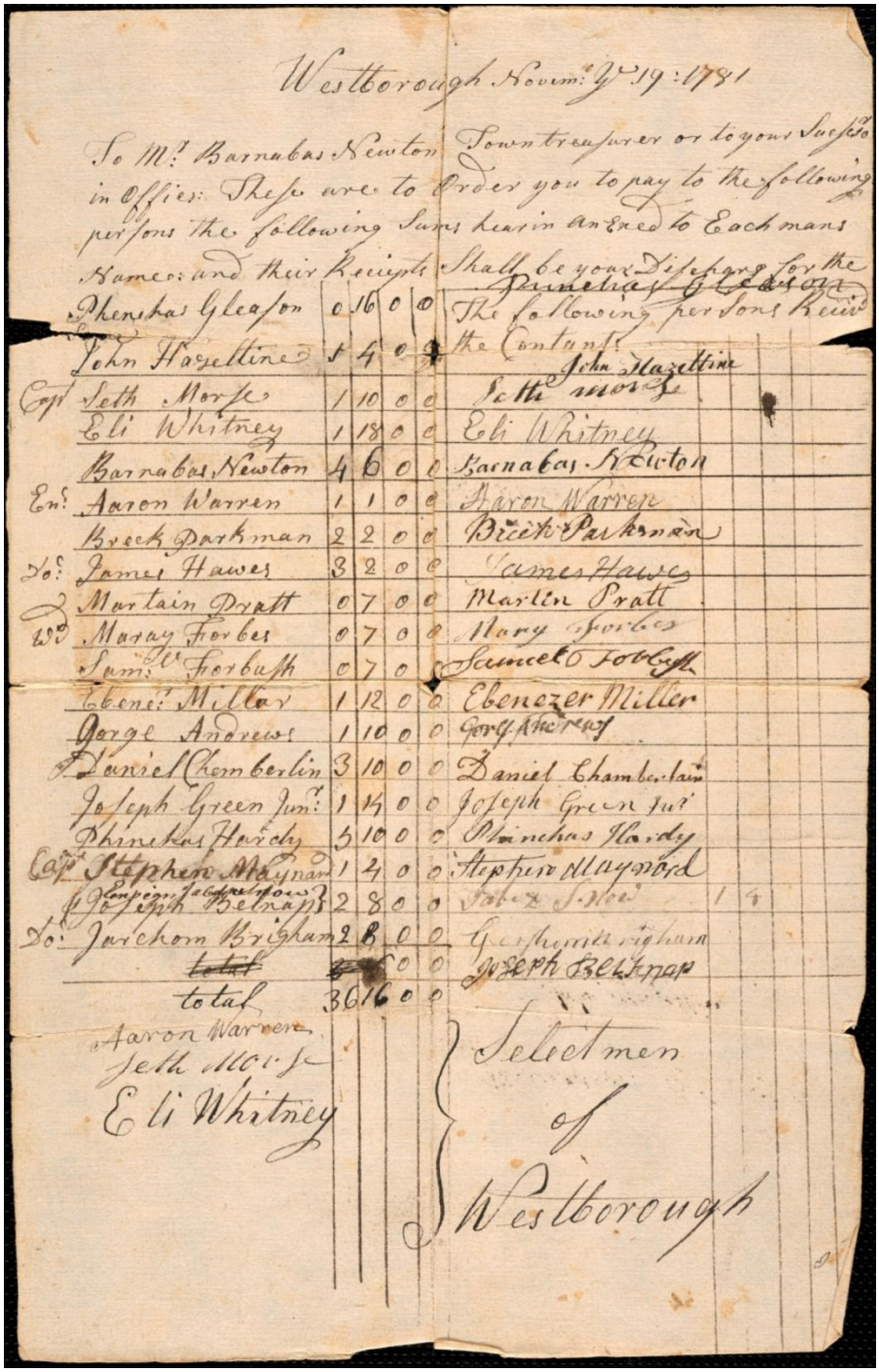
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forged order" implies a forged endorsement. The resolve granting relief to Jacob Hart, for instance, reads that "his wages as a Serjeant in the Continental army, has been drawn by a forged order: Resolved, That the Treasurer of this Commonwealth, be, and he hereby is directed to issue to Jacob Hart, or to his order, three notes of the same tenor and date, with three which appear to have been drawn by a forged order, in favor of John White, subscribed by the same of Jacob Hart."[34] The language of this text confirms the process of the forgery. By stating that Hart's wages "had been drawn" by a forged order, rather than commenting on the certificate that Hart had in his possession, this resolve shows that someone else holding a counterfeit document collected Hart's wages before he applied to the treasury for them. The process of endorsement is supported by the relief being payable either "to Jacob Hart, or to his order," implying that the use of an order did not necessitate the presence of the person originally named on the form; when redeeming such orders, the treasurer was examining the order and its endorsement, not necessarily the individual to whom it was endorsed. That the forged order was drawn "in favor of John White" shows not only that the order had White's name written on it (for how else could the Massachusetts House know the name of the forger) but also that this name and signature was sufficient authorization to pay out Hart's wages to a different recipient. The forgery in this case refers both to the existence of an altered certificate and the endorsement of this certificate to White. In essence, the language of this resolve proves that a forged order refers to a copy of a Continental payment order that was illicitly signed over to someone other than the veteran to which it was given and which was then exchanged at the state treasury for currency.

Examination of military pay documents from Massachusetts shows that the treasurer had access to the amounts due to soldiers and the note numbers of their certificates. Figure 2, a Massachusetts militia pay order, displays the soldiers' names and the wages owed to them; the names are copied to both sides of the table so that the paymaster or treasurer could mark the wages as they were collected and prevent the same wages from being collected twice. Similar Continental Army documents provided to the treasurer allowed him to do the same; thus, when a soldier who was unaware that his pay was collected on a forged order applied to collect his wages, the treasurer had proof that they had already been distributed. Hence the many petitions from soldiers whose wages had already been paid out to forged orders.

[34] Resolve XVIII, 1792 Mass. Acts 10, America's Historical Imprints.

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Westborough Novem.r 9.th 1781

To Mr. Barnabas Newton Town treasurer or to your Successo in Offices: These are to Order you to pay to the following persons the following Sums herein annexed to Each mans Names: and their Receipts Shall be your Discharge for the same

	Phinehas Gleason	0	16	0	0
	John Hazeltine	1	4	0	0
Capt	Seth Morse	1	10	0	0
	Eli Whitney	1	18	0	0
	Barnabas Newton	4	6	0	0
Ens:	Aaron Warren	1	1	0	0
	Breck Parkman	2	2	0	0
Do:	James Hawes	3	2	0	0
	Martain Pratt	0	7	0	0
Wd	Mary Forbes	0	7	0	0
	Sam.l Forbush	0	7	0	0
	Ebenez.r Miller	1	12	0	0
	Jorge Andrews	1	10	0	0
	Daniel Chemberlin	3	10	0	0
	Joseph Green Jun.r	1	14	0	0
	Phinehas Hardy	3	10	0	0
Capt	Stephen Maynard	1	4	0	0
	Joseph Belnap	2	8	0	0
Do:	Jarchom Brigham	2	8	0	0
	~~total~~	~~36~~	60	0	0
	total	36	16	0	0

Aaron Warren
Seth Morse
Eli Whitney

Selectmen of Westborough

Figure 2. Westborough, Massachusetts Militia Pay Order.[35]

The issue was not that the soldiers themselves were in possession of falsified documents. In fact, there was even legislation passed in Massachusetts in 1792 which allowed the original document

[35] Order for Payment to Soldiers, 1781, box 1, folder 1.17, series 3: Finance, Records of Westborough's Involvement in the American Revolution, the Massachusetts Militia, and the Continental Army, 1774-1792, Westborough Public Library, Westborough, Mass.

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to be entered as evidence in criminal counterfeiting cases.[36] Rather, the forger either had access to or created copies of payment orders, which they then endorsed to themselves. This sequence of events is supported by accounts of forged orders in states other than Massachusetts. In New Jersey, for instance, a man named Thomas Baker petitioned in 1793 for his lost wages. In the report published by the New Jersey Secretary of War on the matter, it states that Baker's "captain had, on a pretended order, drawn and received the pay for [Baker], and in consequence thereof he could not be paid."[37] The report continues that Baker "never gave, nor to his knowledge signed any writing or order whatever, to his captain, nor any other person, to receive his said pay."[38] What Baker claims is that his captain illegally collected Baker's wages by forging an endorsed pay order from Baker to himself. Though Baker did not give permission for his captain to collect his wages on his behalf, the captain used a counterfeit order to receive the money anyways. The petition's last line thus corroborates the idea that the forgeries were committed by signing over a counterfeited order in favor of the criminal, as Baker's testimony that he never gave permission for another to receive his pay proves the initial payment was made to the wrong person.

The connection that the forgers had to the veterans is still largely unknown, and the issue made complicated by the fact that many men are named as forging wages. It is likely that most, if not all, of them served in the Continental Army in some regard, given the extent of the war. Of the ten men named as counterfeiters in the resolves, however, only one, Uriah Remington, appears to have served in the same battalion as the veteran whose order Remington forged.[39] Both he and Josiah Jordan, who petitioned in October 1784 for his lost wages, served under Captain Benjamin Frothingham and Colonel John Crane.[40] Such an obvious connection has not been found between the nine other men named as forgers, though there are military records for individuals of the same name.[41] As such, while it

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[36] An Act for making Certificates of certain Officers, evidence in Criminal Cases 1792, Massachusetts H.R. 12, 13th Court. (1792)

[37] United States War Department, *Report of the secretary of war on thirty-five petitions (*Philadelphia. PA: Childs and Swaine, 1793), p. 9.

[38] United States War Department, *Report of the secretary of war*, p. 9.

[39] Uriah Remington, Service Records, 1775-1785, Compiled Service Records of Soldiers Who Served in the American Army During the Revolutionary War, compiled 1894 - ca. 1912, documenting the period 1775 - 1784. (NARA Record Group 93, M881, Catalog ID 570910), Fold3.

[40] Uriah Remington, Service Records; 1784-1785 Mass. House J. for Oct. 26, at 160, vol. 5.

[41] Given the lack of information presented about these men in the Massachusetts Legislature's resolves, it cannot be said definitively whether these service records belong to the same individual or not, as multiple soldiers often had the same name. Resolve XXXV, 1784 Mass. Acts 64-65, America's Historical Imprints; Resolve XXV, 1785 Mass. Acts 101-02, America's Historical Imprint; Resolve XXV, 1785 Mass. Acts 101-02, America's Historical Imprints; Resolve XXVIIL, 1785 Mass. Acts 19, America's Historical Imprints; Resolve LXX, 1785 Mass. Acts 115-16, America's Historical Imprints;

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is likely that many of the forgers were veterans as well, their interactions with those men whose wages they stole remain a mystery. That said, it is important to understand the implications of the counterfeiters' potential identities.

The most probable reality, that the men forging the pay orders were themselves veterans, presents several possibilities. First, that there was a personal relationship between the forger and the veteran whose pay order was forged. In the case of Josiah Jordan and Uriah Remington, this connection is almost certain. Rather than the faceless, institutional victim associated with banknote forgery, a shared identity as veterans meant that forgers could put faces to the men they harmed. Even if the two did not know each other personally, this added connection could result in a greater emotional and relational fallout to the crime. Furthermore, the potential shared identity complicates the counterfeiters' motivations. As established, veterans as a group tended to come out of the American Revolution at a severe disadvantage. Perhaps, then, the impulse to counterfeit other veterans' pay orders came out of economic desperation rather than the greed that motivated many other counterfeiters. This may not have absolved such veterans in the eyes of the men they harmed, but it does add nuance to understandings of why such crimes occurred. Finally, prior service in the Continental Army would provide forgers with more opportunities to access the materials and information necessary to create such false documents in the first place.

The other possible reality, that the forgers were not associated with the Continental Army, removes such personal connections as shared military experience. In this case, the forgery of pay orders becomes more akin to the forgery of banknotes, i.e. counterfeiting carried out without regard for or relation to its victims. That said, the two remain distinct, as banknote forgery did not actively prevent the targeted individuals from obtaining money they were rightfully owed, as pay order forgery did. Almost certainly, more men were involved in the scheme than the ten named in the Massachusetts legislative record, as the majority of resolves and all of the petitions fail to mention the forger. As counterfeiting was a particularly widespread problem in the Early Republic, the forgers need not have been explicitly connected to the Continental Army to carry out the scheme.[42]

The process of forging pay orders was made complex as the documents began to exist as printed forms, such as the one seen in Figure 3, rather than handwritten notes as they were in earlier

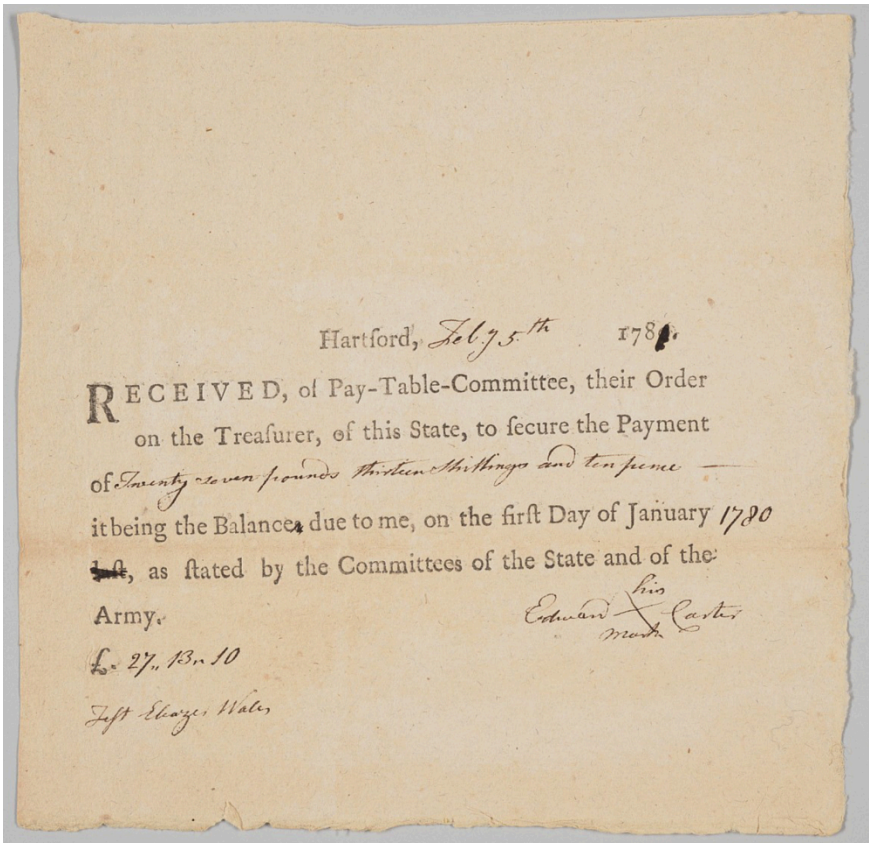
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Resolve LX, 1787 Mass. Acts 25, America's Historical Imprints; Resolve CXXXVIIL, 1787 Mass. Acts 90-91, America's Historical Imprints; Resolve LXIII, 1788 Mass. Acts 57-58, America's Historical Imprints; Resolve XXVL, 1789 Mass. Acts 79, America's Historical Imprints; Resolve XVIII, 1792 Mass. Acts 10, America's Historical Imprints; Resolve XXIX, 1793 Mass. Acts 47, America's Historical Imprints; Resolve LXXIII, 1793 Mass. Acts 18, America's Historical Imprints; Resolve XXXV, 1794 Mass. Acts 41, America's Historical Imprints; Resolve XXVII, 1797 Mass. Acts 59, America's Historical Imprints.

[42] Mihm, *The Alchemy of the Self*, pp. 132-33.

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years of the war.[43] On the one hand, printed orders required the use of a printing press, as well as type and ink that matched the orders in circulation. If the counterfeiters did not have access to such resources on their own, another person had to become involved in the scheme, leaving a trail of people, money, and equipment. On the other hand, printed forms meant that forgers did not have to mimic handwriting and that falsified documents could be produced faster and in higher quantities. In the below receipt of payment given to Private Edward Carter, the only handwritten items are the date, the names of those involved, and the amount of the payment. Using this format, a forger could simply insert their own name into several forms that were otherwise largely uniform, thus expediting the forgery process. That said, the volume of this type of counterfeiting is not incredibly high in Massachusetts, leading to the conclusion that printed forms were perhaps more a hindrance than a benefit.



Hartford, Feb'y 5th 1781.

RECEIVED, of Pay-Table-Committee, their Order on the Treasurer, of this State, to secure the Payment of Twenty-seven pounds thirteen Shillings and ten pence — it being the Balance due to me, on the first Day of January 1780 ~~1781~~, as stated by the Committees of the State and of the Army.

his
Edward X Carter
mark

£. 27, 13, 10

Test Eleazer Wales

Figure 3. Receipt of Pay for Pvt. Edward Carter.[44]

The first known petition on the issue of forged orders was submitted to the Massachusetts House of Representatives on 30 May, 1783 by Edward Lawrence.[45] It was followed by dozens more

[43] Ferguson, *The Power of the Purse*, pp. 57-59.

[44] Edward Carter, Receipt of Pay, 5 February 1781, Collection of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C.

[45] 1783-1784 Mass. House J. for May 30, vol. 4, p. 24.

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over the next several years. Beginning in 1784, the Massachusetts legislature published in its resolves orders granting the lost wages to those soldiers who petitioned. Some, though not all, of these resolves included information such as the petitioner's commanding officer, the identification number of the notes owed, the amount due to the veteran, and the name of the alleged forger. This last piece of information confirms the previous conclusion regarding endorsements, for if the forged orders were not made out in favor of a specific individual other than the soldier, there is little way that the Massachusetts legislature would have been able to name the person who illegally collected the wages. As it is, the appearance of several different names in these resolves informs historians as to both the process of Continental payment as well as how widespread the problem of forgery was. The veterans whose certificates were counterfeited also belonged to a wide variety of regiments and companies in the Continental Army. As such, the problem cannot be isolated to a single person or persons associated with one group of soldiers.

It is still unknown how counterfeiters acquired the information necessary to create copies of payment orders. Since the soldier's name, the date issued, and the amount of money owed needed to match the information that the treasurer had, the forgers must have had some level of access either to Continental Army records or the veterans to whom the certificates belonged. But as no petitioner stated that their certificate was no longer in their possession, it is unlikely that this access came through even temporary theft. Rather, taking into account the general disorganization of the Continental Army upon demobilization, it is entirely plausible that some form of payment records was lost or copied and this information taken advantage of by those with criminal intentions. This is especially likely given that, again, the petitioners were able to present their copies of their certificates upon examination by the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

Similarly, without the counterfeit certificates in question, it cannot be known whether those individuals named as the forger initiated the crime. As mentioned, it was not uncommon for soldiers to sign their pay orders over to others either to be redeemed at the treasurer or to be used as payment before the bond was due. With this in mind, it is possible that the counterfeiters created the false certificates and used them only as currency, rather than attempting to redeem them at the treasury. In this case, the person named in the Massachusetts resolves could be simply the last person to receive the forged order, as well as the one who chose to cash it. Equally possible is that the forgers went directly to the treasury to redeem the order, or that the treasury, upon realizing that an order had been illegally cashed, found the forged document and recorded the first name it was signed over to. Examination of the certificates in which the ten forgers are named could definitively demonstrate whether these men were indeed those who carried out the actual counterfeiting. Unfortunately, the existence of these documents is as yet unknown.

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Inextricable from this reality, however, is the abundance of falsified currency in the Early Republic.[46] Though the Massachusetts petitions and resolves are typically scarce on the processes by which the forgeries took place, other sources provide illuminating detail and personal insight into the means and methods of counterfeiting. One such source is a deposition given by Benjamin Davison, who in March 1785 approached the Continental Congress to provide "information respecting the forgers or counterfeiters of final settlement certificates."[47] The deposition provides a detailed account of a forgery ring in New Hampshire that dealt in what Davison called "privates notes" or "privates certificates" and what Congress called "final settlement certificates," both of which refer to the soldiers' pay orders. Though the scheme Davison outlines is not entirely the same as the one under investigation in this paper, his deposition nonetheless reveals a world of counterfeiters who were eager to use soldiers' certificates to acquire money and goods, regardless of the impact on the veterans themselves.[48]

Davison told Congress about an encounter in Massachusetts in April 1784 with a man named John Cady. Cady informed Davison of a man who could "counterfeit private notes so that no person could know it" and demonstrated the purchasing power of a forged certificate. "Observing the advantage" Cady had, Davison "became desirous of sharing therein" and made his way to New Hampshire in May of that year.[49] There, he again met John Cady, the middleman of the scheme. He told Davison that the man who completed the forgeries altered the sums on small certificates so that a

[46] Counterfeiting was carried out on all forms of currency and by several different methods. Specie forgeries most typically occurred in one of two ways: either small shavings of the coin would be removed, so that the coin itself contained less metal and the shavings used to forge new coins, or coins were produced that were a mix of valuable and base metals, lowering the value of the material. The forgery of paper money and certificates took place either when an individual printed their own copy of the paper or altered an existing document to reflect a changed amount or owner. The former process of forgery is what took place with these particular soldiers' forged orders. Scott, *Counterfeiting in Colonial Connecticut*, p.103.

[47] The initial entry in the Congressional Journals about Davison's arrival to give his deposition is dated March, 1784. However, the deposition itself is dated a year later, and contains within it reference to criminal activities which took place after March 1784. As such, this paper holds that the initial entry in the Congressional record for 1784 was mislabeled, and Davison both arrived and gave his deposition in March 1785; *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, ed. Worthington C. Ford et al. (Washington, D.C., 1904-37), 26: p. 165.

[48] Benjamin Davison Deposition, March 1785, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 167, Image 133.; *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, ed. Worthington C. Ford et al. (Washington, D.C., 1904-37), 26: p. 165.

[49] Benjamin Davison Deposition, March 1785, images 127-138, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 167 - Letters and documents relative to exchange of officers, narration of a journey to the Western Country, and other documents, 1777-1788. (NARA Series M247, Roll 184), FamilySearch;Benjamin Davison Deposition, March 1785, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 167, Image 134.

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two or five dollar certificate became worth $500 or $700.[50] When asked about who was altering the documents themselves, Cady responded that it would not do to say, but that "it was a fine Gimmick, much better than counterfeiting Continental Money."[51]

After several more exchanges with Cady, Davison was invited to the house of one Adonijah Crane. "After conversation Adonijah Crane engaged to do business for [Davison] at any time, injoining [him] secrecy."[52] Davison was told that "there were but 6 or 8 [men] who knew who [forged the certificates], but there were 30 or 40 concerned in passing them."[53] At a later meeting, Davison inquired as to how Crane altered the bills, to which Crane replied that "he could take the ink out of the paper and save it, as clean and thick as ever," and "he defied the man, whose hand he could not countersign."[54] Davison gave several small bills to Crane to be "fixed" into larger sums; these bills were always nearly immediately "passed" for goods such as oxen and cloth. Eventually, however, Davison was caught passing a counterfeit certificate and put into the Plymouth gaol. Upon his release, his father instructed Davison to go directly to the Continental Congress and inform them of the scheme, thus producing the deposition.

This account provides a multitude of details surrounding the creation and proliferation of forged Continental certificates, though this scheme does differ from the one at hand in Massachusetts. Whereas Davison spoke of original certificates with altered sums, the problem in Massachusetts was one of completely new orders with false recipients, such that two copies of the order existed. In the former case, veterans stood to benefit, as a two dollar certificate could be altered into one worth $200. Those veterans petitioning the Massachusetts legislature, however, were merely trying to receive the money owed to them by presenting their pay orders, only to learn that a copy made out to someone else had already been redeemed.

Nonetheless, Davison's deposition provides a wealth of information, such as further detail on the exchange of certificates as a form of currency in the Early Republic. As opposed to the forged orders in Massachusetts, which were brought to the treasurer in exchange for specie or paper money, Davison, Crane, and the other men involved in the scheme simply traded the certificates themselves for

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[50] Benjamin Davison Deposition, March 1785, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 167, Image 134.

[51] Benjamin Davison Deposition, March 1785, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 167, Image 134.

[52] Benjamin Davison Deposition, March 1785, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 167, Image 134.

[53] Benjamin Davison Deposition, March 1785, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 167, Image 134.

[54] Benjamin Davison Deposition, March 1785, Papers of the Continental Congress, Item 167, Image 135.

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goods. In this way, the certificates functioned directly as money, rather than the promise of money. That this sort of exchange happened so frequently also helps to confirm the process of endorsement previously discussed as the method of forgery for the Massachusetts petitioners. Because it was entirely common for Continental certificates to be passed around as money, and thus be endorsed to multiple people as they were exchanged, it would not have been noteworthy to the treasurer when a certificate was turned in by someone other than the veteran to whom it was distributed. Davison's account of Crane's activities also demonstrates the ease with which these certificates were altered and distributed; even within one town, there were several men involved with the production of counterfeits and dozens more implicated in passing them. In all of Massachusetts, then, there were almost certainly many more than just the ten men named who were forging pay orders. Most broadly, Davison's deposition speaks to the prevalence of counterfeit certificates in this period as well as the multitude of ways in which veterans were taken advantage of by counterfeiters in the Early Republic.

As Congress chose to primarily allow the states to respond to the issue of forged certificates, Massachusetts had to engage with the problem quickly, and did so in multiple ways. In the short term, the Massachusetts House paid out the wages of nearly every soldier who claimed that he had been defrauded. The petitions were assigned to committees made up of three representatives. Over the course of the four years in which petitions are recorded, the legislature formed over thirty committees, representing seventy legislators.[55] Though the petitions were not always approved immediately, there is only one known instance in which a petitioner did not receive his wages.[56] In all other cases, the Massachusetts Treasury was ordered to issue to the veteran "the whole amount of the wages due to him, of the same tenor and date, and in the same manner that he would have done, if the said [soldier's] wages had not been drawn by forgery."[57] This pattern was enforced by a resolve passed in 1780, stating "That when any such soldier shall apply to the Treasurer for his notes, and it shall appear that they have been taken out as aforesaid [by forgeries], the Treasurer be, and he is hereby directed, to deliver to such soldier or his order, other notes in lieu thereof."[58]

Measures beyond an individual response to those soldiers affected by the counterfeits were also taken. In May 1781, the Massachusetts legislature resolved that, in order to "prevent fraud and injustice in the payment of warrants drawn on pay-rolls of militia officers," pay certificates would need

[55] 1783-1784 Mass. House J., vol. 4; 1784-1785 Mass. House J., vol. 5; 1785-1786 Mass. House J., vol. 6.

[56] Resolve CLXXIV, 1799 Mass. Acts 76, America's Historical Imprints; Resolve XX, 1799 Mass. Acts 17, America's Historical Imprints. This is that of Obadiah Silvester, whose petition was suspended by the House in June 1799.

[57] Resolve XXI, 1786 Mass. Acts 104, America's Historical Imprints.

[58] Resolve IXX, 1780 Mass. Acts 11, America's Historical Imprints.

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to be signed by two witnesses who would "attest the same" before the treasurer.[59] In 1785, legislation outlining the punishment for forging and passing certificates was passed: upon conviction, the forger would be "be punished by setting in the pillory, at one or more times or places, cropping one ear, whipping, imprisoning, fining, and binding to the good behaviour, all or any of these punishments, according to the nature and aggravation of the offence."[60] Clearly, the issue of counterfeiting was not one to be taken lightly, at least in the eyes of the state. Later in 1785, the House formed multiple committees to consider the matter of forged orders, and in 1786, the Committee on Pension was ordered "consider the expediency of adopting the like check for detecting forged orders at the pension office as is provided at the Treasury."[61] All these actions represent the efforts of the Massachusetts government to support its veterans who had fallen victim to the epidemic of forged orders. For the next several years, no further legislation was passed. However, on 29 January, 1799, it was enacted:

> "That no petition for wages, which have heretofore been drawn by forged orders, shall be hereafter sustained, unless such petition shall be presented within two years from the passing of this Act: And on failure thereof, the petitioner, applicant and claimant, shall be forever excluded and barred from any claim or demand against this Commonwealth, for or on account of any wages so drawn or alledged to be drawn by virtue or any such forged order."[62]

The act was also ordered to be printed in the newspapers for the next three months, so as to inform Massachusetts citizens of the new policy. Accordingly, the last resolve published by the Massachusetts General Court noting the issuance of notes previously forged is dated January 1800, a year before the final deadline. This resolve, in favor of one Amos Smith whose certificate for one hundred and twenty-two dollars and twenty cents had been forged, marks the end of the Massachusetts record on forged Continental pay orders.[63] The soldiers whose wages had been given to counterfeiters finally received their due compensation for their service years before.

The problem of forged pay orders illuminates several important facets of life in the Early Republic and the intersections between the state, the military, and the economy. For one, the General Court's response to the problem highlights this early moment under the Articles of Confederation in which Massachusetts was entirely responsible for its own part of what was truly a national problem. As the Articles so explicitly limited the powers of the federal government in favor of the more obviously

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[59] Resolve CLXXX, 1781 Mass. Acts 208, America's Historical Imprints.

[60] An Act to Punish Forgery, and for the Punishment of those who are guilty of the same 1785, Massachusetts H.R. 34, 6th Court. (1785).

[61] 1785-1786 Mass. House J. for Feb. 18, p. 417, vol. 6.

[62] An Act limiting the Time within which Petitions for Wages, which have been drawn by forged Orders, shall be sustained 1799, Massachusetts H.R. 2, 20th Court. (1799).

[63] Resolve LXXXV, 1800 Mass. Acts 45, America's Historical Imprints.

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democratic states' rights, little aid beyond notification of widespread forgery schemes such as that provided by Davison was provided to states like Massachusetts. Rather, states were expected to legislate on counterfeiting and punish those who participated in such illicit activities in addition to paying the wages of Continental soldiers.[64] For Massachusetts, where the response to forged orders included paying the veteran after the criminal had collected the original wages, this responsibility meant that at times the treasury paid double the amount set aside for veterans' wages. For a state receiving little support from its federal government and already in a massive amount of debt,the toll would have been significant.[65]

Despite this burden, there is no evidence to show that the Massachusetts legislature denied its veterans their wages or their right to petition for them. As stated, there is only one record in which the petitioner's wages were not paid out, the reasons for which are not given. In contrast to what modern audiences may assume of the state's relationship with its veterans, Massachusetts did all it could to support those who returned from the American Revolution only to find that their wages had been stolen by person or persons unknown. This response is particularly significant in comparison to the cultural context surrounding military service, which had largely been inherited from Great Britain. There, low-ranking soldiers were commonly held in poor regard, a mindset which, as Jack D. Warren, Jr. writes, "shaped the way many post-war Americans thought about the veterans of the Continental Army."[66] This negative perception was compounded by notions of civic duty and a broad reluctance to maintain a regular army, as outlined previously. Rather than disregard non-commissioned soldiers who ranked as privates and sergeants as was frequently the practice, the Massachusetts government chose to respond to their needs and fairly compensate veterans for their service. It was in fact non-state actors who were taking advantage of these veterans' service.

These accounts of forged pay orders also speak to the reality of this historical moment in which paper forms of currency were highly unstable and counterfeits were seemingly more common than not. In addition to hard and paper money being falsified, and the latter being highly depreciated, citizens also had little reason to trust documents distributed by the government in lieu of actual currency. As has been demonstrated, these certificates could be forged in many different ways, the ease of which was certainly taken advantage of by a multitude of individuals across New England. With this in mind, the issue of forged orders becomes particularly relevant in the construction of an economic history of the United States. For not only do they highlight the exchange of certificates as a currency as equally accepted as paper money, they also demonstrate the expansion of economic fraud into certificates from counterfeit currency, as well as the impact that such forgeries had on those who fell victim to

[64] Ferguson, *The Power of the Purse*, pp. 50-51.
[65] Ferguson, *The Power of the Purse*, pp. 180-81.
[66] Jack D. Warren, Jr., *America's First Veterans* (Washington, D.C.: The American Revolution Institute of the Society of Cincinnati, 2020), p. 1.

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counterfeiting. Finally, forged orders present a clear intersection between the activities of the Continental Army and its soldiers and the economic sector, both of which were vital forces in the creation of the new United States.

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