

**History, SC, York, William Hill Iron Works
Petition of 1798 SC Senate for relief**

SC Senate

1798

Committee

**JOHN BARNWELL
WILLIAM WASHINGTON
ANDREW LOVE**

**History, SC, York, William Hill Iron Works
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To the honorable **JOHN WARD** president of the Senate and the members of that honorable house.

The petition of **WILLIAM HILL** humbly sheweth:

That in the year 1775 at an early period of late war this country, being in great distress by reason of the shutting up of her ports and the cutting off of her foreign trade, the provincial Congress of the state encouraged the manufacturing of bar iron by offering a premium of one thousand pounds currency to any person who should erect a bloomery for that purpose which premium your petitioner obtained by his exertions.

That afterwards they conceived their works might be greatly improved for the public benefit by erecting a furnace for the purpose of casting cannonballs, shells, camp kettles and other utensils for the Army and accordingly in the month of August 1776 offered him a loan of 7,000 pounds currency which he afterwards received in depreciated paper bills of this state for that purpose.

That the loan was for ten years and free of any interest but a mortgage of The Works was required.

That after he had finished his furnace in about the space of sixteen months he supplied the state with two hundred and twelve thousand pounds weight of iron in articles for military stores, which at the current price when at his Iron Works amounted to about £6,200 pounds sterling.

That during his time Colonel **ISAAC HAYNE** had engaged with him as a partner which added considerably to the stock about the works.

That the great utility of their works by supplying the state with cannon shot had attracted the notice of the enemy, who considering them as public works and an object of military operation, detached a strong party of troops from Rocky Mount to destroy them, who marched for that purpose into a part of the country never before penetrated by the enemy and destroyed them.

Your petitioner on that occasion sustained the loss of the furnace, forge, grist and saw mills, store houses, dwelling houses and every other building on the place. With a large stock of horses, cattle, wagons and utensils besides the loss of twenty one Negroes carried off by the enemy, which he never afterwards regained, amounting altogether to upwards of five thousand pounds sterling drawn on him by the manner in which his iron works was employed and providing military stores for the public service. This happened in the month of June 1780 when the situation of the country was such as put it out of his power to rebuild the works. The unhappy death of Colonel **HAYNE** which soon followed and having his children minors put it out of their power to render him any assistance.

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That is soon as there was any Prospect of - - - he began to rebuild the works which had been destroyed, the auditor's office being opened he delivered in his account against the state for the aforesaid supplies and was allowed two Shillings and six Pence currency per pound for his iron, which was paid him in an indent although the current price in the country was then seven pence sterling per pound, which your petitioner would have had for every pound manufactured at his works but for the preference he gave to the state.

That the great loss he sustained in his private property, his being engaged in the service in a military capacity, the accumulation of his debt incurred in rebuilding and carrying on the furnace rendered his situation such as obliged him to sell his indent at the then market price of ten per cent whereby he received in part only two farthings per pound, which he did not even reimburse workman's wages.

That the works were undertaken and carried on at the request of the provincial provincial Congress and

That your petitioner hath never made use of the bills loaned to him, the state got the supplies wanted and the accounts have been reviewed by the General Government and your petitioner hath reason to believe that this state hath credit for the thousand pounds as well as the supplies.

Your petitioner further sheweth that there is a suit commenced by the solicitor's for the money loaned to him as aforesaid to recover the full amount thereof.

And your petitioner further states that the debt for which he is sued was not incurred by his drawing any money in reality out of the treasury of the state or his receiving the value of one shilling of the public property, that what he received was certain paper bills which cost the state no more than the expense of paper and printing.

That the bills of this kind or soon after issued in such quantities as to ruin their credit and hurt it beyond the ability of the state ever to redeem them. The citizens of the state have never been taxed for that purpose and it is presumed never will be. Neither the state nor an individual, except your petitioner, has suffered by the loan and he has sustained a loss of several thousand Pounds Sterling beyond what he received have the same been in specie. Your petitioner has never brought forward any claims for indemnities, which were promised him by the government at the time, and which he thinks he might justly have done. He has only prayed to be released from paying a large sum in specie for paper bills which he received, of little or no value, which he has still on hand.

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Your petitioner with confidence realize on the Justice of the legislature to do what is right and Grant him proper relief in the premises.

And your petitioner will ever pray

WILLIAM HILL