

"Carroll's First Veterans"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

The Revolutionary War produced the first American veterans including hundreds of men who resided in what later became Carroll County. Locating information about the military service and subsequent lives of these men can be a challenging but rewarding experience as I recently found out while preparing a lecture on the subject.

A search of published records revealed the names of numerous local men who had patriotic or military service. Cemetery records, genealogies, newspaper articles, and other records provided additional information.

Some additional information can be found in the estate papers of a deceased veteran. Michael Waggoner, Jr. (1752-1839), who had patriotic service, left an interesting set of papers. His will contained the standard provisions for the distribution of his property with one exception. He bequeathed to "each of the children of [his] deceased daughter Catherine formerly the wife of David Warner now residing in the State of Ohio namely such as are living at the time of payment the sum of fifty dollars each except Thomas Warner who has been unkind to me and treated me in a manner unbecoming a grand child and I therefore bequeath him one dollar only if he calls upon my executors and demands it."

An inventory of personal property provides a listing of the kinds of household furnishings the Waggoners owned. Among the dozens of items, which altogether were appraised at \$480.91, was an eight day (tall) clock, German Bible and books, blacksmith tools and five beds, evidence that the Waggoners were large and well-to-do household. The household furnishings were sold at auction and a sale of personal property inventory lists the price paid and the purchaser. There were also inventories of moneys owed to the estate and which were likely collectable or not. His administrative accounts show how his sizable estate was distributed per his will by his executors.

Unfortunately for researchers, newspapers did not print obituaries as we know them today at the time when most Revolutionary War veterans died. One notable exception was Samuel Dewees of Manchester whose 1846 death was recorded in the Carroll County Democrat. The editor wrote a lengthy article that detailed the former soldier's service in the Revolution:

"His father entered the service of his country early in the Revolution, and was dangerously wounded and taken prisoner by the British, at the capture of Fort Washington. - He was confined for some time, previous to his discharge on parole, in a British Prison ship, where he was faithfully attended by his wife, the mother of Capt. Dewees. She died, shortly after their release, from disease contracted in the loathsome Prison Ship. The father of Capt. Dewees, not being permitted to enter active service whilst on parole, was engaged as a recruiting officer. In this capacity he enlisted three of his sons. Including the subject of his notice, who was the youngest of the three. He was then about 15 years old, and was regularly entered as a Fifer. This was some months previous to the battle of Brandywine, which occurred September 11th, 1777. He witnessed that battle, being engaged with his father in taking care of the wounded at the Brandywine Meeting House, in the immediate vicinity of the battle ground. He remained with the army throughout the war, and witnessed many of the stirring scenes of that trying

and eventful time. He was present at the execution of Major Andre, and played the "dead march" on that occasion."

A remarkable story about a former Taneytown veteran, Lawrence Everhart (1755-1840), can be found in Revolutionary Patriots of Frederick County by Henry C. Peden, Jr.:

"His company was commanded by Capt. Jacob Goode. Everheart [sic] was then [1776] in his 22nd year and was a tall, stalwart youth, of great physical endurance and indomitable pluck. With his regiment he joined the brigade commanded by Gen. Rezin Beall, which was then stationed at New York. He was, with the other Maryland troops, at the Battle of White Plains, and also at Fort Washington. When the latter was surrendered, however, he managed to escape. In 1778, after the expiration of his term of service, he enlisted at Frederick, with a number of others, in Colonel Washington's regiment of cavalry. At the Battle of Cowpens he was wounded and captured by the enemy. Everheart, with seventeen men, was selected by Colonel Washington to reconnoiter Col. Tarleton's command. As the enemy's horses, impressed from the South Carolina plantations, were much fleeter than those of Everheart and his companions, the scouting party was overtaken. A bloody contest ensued, and Everheart was captured after this horse had been shot under him. He was taken before Tarleton and a conversation ensued with, in part, upset Tarleton and caused him to state "I am Colonel Tarleton, sir!" and to which came the reply "And I am Sergeant Everheart, sir!" Finding that they could no longer keep him in their possession during the course of the battle, the British "shot him in the head, over one of his eyes. The wound was not serious, and Washington's cavalry being then intermingled with the British, Everheart pointed out to Col. James Simons the man who had shot him. The British soldier was at once shot down, and his horse was handed over to Everheart." Soon thereafter, "Sergeant Everheart sprang forward and saved Colonel Washington by disabling a [British] officer's sword arm. On returning from the pursuit, Washington embraced Everheart and sent him to the rear, where his wounds were dressed. He was disabled for active service for some time, but was present at the surrender at Yorktown, where he made the acquaintance of Lafayette. In 1782 he was honorably discharged."

The stories of these first veterans remind us of the high price that has been paid those who took up arms in the Revolution.

Photo caption: Capt. Samuel Dewees of Manchester was a remarkable veteran who served in the Revolutionary War, the Whiskey Rebellion and the War of 1812. This lithographic portrait of him was made shortly before his death in 1846 when his autobiography was published in Baltimore. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.