

"Another Revolutionary Soldier Gone"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

I recently spoke to William Winchester Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution about the patriots buried in Carroll County. With a nucleus of seven names provided by the chapter, I began looking through published sources about Revolutionary War patriots, cemetery records, family histories and newspapers for references to other patriots. Not surprisingly, the search revealed the names of dozens of local men who supported the Revolution. Some had pledged their allegiance to the cause, gave or loaned money for the purchase of arms and ammunition or took up arms against the British. Several local veterans were not native Marylanders and had moved here after the war. The man who left the most detail about his interesting life was Capt. Samuel Dewees of Manchester. His autobiography was published in 1844 and an unusually detailed obituary appeared in the August 13, 1846 issue of the Carroll County Democrat newspaper, under the headline of "Another Revolutionary Soldier Gone":

Departed this life, at his residence near Hampstead, Carroll County, Md., on Thursday evening last, the 6th inst., Capt. Samuel Dewees, a soldier of the American Revolution, aged about 86 years. He was born near Reading, Berks County, Pa., about the year 1760. His father's name was Samuel Dewees; and he was the fourth child in a family of six children. 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 this 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. - After the war he was elected Captain of a volunteer company in Berks county, Pa. He was engaged also in an expedition against the Indians in the interior of Pennsylvania - also in the expedition to suppress the "Whiskey Insurrection." At the breaking out of the last war he resided at Manchester, now in this county; and though over age, volunteered for the defense of Baltimore, when assailed by the British - and acted as Fife Major of his regiment. He was ever ready at the call of his country - and took peculiar pride in celebrating the anniversary of American Independence. On the last 4th of July he attended the celebration at Manchester, on horse back; and few thought, from his appearance, that it would be his last. But he is now gone; and no longer will stand among his friends and neighbors, as a relic of the Revolution. He will be long remembered for his strict integrity, and many excellent qualities. The History of his life and services, was published in 1844 - but, instead of being a solace to him in his old age, it involved him in pecuniary and other troubles which perplexed him greatly. With this exception he went down to the grave in peace - honored by all that knew him. For many years he received a pension from the United States, and also one from Pennsylvania, for his Revolutionary services. Some years ago he attached himself to the Lutheran Church, at Manchester, and there is reason to believe that his last moments were tranquilized

by the sweet consolations of Religion. His remains were deposited at the church yard in Manchester on Saturday last, with the honors of war, by the "Manchester Infantry" under Capt. J. Shower - and an eloquent and highly appropriate funeral discourse was delivered on the occasion by the Rev. Mr. Schwartz of Manchester. May he rest in peace.

The post war movements of Capt. Dewees were similar to others of his generation. A recent study by Lawrence A. Peskin published in Maryland Historical Magazine noted that more than two-thirds of Maryland Revolutionary War veterans left the state. Most went west or south but some also sought opportunities in Pennsylvania, New York and New England. The post-war movement of local veterans helps explain why their names disappear from local records and why they are not found in local cemeteries.

Photo caption: Capt. Samuel Dewees of Manchester served as a musician in the Revolutionary War and was present at the execution of the British spy Major John Andre. From a lithograph by Edward Weber & Co. of Baltimore. J. Leland Jordan Collection, Historical Society of Carroll County, gift of the Commissioner of Carroll County, 1955.