

Carroll Yesteryears

27 January 2019

Jacob Good's Contribution to the Revolution, Taneytown are Deserving of Recognition

By David Buie

The "Carroll's Yesteryears" column of January 13 introduced Taneytown resident Jacob Good, a young man who gained financial success as a land broker and owner of a tavern in the town's early years. In January 1775 he began soliciting money from residents of his area to buy arms and ammunition for the Revolution. Over the following years his patriotic commitment increased dramatically as Maryland raised troops to support the war.

By November 1775 Good was serving as Captain of a sizable militia group in his area. Under him were two Lieutenants, one Ensign, four Sergeants, a Fifer, a Drummer, and 70 Privates—all told 80 men including Good. Frederick County's Committee of Observation for the Middle District must have had confidence in this 27-year-old man, but leadership of local troops grew complicated.

Normand Bruce, slightly older than Good and with strong connections among Maryland's landed gentry, was also a potential military leader. For a short while in early 1776 Good held the rank of colonel in Frederick County's 3rd Battalion while Bruce served under him. Their roles were quickly reversed however, with the reason a matter for speculation. Good, though a prosperous businessman, was new to Frederick County's political life, while the Bruce family was related to the Keys and Scotts who held positions of power in Annapolis.

During the summer of 1776, Frederick County began recruiting men to serve in "flying camps," those newly-approved "extra Continental regiments" designed to supplement regular troops serving in the Continental Army. Service in a flying camp lasted six months until December 1, 1776. The recruits would be paid and fed like regular troops. Jacob Good became captain in one Frederick flying camp.

During that summer of 1776 Washington and his small army occupied New York City. They realized the British troops recently chased out of Boston would likely make New York their next target. Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania responded to the need for more troops by sending men belonging to the flying camps. It must have taken long, hard marches to reach New York by late August. As summer turned to fall, the resulting New York battles were a series of defeats for the Continental troops—Long Island, Harlem Heights, White Plains.

How much action Captain Jacob Good saw is unclear, but a court-martial held in Harlem Heights in October 1776 puts him in the New York area during the right period. Good was one of nine witnesses in the trial of a New York militiaman accused of plunder and mutiny during September. Good could only have been a witness if he and his men had been fighting there. He was probably home by December 1776 although his involvement with the local militia continued. Jacob's life and the Revolution in which he played so many useful roles ended about the same time, raising the possibility that his health may have suffered in the New York

campaign. He left behind a wife and daughter when he died at 35 in March 1783. Rev. Daniel Schroeter conducted the funeral service.

Although his life was short, Jacob Good's contributions to Taneytown deserve more recognition.

Guest columnist David Buie is a Taneytown resident who has a passion for Carroll County and its place in history.

<i>J</i>	Griffith's Regiment, Flying Camp.	<i>M.D.</i>
<i>Capt Good</i>		
Appears as shown below on a		
Return		
of the Regiment of Foot, in the Service of the United Colonies, commanded by Col. Griffith		
Revolutionary War		
Return dated	<i>October 4th</i>	<i>1786.</i>
Company,	<i>Light Bnd</i>	
Officers Present :		
COMMISSIONED :		
Captains, <i>1</i>	; First Lieutenants, <i>1</i>	
Second Lieutenants, <i>1</i>	; Ensigns, <i>1</i>	
NON-COM :		
Sergeants, <i>4</i>	Drums and Fifes, <i>2</i>	
Rank and File :		
Present fit for Duty, <i>62</i>	; Sick Present, <i>18</i>	
Sick Absent,	; On Command,	
Wounded,	; Total, <i>80</i>	
Wanting to complete :		
Sergeants,	; Drums and Fifes,	
Privates,		
Alterations since last Return :		
Dead,	; Deserted,	
Remarks :		
<i>GA Ward</i>		
<i>2</i>		
<i>(548d)</i>		
<i>Copy sent.</i>		

Image source: courtesy photograph

Image caption: The roster showing Captain Good assigned to Griffith's Regiment, Flying Camp with a Troop size of 80.