

Extracts from William McMillan's Revolutionary War Service

"...about a year ago I was throwed off my horse and... 'twas a long time before I got well. I was not able hardly to do anything—I began to think about my Revolution services.

"I joined the Revolutionary War in 1775, the last of December, in Maryland to serve nine months. I was appointed sergeant and a brother of mine [Samuel] was appointed [at the] same time. The British came to New York and parts of our Regiment lay in Annapolis and parts in Baltimore and hand bills was sent in every direction for volunteers and our Regiment turned to a man that was fit to march. We had about twelve hundred men in the Regiment and we marched for New York, I believe we arrived there about first August 1776... On the evening of the 26 August we left New York and landed on Long Island and the next day was August 27 battle... My captain was killed, first lieutenant was killed, second lieutenant shot through the hand, two sergeants was killed; one in front of me... two corporals killed. All belonged to our Company."

"That afternoon my brother and I and 50 or 60 of us was taken. We had a pretty severe fight with Jagers and it was a draw battle. There was a good many on each side killed. They retreated and we did not pursue them. We were surrounded by Healanders [Highlanders] on one side, Hessians on the other and the Hessians broke the butts of our guns over their cannon and robbed us of everything we had, lit their pipes with our money and carried? us into meetings? and gave us nothing to eat for five days,"

"The British put us aboard prison ships and sent us to Halifax and we were there till the next spring and we run away from Halifax and had likely to be taken two or three times by the British, once at Saint John and several times we had likely to been killed by the Indians if we had not had a man that could speak the Canadian language... Once they bared their guns at us and this Canadian spoke their language well and kind providence saved us in that way. We were then weeks in the wilderness, sometimes nothing to eat for days... we suffered everything but death."

Source: Letter, William McMillan to Secretary of Treasury, ca. October 1828. Pension of William McMillan, National Archives and Records Administration, Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, NARA M804, S 2806, p. 33-35.

Note: spelling and punctuation updated for readability