

BARTHOLOMEW VROOMAN

Prisoner of War

Bartholomew J. Vrooman was born September 17, 1761 in Vrooman's Land, New York to Johannes (John) Bartholomeus and Maria Vrooman. In August 1776, fifteen-year-old Bartholomew volunteered in the militia in Schoharie, Albany County, New York. Under Major Abraham Becker, he served for one year as a private in the company commanded by Captain Ephraim Vrooman (an uncle) in Colonel Peter Vrooman's (a cousin) regiment. He was stationed at the Upper Fort near Fultonham in the Schoharie Valley. Bartholomew's father also served in the Albany County militia under Colonel Peter Vrooman.

In May 1778, Bartholomew again enlisted for nine months in a Schoharie company of riflemen commanded by Captain Fair. During this tour of duty, Bartholomew served as a soldier attached to a regiment commanded by Colonel Morgan, under Major Posey and Adjutant Coleman. The company marched to Cooperstown, New York and from there to Wyoming, New York. Upon completion of this enlistment, Bartholomew returned to Schoharie in January 1779.

In March or April 1780, Bartholomew was called out as a Militiaman and was employed as a guard at a fort located in the Schoharie Valley. During the American

Revolution,

several forts were established in the Schoharie Valley, an Upper Fort near Fultonham, a Middle Fort near Middleburgh and a Lower Fort near the Old Stone Church. The local citizens constructed huts near these forts where they lodged at night after occupying their days at their farms and in the fields tending to crops. Bartholomew's main assignment was to provide protection to the local citizens.

August 9, 1780 saw Bartholomew standing watch over a group of local citizens working in their fields. Suddenly at 10:00 AM, a party of British and Native Americans commanded by Captain Joseph Brant (a Mohawk Chief) and Captain Hendricks of the British service swarmed into the area of the Upper Fort, entering on three sides. A horrific tragedy resulted as torches were applied to the dwellings, along with the killing and scalping of women and children. Bartholomew was taken prisoner along with other Schoharie men, women and children.

In a personal account of this tragedy, Bartholomew commented that "they came at us and took me with several others prisoner...at the same time they killed five of my relatives and several other of the inhabitants."

The greater part of the prisoners were marched to Fort Niagara where they were held until November. They were then taken in vessels across Lake Ontario and up the St. Lawrence River. They camped on the snow-covered shore overnight, many prisoners suffering for the lack of suitable clothing and shoes. The prisoners arrived in Montreal in early December 1780, where after a few weeks they were marched to an old French Fort known as South Rakela. Held there until the following summer, they were in time exchanged for other prisoners. When the exchange was negotiated, Bartholomew and most of the Schoharie prisoners were sent on a vessel to the head of Lake Champlain, where they then returned home on foot via Saratoga. Bartholomew arrived home on August 31, 1781. Upon his return, Bartholomew volunteered in Captain Jacob Hager's company and continued serving with this company until the end of the War. The patriotism of the Vrooman men during the American Revolution resulted in their family name becoming legendary in New York State.

Bartholomew married Hannah Mattice (aka Annatje Matteys) on February 15, 1791. Together they had twelve children. Bartholomew and Hannah lived on one farm for a considerable length of time in Vrooman's Land, Middleburg, Schoharie County, New York. They later moved to Harpersfield, Delaware County, New York before settling in Concord Township, Ohio on 147 acres on what is now known as Conley Road. It is possible that Bartholomew and his family were settled in what became Concord Township as early as 1812 or 1813.

Bartholomew died on December 8, 1839 at the age of seventy-eight. He is interred at Huntoon Cemetery in Concord Township, Ohio. The New Connecticut Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) in June 1976 dedicated a new headstone for his grave. Bartholomew's grave is also marked with a Sons of the American Revolution bronze grave marker.

The New Connecticut Chapter, NSDAR have honored Bartholomew with an inscribed brick located at the America 250 Patriots Marker at the Lake County Courthouse in Painesville, Ohio.

