

2. Captain lieutenant: a rank between first lieutenant and captain no longer in use.

10 “Molly Pitcher” at the Battle of Monmouth Court House

[Joseph Plumb Martin, *A Narrative of Some of the Adventures, Dangers and Sufferings of a Revolutionary Soldier*. . . (Hallowell, Maine, 1830), pp. 96-97.]

New Jersey's most famous heroine of the revolutionary war is the legendary “Molly Pitcher,” who gained notoriety for her courage at the battle of Monmouth Court House on June 28, 1778. Surrounded by myth and legend, “Molly Pitcher” comes to life as Mary Hays McCauly of Carlisle, Pennsylvania, a rough, tough woman who reportedly smoked and chewed tobacco and swore like a trooper. During the war she accompanied her first husband, William Hayes, artillerist in the First Pennsylvania, on his tours of duty. At Monmouth she was busily carrying water to the weary cannoneers when her spouse fell wounded; she took over operation of his piece with what was reported as great skill and courage. Mary McCauley belongs properly to Pennsylvania, but New Jerseyans since 1778 have adopted “Molly Pitcher” as their own. The account which follows is the only extant firsthand report of the incident; the author, New Englander Joseph Plumb Martin, was a private in the Light Infantry, Continental army.

[June 28, 1778]

One little incident happened during the heat of the cannonade, which I was eye-witness to, and which I think would be unpardonable not to mention. A woman whose husband belonged to the Artillery, and who was then attached to a piece in the engagement, attended with her husband at the piece the whole time. While in the act of reaching [for] a cartridge and having one of her feet as far before the other as she could step, a cannon shot from the enemy passed directly between her legs without doing any other damage than carrying away all the lower part of her petticoat. Looking at it with apparent unconcern, she observed that it was lucky it did not pass a little higher, for in that case it might have carried away something else, and continued her occupation.