

Two Frederick Hellers, Revolutionary War Soldiers of Pennsylvania

Two men named Frederick Heller served as soldiers during the Revolutionary War. Their identities can be distinguished by examination of the available evidence regarding their service and their families.

Frederick Heller of Reading, Berks County PA

Revolutionary War Veteran Frederick Heller died April 4, 1837 and is buried in Trinity Lutheran Church Cemetery in Reading PA.¹ The details of his service are not recorded in his burial record, only the fact that he was a revolutionary war veteran.

Frederick Heller applied for a land warrant for 400 acres in Berks County PA in 1784.² Frederick Heller married Catharina Brecht June 25, 1786 in Reading.³ He was taxed in Reading in 1786.⁴ He was a resident Reading, Berks County PA in the period 1800 to 1830.⁵

¹ Pennsylvania, Veterans Burial Cards, Frederick Heller, died April 4, 1837, burial Trinity Lutheran Church, Reading, PA, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Pennsylvania Veterans Burial Cards, 1929-1990; Series Number: Series 1.

² Pennsylvania, Land Warrants and Applications, Frederick Haller, 400 acres Berks County, July 22, 1784, *Warrant Applications, 1733-1952*. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania State Archives.

³ Pennsylvania, Church Records, Adams, Berks, and Lancaster Counties, marriage of Frederick Heller and Catharina Brecht, June 25, 1786, Reading, Berks County, citing the Misc. Records of Reverend Carl Friedrich Wildbahn, Extracted from microfilmed transcriptions of the original church records. The microfilmed records are located at the Family History Library.

⁴ Pennsylvania, Tax and Exoneration, 1786, Frederick Heller, Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission; Records of the Office of the Comptroller General, RG-4; Tax & Exoneration Lists, 1762-1794; Microfilm Roll: 318-319.

⁵ Pennsylvania, Septennial Census, 1800, Reading, Berks County, Frederick Heller, image 65 of 91, www.Ancestry.com.

U.S. Census, 1810, Pennsylvania, Berks, Reading, household of Frederick Heller, Year: 1810; Census Place: Reading, Berks, Pennsylvania; Roll: 45; Page: 601; Image: Pam252_45-0074; FHL Roll: 0193671.

With regard to Revolutionary War service, the Daughters of the American Revolution records state that the Frederick Heller was born in Reading PA on July 19, 1763 and died in Reading on August 1, 1837. This record identifies his wife as Catherine Brecht, and it identifies the service of Frederick Heller as being in the Philadelphia Militia under Captain Conrad Rush.

Evidence provided by Hannah Heller, widow of Frederick Heller of the Philadelphia Militia

Hannah Heller, age 87, a resident of Delaware County PA, made a declaration dated August 26, 1857 in which she stated that she married her husband Frederick Heller on October 12, 1792 in Elkton MD and that he died October 28, 1826 in Elkton. This declaration was made in support of her application for a pension based on her husband's service in the Philadelphia Militia. She stated that he served in the 3rd company commanded by Captain Conrad Rush. Her application for a pension was rejected; however, no reason for this rejection is found in the pension file.⁶ While the rejection of Hannah Heller's pension application may appear to discredit her declaration, additional evidence can be correlated with her statements to determine its accuracy. Also, given her advanced age, she may have died before the pension could be granted.

U.S. Census, 1820, Pennsylvania, Berks, Reading, North Ward, household of Frederick Heller, *Fourth Census of the United States, 1820*; Census Place: *Reading North Ward, Berks, Pennsylvania*; Page: 21; NARA Roll: M33_99; Image: 032.

U.S. Census, 1830, Pennsylvania, Berks, Reading, North Ward, household of Frederick Heller, Year: 1830; Census Place: *Reading North Ward, Berks, Pennsylvania*; Series: M19; Roll: 143; Page: 320; Family History Library Film: 0020617.

⁶ U.S., Case Files of Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Claims based on Revolutionary War Service, veteran Frederick Heller, pension number R.4849, service Pennsylvania, pensioner Hannah Heller, NARA publication number M804, NARA catalog ID 30022, record group 15, 13 images, www.Fold3.com.

There is a marriage record for Frederick Hiller and Hannah Trew in Cecil County Maryland dated October 11, 1792.⁷ Elkton is in Cecil County, and the date in this record is one day different from Hannah Heller's declaration. Frederick Heller was enumerated in the 1800 and 1810 censuses of Elkton, Cecil County Maryland. His 1800 household had this composition:⁸

1800 Household of Frederick Heller, Elkton, Cecil County Maryland		
Males 45 and over	Females Under 10	Females 16 - 25
1	3	1

In her 1857 declaration, Hannah Heller's age was stated as 87, indicating a birth year of c. 1770, which would indicate an age of 30 in 1800. This is at variance with the 16 – 25 category, but the age of the oldest female is still significantly younger than the oldest male.

The 1810 household of Frederick Heller in Cecil County MD had this composition:⁹

1810 Household of Frederick Heller in Cecil County Maryland				
Males Under 10	Males 45 and over	Females Under 10	Females 26 - 44	Other free persons
3	1	3	1	1

This record is consistent with Hannah's birth year of c. 1770.

⁷ Maryland, Compiled Marriages, marriage of Frederick Hiller and Hannah Trew, Cecil, MD, October 11, 1792, Dodd, Jordan, Liahona Research, comp.. *Maryland, U.S., Compiled Marriages, 1667-1899* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2000.

⁸ U.S. Census, 1800, Maryland, Cecil, Elkton, household of Frederick Heller, Year: 1800; Census Place: Elkton, Cecil, Maryland; Series: M32; Roll: 10; Page: 33; Image: 40; Family History Library Film: 193663.

⁹ U.S. Census, 1810, Maryland, Cecil County, household of Frederick Heller, Year: 1810; Census Place: Cecil, Maryland; Roll: 15; Page: 286; Image: Mdm252_15-0092; FHL Roll: 0193668.

Han. Heller appears in the 1850 census in this household:¹⁰

1850 Household of John Heller, Upper Darby Township, Delaware County PA		
Name	Age	State of Birth
John Heller	45	Maryland
Marg. Heller	33	Pennsylvania
Han. Heller	80	Maryland

This record is consistent with Hannah's birth year per her declaration and her birthplace being Maryland is consistent with her place of marriage. John Heller made a statement in his mother's pension file, although he was not identified as her son in that record.

The military records for the Philadelphia Militia confirm that the 3rd company of the 3rd Battalion in 1777 was commanded by Captain Conrad Rush¹¹, consistent with Hannah's 1857 statement of her husband's service. There is another record of Frederick Heller of Philadelphia serving in the 3rd Company of the Philadelphia Militia, with him being called to service in September 1778, although the company commander at that time was Captain Jacob Weidman.¹²

The evidence presented by Hannah Heller and the corroboration of the additional evidence is sufficient to conclude that the Frederick Heller who served in the Philadelphia Militia was not the Frederick Heller who lived in Reading PA. Frederick Heller of Reading was identified as a

^{10 10} U.S. Census, 1850, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Upper Darby, household of John Heller, The National Archives in Washington, DC; Record Group: Records of the Bureau of the Census; Record Group Number: 29; Series Number: M432; Residence Date: 1850; Home in 1850: Upper Darby, Delaware, Pennsylvania; Roll: 776; Page: 288a.

¹¹ Pennsylvania State Archives, Philadelphia City Revolutionary War Militia, accessed on September 8, 2025 at <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/phmc/pa-state-archives/research-online/research-guides/revolutionary-war-militia-overview/philadelphia-city-revolutionary-war-militia>.

¹² Pennsylvania, Veterans Card Files, Friedrich Heller, private, 7th company, residence Philadelphia, date 1777 – 1779, Pennsylvania State Archives; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; *Revolutionary War Military Abstract Card File*; Series Number: 13.50.

Revolutionary War veteran, and additional evidence found indicates he was a veteran of the war in a different regiment.

The German Regiment

The German Regiment was authorized by the Continental Congress on May 25, 1776. The German Regiment's troops were drawn from both Maryland and Pennsylvania.¹³ There is a record of Frederick William Heller (his surname is rendered as both Heller and Haller) serving in the German Regiment, enlisting on July 18, 1776 for a term of 3 years. He began as a Private in the 3rd company of the Regiment in 1776, being paid continuously from December 1776 through the entire year of 1777.

In 1778, he began the year as a Private in Captain Greybell's Company of the German Regiment. He was present at Valley Forge in April and May 1778 as a member of the 3rd company. He was present at Second River NJ in July 1778 and at White Plains NY in July and August 1778. In September and October 1778, Frederick William Heller was present at the Camp at Fishkill NY. He received pay for his service continuously until his discharge on July 26, 1779.¹⁴ No other records for Frederick Heller have been found for Revolutionary War service.¹⁵

¹³ American Revolutionary War, Additional and Extra Regiments in the Continental Army, accessed September 9, 2025 at <https://revolutionarywar.us/continental-army/additional-regiments/#:~:text=Authorized%20on%20May%2025%2C%201776,of%20the%20main%20Continental%20Army>.

¹⁴ U.S., Revolutionary War Service Records, Frederick William Haller (Heller), German Battalion, Continental Troops, NARA publication M881, roll 0137, NARA catalog ID 570910, record group 93, 41 images, www.Fold3.com.

¹⁵ Searches of the Maryland Archives and Fold3 yielded no results.

Frederick Heller is identified as the son of Ludwig Heller of Reading in a February 15, 1768 petition filed by his mother Barbara Hoff, the late Barbara Heller. At that time Frederick was identified as being age 4 ½ years, indicated a birth year of 1763.¹⁶ This indicates he was 15 or 16 years old when he enlisted in 1776, not unusual but his relative youth at enlistment may have been influenced by the fact that his father was deceased and his mother was remarried.

Ludwig Wilhelm Haller immigrated to Philadelphia in 1754.¹⁷ Frederick William Heller's surname was alternately rendered as Haller in his military record, and the fact that his middle name was the Anglicized version of his father's middle name may explain Frederick's middle name in the German Regiment records.

The continuous service of Frederick Heller in the German Regiment in the period 1776 – 1779 shows that this Frederick Heller could not have served in the Philadelphia Militia in the period 1777 - 1779. The evidence found supports the conclusion that Frederic Heller of Reading PA served in the German Regiment from 1776 – 1779, and that Frederick Heller of Philadelphia and Elkton MD served in the Philadelphia Militia from 1777 – 1779.

¹⁶ Pennsylvania, Berks County, Orphans Court, Petition of Jacob Hoff and Barbara Hoff, late Barbara Heller, re: estate of Ludwig Heller, deceased, image 152 of 483, www.FamilySearch.org.

¹⁷ U.S. and Canada, Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, Ludwig Wilhelm Haller, arrival Philadelphia, 1754, Filby, P. William, ed. *Passenger and Immigration Lists Index, 1500s-1900s*. Farmington Hills, MI, USA: Gale Research, 2012.