

## Delaware: Allan McLane

Born in Philadelphia, PA on August 8, 1746, Allan McLane was one of George Washington's boldest soldiers, but most reluctant U.S. marshals. By the time the American Revolution began, McLane had moved to Delaware, where he had a trading business, and immediately enlisted as a lieutenant in Caesar Rodney's Delaware Regiment. McLane's company numbered about one hundred men, and included some Oneida Indian scouts. So devoted was he to his troops, that McLane used much of his inherited fortune for their pay and equipment.

McLane participated in Washington's disastrous New York Campaign of 1776.<sup>109</sup> During this military campaign and the Battle of Princeton in January 1777, McLane earned a promotion to captain and began a legendary career as a cavalryman and spy.<sup>110</sup>

McLane utilized different disguises to infiltrate British camps and gather vital information that contributed to the success of American forces at the battles of Monmouth Courthouse (June 28, 1778) and Stoney Point (July 16, 1779).<sup>111</sup> On another occasion, a wounded McLane personally killed two British soldiers and escaped capture, despite being abandoned by his three companions. Collectively, McLane's courage and daring personality helped him earn the rank of colonel by the end of the war in 1783.<sup>112</sup>



**Portrait of Allan McLane.**  
*Courtesy of the State of Delaware Office of  
Historical and Cultural Affairs*

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<sup>109</sup> He was also one of the first officers to question Benedict Arnold's loyalty.

<sup>110</sup> "History - The First Generation of United States Marshals/The First Marshal of Delaware: Allan McLane," U.S. Marshals Service, last estimated release October 22, 2019, <https://www.usmarshals.gov/history/firstmarshals/mclane.htm>. (Accessed October 22, 2019).

<sup>111</sup> Tom Welch, "Allen McLane, Intelligence Officer and Spy," Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, last estimated release October 22, 2019, <https://history.delaware.gov/2015/06/11/allen-mclane-intelligence-officer-and-spy/>. (Accessed October 22, 2019).

<sup>112</sup> "History - The First Generation of United States Marshals/The First Marshal of Delaware: Allan McLane."



Map of Delaware shows the three counties that McLane and/or his deputies enumerated.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

After the war, McLane worked as a farmer and in different administrative posts within his local and state governments, including as a member of Delaware's State Convention to ratify to the new U.S. Constitution in the winter of 1787. Because he was a Federalist from Delaware and had proven himself as a soldier in the American Revolution, President Washington appointed McLane as the U.S. marshal for Delaware.<sup>113</sup>

Despite actively voicing his displeasure at not receiving a more lucrative government appointment, McLane served as a U.S. marshal for eight years.<sup>114</sup> During his tenure as a marshal, McLane was paid \$100 to oversee the 1790 enumeration of Delaware's population.<sup>115</sup> Because, Delaware's 1790 census schedules were destroyed during the War of 1812, it is difficult to determine the actual process McLane and his deputies used to count the population. However, they did complete the enumeration on May 4, 1791.<sup>116</sup> In 1790, Delaware was the smallest state in the country with a population of 59,094 people.<sup>117</sup> However, a later recalculation found a small mathematical error and tabulated the actual number as 59,096.<sup>118</sup>

Having fulfilled one of his main duties as a marshal, McLane continued to beg President Washington for a different appointment within the government. In 1797, Washington recommended McLane as the Collector of Customs for the Port of Wilmington. He held this position through various Presidential administrations until his death in Wilmington on May 22, 1829.<sup>119</sup> His son, Lewis, was just as well respected, and served as the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of State under President Andrew Jackson.

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<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Gazette of the United-States*. [volume] (New-York [N.Y.]), 10 March 1790.

<sup>116</sup> "Delaware". *Return of the whole number of persons within the several districts of the United States: according to "An act providing for the enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States," passed March the first, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one*, pg. 46. PDF. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/content/census/en/library/publications/1793/dec/number-of-persons.htm>. (Accessed October 22, 2019).

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> "Population of the United States as returned at the First Census, by states: 1790," in *Heads of Families/1790/A Century of Population Growth New York & Pennsylvania*, 3:8.

<sup>119</sup> "History - The First Generation of United States Marshals/The First Marshal of Delaware: Allan McLane."