

David Hamilton of Charleston, South Carolina



St. Philips Church, Charleston, South Carolina

When the city of Charleston was surrendered to the British commander, David Hamilton, was taken as a prisoner of war. He was offered a parole if he would promise not to take up arms against the mother country, which

he declined. History of the Revolution in South Carolina by Ramsay records his name as being among the prisoners confined on board the prison ship Torbay in Charleston harbor in May of 1781.

This vessel conveyed these prisoners to Philadelphia where they remained until the treaty of peace was signed at Paris in 1783. Family records tell that during his detention he received permission to go about the city and his wife Elizabeth, joined him there. During her sojourn, a third daughter, Grizelle Agnes Hamilton, was born, and later became the wife of Captain Joseph Taylor, U. S. N. After the Revolutionary War, David Hamilton returned to Charleston and engaged in business with his brother-in-law, Christopher Fitz Simons, who was also an Irishman of wealth and culture, and ancestor of Wade Hampton, the brave cavalry leader of the Southern army in Virginia.

Yet, Mr. Fitz Simons was still wealthier, having \$700,000, as his last will and testament reveals. When his daughter, Anne Fitz Simons, married Wade Hampton the second, her dower was worth some \$100,000. The father of Colonel Hampton was the richest planter in the South. Christopher Fitz Simons died several years before David Hamilton, his last will and testament revealing that he bequeathed to David Hamilton 50 pounds as a souvenir, according to the old English custom, and that he desired the business to continue under the firm name of Hamilton & Co.

David Hamilton died in Charleston, on November 29, 1794, and was buried in St. Philips churchyard. In these sacred precincts also rest the ashes of many of his descendants.

David Hamilton left five daughters and three sons: Elizabeth, who became Mrs. Pritchard; Anne, Mrs. Harvey; Catherine, Mrs. Pritchard; Grizelle Agnes, Mrs. Taylor; Mary, Mrs. Sullivan; of his three sons, David, John and William, David and William died unmarried. His married son, John, left a son and two daughters, from one of whom (Mary), Mrs. Nesbit, springs the family of the same name, wealthy planters of Georgetown, South Carolina

from the daughters of David Hamilton. William Pritchard, her grandson, whose name is carved on the white marble tablet which stands in the vestibule of St. Philips Episcopal church, was a member of the historic Washington Light Infantry of Charleston, and died of country fever during the Civil War.

The daughter of Mrs. Harvey, Anne, married Commandant Knight, U. S. N. Commandant Knight died while in service on the coast of Africa, of African fever. His remains still rest there. The grandson of Mrs. Taylor, William Joseph Magill, commanded a regiment of Georgia regulars during the Civil War. He was a graduate of the Military Academy of South Carolina, a man of fine physique and pleasing address. Colonel Magill lost an arm at the battle of Sharpsburg, and died some few years ago in Florida where he had settled after the war.

Surviving descendants of David Hamilton are the Godfreys of Georgia, the Magills of Florida, the Harveys, Stroheckers, Pritchards, Knoxes, Poppenheims, Milers, O.Driscolls, Langleys, Cantwells, Nesbits and Morrisons of South Carolina, and a family of Prestons in Alabama. A granddaughter, Mary Pritchard, married Dr. Barnard of New Haven, Conn., and her descendants still reside in that city. Source: Some Irish Settlers in Virginia by Hon. Joseph T. Lawless, Richmond, Virginia