

Guion, Isaac ^[1]

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by Tucker Reed Littleton and Gertrude S. Carraway, 1986

March 1740–24 May 1803

Isaac Guion, Revolutionary War ^[2] surgeon, legislator, councillor of state, and merchant, the fourth in lineal descent to bear his name, was born in New Rochelle, N.Y., where his great-grandfather, Louis Guion, a French Huguenot ^[3], had settled about 1660 after fleeing from Rochelle, France, via England because of religious persecution. He first appears in the records of North Carolina as the buyer of Lot 7 in Bogue (Swansboro) on 24 May 1774, identifying himself as a merchant, "Doctor of Physics," and late of "the Island of Santa Croix in the West Indies." Thereafter he became a prominent merchant of Swansboro, with business connections in New Bern.

Entering the Revolutionary War from Swansboro, Guion was appointed surgeon to the First North Carolina Regiment on 1 Sept. 1775 and served until December of that year. Subsequently, he was appointed paymaster to the Second North Carolina Regiment. In August 1775 he was elected to represent Onslow County ^[4] in the Third Provincial Congress ^[5]. On 5 July 1776 Guion was appointed commissary to the Independent Company of Militia stationed on the coast, and on 11 Dec. 1776 he was paymaster to the Ninth Battalion of North Carolina Continental troops. The following year he was transferred as paymaster to the Seventh Regiment, serving in that capacity until March 1778. One resolution of the Committee on the Treasury in Philadelphia referred to him in August 1777 as paymaster for both the Fourth and Seventh battalions of Continental troops in North Carolina.

On 3 May 1779 Guion was elected to the Council of State, and he served in the 1779–80 sessions. During this time he appears to have been importing salt and other needed supplies for the Continental Army, and he and Joseph Leech ^[6] were authorized to charter vessels to transport prisoners of war out of the state. Although elected to another term in the Council of State on 21 Apr. 1780, Guion was among the patriots taken captive at Charleston, S.C., on 12 May. Near the end of the American Revolution, he appears to have moved to New Bern, though he retained business connections in Swansboro at least as late as 1796.

In January 1781 Guion was again attending sessions of the council of state, and in 1782 he was elected to represent Onslow County ^[4] in the North Carolina Senate. As a senator Guion was appointed to the committee to consider and report on the governor's message and the state papers before the Assembly of 1782. He was chairman of the joint committee to examine and settle the accounts of the secretary of state, a member of the Ways and Means Committee, and a member of the Joint Committee on the State Board of Auditors. In 1785 and again in 1786 he was nominated but failed to win a seat on the Council of State.

Guion represented the borough town of New Bern in the North Carolina House of Commons in the sessions of 1789, 1790, 1793–94, and 1795. In 1789, he was also a delegate from New Bern to the North Carolina Convention ^[7], where he voted for ratification of the United States Constitution. The same year, as a member of the Assembly ^[8], he was appointed to the Committee of Propositions and Grievances, the Committee of Finance, and several lesser committees.

In 1790, Guion was granted several tracts of primarily pocosin land in Onslow County totaling more than 50,000 acres. It is not clear what he planned to do with this land, and records do not reveal any use made of the large tracts. In April 1791 he had the honor of giving the welcoming address to President George Washington ^[9] on behalf of the town of New Bern and St. John's Lodge, A.F. & A.M., of which Guion was the Worshipful Master from 1788 to 1791. President Washington, a fellow Mason ^[10], visited New Bern as a part of his Southern Tour.

In the 1790 Assembly Guion again served on the Committee of Finance. Having been named one of the churchwardens for Christ Church (Episcopal ^[11]), New Bern, by the Assembly of 1789, he represented New Bern at the convention of the Protestant Episcopal church, held at Tarboro in May 1794, at which a church constitution was drawn up and the Reverend Charles Pettigrew ^[12] was elected first Episcopal bishop of North Carolina, though never consecrated. In 1795–96, Guion appears as a business partner in the firm of Ferrand and Guion of Swansboro. In 1800, he was one of the commissioners of navigation of the Port of New Bern.

Guion married Ferebe (Ferebee) Pugh Williams Lee, widow of Colonel Stephen Lee ^[13] of the White Oak River. She was a native of Fort Barnwell, Craven County ^[14], and the sister of Governor Benjamin Williams ^[15], Rebecca Williams (m. Judge Alfred Moore ^[16]), and Mary Williams (m. first John Backhouse ^[17] and second William Ferrand). By her first husband, Stephen Lee, she had four children: Stephen; Mary, who married Dr. John Leigh ^[18] of Tarboro, a member of the House of Commons from Edgecombe ^[19] during 1790–96 and speaker of the house in 1793; Sarah, who married John Haywood ^[20], a state treasurer; and Fereby, of whom no more is known.

Isaac and Ferebe Guion had five children: Isaac Lee, an attorney who died at age thirty-nine; Ferebe Elizabeth Pugh,

second wife of Francis Hawks; Ann Maria, wife of Dr. Hugh Jones; John Williams, who married first Mary Wade and second Mary Tillman; and Margaret Sarah, wife of Dr. Andrew Scott. Ferebe Guion Hawks was the mother of the Reverend Francis L. Hawks. Among the five children of Ann Guion Jones were Eliza (m. Alexander Gaston), Julia (m. [Edward Stanly](#) ^[21]), son of Congressman [John Stanly](#) ^[22] and grandson of [John Wright Stanly](#) ^[23], and Anne (m. Bishop Cicero Stephens Hawks). Other distinguished grandchildren included Dr. John Amos Guion and Haywood Williams Guion, who married a daughter of Governor [John Owen](#) ^[24] and was president of the [Wilmington](#) ^[25], [Charlotte](#) ^[26], and [Rutherford](#) ^[27] Railroad.

Isaac Guion died in New Bern and was buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery. His wife Ferebe (1746–1811) was buried beside him.

References:

Gertrude S. Carraway, *Crown of Life* (1940).

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Minutes, St. John's Lodge, A.F. & A.M. (New Bern).

Elizabeth Moore, comp., Guion Family Records (unpublished).

Records, Christ Episcopal Church (New Bern).

Tombstone inscriptions, Cedar Grove Cemetery (New Bern).

Additional Resources:

Isaac Guion in the Colonial and State Records, UNC Libraries: <https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/creators/csr10906> ^[28]

In Memoriam, John A. Guion, M.D., 1894, Page 6. Craven County Digital History Exhibit: <http://newbern.cpclib.org/digital/ephemera/inm0006.htm> ^[29]

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