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Wilkinson, William [1]

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d. September–November 1780

William Wilkinson, Revolutionary leader [2] in New Hanover County [3], was a member of the Safety Committee [4] in 1775 and 1776, serving as deputy chairman in November 1775. He was a member of the committee to collect carriage guns and swivels in 1775 and of numerous local action groups during the war. Wilkinson also was paymaster for several independent companies of troops, a merchant, a constable of the peace, and a member of St. James's Anglican Church, of which he was a warden. In partnership with Cornelius Harnett [5] he owned a rum distillery located on the Cape Fear River [6] between Walnut and Red Cross streets as well as the schooner *Mary*.

In his will dated 22 September and proved in November 1780, he left property to his brother Robert of Duplin County [7]. To his nephew William Wilkinson he left his house and lot in Wilmington [8] near the church. Each of the other children of Robert received £5; William Maclaine, son of Archibald [9], £500; Elizabeth, the wife of Archibald Maclaine, £250; the Reverend James Tate, £5 yearly and the forgiveness of debts due Wilkinson; and William Henry Hill [10], the son of William Hill, £250. The will also provided £500 to build a Presbyterian church in Wilmington. To nephew John, the son of his brother Thomas, Wilkinson left his silver watch, buckles, buttons, and silver plate. He also freed a woman he had enslaved, as well as her daughter, and supplied funds to establish them in Philadelphia on condition that they wash, mend, and make clothes for his nephew, John Wilkinson, during the time he was in school in Philadelphia. To Cornelius Harnett [5] and Archibald Maclaine he left a cask, about thirty to forty gallons, of his oldest rum to be equally divided between them.

There is no evidence that Wilkinson ever married.

References:

Walter Clark, ed., *State Records of North Carolina*, vols. 11 [11] (1895), 13 [12] (1896).

Leora H. McEachern and Isabel M. Williams, comps., *Wilmington–New Hanover Safety Committee Minutes* (1974).

William S. Powell, ed., *The Correspondence of William Tryon and Other Selected Papers*, 2 vols. (1980–81).

William L. Saunders, ed., *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vols. 7, 9–10 (1890). [12]

William Wilkinson will (North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh).

Additional Resources:

Waddell, Alfred M. (Alfred Moore). *History of New Hanover County and the Lower Cape Fear region, 1723-1800.* Wilmington, NC. 1909. https://archive.org/details/historyofnewhano01wadd [13] (accessed March 12, 2014).

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