

Brehon, James Gloster ^[1]

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by Claiborne T. Smith, Jr., 1979

ca. 1740–8 Apr. 1819

James Gloster Brehon, *Revolutionary War* ^[2] surgeon, was born in Ireland and there received a liberal education. On arriving in America, he first settled in Maryland. In the records of Maryland's Committee of Safety is an order of October 1776 for Brehon to deliver up all the books on physic taken on board any of the captured vessels at St. George Island.

Brehon removed to Warrenton and began to practice. He soon entered the service, however, and was appointed a surgeon in the navy. After serving at different posts until the end of the war, he returned to Warrenton to practice. In July of 1783 he married Mildred, the daughter of John Willis and Mary Hayes Plummer of *Warren County* ^[3]. Mrs. Brehon died without issue in June 1803.

Brehon died in Warrenton. According to his obituary in the *Raleigh Register* ^[4], he was a prominent physician, had accumulated a large estate, and was well known as a student of botany. The historian *John H. Wheeler* ^[5] described him as distinguished for his skill as a surgeon and for his learned scientific researches, adding that his "colloquial powers" were unrivaled. Brehon's large estate was inherited by his nephew, who was the son of James Somerville and Catherine Vekes and who had been adopted by Brehon. The adopted son took the name James Gloster Brehon, also became a physician, and died relatively young in Warrenton, 2 Oct. 1839; he donated the land for the Warrenton Male Academy (the site later occupied by the Graham School and eventually by Warrenton High School), and Brehon Street in Warrenton was named for him.

Another prominent early Warrenton physician, Thomas Benn Gloster, may well have been a relative of Brehon. According to family Bible records, Gloster was born in Limerick, Ireland, in 1763, left Limerick 1 July 1785, and on 20 Feb. 1786 "arrived in Warrenton, North Carolina, one of the United States of America." The records imply that he left Ireland with Warrenton as his goal. Gloster married, in 1795, Mary Hayes Willis, the younger sister of Brehon's wife, Mildred Willis. Gloster died in Warrenton 12 Jan. 1819, leaving two children, Arthur Brehon and Elizabeth Willis, who married John Anderson, a native of Scotland.

References:

Elizabeth Wilson Montgomery, *Sketches of Old Warrenton, North Carolina* (1924).

Warrenton *Warren Record*, 11 Nov. 1955.

John H. Wheeler, *Reminiscences and Memoirs of North Carolina* (1883–84).

Additional Resources:

Wheeler, John H. (John Hill). *Reminiscences and memoirs of North Carolina and eminent North Carolinians*. Columbus, O., Columbus print. works. 1884. <https://archive.org/details/reminiscencesmem00whee> ^[6] (accessed April 29, 2013).

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Authors:

[Smith, Claiborne T., Jr.](#) ^[11]

Origin - location:

[Warren County](#) ^[12]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#).^[13]

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