

Life and Times – Humphrey Peake, Sr. and LT William Peake – 24 Aug 2013 by James T Callender, George Washington Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution



First, let me provide a quick summary of the lineage of the Patriots we are honoring today. John Peake, Sr. was born in England in 1627, came to Virginia in 1652 and settled in Stafford County. His son, John, Jr. was born in 1665 and was a farmer in Stafford County. His son William Peake, Sr. was born in 1688, and had extensive land holding in Stafford, Prince William and Fairfax Counties, to include the land we stand on today. His son, Humphrey Peake, Sr., lived and farmed the Peake family plantation and his son, William, was born and raised here. Now, who were Humphrey and William Peake.

Humphrey Peake, Sr. was born 13 Jan 1731/32 and died on 11 Jan 1785. He was the son of William Peake and Sarah Jean Hereford and had four brothers, John, William, Jonathan and Henry, and one sister, Mary. Humphrey his entire life on the 140 acre Peake family plantation on Little Hunting Creek, which was part of 550 acres purchased by his grandfather in 1705, inherited by the father and then split between his sister, Mary, his brother John and himself⁵. Of historical note, the tracts owned by Mary and Humphrey would eventually become Gum Springs, and the Martin Luther King Jr. park where we are holding this ceremony today was part of Humphrey's homestead. While Humphrey did not serve in the military, Fairfax County records showed that he furnished supplies to the Army⁶.

George Washington's diaries indicate Humphrey ate many a meal at Mt. Vernon and that the two neighbors spoke many times about farming and went hunting together regularly. Peake family members appear more than 50 times in Washington's diaries. When Martha Washington notified friends and neighbors of the president's death and funeral plans, she included "Mr. Peake & family (assumed to mean Henry Peake) and Mrs. Peake (Mary Peake)."

William Peake was born on the Peake Family plantation on Little Hunting Creek in 1761 and died on 18 Sep 1793. He was the son of Humphrey Peake and Mary Stonestreet and had four brothers, John, William, Henry and Humphrey, and two sisters, Anne and Elizabeth. He married Elizabeth [Shockley] in 1791 and had one child, William, who was born after his death in 1793.

William joined Army as a member of Lee's Legion on 7 Apr 1778. The original unit, raised June 8, 1776, at Williamsburg, was part of the 1st Continental Light Dragoons of the Continental Army and was under the

command of Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee. On 7 April 1778, the unit was moved from under the 1st, it's scope of mission was increased to included elements of both cavalry and foot and became known as Lee's Legion. It gained a reputation during the war for efficiency and bravery on the battlefield War records show that William served as Coronet Quarter Master for the Lee's Legion. Coronet was rank which was being phased out and replaced with Lieutenant. During William's service with Lee's Legion, he saw action in New Jersey and Pennsylvania where he suffered extensive head and shoulder injuries during fighting in late 1778. These injuries eventually led to his resignation on 28 Feb 1779. Little else is known about William Peake as he lived such a short life, probably due to his injuries sustained during the Revolutionary War.

Humphrey Peake, Sr. and LT William Peake were citizens and patriots as highlighted by their service to Virginia and the American Republic. Accordingly, these final resting places are being proudly recognized today by The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution.

