A NEGLECTED SCOTTISH CLERGYMAN: ARTHUR HAMILTON OF REVOLUTIONARY VIRGINIA AND MARYLAND

The American Revolution was a stressful and disruptive period in the lives of patriots and loyalists alike. In Virginia ministers of the established Church of England especially found the revolutionary years disturbing and unsettling. They had sworn solemn oaths at their ordination to conform to the Book of Common Prayer and to uphold the king, but the Virginia insurgents demanded that they alter the liturgy and abjure their fidelity to the monarch. Because of a heartfelt belief in divine justice, many people of the eighteenth century viewed oaths very seriously and regarded perjury as a grave moral offense. The Revolution, moreover, took from the clergy their accustomed means of subsistence. The laws of the colony had provided the parish rectors with a comfortable living but with the Revolution came the disestablishment of the church and the loss of public stipends from tax sources. Thereafter voluntary tithes yielded very little income for the parsons, sometimes resulting in economic hardship.

One of the Virginia ministers to experience the vicissitudes associated with the Revolution was Arthur Hamilton, rector of two parishes in Virginia from 1769 to 1779 and then of one in Maryland until his death two years later. He left no progeny or family network to perpetuate his name and memory and he died at a relatively early age and thus he is a prime candidate for historical oblivion. The standard biographical authorities of the clergy knew very little about him, largely neglected him, and thought he disappeared from the records in 1779. This biographical sketch will analyze the life and career of Hamilton, examine his reaction to the revolutionary events, and assess the
effects of disestablishment on his economic status. He was not a celebrated divine but he was an active member of the professional group which served important religious institutions in Virginia and Maryland during a critical period in their history. His story will also illustrate the dilemma of other Anglican clergy during the Revolution.

Hamilton was a Caledonian and at the time both the clergy and laity of Virginia sometimes expressed harsh criticism of the Scots among their ministers. Reportedly they were not sincerely committed to the Church of England or their profession, were incompetent and professionally unqualified, and were spiritually and morally unfit for the ministry. A sizable minority of Hamilton's colleagues were Scots. Of the 108 names found on the clerical lists of 1770, 1774, 1775, and 1776 thirty-three (thirty percent) were from North Britain.

Information about his family is not definitive, but our subject, who was sometimes called Archibald Hamilton, was most probably the nephew of Robert Dinwiddie, a Scot and lieutenant governor of Virginia from 1751 to 1758. In his will of 1769 Dinwiddie bequeathed £50 sterling to Archibald, son of his late sister, Christian, and her husband, Reverend William Hamilton. It is possible that he was the Archibald Hamilton who matriculated at the University of Glasgow in 1750 and took his Master of Arts degree in 1756.

Two-thirds of the Scottish parsons on the lists of the 1770s attended and graduated from the universities of Scotland. More than one half of the other British-born ministers held college degrees and about three-fourths of the American ministers had attended college but a large number had not taken baccalaureate degrees. Comparatively, the Scots were not less learned and professionally qualified than their fellow clerics.

Sometime after he completed his education Hamilton came to Virginia but how he occupied himself upon his arrival is not known. His name first appears in the records on December 17, 1767 when he announced in one of the gazettes that he intended to leave "for England immediately." It was the standard notice for creditors to make known their demands and debtors to settle their accounts. Before his departure he had evidently prepared
himself for the ministry by private study, possibly under the tutelage of a local minister.

Hamilton’s goal in England was to seek holy orders from the bishop of London, the nominal diocesan of the Anglican churches in the colonies; there was no bishop in America. With him he carried an endorsement, dated November 9, 1767, signed by both William Robinson, the bishop’s commissary in Virginia, and Francis Fauquier, the lieutenant governor; Hamilton had “produced such strong testimonials of his moral life and character,” they wrote, that they were recommending him for the priesthood. They would do their utmost to place him in a vacant parish upon his ordination and return, they concluded.7

Hamilton experienced no problems in London. To examining chaplains he demonstrated the necessary knowledge of the Bible, the Prayer Book, the Creeds, and the Thirty Nine Articles; of scriptural and church history; of the various branches of theology; and of secular knowledge which included Latin and Greek. Bishop Richard Terrick ordained him deacon on May 29, 1768 and priest on June 11, 1768. On the latter date the prelate also licensed him to officiate as clergyman in Virginia. Hamilton also had to swear allegiance to the king and promise to defend him against any threat, foreign or domestic, and to swear an oath to conform, without exception, to the Book of Common Prayer in the conduct of worship services.8

In its 1768 issue the elitist Gentleman’s Magazine, under the rubric, “Ecclesiastical Preferments,” listed “Rev. Mr. Arthur Hamilton — to Fredericksburg L. in Maryland.” Hamilton’s reported assignment was incorrect, he was licensed for Virginia as noted above, but the appearance of his name suggests that the magazine recognized him as a member of the upper social class. The periodical is known to have mentioned only one other Virginia clergyman.9

Hamilton returned to Virginia about the time the new governor, Norborne Berkeley, baron de Botetourt, arrived in Williamsburg on October 26, 1768. Within a week Botetourt appointed Hamilton to be his chaplain.10 The quick selection by the governor suggests that he knew the young priest personally or that he acted upon the recommendation of an influential
party. In eight weeks Hamilton became parson of his own parish which was located a day’s journey from Williamsburg, but he retained his position with Botetourt. What his benefits and specific duties as chaplain may have been are not known, but his appointment by the popular and respected Botetourt added to his social and clerical standing in Virginia. At the governor’s death on October 15, 1770 his chaplaincy lapsed.11

On December 12, 1768 the vestry of Petsworth parish in Gloucester County received Hamilton as its rector, with his incumbency to begin the following January 1.12 It was the duty of the new rector to conduct services each Sunday in the Poplar Spring church, the only worship center in the parish. It was the second church by that name and was a handsome brick structure, with a surrounding brick wall. The church boasted an organ, an elaborate altar piece, and a pulpit cloth, table cloth, and pulpit cushion of crimson velvet. The parishioners abandoned the church about 1793 and gradually it disintegrated into a heap of bricks.13

As rector he officiated at baptisms, marriages, and funerals for which he received perquisites. Virginia law provided that the minister receive an annual salary of 16,000 pounds of tobacco, plus the percentages for cask and shrinkage, and that he have the use of a farm or plantation, called a glebe, of at least two hundred acres with a suitable residence and appropriate outbuildings for agricultural production.14 The two tracts making up the Petsworth glebe added up to 322 acres; on it was a rectory of brick which had been constructed in 1746. Since his library at his death included school books, it is probable that Hamilton conducted a school in Petsworth and his other locations.15

How much annual income did Hamilton’s cure provide? A few decades ago Jackson Turner Main thought the tobacco salary yielded the Virginia minister between £160 and £200 sterling per annum and that the glebe was “worth another £35 or so;” he said nothing about the value of the perquisites. More recently Joan Gundersen argued that the salaries “ranged far below” the figures Main used, but she based her judgment on the income of all three hundred ministers between 1723 and 1776, not on those of Hamilton’s generation.16 After the war, the British loyalist
claims commissioners, who were certainly not noted for their generosity, awarded pensions, which were judged to be equal to one-half of their total annual income, to nine Virginia clerical Tory refugees. Their pensions varied from £75 to £130 for an average of almost £100 sterling annually, indicating that the commissioners thought their incomes from tobacco, glebe, and perquisites had been nearly £200 sterling per year. With that income, plus the fees from his students, Hamilton lived comfortably as a member of the upper-middle class in Virginia.17

Apparently Hamilton was not completely satisfied with Petsworth for in 1770 he was an unsuccessful applicant for the vacancy in Kingston, one of the other parishes in Gloucester. He may have considered Kingston’s emoluments superior to those of Petsworth. Kingston’s glebe contained five hundred acres, had a good house and outbuildings, and the parish provided two slaves for its rector.18

Since Hamilton had virtually no labor at his disposal, it is unlikely that he managed production on his glebe but collected rent from tenants. In 1770-1771 he was responsible for only one tithable, an eighteen-year-old convict servant. At his death in 1781 he owned no slaves. Inconclusive evidence hints that Hamilton may have dabbled in the tobacco trade in his early years in Virginia. The compilers of tithables in Gloucester, whose county records were destroyed, wrote that Hamilton owned 325 acres of land in 1770-1771, but possibly they were referring to his glebe, to which he held a life-time tenure.19

Very little of Hamilton’s clerical performance is known. No sermon, nor a fragment or text, has survived, nor is a reference to his preaching by contemporaries to be found in the record. No complaints against him or incidents involving him were recorded. The vestry book only reveals that he attended seven of the thirteen vestry meetings during his tenure in Petsworth and that he received his tobacco as the law stipulated.20

He took part in an important program of the Virginia church, the Fund for the Relief of Widows and Orphans of Clergymen, which was organized in 1754 and which functioned successfully until the end of the Revolution. Each spring the clergy met at the College of William and Mary to hear a morning
and an afternoon sermon and to contribute their annual fee, a pistole; the trustees then distributed the money to needy survivors of clergymen. Hamilton supported the fund by preaching one of the sermons in 1769 and by serving as one of the six clerical trustees in 1770-1771. His participation suggests that he was dedicated to the welfare of his church and profession and that his colleagues respected his abilities. The several gazettes, which have been indexed, regularly identified the preachers and trustees of the Fund. An inspection of the index reveals that the Scots were as supportive of the Fund, and thereby of the Virginia church, as their national counterparts.

Hamilton also demonstrated interest in his church and profession by helping young clerical candidates. An ordinand was to have testimonials from three local clergymen. Hamilton recommended John Wingate to the bishop of London as “a person of good and honest Life” in 1771 and gave John Campbell a similar endorsement in 1772. Both succeeded in achieving holy orders. Wingate was rector of St. Thomas’s parish in Orange County, Virginia and then of St. George’s parish on the island of Grenada. Campbell served Episcopal churches in Pennsylvania after the war. An analysis of the papers of the bishop of London found that the Scottish parsons of Virginia were as active in recruiting and recommending candidates for holy orders, and therefore as committed to the Anglican church, as ministers of other national origins.

Although Hamilton became a clergyman too late to be personally affected by the Two-Penny acts, he involved himself in their aftermath. In anticipation of poor tobacco crops, the Assembly in 1755 and 1758 commuted the compensation of rectors into currency at the rate of two pence per pound of tobacco, for ten months in 1755 and twelve in 1758. A genuine shortage in 1758 caused its price to double and even triple, and thus the law had the effect of reducing the salaries of ministers. John Camm, professor at the College of William and Mary and rector of York-Hampton parish, went to London as the clergy’s agent, where the Privy Council disallowed both acts but did not declare them null and void from their inception. Thus the laws had been valid until their expiration, according to scholars.
Yet some parsons concluded that this opened the way for recovery at law of the full value of the tobacco salaries. About five rectors, including Thomas Warrington of Elizabeth City parish, brought suits in the county courts and Camm in the General Court, all without success. Thereupon Camm appealed his case to the Privy Council which also found against him, on a technicality, Camm and his friends insisted.

Next some of the clergy wanted to induce the Privy Council to rule on the merits of their case. At a clerical convention on December 1, 1768, called by Commissary James Horrocks to enable the clergy to pay their “dutiful compliments” to the new governor, Camm and his associates proposed petitioning Botetourt to request a writ of mandamus from authorities in London, ordering the transfer of Warrington’s case to the Privy Council for trial and decision. A committee of six, including Horrocks, Camm, Warrington, and Hamilton, was to “determine the propriety of it.” The committee held its first meeting at the college on May 25, 1769 when Camm produced a prepared document; the members wanted Horrocks to convey it to the governor, but he declined, arguing that the project should be dropped because it was futile and troublesome. Thereupon the others asked Hamilton, who apparently was agreeable, to present the petition to Botetourt. Horrocks derisively reported that the committee held further meetings, which he did not attend, on May 29 and 30 “within the Bounds of Prison” wherein William Davis of Westover parish, a committee member, was “lodged for debt.” Hamilton probably carried the request to his gubernatorial patron, who must have rejected the proposal out of hand, for no more is heard about it.

Why did Hamilton consent to serve on the committee and to be its go-between to the governor? He had no immediate personal interest in the matter and his role in the affair probably offended his benefactor, who did not wish to involve himself in controversy with the local ruling gentry or with his British superiors. It may well be that Hamilton sincerely felt that a successful appeal to London would contribute to the strengthening of the Virginia church, especially in its contest with the dissenters. A recent study found that the “one common ground”
of those who actively opposed the Two-Penny acts, excepting the college professors, “was a fear of the New Lights.”

Hamilton witnessed the attempt by some of the clergy, again led by Camm, to petition the king for an American bishop in the early 1770s. Since he favored an appeal to London in 1768-1769, it might be supposed that he would support the petition for a colonial episcopate, which would remedy institutional deficiencies of the Anglican Church in Virginia. It may well be that he wanted a bishop, but there is no evidence that he involved himself in the dispute.

The Revolution thrust hard decisions upon many Virginia divines but especially upon recent British clerical arrivals. Their vows to the king were fresh in their minds, often their lives were not yet deeply rooted in Virginia, and often they still had close family and social ties with their native lands. Hamilton had been a clergyman for only five years when the troubles began. There is no record of Hamilton's overt response to events, indicating that he was not outspoken or obtrusive, but since he served parishes until his death his name belongs in the passive patriot column.

Whether he made a conscious choice between the patriot or loyalist position at some point or if events simply swept him along the insurrectionary path is not known. Developments did inveigle some reverends. As Jonathan Boucher, a loyalist Anglican rector of Maryland, explained: "[T]he Southern Clergy, and in particular those of the Church of England, were almost without an option, compelled to become in some degree subservient to insurgency. We were inextricably entrapped, before we were well aware that a net had been spread for us."

The first difficult issues for some clerics involved the boycott agreements against British goods. In May 1774 the rebel leaders organized the third Virginia Association which criticized British policies, resolved on a trade boycott, and recommended the convening of a general congress of all the colonies. By coincidence the Anglican clergy were in convocation at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg and thirteen of them endorsed the Association with their signatures. Hamilton's name was not among them. Perhaps he did not attend the convention.
or simply declined to sign. Gloucester’s insurgents organized a county association in 1774 but the names of those who inscribed their support have not survived. In October 1774 the Continental Congress set up the Continental Association, an intercolonial boycott of British commerce, which was circulated for signature. Some parsons had scruples against halting trade, thinking it implied disloyalty to the king, to whom they had sworn fealty. Several registered their qualms and John Agnew of Suffolk parish in Nansemond County preached against the Continental Association from the pulpit. How Hamilton responded is not recorded. It is possible he was able to evade an answer to the county and continental trade agreements without drawing undue attention to himself, but a refusal to affix his name could not have escaped the record.

Fast days called for by the patriots posed another early problem because participation, from the perspective of some clergymen, violated their ordination vows. The Virginians called for a day of fasting, prayer, and humiliation on June 1, 1774 and the Continental Congress requested a similar observance for July 20, 1775. On the appointed days parishioners were to repair to their churches to hear appropriate prayers and sermons by their rectors. Noncompliance became newsworthy and generally was recorded in the newspapers. James Herdman of Bromfield parish declined to officiate on July 20, 1775 because it “was inconsistent with his duty to his Majesty,” and thereupon the Culpeper county committee of safety decided that he should “be publicly advertised as an person inimical to American Liberty” in one of the Williamsburg gazettes; this was an invitation for all whigs to ostracize Herdman. A special service with sermon and prayers was not necessarily insufferable for a parson with political misgivings. He could assuage his conscience by preaching a general, noncommittal, or ambiguous sermon. In 1774-1775 the original liturgy was still in place. Since there is no evidence to the contrary, it can be assumed that Hamilton honored these fast days as well as others that were to follow.

In 1776 Hamilton and his peers faced a more vexatious problem. On July 5 of that year the fifth Virginia Convention, the last extralegal assembly of the patriots, altered the liturgy in
the Book of Common Prayer, ruling that henceforth rectors pray for the magistrates of Virginia rather than, as formerly, for the king and royal family. This required the clergy to repudiate in a direct manner their oath at ordination to adhere strictly to the Book of Common Prayer. Alexander Cruden of South Farnham parish found the new prayers “incompatible... with his ordination Vows,” and “publicly avowed his refusal [to use them] in his parish church before his parishioners.” The amended liturgy could hardly be ignored. In Upper parish in Nansemond County a colonel threatened William Andrews with death while he was “in the Reading Desk if he prayed for the King.” Andrews soon relented. Since he continued to officiate and to draw salary, it is evident that Hamilton utilized these prayers.

The next year the patriots made the ultimate demand. In early 1777 the state government ordered all adult males to renounce their allegiance to the king and to swear true fidelity to the Commonwealth before October 10 of that year. Thus the Parsons would have to abjure their oath to the king in an unequivocal manner, surrender their cures, or leave the province. Rejection of the test brought threats, harassment, and physical abuse. James Ogilvie of Westover parish and Alexander Cruden of South Farnham testified that after they spurned the oath they were reduced “to the state of an outlaw.” Local authorities subjected William Duncan of Newport parish to double taxation and ordered John Hamilton Rowland of St. Bride’s parish to leave the state or remove himself to the interior after they declined it. All four soon made their exit from Virginia. Christopher McRae, rector of Littleton parish, was the only non-juror to retain his parish throughout the Revolution but young ruffians once severely beat him. Recusants, McRae was an exception, could not hold office and since clergymen were officers of the state church until its disestablishment in the mid-1780s, they could not officiate without taking the oath. Since Hamilton served as minister in Virginia and Maryland until his death it is apparent that he took the test.

The political mandates of the Revolution did not dismay all clergymen. Although a complete record has not survived, it can be said that at least forty percent of the Parsons willingly and
even enthusiastically aligned themselves with the patriots. A considerable number upheld the rebellion from the pulpit or made known their position in other, miscellaneous ways; at least twenty-six (three declined) accepted membership on revolutionary county committees of safety; thirteen acted as military chaplains, and four served in the military, two becoming high ranking officers in the continental army. As best as can be determined, another forty percent, including Hamilton, continued to serve their parishes faithfully, which required the taking of the new oath, but did not otherwise participate in revolutionary affairs. They were inactive or passive patriots. Thus eighty percent of the Anglican ministers in revolutionary Virginia took the American side of the question. Among the twenty-five (twenty percent) who were loyalists, ten were English, Irish, or Welsh, ten were Scottish, and five were American. Contrary to assumptions of some contemporaries, the Caledonian men of the cloth were not especially inclined to be loyalists. 45

Not only the political but also the economic results of the Revolution brought disorder and hardship for Hamilton and his professional associates. The fifth Convention suspended clerical compensation from tax sources as of January 1, 1777; the suspension became permanent. After that salaries had to be raised by subscription from parishioners unaccustomed to voluntary contributions; these donations were very “scanty,” according to Abner Waugh, rector of St. Mary’s parish. 46 James Madison, rector of James City parish, president of the College of William and Mary, and later the bishop of the Virginia diocese, considered leaving the ministry and the college to become a lawyer. “Divinity and Philosophy will starve a Man in these times,” he wrote in 1781. 47 John Page, a prominent public figure and a leading churchman, reported in 1785 that James Maury Fontaine of Ware parish had “been almost starved” and that Robert Andrews of York-Hampton parish had left the ministry “to avoid starving.” 48 Alexander Balmain, rector of Frederick parish, informed his brother in 1783 that “the Revolution . . . has been fatal to the Clergy of Virginia. From a fixed salary they are reduced to depend on a precarious subscription for bread.” 49 The repeal of the church tax law was especially hard on young ministers, such
as Hamilton, who had had little time to build up an estate to support himself and his family.

Petsworth's vestry book shows that Hamilton drew the tobacco salary for the full year of 1776, but some time thereafter he took his leave, presumably because of inadequate salary subscriptions. The destruction of the glebe house by fire, which would have robbed him of a residence, may have been another factor in his departure. His name next appeared in the vestry book of Stratton Major parish in King and Queen County, a parish immediately up from Petsworth between the Peanketank and York Rivers. A rump of the vestry had evidently accepted him as minister. On September 23, 1778, however, the Stratton Major vestry "ordered, that the Church Wardens make application to the Revd. Mr. Wm. Dunlap, and the Revd. Mr. Auther [sic] Hamilton about moving from the Glebe; and provided they refuse to move ... to commence a suit against them." Thus it is apparent that the glebe had two clerical occupants. William Dunlap, an outspoken patriot, had been rector of Stratton Major from 1768 until 1777 when he transferred to St. Paul's parish in Hanover County. There unspecified accusations caused him to resign on June 23, 1778 and to return to the glebe of Stratton Major, apparently with the consent of Hamilton. It seems the families had an unknown relationship.

In a short time both Dunlap and Hamilton removed themselves from the Stratton Major glebe. A new vestry at St. Paul's exonerated Dunlap of the unknown charges and received him again as minister, where he remained until his death in September 1779. To Hamilton the Stratton Major vestrymen suggested that he could stay for a while and preach for his rent. They offered him the use of the glebe house, an outbuilding, a garden, and a small pasture, if he would officiate at the parish church once a month. They mentioned nothing about a subscription. In the meantime the wardens rented out the glebe acreage and advertised for a new parson in a Williamsburg gazette. Having had virtually no income for about two years, Hamilton urgently needed a cure with a good living and in late 1778 or early 1779 he accepted the rectorate of Port Tobacco parish in Charles County, Maryland. His removal to Maryland has eluded the
Virginia church historians who thought Hamilton disappeared from the records after he left Stratton Major.

Hamilton’s expulsion from Stratton Major was not related to his preaching or character. Rather it was the product of a bitterly divided vestry, which was involved in acrimonious public controversy throughout the 1770s. Hamilton and his Scottish contemporary reverends, contrary to allegations, had a good moral record. Only one of them faced discipline for misconduct and immorality. He was the well-known Patrick Lunan of Upper parish, who, according to Wilmer L. Hall, set “some sort of record in his time for clerical profligacy.” Lunan’s vestry induced him to resign his cure. Five other clerics of the Revolutionary generation got into trouble for their conduct; one was born in England, three in Virginia, and one in Pennsylvania. To a large degree the Scots, who presumably had been reared as Presbyterians, were victims of a cultural, denominational, and national bias.

As in Virginia, taxes supported the Church of England in Maryland until disestablishment during the Revolution. The accounts by his executrix after Hamilton’s death indicate that Port Tobacco had a good, productive glebe. Port Tobacco was among the best paying parishes in Maryland during the latter years of the establishment. In all probability Port Tobacco offered Hamilton inducements that vacant parishes in Virginia were unable to match.

His death in early 1781, when he was less than fifty years old, limited Hamilton’s tenure in Port Tobacco to only about two years. He dated his will January 3, his executrix qualified on February 21, and the appraisers inventoried his personal property on March 22. He bequeathed all of his “estate and effects” to his wife, Johanna Hamilton, whom he also named the sole executrix. Johanna Hamilton remains unidentified and what became of her after her husband’s death is unknown.

The inventory of his personal property suggests that Hamilton had seen better days before falling upon hard times. In describing and pricing his effects, the viewers used such adjectives as damaged, worn, broken, sorry, and cracked fifteen times. They placed a value of £155 11s. 6d. Maryland current money
(about £127 sterling) upon his personalty. After the executrix collected his tobacco salary and the tobacco and corn produced by the glebe and settled all accounts, she found the total value of the personal estate to be £222 8s. 3d. Maryland common currency (about £133 sterling). Hamilton owned no slaves or bondservants or plantation tools and equipment, indicating that he was not managing agricultural production. Beside the cattle, three horses, a phaeton, and library, the estate consisted of household furniture and kitchenware. The listing makes it apparent that Hamilton had genteel tastes; there were mahogany, walnut, and cherry wood tables, window curtains, china cups and saucers, tea and coffee pots, twelve mezzotint framed pictures, wine glasses, brass candlesticks, a large carpet, and a violin. The appraisers placed a value of £27 current money on his library, which was seventeen percent of the estate. This large proportion suggests that Hamilton had the appreciation of scholarship generally associated with respected clergymen.59

The will did not mention his land in Virginia and inventories did not include real estate. What his land may have been worth, or what may have become of it, or if he owned any realty at the time of his death is not known since the Gloucester county records are not extant. The Land Tax Books for Gloucester have survived but the list for 1782, the earliest year for which they exist, do not mention his name.60

Hamilton’s personal estate was modest in comparison to those of other Chesapeake clergymen of the revolutionary period. Hamilton had been the beneficiary of a tax-supported salary for only eight years and his income since the end of church taxes had been very meager. It was unusual for ministers not to own slaves. Economic constraint, rather than moral compunction, was probably the reason he did not own slaves. The Virginia Personal Property Tax Books of the 1780s indicate that about ninety percent of the resident clerics who survived until that time possessed slaves; these survivors averaged twenty-three slaves each, with the median number being twenty.61

The Revolution imposed fundamental changes upon Hamilton. It required him to forswear his oaths to king and church, to adapt to a new republican order, and to accept drastic
changes in his professional status and personal economic future. For him life might have been happier without the Revolution. In an earlier, tranquil period he could have enjoyed a more professionally productive career, a more personally and economically rewarding career, and a more serene life. Hamilton was not an illustrious figure, but as a clergyman during the unsettled years of the Revolution and the disestablishment of the Church of England, he merits cognizance by his historical constituencies in the two Chesapeake provinces. He appears to have sprung from a good Scottish family, to have been well educated and well qualified for his profession, and to have served his church with ability and dedication. The disturbed political times, as well as his untimely death, denied Hamilton the further opportunity of gaining the full recognition and acceptance he may have deserved in each province. Hamilton lacked offspring and immediate family members in America to perpetuate his name and to preserve his memory. It is to be regretted that the records concerning him are not more complete. Perhaps additional data about him can yet be uncovered in the years to come.

Otto Lohrenz

Endnotes


3 William Stevens Perry, ed., Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church, 4 vols. (Hartford, Conn., 1870-78), 1:363,
Twenty-two on the lists were natives of England, seven of Ireland, one of Wales, and forty-six of American colonies.


6 Purdie and Dixon’s Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), Dec. 1, 1767.


9 Gentleman’s Magazine and Historical Chronicle 38 (1768): 447; the magazine reported the death of John Wingate in 1789; ibid., 59 (1789): 955.

10 Purdie and Dixon’s Va. Gaz., Nov. 3, 1768; Rind’s Va. Gaz., Oct. 27, 1768, Nov. 3, 1768; in announcing his appointment as chaplain, the first gazette used the surname, Arthur, the second, Archibald.


12 Churchill Gibson Chamberlayne, ed., The Vestry Book of Petworth Parish, Gloucester County, Virginia 1677-1793 (Richmond, 1933), 340. The two gazettes reported his appointment as rector; again, one used the surname Arthur, and the other Archibald; Purdie and Dixon’s Va. Gaz., Dec. 22, 1768; Rind’s Va. Gaz., Dec. 22, 1768.
22 Purdie and Dixon’s *Va. Gaz.*, May 4, 1769, Mar. 22, 1770, Mar. 21, 1771.
24 Fulham Papers, 26:71, 164.
26 Gundersen, Anglican Ministry, 42-43.
30 Gundersen, Anglican Ministry, 204-15, esp. 211, 215.
36 Dixon and Hunter’s Virginia Gazette (Williamsburg), Apr. 1, 1775.

42 Hening, ed., Statutes at Large, 9:281-82.


44 Brydon, “Clergy of the Established Church,” 15; on the disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Virginia, see Thomas E. Buckley, Church and State in Revolutionary Virginia, 1776-1787 (Charlottesville, Va., 1977).


49 Alexander Balmain to John Balmain, May 8, 1783, cited in Buckley, Church and State, 83.

50 Chamberlayne, ed., Vestry Book of Petsworth Parish, 356-57; the exact date of the fire is not known, but the vestry voted to sell the bricks in 1785; see ibid., 375


55 Fulham Papers, 26:200-03; Wilmer L. Hall, ed., The Vestry Book of the Upper Parish, Nansemond County, Virginia, 1743-1793 (Richmond, 1949), xxxix.


57 Perry, ed., Historical Collections, 4:209-11, 336, 344; Administration Accounts, December 1782 Court, Charles County Wills, B#1, 66-68, photocopy, Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis.

58 Charles County Wills, AF#7, 1781, 609, 614-15, 646-48, photocopy, Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis.

59 For Hamilton’s will, qualification of the executrix, the inventory, and administration accounts, see Charles County Wills, AF#7, 609, 614-15, 646-48; and ibid., B#1, 66-68, photocopy, Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis. On the value of Maryland’s common and current money, see Alice Hanson Jones, Wealth of a Nation to Be: The American Colonies on the Eve of the Revolution (New York, 1980), 9.

60 Gloucester County Land Tax Books, 1782-1820, reel 117, Virginia State Library, Richmond.