

GENERAL AARON HANKINSON

BY

GENERAL JAMES F. RUSLING

AARON HANKINSON was the son of Joseph and Rachel (Mattison) Hankinson. He was born Feb. 7, 1735, near Rowland's Mills, Hunterdon County, N. J., and died Oct. 9, 1806, near Stillwater, Sussex County, N. J. His marriage license, dated Feb. 9, 1764, is recorded in the office of the Secretary of State, Trenton, N. J., and gives him as of Amwell Township, Hunterdon County, N. J., to Mary Snyder of Kingwood Township, same county. He was brought up on a farm there, still known as the "Hankinson Homestead," but in 1764 or 1765 removed to Sussex County and lies buried in the "Yellow Frame Cemetery" of the Presbyterian church, near Stillwater, of which he was long an elder. He lived at or near Stillwater, but also owned land in Sandiston Township. When he removed from Hunterdon to Sussex, his father (evidently a man of means) gave him and his brother William farms there of 363 acres each.

He was in commission as Colonel, commanding Regiment N. J. Troops (a Provisional Regt., probably), at Amboy, N. J., 1776, and was regularly commissioned Colonel of 2d Regiment Sussex, N. J., Militia Feb. 28, 1777, and continued as such during the Revolutionary War. He was present with his regiment as a part of General David Forman's Brigade, N. J., Detached Militia, at the battle of Germantown, Pa., Oct. 4, 1777,

under General Washington, but his regiment appears to have been kept chiefly at home to protect Sussex against Tories and Indians—Sussex being then a frontier county in part. After the war, June 5, 1793, he was promoted Brigadier General of N. J. Militia, and continued as such until his decease. He was a member of Assembly N. J., 1782 to 1786, and again 1788 to 1792 continuously, from Sussex County.

He had thirteen children,¹ as follows:

Joseph, b. 1763, d. 1838; m. Margaret Goble, d. 1844.

Henry,² b. Aug. 27, 1767; d. May 5, 1848; m. Mary McCullough, dau. Col. Wm. McCullough, Asbury, N. J. Her dau. Eliza B. married Gershom Rusling, my father.

Sarah, b. 1770, d. Feb. 10, 1815; m. 1st, David Linn; 2d, John Smedley, June 10, 1806.

John, b. Nov. 25, 1771; d. Aug. 3, 1845; m. Elizabeth Hunt, b. Feb. 6, 1770; d. Nov. 2, 1841.

Thomas, b. 1775, d. April 27, 1796.

William, b. Oct. 30, 1779; d. Oct. 17, 1830; m. Margaret Crisman, March 14, 1805. She d. Feb. 26, 1857.

No issue. He acquired much property at Blairstown, N. J., which he bequeathed to John L. Blair (his clerk), which was the beginning of the great Blair estate.

Samuel, b. 1792; d. April 21, 1793.

Elizabeth, b. —; d. —; m. Nathan Armstrong, Jan., 1807. He d. 1838.

¹The "Genealogical Record of descendants of Nathan Armstrong" says 12, but apparently there were 13.

²Admitted to N. J. Bar Nov. Term, 1794, and settled at Washington, N. J. Was Major and Inspector Sussex Brigade, Oct. 26, 1809; member of Assembly N. J. 1805-1807-1808 and 1815.

Hannah, b. —; d. —; m. Cooper Kelsey, May 14, 1808,
related to Hon. Henry C. Kelsey, probably.

Aaron, b. April 22, 1782; d. Feb. 23, 1850; m. Sarah
Kelsey, April 12, 1804; b. March 1, 1785.

Nancy, b. —; d. —; m. Aaron Southard.

Rachel, b. —; d. —; m. Sidney Herriott.

Daniel Thatcher, b. —; d. —.

A fruitful vine, clearly; but am unable to complete his
"Family Record," and am not sure of their order of
births, even.

His grave is on the southeasterly side of the old
"Yellow Frame Church," and near to it (our forbears
liked to be buried as near to the church as possible, and
many inside of it!), in the midst of a group of Hankin-
son graves, and bears the following quaint inscription:

"A. H.
In memory of
B. General
Aaron Hankinson,
who departed this life
Oct. IX, 1806.

Aged 71 years, 8 months, 2 days.

Let all his children in a word,
Unite and praise the Eternal God,
For the sweet hope that he has gone
To rest with Christ God's only Son."

Evidently he was a God-fearing man, of soldierly tastes
and character, a typical Jerseyman of his time, a good
citizen, and a man of parts and substance.

The Hankinson family were English unquestionably,
and settled first in Monmouth County, N. J. Two of

them removed to Hunterdon and settled near Rowland's Mills, 4 miles northeast of Flemington, about 1700 probably. These were Joseph (father of General Aaron) and William Hankinson. As early as 1688, Thomas and Richard Hankinson received a patent for 120 acres of land in Monmouth County from proprietors of West Jersey. In 1700 Thomas Hankinson, of Freehold, bought 610 acres from Benjamin Alien. In 1776 Kenneth Hankinson was taxed in Freehold Township for 504 acres of land and 64 horses and cattle. This Kenneth Hankinson was a man of parts, and June 16, 1776, became a captain in Col. Forman's battalion, Heard's Brigade, N. J. Line; also in 1st Reg't Monmouth Militia 1777, and participated in the battle of Monmouth, June, 1778 (probably). The Hunterdon and Sussex Hankinsons all claim relationship to this Kenneth Hankinson; and Ex-Gov. William A. Newell, of N. J., was a descendant of his.

If the Hankinsons emigrated from England, they likely came from Middlesex County there, where they have the following coat-of-arms: "Ar. a fesse gu. fretty or. betw. three ducks sa. Crest a demi-phoenix, wings elevated or. issuant from flames. Motto *vi et animo*." Burke's Gen. Armory, 452.

Trenton, N. J., Jan. 22, 1907.