

Hezekiah Maham, of Maham's Towers ~

“The most eminent military character the Revolution produced in this parish” were the words of one of Berkeley County's most revered and respected historians, Frederick A. Porcher, about Colonel Hezekiah Maham of St. Stephen's Parish.

You've been told, several times over the past several months, about a few of our more illustrious heroes, when it relates to the American Revolution and our action sites here in Berkeley County. General Francis Marion, of course topping the list. Colonel Maham, also born here in Berkeley County, lived, worked, fought, died, and is buried here in St. Stephen's Parish (more especially, here in Pineville). When comparing him to the General, there was difference in almost every aspect of their lives. (All things considered, we'd have to say that most folks don't compare well to others; we all have our “peculiarities.”)

Many of our Revolutionary War action sites' history in Berkeley County include as a key participant, Hezekiah Maham, in each of the stories. A few that immediately come to mind are Battle of Moncks Corner, Biggins and Wadboo Bridges, and Fair Lawn Plantation. Each of these stories (action sites) have defining moments as to the part played by the Colonel, relating to the instructions he was ordered to follow, and how he carried out those orders.

As I think about these “local” skirmishes / raids / and/or actions, I am reminded of all the people involved in those particular battles. Some were *Loyalists*, those colonists in the Thirteen Colonies who remained loyal to the British Crown during the American Revolutionary War, often referred to as Tories or King's Men at the time. On the other side, were the *Patriots*, who in the 18th century, American writers, including Benjamin Franklin, embraced the word *Patriot* to define the colonists who took action against British control.

Certainly, a most disturbing situation for many families were those split between that of being a *Loyalist*, or that of an American. Such was certainly the case of many families in Berkeley County.

I have a rather lengthy story to tell you about Hezekiah Maham, that I'm sure you will find interesting, especially pertaining to the military character Hezekiah exhibited during his ‘war days.’ However, I'll have to pick a time when I have more space provided . . . to do it justice. It also has information about his involvement with blooded horses, Carolina Gold rice, etc.,etc. Interested?

Hezekiah Maham was always a curiosity to me when I was growing up in Pineville. Knowing every inch of Maham Plantation property, the Maham

monument was in the middle of one of my cousin's fields we farmed around on a regular basis. All of this property had belonged to my grandfather and his brother for too many years to count, farmers they both were, as was my father. The cemetery we plowed around had a very old, but neat little wrought iron fence around it, and from all appearances there may have been at least a half-dozen gravesites inside. I'm so sorry I didn't have any "historical value importance" settled in my head at that time, otherwise, I'd be able to tell you about tons more today.

During the year 1776, Maham was elected a captain in the First Rifle Regiment under Colonel Isaac Huger, where he served during the siege of Savannah and other battles. Later he was made a Commander of the Horse in General Francis Marion's Brigade, and in the attack on Fort Watson in April 1781, he created a crude tower, tall enough to overlook the stockade, giving the Americans a win over the British. The "Maham Towers" were likewise used for command platforms over British forts in South Carolina and Georgia. Hezekiah Maham would later become Lt. Colonel of an independent Corp of Cavalry, performing many daring exploits in the Lowcountry of the Carolinas, where thirty or more actions were on Berkeley County soil.

Hezekiah Maham was born in St. Stephen's Parish, South Carolina on June 26, 1739, and died there in 1789. In early manhood, he was an overseer for the Sinkler family of St. John's Parish, Berkeley; later a Planter at his own plantation "Maham" in St. Stephen's Parish. He was a Tax Collector in 1767. He was elected a member of the First and Second Provincial Congresses, St. Stephen's, 1775-76; S.C. House of Representative, St. Stephen's, 1781-82, 1783-84 (declined election in 1784), 1785-86; and the S.C. Senate, St. Stephen's, 1786-89, when he died. He was a delegate to the State Convention to ratify the Federal Constitution in 1788; a Justice of the Peace; and a member of the Santee Jockey Club.

Hezekiah Maham, with his love for 'blooded' horses, was responsible for design and lay-out of one of South Carolina's more prestigious race courses, the Pineville Race Course (years before it was Pineville), later named the St. Stephen's Race Course. He was also an active member and vestryman of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church.

Hezekiah Maham, as I stated, was a very important character in Berkeley County. I consider him a hero . . . from several angles. Maham's assistance to General Francis Marion over the years became extremely valuable, especially in Marion's gathering of intelligence. He had learned to become increasingly careful to verify information which he sent to his superior, to ensure it correct. Maham was distinguished not only for his gallantry, but also for a certain skill he possessed

in the art of reducing ‘fortified places’ (a perfect example was his institution of “Maham Towers at Fort Watson).

My reason for pointing out Col. Hezekiah Maham’s service to his country is (I’m hoping!) to get you interested enough that you will send me names and stories of ancestors, friends, and/or neighbors who are “important people” in Berkeley County’s history. I know you have names of those who lived or had property and voting rights in Berkeley County parishes that you can send me. What about historic places or events that occurred? And you definitely have stories you can tell . . . that need to be written, so they won’t be forgotten when you’re gone. Please, let me hear from you. We must preserve our Berkeley County history so it won’t be forgotten. Call me at 843-509-3408, or email me at keithg@homesc.com. There is so much to tell!



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Gingi Martin

Portrait by Gingi Martin, in collections of Keith Gourdin