

Life and Times – Richard Major – 29 Mar 2014

by James T Callender, George Washington Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution

Richard Major was born near Pennsbury, Pennsylvania, in the 1722. He married Sarah Mershon of New Jersey in about 1743 and they had five children. The family moved to Loudoun County in 1766 and died 3 Dec 1796 in Virginia.

Richard Major was ordained by the Baptist Church in 1768 and was one of the first Baptist preachers in Northern Virginia. He established numerous Baptist churches in Northern Virginia, to include Frying Pan, Bull Run and Popeshead Churches in Fairfax County; and Kectocon and River Churches in Loudoun

County. There are stories about many efforts to do him bodily harm for his ministry of the gospel. James Taylor in his book "Virginia Baptist Ministers," written in 1860, tells a story about a man whose wife Rev. Major had baptized. He determined to kill Major on sight. He attended a meeting where Major was preaching and waited for an opportunity to catch some negative expression from the sermon to provide an excuse to attack him. Rather, he came under conviction and was saved.

His patriot service is documented in the book "Virginia Military Records." Public notice was given on 25 February 1782 in an act of Assembly, entitled "an act for adjusting claims for property impressed or taken for public service," where Richard Major is identified as one of the persons who gave aid to the American Revolution.

Rev. Major's daughter Sarah married Andrew Hutchison in 1775 and thus the connection to the Hutchison House and this cemetery. Of historical note: the significance of the Hutchison House lies in the fact that it is one of the few remaining fourth quarter, 18th Century plantation houses in western Fairfax County, and the only one in brick. At the time of its erection the house was an elaborate structure exemplified by its large windows with heavy sills and lintels, its decorative Flemish-bond brick work, and by its interior mantels and other woodwork.

