

Patriot Willis McDonald

Willis McDonald was born Jan 10, 1760 near present day North Carolina, and died Mar 7, 1840, Jefferson County, Mississippi. His death resulted from injuries received when his horse was startled and he was thrown off.

There is an unresolved question on who Willis' father was. Some say James McDonald, Captain, 1st South Carolina, while others believe it was Major Adam McDonald, also of the 1st South Carolina. Three of Willis' 2nd great granddaughters obtained DAR membership in 1895, DAR National Numbers: 8767, 9591 and 9592, each claiming Adam McDonald as their "Patriot" ancestor. To prove Willis' father, further research is necessary.

James McDonald died while in captivity, 1777, Fort Moultrie, and Major Adam McDonald was killed in 1778. His uncle, Lieutenant Colonel Archibald McDonald also served with the 1st South Carolina, and was executor for the estates of both his brothers.

Willis is shown on South Carolina Roster with service during the fall of Charleston, and served under Captains Robert Carithers, and John Chestnut, and Major Postel. After his death in 1840, the following obituary appeared in a Jefferson County, Mississippi newspaper: "Willis McDonald entered the service of his native state, South Carolina, at the age of sixteen. He served under General Moultrie at the siege of Charleston; was taken prisoner by the British; released on parole and, after two years exchanged. He afterwards served under General Marion until the close of the war. He was present at the Battles of Eutaw Springs and Bacon's Bridge, and a variety of other engagements with the British, Indians and Tories."

Some family lore, as published in "History and Customs of the McDonald Family", 1972 by Willie McDonald Arneson includes:

- "Willis was present when Marion served the dish of potatoes to the British, and was with "Scotch" McDonald when certain British officers were surprised and several were killed who had gone into the country to enjoy the scenery with some pretty Tory girls."

After the war, Willis married Theodortia Owen, and initially settled in the Cheraw District and through Post- Revolutionary Grant - Vol 13, purchased 400 acres of land on the North side of Synches Creek, Jan 13, 1786. It was here that

Thomas Owen McDonald, my second great grandfather was born. Late 1790 Willis decided to move to Georgia where he and Dortia continued to thrive and were active members of the Mc Bean Baptist Church, Burke County, until 1799, when again they decided to relocate. This was the last of the moves for Willis as they settled in Jefferson County, Mississippi on land that became known as "China Grove Plantation" for the plentiful trees that grew in the area. Here Willis was laid to rest in 1840.