

Col. Ambrose Levi Rucker - Biography

A Patriot of the American Revolution for VIRGINIA with the rank of LIEUTENANT COLONEL. DAR Ancestor # A099452. Direct Ancestor of Zachary T. Haines.

Colonel Ambrose was 6 feet 6 inches in height and weighed 300 pounds. He was a pioneer in Virginia who left a legacy to his Family and descendants and blazed a path in the History of the USA.

Residences and Occupations—

Ambrose Rucker was born about 1725 in Orange County, Virginia, one of the twelve children of John Rucker and Susannah Coghill. On the death of his father in 1742, he inherited approximately 5,000 acres in Albermarle County and around 1,760, which he then took up residence in that part which became Amherst County in the following year. By 1781, he owned (patented) thousands of acres of land in Virginia and Kentucky.

In 1751, Colonel Ambrose Rucker founded Rucker's Chapel in Amherst County, Virginia. It was one of the first Anglican (present-day Episcopal) churches in Amherst County. It was also known as Harris Creek Church and later known as Saint Matthew's Church. It stood on a part of a 5,850-acre tract his father John Rucker, patented in 1745. The Church served its congregation until 1817, when the members moved to Ascension Church in Amherst.

He was appointed Lt. in the Virginia Militia and was a substantial citizen of the county. When relations with England worsened, he was appointed to the Committee of Safety and to the Virginia House of Delegates.

Colonel Ambrose Rucker and his Family were close friends with Virginia Governor Thomas Jefferson (later President of the United States).

In 1821, after the death of Colonel Ambrose Rucker, Patrick Henry represented Rucker Family's interests in a legal dispute with the Rucker's neighbor, and Thomas Jefferson testified in the suit to prove the legal dispute in favor of the Rucker Family.

Military and Public Service--

He served as a Captain in the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War. In 1766, he received a commission as Lieutenant in Amherst County Militia Company. In 1766, he was appointed and served as Justice of the Peace in Amherst County, Virginia. In 1778, he was appointed and served as Sheriff of Amherst County. In 1781 - 1782, he served in the Virginia Legislature House of Delegates during the Revolutionary War representing Amherst County.

When the War broke out, he was appointed Captain of Militia. His company guarded some of the thousands of British and Hessian prisoners from Saratoga that were held at Albermarle Barracks. Later he was promoted to Lt Col and commanded a battalion. While attending the House of Delegates meeting in Charlottesville, he narrowly escaped capture by the infamous Tarleton and his Dragoons. Ambrose, although he was 6' 6" and weighed 303 pounds, outran his pursuers while mounted on his sturdy Hunter.

Ambrose could have been said to had a "good war" but it was marred by the loss of his oldest son, Reuben, killed in action in the last year of the war.

In 1791, he was active in the process to establish the Warminster Academy in Amherst County, Virginia. Colonel Ambrose Rucker was appointed one of the first trustees of this Academy. (Source: "The Beginnings of Public Education in Virginia", 1776-1860: Study of Secondary Schools in Relation to the State Literary Fund, Volume 187, page 123)

Last Will and Testament--

Col. Rucker passed away after reaching age 84 years. The Will of Col Ambrose Rucker was written, signed, and sealed on 3 Dec 1803; and after his death it was probated on 21 Dec 1807. His personal and real wealth was considerable. The Will left proportions to his wife, children, grandchildren, other family members, and their heirs forever. Some of the property included: money (in British pounds and shillings), furniture, livestock, buildings, farm equipment, land, and negro slaves.

The Will allocated some of his land for a family cemetery-- "It is to be observed that I reserve half an acre for a grave yard is now fixed to belong to my Family forever..."

(Source: Amherst County, Virginia, Will Book 4, pg. 479)

Sources--

"The Rucker Family Genealogy with their ancestors, descendants, and connections", compiled by Sudie Rucker Wood from original records, letters, and other material collected over a period of thirty years.", published 1932 by Old Dominion Press, Inc., in Richmond, Virginia.