

Richard Hill (b. 1698 - d. 1762)

MSA SC 3520-15900

Property Owner, London Town, Maryland

Biography:

Dr. Richard Hill was a Quaker who lived in the area surrounding London Town from his birth in 1698 until he left Maryland in 1739. Born on his family's plantation, "Hill's Point," right outside Annapolis, he was the grandson of Captain Richard Hill¹ and the son of Henry Hill.²

His brother Levin Hill was married to Elizabeth Hill.³ Dr. Hill's other brother Joseph Hill died in 1761, surviving all of his children.⁴ Joseph Hill's wife, Sarah Richardson Hill, also died in 1761.⁵ His daughter, Margaret, died in 1745.⁶ His only son, Henry, died in 1751 while helping hang tobacco.⁷ Joseph Hill left most of his possessions to his granddaughter, Henny Margaret Hill.⁸

In 1720/1, Dr. Richard Hill married Deborah Moore. They were married near London Town and the South River. She was the granddaughter of Thomas Lloyd, the governor of Pennsylvania, and the daughter of Mordecai Moore.⁹ Dr. Hill and his wife had at least ten children: Richard Jr., Henry, Deborah Bissett, Milcah, Harriot Scott, Hannah Moore, Mary Lamar, Rachel Wells, Margaret Morris, and Sarah Dillwyn.¹⁰ His eldest son, Richard, died on March 18, 1755 in Madeira.¹¹

Dr. Hill was a surgeon, an amateur botanist, and a merchant. It is believed that he may have lived in Philadelphia for a time while receiving his medical training.¹² He pursued his interest in medicinal plants through his correspondence with scholars in London and the Royal Society of London.¹³ As a merchant, he owned at least four vessels: *Frederick* (80 tons, ship), *London Town* (70 tons, snow), *Benedict* (50 tons, sloop), and *Bachelor Hall*.¹⁴

Dr. Hill possessed at least seven lots in London Town and some parcels of land in the surrounding area. He acquired lots 1, 2, and 44 from Richard Moore (son of Mordecai Moore) in 1722.¹⁵ He bought lot 43 from Ellis Davis of Philadelphia in 1722,¹⁶ lot 8 from Stephen Warman in 1725,¹⁷ and lot 90 from Thomas Macklefish in 1727.¹⁸ He also purchased other parcels of land from Patrick Sympson,¹⁹ David Macklefish,²⁰ Richard Jones,²¹ Thomas Tylooy,²² and William Purdy.²³

Dr. Hill owned at least thirty nine slaves. He purchased Sambo from Joseph Burton in 1730, Toby from Thomas Linthicum in 1730²⁴, and Tommy, Tommy, and Nell (or Moll?) from Edward Parrish in 1732.²⁵ He sold Valentine, Bob, Sambo, Worchester, Jack, Dick, Polydore, Lucy, Rose, Bacchus, Plato, London, Tom, Tom, Will, Charles, Angolus, Will, Batchelor, Amoas (Caneas?), Sam, Moll, Sarah, Cudjo, Jack, Peter, York, Jemony, Jenny, Phillis, Junina (Jemima?), Salopina, Handy, Parthonia, Tom, Hannah, and Diana to John Galloway in 1737.²⁶ Valentine (boy) and Jemima (girl) were two of the slaves he had

with him in Madeira. In his will, he left Valentine to his son, Henry, and Jemima to his granddaughter, Mary Bissett.²⁷

Toward the end of Dr. Hill's time in the London Town area, he "sought immunity from debts," the equivalent of filing for bankruptcy today, but was denied.²⁸ Thus, he had to sell most of his possessions, demonstrated by a deed made in 1737 in which Dr. Hill had to sell three London Town lots and at least five parcels of land to John Galloway.²⁹ Dr. Hill moved to Funchal, the capital of Madeira, a Portuguese archipelago north of the Canary Islands.³⁰ Before his departure, his eldest daughter, Hannah, aged fifteen, married the grandson of his wife's sister, Dr. Samuel Preston Moore. He left six of his own children in her care.³¹ One can read about the relationship between Hannah Moore (nee Hill) and her father in the letters they exchanged during Dr. Hill's time in Madeira.³² Gradually, Dr. Hill's business affairs started to improve, as he desired to provide well for his children. He returned to the colonies in 1754 to visit his family who had moved to Philadelphia, and his brother, Joseph, who lived near London Town.³³

While visiting from Madeira, Dr. Richard Hill died on January 29, 1762 in Philadelphia.³⁴

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1. Mechelle L. Kerns, *London Town: The Life of a Colonial Town*, (University of Maryland Baltimore County: Masters of Arts Thesis, 1999), 93.
 2. [ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT \(Land Records\) Richard Hill, 1734, Liber RD2, folio 247, MSA C97-17, MdHR 4783.](#)
 3. Barnard C. Steiner, ed, *Proceedings and Acts of the Assembly*, vol. XL, (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society), 237.
 4. Kerns, 96.
 5. "[Sarah Richardson Hill,](#)" *Maryland Gazette*, January 15, 1761.
 6. "Margaret Hill," *Maryland Gazette*, January 20, 1745.
 7. "[Henry Hill,](#)" *Maryland Gazette*, August 28, 1751.
 8. Kerns, 96.
 9. Mechelle Kerns and Mollie Ridout, *Dr. Richard Hill of London Town: Economic and Social Perspectives on Life in Colonial America*, (Maryland: London Town Foundation, 1998), 5.
 10. Library Company of Philadelphia. Will. Richard Hill, 1761. Collection Number. YI 2/ 7291/ F235.
 11. "Richard Hill, junior." *Maryland Gazette*, May 15, 1755.
 12. Kerns, 93-4.
 13. Kerns and Ridout, 13-4.
 14. Kerns, 93-4.
 15. [ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT \(Land Records\) Richard Hill, 1722, Liber CW1, folio 499, MSA C97-11, MdHR 4777.](#)
 16. [ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT \(Land Records\) Richard Hill, 1722, Liber RCW2, folio 232, MSA C97-12, MdHR 4778.](#)
 17. [ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT \(Land Records\) Richard Hill, 1725, Liber SY1, folio 161, MSA C97-13, MdHR 4779.](#)
 18. [ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT \(Land Records\) Richard Hill, 1727, Liber SY1, folio 293, MSA C97-13, MdHR 4779.](#)
 19. [ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT \(Land Records\) Richard Hill, 1724, Liber SY1, folio 83, MSA C97-13, MdHR 4779.](#)
 20. [ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT \(Land Records\) Richard Hill, 1726, Liber SY1, folio 206, MSA C97-13, MdHR 4779.](#)
 21. [ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT \(Land Records\) Richard Hill, 1731, Liber IHTI1, folio 393, MSA C97-16, MdHR 4782.](#)

22. [ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT \(Land Records\) Richard Hill, 1732](#), Liber RD2, folio 266, MSA C97-17, MdHR 4783.
23. [ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT \(Land Records\) Richard Hill, 1730](#), Liber RD2, folio 381, [MSA C97-17, MdHR 4783](#).
24. [ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT \(Land Records\) Richard Hill, 1730](#), Liber TI1, folio 303, [MSA C97-15, MdHR 4781](#).
25. ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Land Records) Richard Hill, 1731, Liber IHTI1, folio 393, MSA C97-16, MdHR 4782.
26. [ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT \(Land Records\) Richard Hill, 1737](#), Liber RD2, folio 483, [MSA C97-17, MdHR 4783](#).
27. Will. Richard Hill, 1761.
28. Kerns, 95; Steiner, 237.
29. ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY COURT (Land Records) Richard Hill, 1737, Liber RD2, folio 483, MSA C97-17, MdHR 4783.
30. Kerns, 93-5.
31. Kerns and Ridout, 24.
32. John Jay Smith, *Letters of Doctor Richard Hill and His Children*, (Philadelphia: T.K. & P.K. Collins, Printers, 1854).
33. Kerns and Ridout, 36.
34. "Richard Hill," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, Feb. 11, 1762; Kerns and Ridout, 39.

Biography written by 2012 summer intern Sarah Hartge.

<http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/speccol/sc3500/sc3520/015900/015900/html/msa15900.htm>
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