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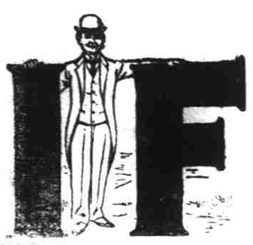

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DR J A GUION.

A Sketch of His Life—His Ancestry, for 200 Years—Historical Matters Connected There With

Died in Berne, N. C., on Wednesday, the 14th day of March, 1894, John Amos Guion, M. D., in the 78th year of his age.

So passed from among us into the rest of life eternal, a gentleman, upright, honorable and just, cultivated and accomplished, a citizen of usefulness, prominence and of good report, the last of a family of three brothers, and of three brothers and two sisters of the half blood, who reached the years of manhood and womanhood; a family of distinguished lineage, members of which have been eminent as citizens of New Bern, and elsewhere in North Carolina, for more than a century. It is a pathetic incident that the day of his death was also the 51st anniversary of the marriage of Dr. John A. Guion.

The first of the name of Guion, which in time past was sometimes spelled Guyon—of whom we have knowledge, was **Louis Guion, a Huguenot refugee, who fled, with so many others of his faith, from LaRochelle in France; to escape persecution on account of religion, about the year 1674.** LaRochelle was a stronghold and one of the chief cities of the Huguenots. Beautifully situated in the Southwest of France, its history is especially during the time of the so-called religious wars in France, extending, with short intervals of peace, over a period of more than a hundred years years, (1560-1685), is full of interest. In the 17th Century the city was besieged by an army of the famous Cardinal Richelieu, and succumbed only after a most heroic defence by its inhabitants.

Louis Guion went first to England with his family, coming afterwards to America, where he arrived in 1687, and settled in New Rochelle, West Chester county, New York. New Rochelle, named in honor of the old home in France, was for many years the principal settlement of the Huguenots in our Northern States. It is the birthplace of many distinguished men,—among others of John Jay, at one time President of the Continental Congress, and the first Chief Justice of the United States under the Constitution.

Isaac Guion, son of Louis is said to have been born during the voyage to America, but more probably was born at New Rochelle in 1692. He died at New Rochelle in 1766. His son Isaac (2d) was born at New Rochelle in 1720 and died there in 1784. This Isaac had a son, also Isaac, the grand-father of Dr. John A. Guion, who was born in New Rochelle in March, 1740; he it was, the first of the name, who came to North Carolina, where he established himself in the practice of medicine. He married Perabe Pugh Williams, who was born at Fort Barnwell in Craven County, 26th of May 1847. At the time of this marriage she was a widow. Mrs. Lee, and one of her daughters, Sallie Lee, became the wife of John Haywood, Treasurer of the State from 1787 to 1827. Sarah Lee Haywood died in February, 1791, and lies buried in the church yard of Christ Church, New Bern, where was the main aisle of the old Church of Colonial days.

Isaac Guion settled first on White Oak river in Onslow county, from whence he removed with his wife to New Bern. By this marriage there were five children, of whom two, Isaac Lee and Elizabeth Pugh (Mrs Francis Hawks), were born in Onslow County, and three were natives of New Bern, viz: Ann Maria (Mrs. Hugh Jones); John Williams, the father of Dr. John A. Guion; and Margaret Sarah (Mrs Andrew Scott).

Isaac Guion with Edward Starkey, and others, represented the county of Onslow in the Provincial Congress that met in Hillsboro, the 21st of August, 1775. This Congress made active preparation for the war of the Revolution, then just at its beginning, and organized the first Continental troops of the North Carolina line, to the 1st Regiment of which (Col. James Moore) Isaac Guion was appointed Surgeon, his commission bearing date 1st September, 1775. On the 11th of December, 1776, he was appointed Commissary of the 9th Regiment of Continentals, of which his relative, John Pugh Williams, was Colonel, and in March, 1777, he was transfered to the 7th Regiment, (Colonel James Hogun), as Paymaster, in which capacity he served until July, 1778, when the regiments of the North Carolina Line were reduced in number and consolidated. It is worthy of note that his cousin of the same name, Isaac Guion of the New Rochelle family, also served as a Continental officer, having been in the New York Line throughout the war of our Revolution, and afterwards in the United States Army.

The Provincial Congress of August, 1775, of which Isaac Guion was a member, was a very able body, and one that legislated wisely and well in very troublous times. Against it Gov. Josiah Martin, from his safe retreat on board the man-of-war "Cruizer," in the Cape Fear River, fulminated his wrathful proclamation of August 8th, 1775, in which he forbade the assembling of the Congress, and

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department of the County that I have been of false mind and action." The Congress returned the compliment by ordering the document to be burned by the common hangman, styling it "a most false, malicious and seditious libel."

Gov. Martin was much exercised too, about the time, on account of the actions of the citizens of New Bern, on Feb the same proclaimed, in compliance with reasonable precedents, of an unarmed Committee at New Berne, at the house of Richard Cogdell, of utmost men, in writing and [illegible] sex pieces of artillery with [illegible] King, that lay behind the [illegible] place, expected insults and [illegible] fered to His Majesty's Subjects, [illegible] little Britain and Albion [illegible] tions."

Towards the end of the Revolution Isaac Guion effect in New Bern. In 1780, by order Assembly, he was appointed Vestryman [illegible] he is called in the Act [illegible] Christ Church, with Richard Dobbs Spaight, Maj. Joel Davis and six others and in the years 1782 and 1785 he represented the Town, then entitled to borough representation in the General Assembly.

In May, 1803, Isaac Guion died, in the 84th year of his age, his wife, Perabe, surviving him until February 24th, 1841, when she died in her 95th year.

John Williams Guion, father of Dr. John A Guion, was born in New Bern the 14th February, 1782. On the 15th December, 1811, he married in New Bern, Mary Webb Smith, daughter of Gen. Nathaniel Allen Smith, of Craven county. 10th June, 1790. Her father was Captain Anne Wade, and Hannah Stone, his wife. Mrs. Mary Webb Guion died December 12th 1818, at the early age of 28. She was a woman of great piety and abounding in good works. It was her custom, in connection with her father, though then not unusual, that her pallbearers were of both sexes. Stephen B. Forbes and wife, Edw. Grant and wife, Wm. Taylor and wife, Wm. Hollister and wife, Mrs. Bonner Vail and Mrs. Gen. Bryan Sr. at the funeral of Mrs. Mary McKinlay, in January, October, 1846, the pall bearers were Mrs. Vail, Mrs. Sneed, Mrs. Brookes, Mrs. Reading, Mrs. Cozen and Mrs. Court.

On the 23d of June, 1826, John Williams Guion married a second wife, Mary Tillman of Craven County, who was born 24th June, 1787, and died in New Bern, 30th June, 1834, aged nearly 47 [illegible] husband's interment 17th July, 1[illegible]

For many years John Williams Guion was prominent in business circles in New Bern, and for a long time a Bank officer. Three children of his first marriage attained years of maturity, viz: Haywood Williams, who was born in New Bern, 9th June, 1814, and died in Charleston, S. C., 19th July, 1876; John Amos, the subject of this sketch, born in New Bern the 22nd September, 1816, and died as above stated; and Isaac, born in New Bern 19th October, 1818, where he died April 30th, 1845. Of his second marriage five children were born to John Williams Guion,—Tillman Henry, Estelle Eliza (Mrs John Jordan), Mary Anne, Benjamin Simmons, and Alexander Hunter—on all of whom are now (March, 1894) dead,—the last two, Colonel Tillman Henry Guion, and Benjamin Simmons Guion, having died on the 23rd of January, 1876, and the 9th of November, 1893, respectively.

The childhood and youth of John A. Guion were passed in New Bern, his early education having been at the New Bern Academy under the tuition of Abonzo Attmore, to whom, and to his famous "Lancasterian" system, so much owed their thorough training. It was a common remark that it was the exception to find among Mr. Attmore's pupil one who was not well versed in all studies pursued, especially in the accompanying word of correct spelling.

At the age of 16 John A. Guion went to Tarpeian Private Secretary to D. S. McCorkle, and to active service in the United States. There he was stationed for about two years in the discharge of the duties of his position, and on his return to this country, having determined to devote himself to the study of medicine, he entered the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Philadelphia, where, in 1837, he was graduated with distinction, and shortly after, when he was but 21 years of age, he was awarded, after a rigid competitive examination, the position of Assistant Surgeon in the United States Navy, a position he filled most honorably until 1842, when he resigned, to return to his native town to practice his profession. Dr. Guion improved to the utmost the unusual opportunities and advantages afforded by his residence in the Mediterranean Ports, and by his various cruises made while in the Navy. To other acquirements, he added that of an accomplished linguist. Besides the European languages, he became quite efficient in Arabic, a language soft and musical as spoken by him.

On the 14th of March, 1843, John A. Guion married Susan Sidney, born 24th July, 1823, oldest daughter of John M. Roots, of New Bern, and Mary L. Jones, his wife, a lady endeared by good deeds, of exemplary piety, zeal and meekness, who was much beloved, and to [illegible] husband a helpmeet indeed. Mrs. [illegible] died in New Bern the 26th, of [illegible] 1889, in the 67th year of her [illegible] Of this marriage several children, [illegible] and three daughters survived their parents, two of whom still live in New Bern. A son also attained the age of manhood, but died before his father.

A few years after his marriage Dr. Guion, in partnership with the late Edward R. Stanly, established a factory in New Bern on the present site of the passenger depot of the Atlantic & North Carolina R. R., for the manufacture of cotton yarns. This, about 1855, was succeeded by a cotton mill, and was afterwards converted by East Front Street to about where the Fertilizer Factory now stands. Here he remained until 1859, when he was appointed Cashier of the Bank of Commerce, then just established in New Bern, a position held by him during the existence of that institution. In consequence of the ill-effects of the bank, he went in 1862, when New Bern was occupied by our Federal forces, to Burlington, N. C., then called Company's Shops, and there resided during the continuance of the war.

Returning to New Bern at the close of the war, he re-started the banking business in partnership with the late Israel Disosway, and continued until 1869, when he resigned an appointment as Cashier of the National Bank of New Bern, to which his experience and close management contributed greatly in the successful financial embarrassments which continued to [illegible] until 1870, when he [illegible] active until May 7th, 1886, when he was disabled by a paralytic stroke, and shortly after [illegible]

In private circles Dr. Guion recovered in great measure from this severe attack, but was never fully restored to his accustomed robust health. The mother he lived a life [illegible] and [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]