

# The Kenans Of Duplin County

## Soldiers-Legislators-Statesmen-Philanthropists

By A. T. OUTLAW, Kenansville, N. C.

Three of the Kenan family, William, Felix and Thomas, were among the early settlers in Duplin. Some accounts of the family say they came from County Antrim, Ireland, about the year 1736.

(1) WILLIAM KENAN, was a member of Captain Sampson's company of militia and attended the "Alarm at Wilmington" (Spanish) in September, 1748. His name appears as a witness to a will, dated 1751, and again as a witness to a deed, dated 1756. There is no further record of him in Duplin.

(2) Colonel FELIX KENAN, was a member of Captain Gregg's company of militia in 1754, a vestryman of Saint Gabriel parish, and a member of the Colonial Assembly in 1762 and for some years thereafter. He was Sheriff of Duplin in 1760 and 1761, and again from 1769 to 1776. He was an officer in the militia and a land agent for Henry McCulloch.

Colonel Kenan's first wife was Catherine Love, widow of Daniel Love, and she died soon after the marriage. The children of her first marriage were Captain James Love, who did conspicuous service in the Revolution, and Sarah Love who became the wife of General James Kenan. Colonel Kenan's second wife was Catherine Norris and their children were: (a) William Kenan, died without issue. (b) Nancy Kenan, married Harroll Blackmore and their children were Edward and Mary Blackmore. (c) Jane Kenan, married John Hill and they had several children. (d) Rose Kenan, "now in England for his education", year 1781.

Colonel Felix Kenan died about the close of the Revolutionary War, and his widow died at the home of General James Kenan, Jan. 9, 1808, in her 86th year.

(3) THOMAS KENAN, was a man of considerable prominence and means, though not as conspicuous in public affairs as his brother Felix. He was a member of Captain Sampson's company of militia and served as quartermaster in Captain Gregg's company in 1754-1765. He first lived in the Grove settlement (now Kenansville) and later located on land purchased from McCulloch on Turkey branch near the present Duplin-Sampson County line.

His wife was Elizabeth Johnston. Some of the family records say she was an English woman, of noble ancestry, and that her marriage was against the will of her parents. He died about the year 1766 and his widow died about 1789. Their children were: (a) General James Kenan. (b) Colonel Owen Kenan. (c) Captain Michael Johnston Kenan. (d) Thomas Kenan, died young. (e) Arabella Kenan. (f) Elizabeth Kenan. (g) Penelope Kenan, married General Richard Clinton, for whom the town of Clinton, County seat of Sampson County, was named. (h) Jane Kenan, married Captain James Love and George Morrissey.

(4) General JAMES KENAN, see section 3, was born September 23, 1740. When only 22 years of age he was elected Sheriff of Duplin and served in that capacity from 1762 to 1766 and again in 1785 and 1786. He took a prominent and leading part in public affairs and he was Duplin's most outstanding military leader in his day. He led a company of volunteers to Wilmington to oppose enforcement of the British Stamp Act of 1765 even though a very outstanding citizen of Duplin (Dr. Houston) had been appointed Stamp Master for North Carolina. At various times from 1773 to 1776 he was a member of the Colonial Assembly and of the Provincial Congress and served as a member of the Wilmington Safety Committee and as chairman of the Duplin Committee. He was an outstanding patriot and participated in the Revolution as Colonel of the Duplin militia and performed conspicuous service in the vicinity of Fayetteville, Wilmington, Rockfish, and elsewhere. Details of his operations are in the public records. About the close of the War he was chosen Brigadier-General of State militia, Wilmington district, and was highly honored by the people of his County. At various times he was a member of the State House of Commons and of the State Senate and

was a member of the State Constitutional Conventions of 1788 and 1789. He was also a Councilor of State and a trustee of the State University.

General Kenan's wife was Sarah Love, daughter of Daniel Love. The general died May 23, 1810, and his widow died March 22, 1819. Interment on their plantation near Turkey Branch. Their children were: (a) Daniel Love Kenan. (b) Colonel Thomas Kenan. (c) Owen Kenan, died young. (d) Catherine Kenan, married Thomas Norment. (e) Susanna Kenan, married Colonel Joseph Green. (f) Elizabeth Kenan, married James Price. (g) Sarah Kenan, married Morrisey. (h) Jane Kenan, married Hall and they moved to Florida.

(5) Colonel OWEN KENAN, see section 3, was born about 1743. He served Duplin as Sheriff and was an outstanding leader for American Independence. He was killed in a skirmish with the Tories in Coharie swamp during the war. His wife was Miss Routledge and their children were: (a) Owen Kenan. (b) Catherine Kenan, married James Hall. (c) Susanna Kenan, married Kinnear. Possibly other children.

(6) Captain MICHAEL JOHNSTON KENAN, see section 3, was born August 26, 1746. In company with many others he took a stand for Independence and was one of the signers of Duplin's Oath of Allegiance in 1777 and served as an officer in the militia and as a captain in the State militia of the Wilmington district. Soon after the war he moved to Jasper County, Georgia, and later to Hancock County where he died during the year 1799.

Captain Kenan's wife was Anne Holmes, sister of Governor Gabriel Holmes, of Sampson County. She died during the year 1816. Their children were: (a) Thomas Holmes Kenan. (b) Mary Kenan, married Richard Carew and Mr. Curtis. (c) Gabriel Holmes Kenan. (d) Michael Johnston Kenan, married Mrs. Deveraux and they had several children. (e) Elizabeth Kenan, married Abram Boreland and they had several children. (f) Owen Holmes Kenan, married Martha Marks. (g) James Kenan. (h) Hardy Holmes Kenan. (i) Ann Holmes Kenan. (j) Lewis Holmes Kenan. (k) Arabella Kenan, married Dr. William McClure.

(7) ARABELLA KENAN, see section 3, married Andrew McIntire who is described in the public records at times as a "gentleman" which means that his ancestors ranked next to the nobility. They had a son James McIntire and probably others.

(8) ELIZABETH KENAN, see section 3, married Colonel Thomas Torrans of Dobbs (now Lenoir) County and they had several children. A daughter married Reverend Samuel Stanford who was a leading Presbyterian minister and educator in Duplin for many years.

(9) DANIEL LOVE KENAN, see section 4, served as Sheriff in Duplin and as a member of the State House of Commons. He married Mary James and Elizabeth James and there were several children. This family moved to Florida.

(10) Colonel THOMAS KENAN, see section 4, was born on Turkey branch in Duplin, February 26, 1771. He was educated by private tutors and served as a member of the State House of Commons and of the State Senate; elected a member of the United States Congress and served from March 4, 1805 to March 3, 1811; moved to Selma, Dallas County, Alabama, in 1833, and served for a number of years as a member of the Alabama House of Representatives. He died October 22, 1843.

Colonel Kenan's wife was Mary Rand of Wake County and their children were: (a) Catherine Kenan. (b) Sarah Kenan. (c) Major Owen Rand Kenan. (d) Julia Kenan. (e) James Kenan. (f) Thomas Kenan. (g) John R. Kenan, married Mrs. Louise Kimball. (h) Daniel Love Kenan, married Tollie Cove. (i) William Kenan, married Rebecca McGee. (j) Mary E. Kenan, married Dr. Chauncy Williams Graham.

(11) THOMAS HOLMES KENAN, see section 6, was born in Duplin, 1774, and moved with his parents to Georgia. He located at Milledge-

ville, Baldwin County, where he was closely and prominently identified with public affairs for many years, serving as U. S. District Marshal and in various other positions of public trust. He died March 17, 1837.

His wife was Mrs. Aurelia (Gray) Powell and their children were: (a) Colonel Augustus Holmes Kenan. (b) Michael Johnston Kenan. (c) Uriah Threatt Kenan, married John T. Lamar and William L. Gordon. (d) Arabella Kenan, married James U. Horn and left a large and prominent family. (e) Anne Holmes Kenan, married Sam Beecher and William G. Robinson.

(12) Major OWEN RAND KENAN, see section 10, was born in Duplin, March 4, 1804. He was a militia officer, member State House of Commons and of the Confederate Congress. His home place "Liberty Hall" in the town of Kenansville is still standing and is now owned by his grandson, Col. Owen H. Kenan of New York and Florida. He died March 3, 1887.

Major Kenan's wife was Sarah Rebecca Graham, daughter of Dr. Stephen Graham, and their children were: (a) Colonel Thomas Stephen Kenan, 1838-1911, was one of the outstanding lawyers of the State. He entered the service of the Confederacy as Captain of the Duplin Rifles and later became Colonel of the 43rd N. C. Regiment. He was a member of the State House of Commons, Attorney-General of the State, and Clerk of the State Supreme Court. A portrait of him hangs on the wall in Duplin courtroom. Colonel Kenan's wife was Sarah Dortch and they had no children. (b) Captain James Graham Kenan. He was a Confederate officer, Sheriff and Legislator. His wife was Annie H. Hill and their children were: Col. Owen Hill Kenan; Emily Howard Kenan; Thomas S. Kenan, business man of Atlanta; Graham Kenan, lawyer, died in "flu" epidemic of 1918; and Fannie Hill Kenan, died in infancy. (c) Captain William Rand Kenan.

He was a Confederate officer from Duplin, and later located in Wilmington. His wife was Mary Hargrave of Chapel Hill and their children were: Mary Lily Kenan, married Henry Morrison Flagler, Standard Oil capitalist and founder of the Florida East Coast Railway, and after his death she married Judge Robert Worth Bingham, American Ambassador to Great Britain; Jessie H. Kenan, married J. C. Wise; William Rand Kenan, capitalist and philanthropist, of New York City; Sarah Graham Kenan, married Graham Kenan. (d) Annie Dickson Kenan, never married.

(13) Colonel AUGUSTUS HOLMES KENAN, see section 11, was a lawyer of Milledgeville, Baldwin County, Georgia, and has been described as one of the ablest criminal lawyers of his time. He was a soldier in the Seminole War, and a member of the Confederate Congress at Richmond.

Colonel Kenan married Henrietta G. Alston and Sarah Barnes, and the children, probably by the first marriage, were: (a) Henrietta A. Kenan. (b) Ella Kenan. (c) Martha Kenan. (d) Lewis Holmes Kenan. He was a lawyer and practiced for many years in Milledgeville. (e) Dr. Thomas Holmes Kenan. He was a physician and practiced for many years in Milledgeville, moving to Atlanta, where he died.

(14) MICHAEL JOHNSTON KENAN, see section 11, lived at Milledgeville and was a lawyer by profession but gave it up on account of deafness and became a cotton planter.

His wife was Catherine Ann Spalding and their children were: (a) Sarah Aurelia Kenan, married Dr. Charles H. Hall and they had several children. (b) Dr. Spalding Kenan, a surgeon in the Confederate Army. (c) Catherine Clifford Kenan, married Capt. William W. Williamson, a lawyer, and they had several children. (d) Col. Owen Thomas Kenan. He was a soldier of the Spanish-American and World Wars and was active in military affairs from early life. He has been described as a natural born soldier, and his military activities brought him honor, promotion, and distinction. His wife was Lizzie B. White, daughter of Dr. Samuel G. White, and they had several children.

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### MR. MOLE

He comes to our garden to visit a while. The garden then is a show. With tunnels and overhead bridges, An enemy on the go.

He enters cautiously, pays no court. Then off on a row to row round Where he sometimes stops to smile and gloat. And then he naps in the ground.

He likes cool nights, in rain is a pet. He's a mean old underground Joe. He moves to my asters to furrow the row, I strike for him with my hoe.

He visits a while then disappears. But it's useless to think it's the end. For he'll be back in a day or so, Though he finds in me no friend.

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