

## Rev. Green Hill, Jr. (1741-1826)



Green Hill (1741-1826) at age 25.

Rev. Green Hill, Jr. was a patriot who served his country and was a leader of the western branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church. His ancestor, Robert Hill (1615-1682), came to the Colonies as a headright of Francis England in 1642. He married Mary Webb who also immigrated in 1642 from England to Virginia. They lived in the Isle of Wight, Virginia. By Green Hill, Jr.'s time, the Hills had become relatively well-off and were connected with the leaders in their communities.

Green Hill, Sr. and Grace Bennett Hill moved 130 miles from Surry County to Bute County, North Carolina in 1736. Green Hill, Jr., was born there on November 14, 1741 (Family Bible). He married Nancy Thomas (1745-1772) in 1763 in Northampton County, North

Carolina; they had five children. After Nancy Thomas Hill's death, he married Mary Seawell (b. 1751) in 1773; they had nine children. Green Hill became a Methodist ca. 1776, and was an early local Methodist minister.

Rev. Green Hill had an illustrious career in public service in Bute County. He was a member of the Bute County Committee of Safety (1774). He represented Bute County at the First Provincial Congress (at New Bern, commencing August, 1774), which was the first assembly of the people of North Carolina in a representative character in opposition to the Royal Government. He continued to represent Bute County at the Second Provincial Congress (at New Bern, commencing April, 1775); the Third Provincial Congress (at Hillsborough, August-September, 1775); the Fourth Provincial Congress (at Halifax, April-May, 1776); and the Fifth Provincial Congress (at Halifax, November-December, 1776) when a "Declaration of Rights" and a State Constitution were approved.

At the Fourth Provincial Congress in April 1776, Hill was appointed as one of four people with authority to sign bills of credit. He signed North Carolina currency in 1776.



Hill started his Revolutionary War service at the Fourth Provincial Congress (April- May, 1776) when he was appointed as a second major of the Bute Militia Regiment under Col. Thomas Eaton. His actual service in the militia is unclear inasmuch as he also was involved in the planning of a new General Assembly, and was a representative from Bute County, when it was convened in April, 1777. He was also a member of this General Assembly in 1779.

In 1781 Hill enlisted as a private in Sharp's Company of the 10<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the North Carolina Continental line. He was then promoted to chaplain, with a rank of Captain.. He visited soldiers in the camps and preached to them as far west in North Carolina as Salisbury. According to Neal Ivy's *Green Hill* (1926) he served until a short time after the Treaty of Paris was signed (November 30, 1782) at which time he returned to civilian life.

Hill was appointed in Bute County as a justice of the court (magistrate) (1777) and county clerk for Franklin County (1785). He served as State Treasurer of Halifax District (1783-1786).

After the war, Hill took on a leadership role in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The First Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America was held at Green Hill's home in Louisburg, North Carolina on April 20, 1785. Two of the most prominent Methodists, Bishop Francis Ashbury and Dr. Thomas Coke, attended the Conference. The 1790, 1791, and 1794 conferences were also held there. He was ordained a deacon in 1792 and was later made an elder.

North Carolina granted land grants of acreage in the western part of North Carolina (now Tennessee) to Continental Line soldiers for their service in the Revolutionary War. The grantee could settle on the acreage, or he could sell the land if he did not want to live in Tennessee or could not afford to move there. Hill received 2,070 acres as land grants from the State of Tennessee and bought 2,281 acres of North Carolina land grants from officers and enlisted soldiers who had served in the North Carolina Continental Line. (Other sources state that he received 3,834 acres in land grants from North Carolina). Hill's land was located in Tennessee's Williamson, Davidson, Rutherford, and Bedford counties.

In 1796, Rev. Hill and his wife visited Tennessee. Three years later they, with ten of his fourteen children, moved 600 miles to settle in Brentwood (south of Nashville), Williamson County. Their home was called Liberty Hill. The Ninth Western (west of the Alleghenies) Conference of the Methodist Church was held at Liberty Hill in 1808.

Although the Methodist Church opposed slavery (as adopted at the 1808 Conference), Rev. Green Hill did own slaves. The 1790 Census for Franklin County, North Carolina lists Green Hill as owning fourteen slaves. The 1820 Census Records for Williamson County, Tennessee, shows that Green Hill owned thirteen slaves. In his will he wrote:

Respecting my colored people whom I now possess, it is my sincere desire that whenever Government shall permit, that they all be liberated for I consider slaver [sic] to be unjust and inconsistent with Spirit and Doctrine of the Gospel of Christ. But under present law we are restrained that liberty, therefore, until that desirable event shall take place I dispose of them as follows....

Hill died in Williamson County, Tennessee on September 11, 1826. His grave is at Liberty Hill, which is one of twelve Methodist Shrines in the United States.



Author: Stanley Frazer Rose, 5<sup>th</sup> great grandson of Rev. Green Hill, Jr. With assistance from James Allen Hill, Jr., whose 4<sup>th</sup> great grand uncle is Rev. Green Hill, Jr.

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Currency Signed by Green Hill, Jr.









