

The Heeper Family Of North Carolina

The name first appeared in 1275 as William le Hepere who owned lands in Dorset, England. In 1325 the name spelled Heeper was found for the first time on records in the county of Somerset.

Bishop John Heeper was born in 1495 and was a student at Oxford. In 1539, to escape the bloody statutes of Henry VIII, he left England and resided in Zurich for several years. At the death of Henry VIII he returned to England. He was Lord Bishop John Heeper of Wiltshire and Gloucester. He was burned near the door of his cottage. Following the accession of Mary to the throne and the burning of the bishop the family moved to Scotland and settled in Stichel.

(1) A.M. Heeper, of Nether Stichel, died in 1596 leaving 7 children. (The record doesn't say who his parents were. Probably he was the grandson of the bishop. There is a record of his son and heirs to Robert; then the record is lost until there appears again the name of Robert Heeper.)

(2) Robert Heeper was born Aug. 2, 1704 at Edenmouth, a farm at the junction of the Eden and Tweed Rivers, in the parish of Ednam, near Kelso, Scotland. He received an M.A. degree from Edinburgh in 1723. He was a Presbyterian minister in Scotland; he came to America and settled in Boston. He was the Pastor of the West Congregational Church from 1737 until 1747. Changed to Episcopal in 1747.

(3) Reverend William Heeper, of Boston, founder of the American branch of the family, was the third and youngest child of Robert. ~~Wm~~ Wm ~~He~~ married Mary Dennie of Boston. Their children were William, John, George, Mary and Thomas.

(4) William, son of William and Mary Dennie was born in Boston in 1742. He studied for 7 years under his father, and for 7 years at the Boston Latin School. In 1757 he entered Harvard - a delicate, nervous, beautiful youth. He behaved well and was graduated in 1760 with a Bachelor of Arts degree. He chose to study law against his father's wishes and entered the law office of James Otis in 1761. In 1763 he received a Master of Arts. He found the bar overflowing with lawyers and poverty drove him to seek his fortune in a distant colony. He moved, temporarily, to the province of N.C. at Wilmington on the Cape Fear River in 1764. His public spirit was manifested at this time. On Aug. 27, 1774 he was elected a delegate to the Continental Congress with Joseph Hewes and Richard Caswell. He was one of the 54 men who signed the Declaration of Independence, on Aug. 2, 1776. He married Ann Clark of Wilmington, a woman of uncommon strength of character, noted for their plain features, but great charm of manner. Their home was called "Finian" on Masonboro Sound eight miles from Wilmington. After the Continental Congress he "rode the circuit" with Judge James Iredell. At the approach of the war he moved his family to Wilmington. He was ruined by the war. The following is an outline summary of the various activities which occupied his time until his death: 1782 - moved to Hillsboro and practiced law. 1784 - elected to the House of Commons from Orange county and was re-elected in 1786. - On Sept. 22, 1786 he was appointed one of the judges of the federal court.

(5) William Hooper III was born at Hillsboro on Aug. 31, 1792. He was brought to Chapel Hill at the age of 12. He received his B.A. at The university.

- 1814 - Married Frances P. Jones
- 1817 -1822 - Prof. of Ancient Languages at University of N.C.
- 1822-1825 - Rector of St. Johns Episcopal Church at Fayetteville, N.C.
- 18 25-1827 - Prof. of Rhetoric at U.N.C.
- 1827-1837 - Prof. of Ancient Languages at U.N.C.
- 1838-1840 - Prof. of Theology at Furman Institute, S.C.
- 1840-1846 - Prof. of Roman Lit. at U.S.C.
- 1846-1848 - Prof. of Roman Lit. at Wake Forest, N.C.

He died Aug. 19, 1876.

(6) Edward Jones Hooper married Amelia Jones, the widow of Bartlett Massey.

The book on the Hoopers stated that the Signer had "no descendants except these of his grandson Rev. William Hooper of N.C." This does not seem clear.