

Hogg, Robert ^[1]

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Hogg, Robert

by Alice E. Mathews, 1988

D. 1780

Robert Hogg, merchant, a native of East Lothian in northern Scotland and the son of Gavin and Helen Stevenson Hogg, emigrated to North Carolina about 1756 according to one source, but the New Hanover County Court Minutes record the transference of a deed to a Robert Hogg in 1739. [James](#) ^[2] and [John Hogg](#) ^[3] were his brothers. Because James, apparently a younger brother, was forty-six years old in 1774, Robert must have been born before 1728.

Hogg settled in [Wilmington](#) ^[4] where he formed a business partnership with [Samuel Campbell](#) ^[5], and together they established "one of the most important mercantile firms on the Cape Fear." Hogg and Campbell operated branches in Cross Creek, Hillsborough, Swansboro, [New River](#) ^[6], and [Bladen County](#) ^[7], in addition to the store maintained in Wilmington, and carried on a widespread trade with merchants in Great Britain, the West Indies, and the other continental colonies. The firm exported a wide variety of products, including [naval stores](#) ^[8], [deerskins](#) ^[9], and flour (the latter from Cross Creek), and sold various manufactured goods, sugar, coffee, tea, rum, and sometimes slaves to their local customers. Their annual profits approximated £1,200 sterling; when the company was dissolved in 1778, it had assets of £18,330 sterling. Because an established merchant was expected to earn more than £500 sterling per annum in the Revolutionary Era, the firm was obviously prospering. The Scottish lady, [Janet Schaw](#) ^[10], called Hogg a merchant "of eminence" and trusted his judgment.

On the eve of the [American Revolution](#) ^[11], Hogg was one of the leading gentlemen of Wilmington. He took part in civic activities, was elected a town commissioner in 1770 and 1772, and later served on the [Committee of Safety](#) ^[12] from November 1774 to June 1775. As perhaps indicative of his social status, he defaulted on road work. On another occasion he was accused of "dealing & trafficking with negroes." Although Hogg was at first a member of the Committee of Safety, he evidently became disenchanted with the Revolutionary cause and sailed for England in 1775. Governor [Josiah Martin](#) ^[13] wrote that Hogg was "a merchant of first consideration in the colony, where he has resided many years, and who is compelled by popular clamour and resentment to abandon his important concerns here, because he will not renounce his principles, which he has maintained with a manly firmness and steadiness, which do honour to his heart and understanding." Hogg stayed in England from the fall of 1775 to the summer of 1778, when he returned because a [confiscation act](#) ^[14] had been passed declaring that all property of persons living outside the province after October 1778 would be confiscated by the state. Upon his arrival, he and another merchant, [John Burgwin](#) ^[15], were "on their parole" at Burgwin's plantation. In January 1778, the motion carried 16 to 10 in the legislative committee to admit Hogg as a citizen of the state. The minority legislators seemingly did not believe in Hogg's sincere friendship for the new government. In contrast, the majority accepted as proof of his loyalty his "instructions to his Factors and Agents" before he had left in 1775 "to appropriate one-half of his property, if they found the same necessary, in the Defense of the American Cause." Hogg's position on independence, then, is somewhat ambiguous.

Apparently Robert Hogg never married. On a visit to Scotland in 1772, he urged his brother James to emigrate, and in 1774 [James Hogg](#) ^[2] arrived with all his family. James worked for his brother by managing first the Cross Creek store and later the outlet at Hillsborough. Robert Hogg died before 7 July 1780, when he was supposed to have sat on a grand jury. He left his estate to James, whose loyalty both to the Revolutionary cause and to his brother was unquestionable.

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Additional Resources:

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