

## The Narrative of Hercules Mulligan of the City of New York, ca. 1810-15

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### *Narrative of Hercules Mulligan of the City of New York*

I knew Alexander Hamilton shortly after his arrival in the City of New York from the West Indies whence he sailed to Boston and thence came here in the month of October 1773. He brought letters from the Revd. Mr. Knox of St. Croix to Governor Livingston, Mr. Boudinot, Dr. Rogers & others, and one to the House of Kartright & Co. Merchants of the City of New York (my brother was the Company), to whom was also assigned from time to time, the first shortly after his arrival, West India produce to be sold & the proceeds to be applied to his use.

I understood from him that he wrote two or three political pieces while he was at Boston which were published in a newspaper there. He first went to grammar school at Elizabethtown kept by a Mr. Barber; before he had been there one year he told me, and I was also informed of the same by a letter form the teacher, that he was prepared to enter Colledge. He came to N Y, and told me he preferred Princeton to King's Colledge because it was more republican. I went with him to Princeton to the house of Dr. Witherspoon, then the president of the Colledge, with whom I was well acquainted, and I introduced Mr. Hamilton to him and proposed to him to Examine the young gentleman which the doctor did to his entire satisfaction. Mr. Hamilton then stated that he wished to enter either of the classes to which his attainments would entitle him but with the understanding that he should be permitted to advance from Class to Class with as much rapidity as his exertions would enable him to do. Dr. Witherspoon listened with great attention to so a unusual from so young a person and replied that he had not the sole power to determine but that he would submit request to the trustees who would decide, which was done & in about a fortnight after a letter was received from the President stating that the request could not be complied with because it was contrary to the useage of the Colledge and expressing his regret because he was convinced that the young gentleman would do honor to any seminary at which he should be educated

He entered King's (now Columbia) Colledge in the spring of 75 in the Sophomore Class & on the terms he had proposed at Princeton and boarded with my family.

While in Colledge he joined a volunteer uniform company which was commanded by Capt. Fleming. It having been determined by the Committee of Safety that the Cannon which were the Battery should be removed to a place of greater safety, this Company with others were engaged in making the removal (28 Augt 75) the Asia fired upon the City and I recollect well that Mr. Hamilton was there, for I was engaged in hauling off one of the Cannons, when Mr. H came up and gave me his musket to hold, & he took hold of the rope. The punt of the Asia had before approached the Battery and was fired upon and a man was killed, she returned to the ship and the fire was then opened upon us. Hamilton at the first firing was away with Cannon. I left his musket in the Battery & retreated, as he was returning I met him and he asked for his piece. I told him where I had left it, and he went for it, notwithstanding the firing continued, with as much unconcern as if the vessel had not been there.

About the 10 or 12 July 1776 Mr. Hamilton being desirous to enter the Army a Commission as a Capt. of Artillery was promised to him on the Condition that he should raise thirty men. I went with him that very afternoon and we engaged 25 men. The next day a report was made to the Committee & a recommendation was unanimously passed and the Commission was obtained. Hamilton recruited his men and with his own funds equipped them. He attended to their drill and his other duties with a degree of zeal and diligence which soon made his Company conspicuous for their appearance and the regularity of their movements. About the time the first division of the British Army arrived at Sandy Hook, Capt. Hamilton went on the Battery with his Company and his piece of artillery and commenced a Brisk fire upon the Phoenix and Rose then passing up the river. When his Cannon burst and killed two of his men who I distinctly recollect they were buried in the Bowling Green.

Previously to the skirmish on Long Island Mr. H, the Revd. John Mason, father of the present Dr. Mason, were at Dinner at my House, and after others (perhaps Mr. Rhineland & Col. Troup) had retired from the table they were lamenting the situation of the army on Long Island and suggesting the best plans for its removal when Mr. Mason and

Mr. Hamilton determined to write an anonymous letter to Genl. Washington pointing out their ideas of the best means to draw off the Army. I saw Mr. H writing the letter & heard it read after it was finished. It was delivered to me to be handed to one of the family of the General and I gave it to Col. Webb then an aid de Champ and I have no doubt he delivered it because my impression at that time was that the mode of drawing off the army which was adopted was nearly the same as that pointed out in the letter.

When the enemy came in the City on Sunday at 8 o'clock Capt H commanded a post on Bunker's Hill near New York and brought up the rear of our army, and in retiring he lost as he afterwards told me his baggage and one of his Cannon which broke down. After the British crossed the Hudson at fort Lee I went to see my young friend and found him encamped near fort Washington having the Command of his Company. I afterwards saw him when he came to New York with a flag to see Sir Guy Carleton. He evinced his gratitude for the attentions of my brother & myself by his attentions to us thro' life & by taking one of my sons to study law with him & refusing the least compensation.

While Mr. Hamilton was at Colledge he wrote several Political essays, in June 1776 he wrote the Westchester Farmer refuted in my house and in part in my presence and read some of the pages to me as he wrote them, at the time this publication was attributed to Governor Livingston. Mr. H used in the evening to sit with my family and my brothers family and write dogrel rhymes for their amusement; he was always amiable and cheerful and extremely attentive to his books.

When Rivington's Press was attacked by a Company from the Eastward, Mr. H indignant that our neighbours should intrude upon our rights (although the press was considered a tory one) he went to the place addressed the people present and offered if any others would join him to prevent these intruders from taking the types away.

Dr. Cooper, President's of King's Colledge, was a tory and an obnoxious man and the mob went to the Colledge with the intention of tarring & feathering him or riding him upon a rail. Mr. H got on the stoop of the President's House and harangued them in order to give him time [to] escape out of the back of the House which he did & went on Board a Frigate Lying in the North river.

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