



A Patriot Story

Lilly McIlhaney Bowen

Service: Patriotic Service, Loaned Money

Residence: Augusta Co, VA

Born: c 1705 / Ireland

Died: a 20 Jun 1780 / Washington Co, VA

Patriot Ancestor # A012714

Lilly was born in Ireland around 1705 to Henry and Jane McIlhaney; but Henry died while she was still an infant. Her mother remarried a man with the last name Hunter, and they had a large family. The family immigrated around 1722 and settled in Lancaster Co, PA.

John Bowen, the son of Moses and Rebecca Reese Bowen, who emigrated from Wales around 1698, was a wealthy planter in Lancaster. He met Lilly soon after she and her parents arrived, and they married sometime in 1730. He was 12 years older than Lilly.

John and Lilly moved to Augusta Co, VA. The date is uncertain – family lore indicates around 1730, though their first documented presence was a bond in Augusta Co. dated April 15, 1748.

After John died in May 1761, Lilly ran their farm. She was known to be a very remarkable woman. She had a strong, discriminating mind. She lived 20 years longer than her husband, was administratrix of his will and had many important decisions to make regarding property settlements, and the management of their large farm.

In 1779, she and some of her family moved farther southwest to the middle fork of the Holston River and built a new home. According to family tradition, the first missionaries in the area held services in Lilly's ballroom. Her home also became the meeting place for local militia. Lilly died sometime between April 4, 1780, when her will was dated, and June 1, 1780, when it was probated.

Sons William and Rees Bowen were lieutenants in the Washington Co, VA militia. The unit was part of the Overmountain Men who defeated a Loyalist force at the Battle of Kings Mountain. William was bedridden with a severe fever and unable to go on the expedition, so Rees led their company. He was killed leading an attack at the Battle of Kings Mountain.