

Husband (or Husbands), Herman (or Hermon, Harman) ^[1]

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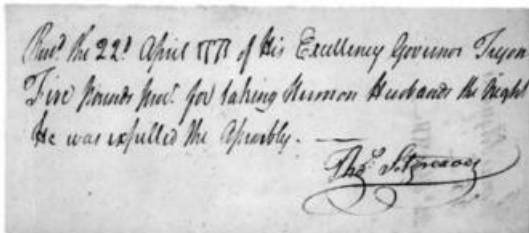


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Husband (or Husbands), Herman (or Hermon, Harman)

by Mark H. Jones, 1988

3 Oct. 1724–Ca. June 1795



Receipt given to Thomas Sitgreaves for assisting in Herman Husbands' 1771 incarceration. Image courtesy of the North Carolina Office of Archives and History (call # N_2001_3_76), Raleigh, NC.

Herman (or Hermon, Harman) Husband (or Husbands), legislator, county official, planter, surveyor, miner, pamphleteer, and social radical, was born in Cecil County, Md., the son of William and Mary Husband, wealthy slave-owning planters ^[2] and the parents of eleven or twelve children. His early education consisted of tutoring at or near the farm of his maternal Dutch grandfather, Herman Kinkey. Husband also read extensively throughout life. His probated inventory notes around eight hundred pamphlets and eighteen "Bound Books" in his estate.

Although his parents belonged to the Anglican church, Husband joined a New Side Presbyterian congregation after hearing evangelist George Whitefield in 1740. After quarreling with the congregation's elders, he joined the Society of Friends at East Nottingham. Husband wrote about his religious odyssey in a pamphlet entitled *Some Remarks on Religion* in 1750. By that year his first wife, whose last name may have been Cox, had died leaving three children. Also in 1750 he received lands in Cecil and Baltimore counties from his parents and traveled to Barbados. In 1751 he spent time in Bladen County ^[3], N.C. Back in Maryland, Husband served from 1752 to 1754 on numerous committees appointed by the Friends at East Nottingham to enforce discipline, and in 1753 as overseer of the Deer Creek Preparative Meeting in Baltimore County.

In the fall of 1754, Husband traveled through the backcountry of North Carolina as agent for a land company composed of farmers and artisans from Pennsylvania and Maryland. In the Granville District ^[4] he looked over lands and met with settlers in Orange ^[5] and Rowan ^[6] counties. Acting on rumors of fraud, he went to Earl Granville's land office in Edenton ^[7] and examined the records. He also petitioned Governor Arthur Dobbs ^[8] and the Assembly, arguing against appropriations and legal sanctions for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. In 1755 Husband went back to Maryland but returned to North Carolina when he discovered that no member of the land company wanted to journey southward. He purchased two lots in Corbinton (later Hillsborough) on which he built a temporary residence. From 1755 to 1762 he acquired more than 10,000 acres in Orange and Rowan counties and moved to land along Sandy Creek.

Husband raised wheat, surveyed and sold land, and set up a public gristmill, but in 1759 he resettled in Maryland and managed the Fountain Copper Works in Frederick County. In 1762 he returned to Sandy Creek and married Mary Pugh, a member of the Cane Creek Monthly Meeting. She probably died before 1765. Husband participated in county government as an overseer of Sandy Creek in 1764 and on a road jury in 1765. In January 1764, the Monthly Meeting disowned him as a result of a dispute over the society's discipline. The following year he married Amy ("Emey") Allen, nineteen years younger, who was also disowned for marrying out of unity.

Influenced by the Stamp Act ^[9] protest, Husband and other Sandy Creek farmers formed an association in 1766 to seek a solution to civil corruption, but the organization collapsed due to official intimidation. He did not join the new reformers, the Regulators ^[10], in 1768, although he served as their spokesman and pamphleteer. In May 1768 Colone Edmund Fanning ^[11] and others seized Husband and William Butler ^[12] and jailed them at Hillsborough as suspected organizers of the renewed "insurgency." After a crowd assembled near the town, Fanning released the prisoners. Husband also appeared in the Hillsborough Riots of September 1770, but his role remains unclear. He served as assemblyman for Orange County

[5] in 1769 and 1770 but was expelled during the latter session and imprisoned in New Bern for allegedly libeling Maurice Moore, Jr. [13], for threatening the Assembly, and for initiating the revolt. He remained incarcerated until February 1771 before being acquitted by a grand jury. Husband wrote two defenses of himself and the Regulators, *An Impartial Relation of the First Rise and Cause of the Recent Differences in Publick Affairs* and *A Continuation of the Impartial Relation*, both in 1770.

Prior to the Battle of Alamance [14] on 16 May 1771, Husband attempted to arrange a truce but left after negotiations collapsed. He then fled, a proscribed traitor, through Maryland into western Pennsylvania under the name "Toscape Death." Although his properties in North Carolina were confiscated, he began another estate in Bedford County, Pa., where his family settled in 1772. All Regulators and outlawed leaders except Husband were pardoned by Governor Josiah Martin [15] in 1775.

Husband supported the American Revolution [16] and the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776. In September of that year the state convention appointed him to the Bedford County Board of Commissioners and Assessors, and in 1777–78 he represented his county in the legislature, publishing a paper money scheme and urging Quakers [17] to support the state constitution. He also informed the state war board of the location of lead deposits that were mined for ammunition production.

In 1779 Husband believed he saw the New Jerusalem rising west of the Alleghenies. Until his death he mapped out the heavenly city according to the Book of Ezekiel and his own observations gathered on trips through the mountains. He also wrote about the coming of this western New Jerusalem, which he thought fulfilled God's plan to provide small farmers and artisans with land and political democracy. He composed pamphlets proposing alternatives to the federal Constitution and Secretary Alexander Hamilton's financial policies, offering a plan for peace with the Indians, and praising the French Revolution as the final stage before a republican millenium. Many of these ideas were also inserted in articles Husband wrote under the name "Allegheny Philosopher" for Andrew Ellicott's *Maryland and Virginia Almanack* from 1781 to 1792. In addition, Husband prepared designs for internal transportation improvements. His civil services included surveying Brunerstown (later Somerset), Pa., and serving as Bedford county commissioner (1786) and as state representative (1790).

From 1793 to 1795 Husband apparently participated as a moderate in the Whiskey Rebellion, a western Pennsylvania revolt against Secretary Hamilton's excise on whiskey. As a Bedford County delegate, he attended the meeting at Parkinson's Ferry in 1794 and served on a resolutions committee with Albert Gallatin, H. H. Brackenridge, and David Bradford. He was also appointed to committees that negotiated with state and federal commissioners. In 1795 federal troops arrested Husband and sent him with other rebels to stand trial in Philadelphia. He was acquitted and pardoned by President George Washington [18] due to the intercession of Dr. Benjamin Rush, Dr. David Caldwell [19], and North Carolina senators Alexander Martin and Timothy Bloodworth [20]. Husband died in a tavern outside Philadelphia, allegedly from an illness contracted in prison. His burial place is unknown. He was survived by his wife Amy and eight children.

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