

Richard Hutson, Intendant of the City of Charleston, 1783-1785

Charleston's first Intendant, Richard Hutson, was born June 12, 1747, to Mary Woodward Hutson and Rev. William Hutson, rector of the Stoney Creek Independent Presbyterian Church in Prince Williams Parish. In 1756, Rev. Hutson took charge of the Independent Circular Church (later known as the Circular Congregational Church), and the family moved to Charleston.

Richard Hutson graduated from Princeton University (then known as the College of New Jersey) in 1765. He studied law afterward and gained admittance to the South Carolina bar in 1768. In addition to a successful law career, Hutson played an influential role in Charleston's political circles during the dawning of the new nation. He served five terms in the South Carolina House of Representatives between 1776 and 1788. As a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, he signed the Articles of Confederation in 1778. In 1780, the South Carolina House of Representatives selected Hutson to serve on the thirteen-person Legislative Council known as the "upper house."

When Charleston fell to the British that same year, Lord Cornwallis ordered the arrest of the City's leading political figures. British soldiers detained and transported forty-three men, including Hutson, to St. Augustine where they remained imprisoned until July 1781. Upon his return to the City, Hutson resumed his duties on the Legislative Council and subsequently served as Lieutenant Governor of South Carolina from 1782-1783.

The Act of Incorporation of the City in 1783 divided Charleston into thirteen wards, each administered by an elected warden. Voters selected Hutson from among the wardens to serve as the City's first Intendant. Despite resistance from the artisan class, who criticized his elitist background, Hutson won reelection to a second term in 1784. From 1785 until his death in 1795, Hutson held the position of Chancellor of the Chancery Court.

"Charleston, Wednesday, Sept. 15." *South-Carolina Weekly Gazette*, September 15, 1784.

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