

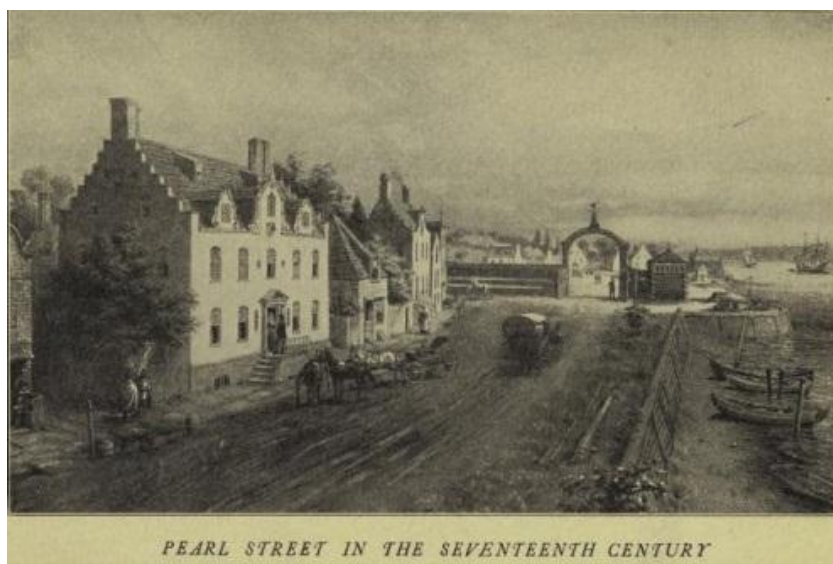
Bio: Daniel Honan

Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2016

Daniel Honan was among the retinue of Governor Benjamin Fletcher when he arrived in New York in 1692. Honan served as personal secretary to the governor, and later filled several important positions in the government of colonial New York.

I have long been interested in Daniel Honan because parts of his personal history are very similar to my own 8xgreat-grandfather Peter Mathews. Honan and Mathews both came, as young men, with Governor Fletcher from Ireland to New York, and served alongside him for the five years of his governorship. After Fletcher's departure for England and Ireland in 1698, Honan and Mathews continued to appear in the records of the colony. Peter Mathews lived out his life in New York, but the ending to Daniel Honan's story remains elusive.

Daniel Honan was born around the year 1665 in Ireland. A deposition given by him (showing the date February 1701-2, but possibly referring to 1698-99) gives the information that he was born at Elfin, county Roscommon - that he was a merchant, age thirty-three, and had resided in New York for seven years. County Roscommon was also the homeplace of Benjamin Fletcher and his wife Elizabeth Hodson. She was the daughter of John Hodson, Archbishop of the Diocese of Elphin. Because Peter Mathews "grew up in the household of Benjamin Fletcher", it seems likely that the three men were well acquainted before coming to New York.



Upon their arrival in New York, Daniel Honan was appointed to the newly created office of accountant-general. Through the course of Benjamin Fletcher's administration Honan benefitted by several offices, and large land patents. When Fletcher was "vilified" in 1698, Honan went down with him - charges noting primarily Honan's involvement in the "pirating" schemes of the era. Daniel Honan was accused by Fletcher's successor, Lord Bellomont, of taking bribes and destroying documents related to "privateering" commissions.

Instructions of Lord Bellomont to Captain Culliford. 7 May, 1698. To board H.M.S. Richmond with forty armed men, detain all strangers, muster the men, seize all pirates on board, also Daniel Honan, if he be on board, and board and search all merchant ships for pirates. Copy. 2J pp.

There is no evidence that Honan ever "paid for his crimes", but he did fall into disfavor for a season.

Daniel Honan may have returned to England, or Ireland during the years 1698 - 1702. After Bellomont's death in 1701, the King appointed Edward Hyde - Lord Cornbury to the governorship of New York. William Sharpas, New York City's town clerk, reported in a letter to Robert Livingston - ". . . Lord Cornbury's impending arrival in New York, with his retinue including his wife and children, Mr. Honan his private secretary, and Coll Richard Ingoldsby." Honan's appointment was quickly disputed, and "the Council of Trade exhorted Lord Cornbury to pursue a policy of moderation, and expressed their surprise at his having reappointed Honan Secretary of the Province."

Author James Grant Wilson, in his 1892 "Memorial History of the City of New York":

In reply to this reprimand from his superiors, Cornbury wrote them an obsequious letter, in which he stated that the character of his appointee [Daniel Honan] had been unknown to him, and promised at once to dismiss him from his employ. But notwithstanding this promise, Cornbury found means to evade the commands of the lords of trade, and Honan remained secretary of the province to the end of his administration [1708].

Returning to look at Daniel Honan's personal life - there is very little information to draw from. According to early New York marriage records, he was wed to Sarah Jones on the sixth of October 1694. I have had little success in learning more about his home, wife, or possible children. In the 1703 Census of New York City is found Mr Honan with one male, two females, one child, and one negress. What might have happened to his wife and child is unknown.

Daniel Honan's story has two endings to consider.

Ending number one -

An account of Honan, published in The Journal of the American-Irish Historical Society, Volume 15 (1917), indicates - *This Daniel Honan lived to a great age and died about the middle of the eighteenth century. The fact that he was a native of Ireland is stated in an announcement of his death which I copied from a New York newspaper.*

Daniel Honan seems to vanish from the official records of New York after 1703. A few mentions of Daniel Honan appear, but most seem to refer to earlier incidents. In March of 1716, Daniel Honan is party to the sale of his portion of the Kakiat Patent. This was a land grant he and his

partner Michael Hawdon had received from Benjamin Fletcher in 1696. Whether he was physically present in New York when this transaction took place is unknown.

Ending number two -

A family record suggests that Daniel Honan left public life and returned to "Whitehall in Roscommon, Ireland".

Whitehall is difficult to identify today, but it may be a community within or near the small town of Tarmonbarry in county Roscommon. Thanks to the pedigree of the Hogg family in Burke's Peerage, there is evidence of a Honan family in mid-eighteenth century Roscommon. This Honan family, which includes the name Daniel, claims a Rev James Honan of the Diocese of Elphin as their ancestor. All of this is promising, but I have been unable to pick up many other clues. The most curious reference I have come across is a marriage record for Sarah Honan and Robert Stafford, 1723 in the Kilmore and Ardagh Diocese. Could this be the widow, or daughter of our Daniel Honan of New York? This is the right location for Roscommon Honans, and becomes more intriguing when it is noted that the Hogg and Stafford families of Roscommon intermarried. One further piece of evidence from the Hogg pedigree sparks interest. Gilbert Hogg and Mary Stafford had a son James Hogg who married Jane Piers, of the Piers family of Tristenaugh. This is the same Piers family into which Benjamin Fletcher's daughter, Catherine Fletcher, married.

Understanding the Honan family could eventually lead to clues on my own Mathews family in Ireland. I will always remain open to further information on the Honan family.

Do you want to know more?

[Link to Daniel Honan in the database](#)

Further Reading:

Hogg of Gilstown, Churchview and Cartron. From - A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain & Ireland (Supplement); John Burke, Sir Bernard Burke; Henry Colburn, 1849.