

cently released national survey. The

five outside of Nashville in Charleston

and renovations for the Hunley Park

Hanau, and Shaw Air Force Base in
Sunter.

Street Linked To Military Figures

May 1983

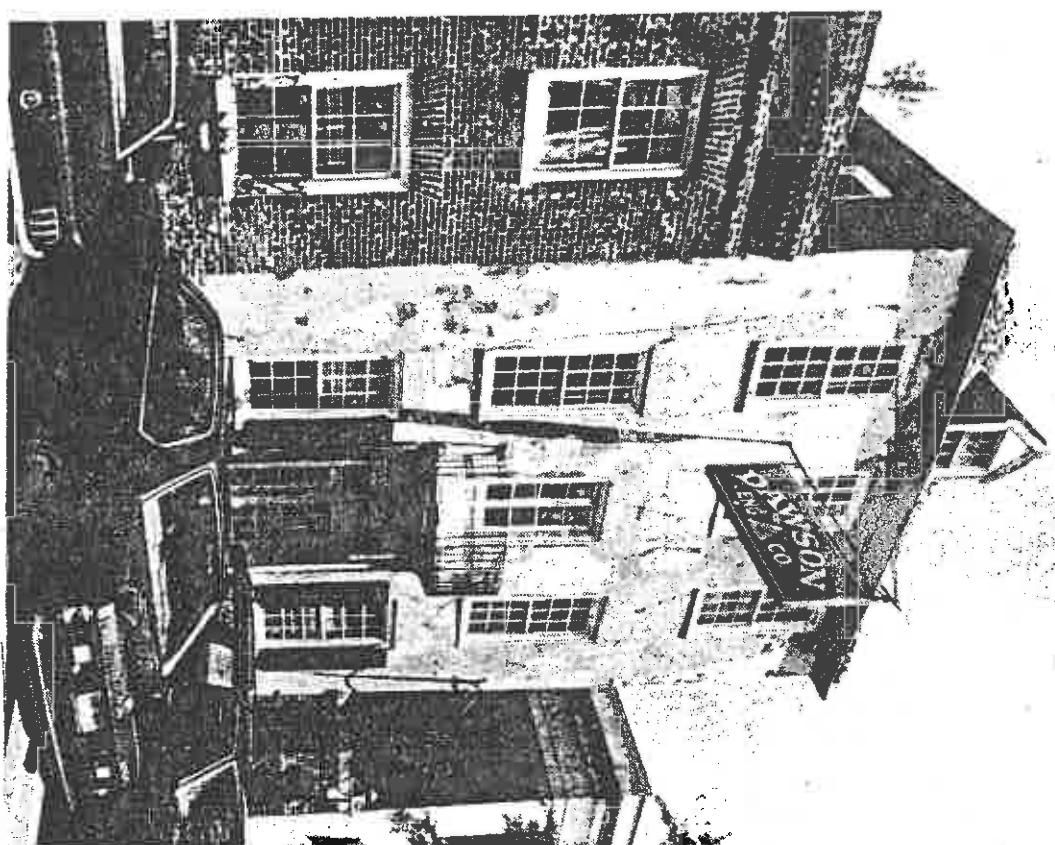
By JANE E. ALLEN
Post-Courier Reporter

Gillon Street, a small street just yards from the Exchange Building near Broad and East Bay streets, has been linked to distinguished figures in the military history of the last 200 years.

It bears the name of Commodore Alexander Gillon, a Dutchman who emigrated to Charles Towne in 1765, took up residence and became the first man to reach the rank of commodore in the United States. More recently, 10 Gillon St. was the working address of Louis Dawson Jr., a Charleston engineer who distinguished himself in World War II by rebuilding the Burma Road.

The street named for the Commodore appears as Gillon Street as early as the turn of the 19th century. Gillon was born Aug. 13, 1741, to a wealthy family in Rotterdam, Holland. He was said to speak seven languages, and write five and live in a high style that ultimately proved the undoing of his estate. After apprenticeship at a banking house in Holland and next in London, he began a nautical career. He was master of the brigantine Surprise and arrived here in February 1765. He married Mary Splatt Cripps, widow of William Cripps, and became the owner of much waterfront property, both downtown and on the Ashley River.

In 1774 he was made captain of the German Fusiliers. In 1775, Gillon was elected a member of the Provincial Congress of S.C. and also served as president of the German Friendly Society. In 1778, he was appointed a commodore in the South Carolina



Staff Photo by Tom Spain

Do You Know Your Charleston?

Navy, which had been formed to keep trade open with the West Indies. That year, Gillon helped capture two British vessels blocking Charles Towne Harbor. He commanded a 59-vessel fleet that captured the Bahama Islands.

After traveling to Europe, Gillon was engulfed in political intrigue over acquisition of ships and ammunition for the colonies, and he found himself in Amsterdam again in 1780.

He returned, and served for several terms in the House of Representatives of South Carolina. He was chosen lieutenant governor in 1783, but did not choose to serve. He was elected to Congress in 1784 and served in 1793-4. He was a member of the S.C. Constitutional Convention. Among his constitutional services was his presidency of the Charleston Chamber of Commerce.

The tract of land that bears his name was conveyed by wealthy Charleston merchant Richard Beresford to merchant Florian Charles Mey in 1772. Gillon was one of two executors of Beresford's estate, the other being the Rev. Robert Smith, rector of St. Philips Church, a founder of the College of Charleston, and later the first Episcopal Bishop of South Carolina.

The property was east of East Bay Street (then known as The Bay), but-

10 Gillon St.

Horry Minister Charged With Hubcap Tampering

By BILL KOVARIK
Post-Courier Reporter

He was released on his own recognizance Saturday morning by Judge G.W. Tumbleston Jr.

Mr. Weathers was in Charleston for the weekend to fulfill his duties as a U.S. Air Force Reserve

See Gillon Street, Page 2-B

two years.

on Overcrowding
eprior emergency powers to re-
e prison overcrowding is still sit-
on the Senate calendar where it
been for weeks. But Sen. Norma
sell, R-Lexington, removed her
ction to the bill, and that could
in quicker action on it. There are
several amendments that would
e to be worked out. And the Senate
sion of the bill would also have to
ke it through the House. The bill
ld allow the governor to shorten
a small percentage the sentences
ome non-violent criminals to re-
e overcrowding at critical stages
avoid court action.

Get Bill

The House finished work last week
a \$2.1 billion state budget for
3-84. The money bill calls for a 5
cent across the board cost-of-
living raise for the state's 55 thousand
employees. The budget also includes
\$ money for education and correc-
tions. The legislation, which must go
through one more vote in the House
before it goes to the Senate, also de-
fines for a year indexing on individual
ome taxes and for six months the
ies tax on utilities.

Gillon Street

Continued From Page 1-B

It was north of the Exchange
Building, with the Cooper River to the
East and John Burns Wharf to the
north. The area was occupied by var-
ious merchants throughout the 18th
and 19th centuries. For example,
John Johnson and Richard Fordham
had a blacksmith's shop there, ac-
cording to an 1822 City Directory. By
1882, most of the lots on the north side
of the street belonged to a merchant
named George Gibbon.

Between 1826 and 1842, Gibbon
managed to obtain the corner lot with
a house facing the Bay as well as an
adjacent lots belonging to James Ad-
ger, and the lots farther east that had
been held by Johnson, Fordham and
Daniel Perkins.

The current street, with two nar-
row alleys, one of which leads to the
upstairs floors of 10 Gillon St., ap-
pears much the way it did on an 1852
map. Today, the stuccoed brick
buildings house commercial busi-

nesses. The second and third floors of
10 Gillon, now occupied by Avery
Saylor and Associates, an advertising
agency, are thought by its owners to
have been the home of Commodore
Gillon, although his name does not ap-
pear in any property records except
when he was executor for the whole
tract. It is possible, however, that he
leased the waterfront property there,
but never owned it.

Titles and deeds indicate that he
owned property farther north on East
Bay Street, near Lodge Alley, had a
wharf on the Cooper River and land
on the Ashley River, and lived for a
time on Tradd Street. In addition, he
owned acres of plantation land
throughout the state, including many
acres at Gillon's Retreat on the Cor-
garee River, where he died Oct. 6,
1794.

Since 1935, part of 10 Gillon St. has
been occupied by the offices of Daw-
son Engineering, whose consultant
engineer, Louis V. Dawson Jr., rebuilt
the Burna Road destroyed by Jap-
anese forces during World War II.
Dawson, then a lieutenant colonel
with the Army Corps of Engineers,
was called one of the "engineering im-
mortals" by the New York Times for

his work in constructing more than
700 miles of highway through curving
mountain roads, using only eight
pieces of rundown machinery, 50
skilled workers and 40,000 Chinese la-
borers. He bridged 400 streams and
worked in areas with elevations as
high as 9,200 feet. Dawson also super-
vised the building of the Sawnee
bridge, the longest wooden bridge in
the world.

He was awarded a Legion of Merit
from the U.S. Army for his work. In
1958, Dawson was awarded the Na-
tionalist Chinese Government Media
or Cloud and Banner for his services
Dawson was also a city zoning en-
gineer who helped set up the city
original zoning plan in 1930-31. He al-
so served as chairman of the buildin
code for the Charleston Chamber and
was named provisional president.

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