

Hilton Lodge, Court Street

Interesting and genuine reference to the **Town Wall** on the **West** of Haddington in the late 1700s.

The information comes from the description of lands sold to the Johnston family in **1786**. The Johnstons appear to be the first to build a dwelling on the land which they named 'Hilton Lodge'.

*"ALL and WHOLE that piece of ground near the **West Port** of Haddington, sometime a barn and barnyard, granted in feu by the town of Haddington to William Richardson, land labourer in Haddington, by Charter dated 18th August **1764** and duly recorded in their register, bounded by the **Town Wall** or the tenement late of Mr Andrew Leslie on the **East**, the common loan on the **West and North** and the 'Barracks' on the **South-part**."*

Re that description of the boundaries in 1764: the 'common loan on the **West**' is the road to Aberlady, and the 'common loan on the **North**' could have been the route of the 'Black Palings' but is perhaps more likely Lydgait*. The 'Barracks' referred to on the **South** was puzzling, but it would appear to have been the 'Barrack' built in **1750** by Baillie Robert Reid, a Haddington mason. Town records dated **1st Oct. 1750** show that he had been 'empowered' by the town council to build, at his own expense, a 'Barrack' of stables for dragoon horses at the West Port, between it (the Port) and **Northwards** to the "round house at the corner of the town wall". This Barrack was to contain "a full troop of horses, besides a magazine for their forage, and to extend **100ft** from **South** to **North**, and **42ft** from **East** to **West**, excluding the town wall". "The building to give no interruption to the highway leading to Aberlady". "The Feu of the piece of ground to be L.2 Scots yearly." (*Lamp of Lothian* by James Miller p.143). [Note: the date suggests a connection with the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion – HHS members will perhaps know more.]

Miller goes on to describe the situation in the same area 40 years later at the time of Napoleonic Wars [1799-1815]. Barracks were then being constructed in Haddington to contain around 1800 men and 500 horses, 326 cavalry, 301 artillery and 1158 infantry. The 'Cavalry' Barracks were situated in a field lying **North** from Craig Lodge (formerly Hilton Lodge), bounded by the Aberlady Road **now owned by Patrick Craig**. [*Note: as Patrick Craig bought Hilton Lodge in 1815 this might suggest that those more northerly lands were also part of the Johnston's original package.]

Those 'Cavalry' Barracks consisted of 44 huts, viz: 1 mess room, 4 field officers' rooms, 16 for officers, 4 quarter-masters, 4 sergeants, 12 soldiers, besides stables for 320 horses, hay sheds, granaries, guardhouse, storerooms, etc.

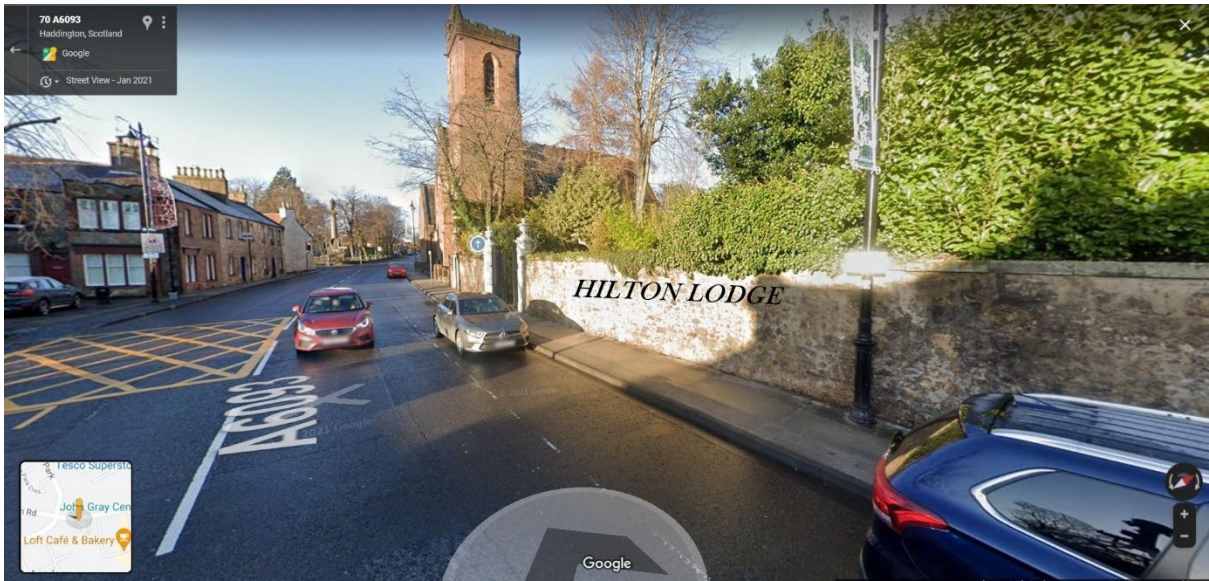
Separate 'Infantry' Barracks (consisting of 104 huts) were also situated in that field, in a line with the former (from which it was divided by a park), lying eastward of the road leading to Harperdean, ... and bounded by Goatfield and the great north post road – etc. (*Lamp of Lothian* by James Miller p.158)

In **1889** a later owner sold the south-west portion of Hilton Lodge garden (adjacent to the Railway Inn) to the Free Church Congregation (now the West Church). The deed was recorded in the Register of Sasines on 11th September 1889.

{Taken from 'Hilton Lodge - The Story of a House in Haddington' by Diana Hardy – 2003}.



The 1853 Town Plan marked to show the East boundary of Hilton Lodge as it is in 2021. However, the Antiburgher Meeting House, which was included in the lands around 1988, could also have been part of the original package.



Hilton Lodge and the West Church in 2021 – In the late 1700s the Town Wall lay to the east of this.

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