

Stamp Defiance Chapter Plaque to Cornelius Harnett ^[1]

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Stamp Defiance Chapter Plaque to Cornelius Harnett, Wilmington. Photograph courtesy of Natasha Smith. ^[2]

Stamp Defiance Chapter Plaque to Cornelius Harnett Wilmington

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<https://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/463> ^[3]

Description: This small metal plaque, approximately 8 inches by 10 inches, commemorating the life and service of Revolutionary patriot and statesman Cornelius Harnett sits in the ground next to his [grave marker](#) ^[4] in the cemetery of St. James Episcopal Church. It is fashioned from metal, and the inscription, in shiny brass-like raised lettering on a dark black field, commemorates Harnett's participation as a delegate to the Continental Congress and signer of the Articles of Confederation. The plaque includes the insignia of the Daughters of the American Revolution, a compass with the original 13 colonies represented by 13 stars placed around the exterior of the orb.

Another Wilmington commemoration of Harnett is located nearby the grave and Daughters of the American Revolution plaque. [The Monument to Cornelius Harnett](#) ^[5], a granite obelisk, stands across the street from the St. James Episcopal Church graveyard.

Image: [St. James Episcopal Church graveyard](#) ^[6]

Inscription:

REVOLUTIONARY WAR PATRIOT / CORNELIUS HARNETT /
NC DELEGATE TO CONTINENTAL CONGRESS /
SIGNER OF THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION /
BORN 1723 IN CHOWAN COUNTY, NC /
DIED c1781 IN WILMINGTON, NC /
MARKER PLACED BY THE /
STAMP DEFIANCE CHAPTER, NSDAR /
SEPTEMBER 2009

Dedication date: 9/19/2009

Materials & Techniques: Metal

Sponsor: Stamp Defiance Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

Unveiling & Dedication: The dedication took place on Saturday, September 19, 2009 at Harnett's grave site. The plaque had not yet arrived, although the dedication took place as planned. Members of the Lower Cape Fear Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution appeared in colonial dress to form a color guard for the event, and DAR members appeared in period dress as well. The event included patriotic songs and "Taps" played by Justin Raphael.

Subject notes: The effort to purchase and dedicate the plaque was the first time the local Stamp Defiance Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution had honored Cornelius Harnett, a merchant and statesman from Wilmington.

Harnett was a leader in the resistance to the Stamp Act organized in the Lower Cape Fear area and chairman of the Sons of Liberty. He served as the first president of North Carolina's Provincial Council, also known as the Council of Safety, from 1775 to 1776, as a delegate to the Continental Congress, and was a signer to the Articles of Confederation. In a local news report from the *Star News* at the time of the dedication the historian of the local chapter, Ruth-Anne Bolz, indicated the significance of the effort to the local chapter and the DAR as an organization based on ancestry and lineage and the fact that Harnett himself had no descendants, although it is known that Harnett left a son, also a Revolutionary, Cornelius Harnett, Jr. Cornelius Harnett was captured in Wilmington in 1781 by the British during their occupation of the city. He died soon after his release from prison.

The name of the local Daughters of the American Revolution chapter reflects the efforts of Harnett and other local patriots who resisted the Stamp Act. A write-up in a 2009 issue of the *Old North State*, the newsletter of the Lower Cape Fear Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, acknowledged Harnett's role as the "John Adams of the South" as both revolutionary and statesman in the development of the revolutionary government and emerging nation.

Location: The plaque is located in the graveyard of St. James Episcopal Church, on the corner of 4th and Market Streets, and sits just to the right of Harnett's gravestone.

Landscape: The plaque sits in the grass in the graveyard next to the church buildings. The graveyard is separated from the street and sidewalk by a low gridiron fence and is graced by shrubs, plantings, and mature shade trees.

City: Wilmington

County: New Hanover

Subjects: Historic Political Figures, Revolutionary War

Latitude: 34.23552

Longitude: -77.94469

Subjects:

[Monuments](#) ^[7]

[Places](#) ^[8]

Authors:

[Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina](#) ^[9]

Origin - location:

[Wilmington](#) ^[10]

[New Hanover County](#) ^[11]

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[Commemorative Landscapes of NC, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.](#) ^[12]

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