

Arnett, Silas W. ^[1]

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by Thomas A. Bowers and Gertrude S. Carraway, 1979; Revised by SLNC Government and Heritage Library, May 2023

fl. 1783–1806

Silas W. Arnett, was a printer in New Bern as early as 12 Dec. 1783, for the senate on that date rejected a House of Commons resolution to name the firm of Arnett and Hodge the public printers. The senate action proposed to award the contract to Martin and Company, but the journal does not report further action on the matter. Two years later, on 28 Dec. 1785, the [General Assembly](#) ^[2] elected Arnett and Hodge the public printers. They were the first to be chosen by an election, rather than by special resolution, in both houses. In November 1785, Arnett and Hodge also began publishing the *State Gazette of North Carolina* at New Bern. In 1787, [Andrew Blanchard](#) ^[3] replaced Arnett as [Abraham Hodge](#) ^[4]'s partner in the printing and publishing firm.

An attorney, Arnett pursued a career of public service during the remainder of his life. In November 1789 he was a delegate from [Beaufort County](#) ^[5] to the constitutional convention at [Fayetteville](#) ^[6] and voted with the majority to approve the ratification of the [U.S. Constitution](#) ^[7], already in force in all states except North Carolina and Rhode Island. Although he did not have to live in Beaufort County in order to represent it, the 1790 census does list a Silas W. Arnett in Beaufort County. In the [Pitt County](#) ^[8] court records for 1790, a Silas White Arnett, Esq., is listed as an attorney for the defense. An 1803 document from the [Craven County](#) ^[9] court lists a W. Arnett as clerk of the superior court and an 1804 document lists S. W. Arnett as the clerk. It is definitely known that Silas Arnett was clerk of this court between 1805 and 1806; his term probably began as early as 1803.

Arnett was also active in state [Masonic](#) ^[10] affairs. He may have lived in Windsor, N.C., at some time during his life, because in December 1788 the minutes of the New Bern St. John's Lodge, No. 3, reported that Arnett, "of Royal Edwin Lodge of Windsor," came to New Bern as grand junior warden of the [North Carolina Grand Lodge](#) ^[11]. The New Bern lodge minutes refer to Arnett again in December 1789, as "the Right Worshipful Senior Grand Warden" of the state lodge. Shortly thereafter, he transferred his membership to the New Bern lodge, and lodge members officiated at his funeral on 31 May 1806.

He married twice: to Susanna Davis in Craven County on 14 June 1785 and to Elizabeth Latchmore on 23 Sept. 1793.

Additional information from NCpedia editors at the State Library of North Carolina:

This person enslaved and owned other people. Many Black and African people, their descendants, and some others were enslaved in the United States until the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in 1865. It was common for wealthy landowners, entrepreneurs, politicians, institutions, and others to enslave people and use enslaved labor during this period. To read more about the enslavement and transportation of African people to North Carolina, visit <https://aahc.nc.gov/programs/africa-carolina-0> ^[12]. To read more about slavery and its history in North Carolina, visit <https://www.ncpedia.org/slavery> ^[13]. - Government and Heritage Library, 2023

References:

Clarence S. Brigham, *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690–1820* (1947).

Gertrude S. Carraway, *Years of Light: History of St. John's Lodge* (1944).

Walter Clark, ed., *The State Records of North Carolina*, 16 vols. (1886–1907).

Elizabeth Moore, *Records of Craven County, North Carolina* (1960).

"Silas W Arnett." *Second Census of the United States* 1800. New Bern, Craven, North Carolina. Series M32, Roll 31, Page 124, Image 254. Family History Library Film 337907. Accessed May 24, 2023 from Ancestry.com

Additional Resources:

North Carolina; Clark, Walter. *The State records of North Carolina*. Goldsboro, N.C. : Nash brothers, printers; [etc., etc.]. 1886. <https://archive.org/stream/cu31924032284162#page/n275/mode/2up/search/Arnett> ^[14]

Minutes of the North Carolina Constitutional Convention at Fayetteville, North Carolina. Convention (1789) November 16, 1789 - November 22, 1789, Volume 22, Pages 36-53:
<https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr22-0002> ^[15]

The State records of North Carolina (1886), The Internet Archive: <#>

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