

Bloodworth, Timothy ^[1]

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by G. Melvin Herndon, 1979; Revised November 2022.

1736–24 Aug. 1814

Timothy Bloodworth, patriot in the [American Revolution](#) ^[2], member of the Confederation Congress, anti-Federalist, U.S. congressman and senator, collector of customs for the [Port](#) ^[3] of [Wilmington](#) ^[4], and enslaver was born in [New Hanover County](#) ^[5]. He had two brothers, James and Thomas, who were active local politicians; their father was probably Timothy Bloodworth, who came to North Carolina from Nansemond County, Va., in the early years of the eighteenth century. Timothy was an impoverished child and received no formal education. Nevertheless, he pursued eight or ten different occupations—keeper of an ordinary and a ferry, preacher, doctor, blacksmith, wheelwright, watchmaker, farmer, and politician. He enslaved nine people and received grants for 4,266 acres of land. He was also a consistent proponent of democracy before, during, and after the Revolution.

Elected to the legislative assembly in 1758 at the age of twenty-two, he was returned to that body frequently during the next thirty-five years. He also served in other local political positions. Bloodworth, along with [John Ashe](#) ^[6], has been credited with the formation of the [Wilmington Committee of Safety](#) ^[7] in 1775. As a member of this committee, as a legislator, and later as commissioner of confiscated property for the district of Wilmington, Bloodworth was known for his harsh treatment of suspected and known [Loyalists](#) ^[8]. He was once accused of trying to depopulate New Hanover County.

In 1784, Bloodworth was elected to Congress; he resigned in August 1787 to return home to fight against the ratification of the Constitution, serving as a member of the Hillsborough and Fayetteville conventions. Emerging as one of several prominent radical leaders in North Carolina, he opposed nearly everything proposed by the Federalists. Defeated in his bid for a seat in the Senate in 1789, he was elected to the House of Representatives the following year. He replaced [Benjamin Hawkins](#) ^[9] in the Senate in 1795, where he served until the inauguration of [President Jefferson](#) ^[10]. Bloodworth was one of the first North Carolina Republicans to be rewarded by Jefferson. Soon after his resignation from the Senate, he was appointed collector of the Port of Wilmington. He served in this capacity until he resigned in 1807. He cited the inefficiency of the office for his resignation. At the time of his death in 1814, he still owed the United States \$22,500.

Bloodworth retired to his home near Burgaw, in present-day [Pender County](#) ^[11], and died while on a visit to Washington, N.C. He was survived by two daughters, Mary and Martha, and he had been a widower since the death of his wife Priscilla in 1803.

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Subjects:

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Authors:

[Herndon, G. Melvin](#) ^[21]

Origin - location:

[New Hanover County](#) ^[22]

[Pender County](#) ^[23]

From:

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