

## **Blount, Thomas** <sup>[1]</sup>

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by Armistead Jones Maupin, 1979; Revised by SLNC Government and Heritage Library, May 2023

**10 May 1759–1812**



An 1805 portrait of Thomas Blount by Charles Balthazar Julien Fevret Saint-Memin. Image from the North Carolina Museum of History.

<sup>[2]</sup> Thomas Blount, landowner, merchant, congressman, and revolutionary soldier, was born in [Craven County](#) <sup>[3]</sup>, the fourth son of [Jacob Blount](#) <sup>[4]</sup> and Barbara Gray. His father was a prominent landowner, planter, and public officeholder in the colony.

Blount was closely associated with his two brothers, [William](#) <sup>[5]</sup> and [John Gray](#) <sup>[6]</sup>, in business and politics. It has been said that their financial interests were so closely interlocked that it is questionable whether any of the brothers ever knew exactly what was his. The Blount brothers' mercantile business became one of the largest in North Carolina, conducting stores, trading in land, and operating a fleet of ships engaged in European and coastal trade. The principal base of operations was at Washington, N.C., but other establishments were operated, and the one in Tarboro was under the charge of Thomas Blount.

Blount served in the [Revolution](#) <sup>[7]</sup> as a lieutenant in the Fifth Regiment of the North Carolina Continental Line. During a portion of the war he was taken to England as a prisoner of war, and he later became a major general in the North Carolina Militia.

Blount was elected a trustee of [The University of North Carolina](#) <sup>[8]</sup> on 3 Aug. 1792 and served until his death. He was one of the commissioners who laid out the city of [Raleigh](#) <sup>[9]</sup>, and a principal street in that city bears his name. For a while he was a member of the U.S. Congress.

Blount was a member of the [Episcopal church](#) <sup>[10]</sup>, and his wife, Mary Sumner, bequeathed money to Christ Church in Raleigh.

Blount was married first on 4 June 1782, to Martha Baker, daughter of Colonel Benjamin Baker. After his first wife's death, he married Mary ("Jackie") Sumner, in November 1796. She was the daughter of General [Jethro Sumner](#) <sup>[11]</sup>, a distinguished Revolutionary War soldier and founder of the [North Carolina Society of the Cincinnati](#). <sup>[12]</sup> Both wives died without issue.

### **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://aaahc.nc.gov/programs/africa-carolina-0> [13]. To read more about slavery and its history in North Carolina, visit <https://www.ncpedia.org/slavery> [14]. - Government and Heritage Library, 2023

## References:

A. B. Keith and W. H. Masterson, eds., *The John Gray Blount Papers*, vols. 1–3 (1952–65).

William L. Saunders and Walter Clark, eds., *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*, 30 vols. (1886–1914).

## Additional Resources:

"Blount, Thomas, (1759 - 1812)." *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress*. Washington, D.C.: The Congress. <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=B000569> [15] (accessed May 28, 2013).

"[North Carolina] County Tables (continued): Fayette District, Sampson County - Hillsborough District, Wake County." *1790 Census: Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790* United States Census Bureau. Accessed May 11, 2023 at: <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1907/dec/heads-of-families.html> [16].

"CSR Documents by Blount, Thomas, 1759-1812." *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*. Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/creators/csr11279> [17] (accessed May 28, 2013).

"Blount-Bridgers House." Edgecombe County Cultural Arts Council. <http://www.edgecombearts.org/bbh.htm> [18]

## Image Credits:

Saint-Memin, Charles Balthazar Julien Fevret. "Portrait, Accession #: [H.1933.12.60](#) [2]." 1805. North Carolina Museum of History.

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## Authors:

[Maupin, Armistead J.](#) [25]

## Origin - location:

[Beaufort County](#) [26]

[Craven County](#) [27]

## From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.](#) [28]

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