

Hunter, Thomas ^[1]

Hunter, Thomas

by Claiborne T. Smith, Jr., 1988

Ca. 1735–84

Thomas Hunter, [Revolutionary](#) ^[2] patriot, was the son of [Isaac Hunter](#) ^[3] of [Northampton County](#) ^[4]. He first appears in the North Carolina records in 1761, when he purchased a tract of land in Northampton County called "the rich square." This was the site and origin of the present town of that name. About 1764 he married Priscilla Smith, the daughter of Drew Smith. In 1766 he sold his holdings in Northampton and began buying land in the Scotland Neck section of [Halifax County](#) ^[5]. In 1770 he moved farther to what was then [Edgecombe County](#) ^[6] and bought land on the north bank of Stoney Creek. This property was four miles west of the present city of Rocky Mount and is still known as Hunter's Hill.

From the first, Hunter was active in the Revolutionary movement. He represented Edgecombe in the First [Provincial Congress](#) ^[7] held at New Bern on 21 August 1775, and when the brigade of [militia](#) ^[8] for Edgecombe was reorganized on 22 May 1776 he was appointed second major. In 1777, when [Nash County](#) ^[9] was formed from western Edgecombe, Hunter was placed in charge of the militia of the new county with the rank of colonel. The following year he respresented Nash in the [North Carolina House of Commons](#) ^[10].

Little is known about Hunter's military service. The major duties of militia officers were to draft men and supplies for the Continental Army and to defend the home ground when under attack. In the state records are several letters from Colonel Hunter regarding military supplies, and in the [Nashville Courthouse](#) ^[11] are records of several courts-martial at which he presided. No doubt he saw action in the spring of 1781, when [Lord Cornwallis](#) ^[12] marched north from [Wilmington](#) ^[13] on his way to Virginia and passed through [Nash County](#) ^[9]. The militia tried unsuccessfully to impede the British advance in skirmishes at Swift and Fishing creeks. The arrival of the British gave impetus to a [Tory](#) ^[14] uprising in the county. [Colonel Seawell](#) ^[15] wrote: "Not a man of any distinction or scarcely any men of property has lain in his house since the British passed through Nash County."

Hunter did not long survive the war. He resigned as justice of the county court in 1784, and died intestate the same year. The inventory of his estate was dated 5 May 1787, with Micajah Thomas as administrator. According to the Nash County Registry, Hunter left sons Thomas, Cordial Norfleet, and Drew, and daughters Elizabeth and Polly, who married Loderick F. Ellin.

References:

John B. Boddie, *Historical Southern Families*, vol. 7 (1963).

Walter Clark, ed., *State Records of North Carolina*, vols. [22](#) ^[16], [23](#) ^[17], [24](#) ^[17] (1907, 1904, 1905).

Deeds and Wills of Northampton, Halifax, and Nash counties.

Subjects:

[American Revolution \(1763-1789\)](#) ^[18]

[Biographies](#) ^[19]

[Judges](#) ^[20]

[Militias](#) ^[8]

[Politics and government](#) ^[21]

[Public officials](#) ^[22]

Authors:

[Smith, Claiborne T., Jr.](#) ^[23]

Origin - location:

[Edgecombe County](#) ^[24]

[Halifax County](#) ^[25]

[Nash County](#) ^[26]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[27]

1 January 1988 | Smith, Claiborne T., Jr.

Source URL: <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/hunter-thomas>

Links

^[1] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/hunter-thomas> ^[2] <https://www.ncpedia.org/american-revolution> ^[3] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/hunter->

isaac [4] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/northampton> [5] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/halifax> [6]
<https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/edgecombe> [7] <https://www.ncpedia.org/provincial-congresses> [8]
<https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/militia> [9] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/nash> [10] <https://www.ncpedia.org/general-assembly> [11]
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/north-carolina-state-archives/8476211980/> [12] <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/historyofus/web02/features/bio/B03.html> [13]
<https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/wilmington> [14] <https://www.ncpedia.org/tory> [15] <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/seawell-benjamin> [16]
https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/volumes/volume_22 [17] https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/volumes/volume_23 [18]
<https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/us-revolution> [19] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/biography-term> [20]
<https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/judges> [21] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/politics-and-gove> [22]
<https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/public-officials> [23] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/authors/smith-claiborne-t-> [24]
<https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-20> [25] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-30> [26]
<https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-19> [27] <https://www.ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/dictionary-no>