

Grove, William Barry ^[1]

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by D. A. Yanchisin, 1986

15 Jan. 1764–30 Mar. 1818

William Barry Grove, congressman, was born in [Fayetteville](#) ^[2], the son of Richard Grove and the stepson of Colonel Robert Rowan, who married his widowed mother, Susanna. Very little is known of Grove's private life, but he did win the respect of his stepfather, who made him an executor of his will and the recipient of Hollybrook plantation. Grove studied law and was admitted to the bar, but his major business quickly became politics when, in 1784, he became the register for Fayette ([Cumberland](#) ^[3]) County. As a member of the House of Commons in 1786, 1788, and 1789, he was responsible for having Fayetteville designated one of the towns in which a superior court (1788) would be held and for obtaining it borough status with an independent seat in the House of Commons (1789).

Although an unprepossessing legislator, for the most part influencing his colleagues outside of chambers, the member from Fayette district occupied a seat in every Congress from the Second to the Seventh (4 Mar. 1791–2 Mar. 1803). Therefore, it was with much glee that [Nathaniel Macon](#) ^[4] boasted to [Thomas Jefferson](#) ^[5] about Grove's defeat in 1802 for reelection to the Eighth Congress. Generally Grove joined the southern bloc—irrespective of party—on economic issues, but he was one of the three southern congressmen to vote in favor of the [Jay Treaty](#) ^[6]. Despite his patent belief in the [Federalist](#) ^[7] principle that the best should rule, apparently a great deal of his success was based on the ability to convince the members of his constituency that he best served their interests. Appointed an original member of the board of trustees of [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[8] in 1789, after his political defeat he spent most of his energies in support of the university until his death.

Grove occupied the fine colonial mansion, inherited from his stepfather, on a hill at the corner of Rowan and Chatham streets in the crossroads town of Fayetteville. His gracious hospitality to the [Federalist](#) ^[7] elite of the South played no small part in his political success. He was described as having brown hair sprinkled with gray and as being average in height with a dignified bearing, rather handsome but lacking a strong visage. His marriage to a daughter of Colonel William Shepperd of Hawfields made him a brother-in-law of some of North Carolina's leading Federalists including Sam Porter Ashe, [Colonel Samuel Ashe](#) ^[9], and David Hay. Moreover, [Justice John Louis Taylor](#) ^[10] married a daughter of Colonel Rowan, and young William Gaston's first wife was a daughter of Rowan's son-in-law, Thomas John Hay. Grove had two sons and a daughter. He died in Fayetteville and was buried in Cross Creek Cemetery.

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Additional Resources:

William Barry Grove Letters, 1792-1802 (collection no. 00293-z). The Southern Historical Collection. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/g/Grove,William_Barry.html ^[11] (accessed June 20, 2013).

William Barry Grove in the Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/search.php?query=creator%3A%22Grove%2C+William+Barry%2C+d.+1818%3F%22> ^[12]

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