

Medici, Cosimo de ^[1]

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by John D. Neville, 1991

fl. May 1767–December 1789

Cosimo de Medici, *Revolutionary War* ^[2] officer, was probably born in Italy; however, little is known about him either before he came to North Carolina or after he left. Letters for him arrived in Norfolk, Va., in May 1767 and in February 1768. On 16 Apr. 1776 he was commissioned a lieutenant in the Third Company of Light Horse in the North Carolina Continental Line, and in January 1777 he was made captain of an Independent Company of Light Horse.

His career, however, was checkered with irregularities. In 1777 he enlisted men but had no supplies; since the men were not attached to a corps, they were of little use to the state and were discharged. Also there was some question about the delay in his delivery of \$650,000 in Loan Office certificates to Governor *Richard Caswell* ^[3], although in time they were delivered. When sent to North Carolina to purchase horses, he remained over eighteen months without finding any. At a court-martial convened to inquire into his behavior, colleagues and men he commanded testified that de Medici was "haughty, imperious, and neglectful of duty." He was also accused of withholding the pay of his soldiers, of being in debt to some of them, of lending or hiring out horses belonging to the company, of being addicted to gaming, of "sporting away £100 belonging to the public," of rarely attending to any public duty, and of treating his soldiers "with great indifference and inhumanity."

By 6 June 1779 de Medici had resigned from his corps, which was then disbanded. Yet in November 1789, the North Carolina General Assembly noted that he should be paid for a debt of £6 2s. 8d. he had personally incurred in 1776 to Colonel *Joel Lane* ^[4] of *Wake County* ^[5] to support himself and his troops in service to the United States. In December 1789, on the other hand, his petition for interest on a claim for a boat burned at Halifax was rejected. According to one tradition, he went with Count Axel DeFersen in a futile attempt to save Queen Marie Antoinette of France.

A Mason, de Medici was a member of Unanimity Lodge in Edenton, St. John's Lodge in New Bern, and Washington Lodge No. 15 in *Beaufort County* ^[6].

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