

## General Francis Nash



Francis Nash was born in Amelia County, Virginia, circa 1742, and moved to Orange County around 1762, with his brother, Abner. His home, constructed in 1772 in Hillsborough, still stands. He was a lawyer, invested in a local store, with his brother owned substantial property in the town and established a mill on the Eno River, and held both the office of Justice of the Peace and Clerk of Court, making him a target of the *Regulators*. He served as Lt. Colonel of the Orange County Militia in the Battle of Alamance in 1771.

Nash represented Hillsborough in the Province of North Carolina General Assembly, and in the First North Carolina Provincial Congress in August, 1774, and Second Provincial Congress in April, 1775, both in New Bern, and the Third Provincial Congress in Hillsborough, in August and September, 1775, which organized eight regiments of soldiers on instructions from the Continental Congress (a ninth was later added in the west), Francis Nash was appointed Lt. Colonel of the 1st North Carolina Regiment, participating in maneuvers leading to the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge in February, 1776, but did not participate in the battle, arriving after its conclusion. In April, 1776, he was promoted to Colonel, commanding the 1st Regiment, which participated in the expedition to aid Charleston, culminating in the Battle of Sullivan's Island. In 1777, he was promoted to

Brigadier General, in command of all nine North Carolina Regiments.



*Battle of Germantown*

General Nash commanded the North Carolina Brigade at the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777, which had more troops in combat than any other battle of the American Revolution, and the Battle of Germantown (north of Philadelphia), suffering a mortal wound from an artillery round on October 4. Thomas Paine ("These are the times that try men's souls...") saw him taken off the battlefield and said that Nash's wounds had left him unrecognizable. Nash was treated by Washington's personal physician but died on October 7, 1777. Nash's final words were reported to be, "From the first dawn of the Revolution I have been ever on the side of liberty and my country." His funeral on October 9 was attended by General George Washington and most of his senior officers.



Francis Nash was originally honored with a Memorial Arch at the Guilford Courthouse National Military Park (which was removed in 1937 to focus on the 1781 Battle there).

He is memorialized in a sign near his former home, and plaques there and at the

Alamance Battleground Memorial. He is honored by several city and county names, including those of Nashville, Tennessee, Nashville, North Carolina, and Nash County, North Carolina. There are no known likenesses of Francis Nash.



Nash's brother Abner went on to serve as the second NC Governor and in the Continental Congress.

This broadsheet is dedicated to the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Declaration of Independence. For more information, visit the National Society Sons of the American Revolution website at: [www.sar.org](http://www.sar.org).

**Presented by: General Francis Nash Chapter, North Carolina Sons of the American Revolution**



## North Carolina 1775 Timeline

April 3-7	<b>Second North Carolina Provincial Congress in New Bern</b> Met at essentially the same time and place with most of the same participants as the General Assembly; approved British goods boycott
April 4-7	<b>North Carolina General Assembly</b> Recognized the authority of the Continental Congress
April 8	<b>Governor Dissolves General Assembly</b>
April 19	<b>Battles of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts</b>
May 20	<b>“Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence”</b> Upon learning of Lexington and Concord, two delegates from each Mecklenburg militia company meet on May 19, and at 2 a.m. on May 20 unanimously agree on a set of resolutions. The undisputed published document is the May 31 <b>Mecklenburg Resolves</b> . May 20, 1775, is celebrated on the North Carolina flag, seal, and First in Freedom license plate.
May 23	<b>Abner Nash and “Motley Mob” meet with Governor in New Bern</b>
May 24	<b>Governor sends wife and children to NY</b>
≈May 29	<b>Governor Josiah Martin flees New Bern</b>
May 31	<b>Mecklenburg Resolves</b> Denied the authority of Parliament and specifically rejected the authority of the King-the first time any colonial committee had done so. The document declared all laws passed under royal authority to be void, condemned all holders of royal commissions as enemies, and called for a temporary local government to run affairs until a Provincial Congress could meet and pass new laws.
June 2	<b>Governor arrives at Fort Johnston, near the mouth of the Cape Fear River</b>
June 20	<b>Adoption of the Liberty Point Resolves</b>
June 30	<b>Governor writes Earl of Dartmouth</b> Long-winded dispatch to his superior circuitously rationalizing his exile; pleads for troops and weapons; characterizes Mecklenburg Resolves to “surpass all the horrid and treasonable publications that the inflammatory spirits of this Continent have yet produced”; describes plan with Scots loyalists to regain power, which eventually results in loyalist defeat at the Battle of Moore’s Creek Bridge, February 27, 1776
≈July 13	<b>Governor learns of planned Militia attack and flees to HMS <i>Cruizer</i></b>
July 18-20	<b>Cornelius Harnett and John Ashe lead several hundred Militiamen to burn Fort Johnston</b>
August 8	<b>Governor issues “Fiery Proclamation”</b> “I do hereby advise forewarn and exhort all His Majesty’s Subjects within this Province to forbear making any choice of Delegates to represent them in the intended Convention at Hillsborough as they would avoid the guilt of giving sanction to an illegal Assembly acting upon principles subversive of the happy Constitution of their Country and that they do by every means in their power oppose that dangerous and unconstitutional Assembly and resist its baneful influence.” “And whereas, it appears that the assembling Convention at Hillsborough will bring the Affairs of this Country to a Crisis which will make it necessary for every man to assert his principles, I do hereby conjure the good people of this Province as they tender & regard the blessings of British Subjects that they do firmly persist and persevere in their Duty and allegiance to His Majesty, hereby assuring them in the King’s name and by His Majesty’s Authority of his firm and determined resolution to maintain his faithful Subjects in the full and free enjoyment of all their religious and Civil Rights, Liberties and Privileges and of His Majesty’s utmost Encouragement to them in the defense and support thereof against all Enemies, Rebels and traitors whatsoever.”
August 14	<b>Issuance of Tryon Resolves</b>
August 20 – September 10	<b>Third North Carolina Provincial Congress in Hillsborough</b> Begins North Carolina self-rule government and plans for defense
November	<b>Governor moves to HMS <i>Scorpion</i> and sails to Charleston</b>

Governor Martin left for his home in New York in 1776, but returned to accompany Cornwallis in 1780-1781, as the war moved to the south, providing overly optimistic estimates of North Carolina’s loyalist support.