

Dudley, Guilford ^[1]

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17 Apr. 1756–3 Feb. 1833

Guilford Dudley, Revolutionary militia officer, was born in Caroline County, Va., the son of Christopher and Elizabeth Dudley. In November 1763 his father moved to [Halifax](#) ^[2], N.C., where the younger Dudley lived until January 1785. In July 1775 he volunteered for service as a private in a company of minutemen at Halifax. He participated in the [Moore's Creek Bridge campaign](#) ^[3] but was primarily engaged in gathering [loyalist](#) ^[4] prisoners after the battle. Not until after the fall of Charles Town, S.C., did he return to the army. In June 1780 he enlisted as a private in the dragoons of the North Carolina militia. The North Carolina militia marched into South Carolina under General Horatio Gates, and at [Camden](#) ^[5] on 16 August the American army was crushed. Dudley engaged in both the night action and the main battle the next morning. He and his unit remained on the field after the bulk of the militia fled, and they retired only when compelled to retreat by the British advance.

Following the British invasion of North Carolina in 1781, Dudley was again called to serve with the militia dragoons. During the maneuvering before and after the [Battle of Guilford Court House](#) ^[6], the dragoons were on detached duty patrolling and foraging. After the battle the remaining forces were organized at Troublesome Creek Ironworks into the First Battalion, state militia, and Dudley was appointed major on 22 March by Governor [Abner Nash](#) ^[7]. On 30 March—after only eight days' service—he was commissioned a lieutenant colonel. General Greene moved into South Carolina and Dudley and the militia saw action at Hobkirk's Hill on 25 April. The day after the battle Dudley became commander of the North Carolina militia in Greene's army.

On 10 May Dudley was discharged from active duty and returned home. While journeying through his state he narrowly escaped capture by the notorious loyalist Colonel [David Fanning](#) ^[8]. He lost his baggage wagon to Fanning and had to detour nearly a hundred miles out of his way to escape. At Hillsborough on 22 May he was commissioned a colonel in command of a volunteer unit to campaign against Fanning. He returned home to Halifax in July but on 2 September was recalled to command a light dragoon force sent to Virginia to scout the British army.

After the war Dudley returned to Halifax and on 23 May 1784 he married Anna Bland Eaton of [Warren County](#) ^[9], N.C. A native of Prince George County, Va., she was born on 21 Dec. 1763, the daughter of [Thomas](#) ^[10] and Anna Eaton. The Dudleys had six daughters and four sons: Frances Elizabeth (b. 25 Feb. 1785), Frances Bland (b. 30 June 1786), Julia Anna Eaton (b. 16 Oct. 1788), Theodoric Bland (b. 5 May 1790), Thomas Eaton (b. 9 Aug. 1792), Elisabeth Helen (b. 18 Mar. 1794), Sarah Bland (b. 8 Sept. 1796), Guilford (b. 22 Jan. 1799), Judith Randolph (b. 24 July 1800), and Caroline (b. 28 Apr. 1802). The Dudleys lived a decade in [Fayetteville](#) ^[11] and then moved to Prince Edward County, Va., in January 1796. In April 1807 they moved to Williamson County, Tenn., and settled in the town of Franklin where they remained the rest of their lives. Dudley apparently was a farmer; his enslavement of people varied in number from six in 1790 to nine in 1830.

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Pension Claim of Guilford Dudley (National Archives).

United States Census, 1790, 1830.

Additional Resources:

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Subjects:

[American Revolution \(1763-1789\)](#) [15]

[Biographies](#) [16]

[Farmers](#) [17]

[Military personnel](#) [18]

Authors:

[Butler, Lindley S.](#) [19]

Origin - location:

[Fayetteville](#) [20]

[Halifax](#) [21]

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1 January 1986 | Butler, Lindley S.

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