

## **Hinton, John** <sup>[1]</sup>

### **Hinton, John**

by Mary Hinton Duke Kerr, 1988

**ca. 1718–11 May 1784**

John Hinton, colonial and Revolutionary pioneer, planter, patriot, legislator, and soldier, was born in Chowan Precinct (now [Gates County](#) <sup>[2]</sup>). He was the son of "Col." John Hinton, an emigrant from England to Virginia who had come to North Carolina in 1700 by way of Nansemond County, Va. His mother, Mary Hardy Hinton, arrived in North Carolina from Virginia in 1695 with her parents, John and Charity O'Dwyer Hardy.

Hinton was among the early trailblazers who opened up the wilderness of present [Wake County](#) <sup>[3]</sup>. He was not yet eighteen when his father wrote his will in 1730. Nine years later he was granted land in the part of [Craven County](#) <sup>[4]</sup> that would be cut off into Johnston and then Wake County by means of a grant said to be the earliest known document identifying land now included in Wake County. The "Entry" (for less than the 640 acres this well-to-do young man could have asked for) indicated his intention of establishing a home surrounded by open grazing forest with the advantage of a "burnt marsh," a landmark left by Indian hunters. Here he built a log house on the south side of the [Neuse River](#) <sup>[5]</sup> about six miles east of the present city of Raleigh. The dwelling was entered by a ladder to the upper portion, as protection from marauding Indians and wild beasts. Later Hinton built a house facing the river from the opposite side, called The Square Brick House because of the unusual shape of the brick used in the foundation and chimneys. One of the bricks has been preserved in the Mordecai House in Raleigh, which was built by Henry Lane, one of Hinton's grandsons whose wife was Hinton's granddaughter. Over the years Hinton took up several thousand acres of land by Granville grants and additional acreage by purchase, becoming one of the largest planters in this section. His land followed the course of the Neuse River, and in some places the property ran four miles to the east and west of the river.

A justice of the peace for Johnston County in 1759, Hinton was named with other justices to find a suitable location for the Johnston courthouse. The site selected, Hinton's Quarter, was on the property of his brother William. Hinton also represented Johnston County in the Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Provincial Assemblies of Governor [Arthur Dobbs](#) <sup>[6]</sup> in 1760–62.

For over twenty years, Hinton served as an officer in the colonial and then state militia. Listed as captain of foot in the Johnston County militia in 1754, he held the ranks of major by 1761 and colonel by 1769; he served as colonel for eight years or longer. In 1768, just after the onset of the [Regulator](#) <sup>[7]</sup> disturbances, Hinton—then a major in the [Johnston County](#) <sup>[8]</sup> militia—was one of the "General and Field officers" of the army at the council of war called by Governor [William Tryon](#) <sup>[9]</sup> at Hillsborough Camp on 22–23 September. Convinced that the Regulator dissension could not be settled peaceably, Tryon raised an army in the spring of 1771 and began an expedition against the insurgents on the western frontier on 20 April. Hinton, by now colonel of the militia in the newly formed Wake County, participated in this expedition, but Governor Tryon's journal refutes the claim of Hinton's former biographers that he and his Wake County detachment were present at the [Battle of Alamance](#) <sup>[10]</sup> on 16 May. The detachment had been ordered to remain in Wake County to collect fines from the men who had appeared at the general muster on 6 May without arms, as well as to prevent the disaffected from joining the Regulators. It was not until 20 May, four days after the two-hour conflict, that Hinton and his men joined the army, having successfully carried out their assignments. They remained with the army until discharged at Captain [Theophilus Hunter](#) <sup>[11]</sup>'s Quarter in Wake County on 21 June, after Hinton had presided at the trial of prisoners held at Hillsborough Camp three days earlier.

When his land came under Wake County jurisdiction in 1771, Hinton served as one of the seven commissioners appointed to select a site for the Wake County courthouse. As a representative from Wake County, he attended the Second Provincial Congress at New Bern on 3 Apr. 1775 and the Third Provincial Congress at Hillsborough, beginning 20 Aug. 1775, where he subscribed to the oath of allegiance to the Association just adopted by the Continental and [Provincial Congresses](#) <sup>[12]</sup>. At the latter Congress he was appointed a member of the Committee of Safety for the Hillsborough District and the same day designated colonel of the Wake County minutemen, thus being transferred from the colonial to the state militia. A delegate from Wake County to the Fourth Provincial Congress at Halifax, Hinton participated in the adoption of the [Halifax Resolves](#) <sup>[13]</sup> and was named (5 Apr. 1776) a member of the [Safety Committee](#) <sup>[14]</sup> "to enquire into and make report to this Congress of ammunition now remaining in the Province," a fitting appointment for a veteran who had commanded his regiment in the Moore's Creek expedition only a month before.

Because he was already a colonel in the Johnston County militia, it appears that Hinton, with his regiment, had simply been transferred to Wake County in 1771. The muster rolls show Hinton as colonel of the Wake militia, his son-in-law Theophilus Hunter as major in 1772 and lieutenant colonel in 1773, his son-in-law [Joel Lane](#) <sup>[15]</sup> as lieutenant colonel in 1772, his son John, Jr., as captain in 1772 and major in 1773, and his son James as captain in 1773. When the British yoke could no longer be borne, he was as loyal to the cause of freedom as he had been to the king as a British subject and officer of the royal governor's militia forces. After a campaign of about a month's duration, the [Battle of Moore's Creek](#)

Bridge <sup>[16]</sup> was fought on 27 Feb. 1776. The state comptroller's accounts show that Colonel Hinton was paid for his services for thirty days as well as for furnishing a cart, four horses, and two servants for twenty-seven days in this campaign. One of the servants was "Uncle Brisco" who, after Hinton's death, lived at The Oaks, the plantation of his youngest son David, where Brisco drove the first carriage brought into Wake County, hitched a horse to the last gig brought within its boundaries, and told many a tale about having gone off to war with his master.

In 1776, Hinton also spent five days organizing the Wake County militia regiment and collecting provisions for an intended expedition to Cape Fear. Apparently, although alerted for the expedition, Hinton and his regiment did not participate in it.

About 1745, Hinton married Grizelle Kimbrough, the daughter of Buckley and Elizabeth English<sup>[?]</sup> Kimbrough who had arrived in Edgecombe County in 1735/36 from New Kent County, Va. They had four sons and five daughters, all of whom married and had descendants. Hinton and his wife lived to see their second son, James <sup>[17]</sup>, serve as colonel of the Wake County militia in 1780, after that commission had been declined by their oldest son, Major John Hinton <sup>[18]</sup>, in 1777.

Hinton's unmarked grave is at the site of his river plantation home, The Square Brick House, which burned two years after his death. It appears that his wife, who survived him by fourteen years and was buried beside him, lived with their son Kimbrough at his home, The Red House, after her home burned. Following her death, Kimbrough Hinton went to Tennessee where he died.

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