

## Cornelius Harnett Grave <sup>[1]</sup>

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Cornelius Harnett Memorial, Wilmington. Photograph courtesy of Natasha Smith.

<sup>[2]</sup>

Cornelius Harnett Grave  
Wilmington

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<https://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/424> <sup>[3]</sup>

Description: The stone grave marker bears an inscription to the memory of Cornelius Harnett, North Carolina patriot and statesman. Although the marker indicates the date of death as April 20, 1871, the correct date of Harnett's death is more likely April 28, 1781. A small [plaque commemorating Harnett](#) <sup>[4]</sup> is located in the ground in front of the marker. It was dedicated in 2009 by the Stamp Defiance Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Another Wilmington commemoration, [the monument to Cornelius Harnett](#) <sup>[5]</sup>, a granite obelisk, stands across the street from the St. James Episcopal Church graveyard.

Image: [St. James Episcopal Church graveyard](#) <sup>[6]</sup>

Inscription:

CORNELIUS HARNETT / DIED / April 20, 1781 /  
Aged 58 Years /  
Slave to no sect, he took no private road, /  
But looked through nature up /  
to nature's God.

Dedication date: Sometime after April 28, 1871, the date of Harnett's death

Materials & Techniques: Stone

Subject notes: Cornelius Harnett, Revolutionary patriot and statesman, was a leader in the resistance to the Stamp Act organized in the Lower Cape Fear area and chairman of the Sons of Liberty. He served as the first president of North Carolina's Provincial Council, also known as the Council of Safety, from 1775 to 1776, as a delegate to the Continental Congress, and was a signer to the Articles of Confederation. Harnett was captured in Wilmington in 1781 by the British during their occupation of the city. He died soon after his release from prison.

Location: The marker is located in the graveyard of St. James Episcopal Church, on the corner of 4th and Market Streets.

Landscape: The marker sits in the grass in the graveyard next to the church buildings. The graveyard is separated from the street and sidewalk by a low gridiron fence and is graced by shrubs, plantings, and mature shade trees.

City: Wilmington

County: New Hanover

Subjects: Historic Political Figures, Revolutionary War

**Latitude:** 34.23552

**Longitude:** -77.94469

**Subjects:**

[Monuments](#) <sup>[7]</sup>

[Places](#) <sup>[8]</sup>

**Authors:**

[Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina](#) <sup>[9]</sup>

**Origin - location:**

[Wilmington](#) <sup>[10]</sup>

[New Hanover County](#) <sup>[11]</sup>

**From:**

[Commemorative Landscapes of NC, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.](#) <sup>[12]</sup>

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[4] <https://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/463/>

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