

Hall, John ^[1]

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by Elizabeth W. Manning, 1988; Revised by SLNC Government and Heritage Library, March 2023

31 May 1767–29 Jan. 1833



John Hall. Image courtesy of the North Carolina Digital Collections. ^[2]John Hall, justice of the [North Carolina Supreme Court](#) ^[3] at the time of its organization in 1818, was born in Augusta County, Va. His father, Edward Hall, a native of Ireland, settled in Pennsylvania about 1736 but later made his home in Virginia. In the spring of 1744 Edward married Eleanor Stuart, a daughter of Archibald Stuart, Sr., of the noted family that produced Judge Archibald Stuart, Jr., the Honorable A. H. H. Stuart of President Fillmore's cabinet, and General J. E. B. Stuart of the [Confederate Army](#) ^[4].

After due preparation John Hall entered [William and Mary College](#) ^[5]. He then studied law at Staunton, Va., under his kinsman, Judge Archibald Stuart, for whom he cherished an ardent gratitude and later named a son. At about age twenty-five, Hall, having completed his legal studies, settled in Warrenton, N.C., where he remained throughout his life.

In 1800, Hall took his seat on the Superior Court bench, a position he held until 1818, when he became one of the justices of the newly established North Carolina [Supreme Court](#) ^[3]. Upon the organization of this court on 1 Jan. 1818, [John Louis Taylor](#) ^[6] was appointed chief justice with [Leonard Henderson](#) ^[7] and John Hall as associate justices. The court first sat for the dispatch of business on 1 Jan. 1819. Hall remained on the bench until December 1832, when he resigned because of ill health. In 1829, he was chosen one of the presidential electors from North Carolina. Although his position on the court prevented his active participation in the political campaigns of the day, he was a pronounced Jeffersonian [Democrat](#) ^[8]. He was also a [Mason](#) ^[9] and Senior Grand Warden from 1802 to 1805, and was also Grand Master of Masons for the state of North Carolina from 1805 until 1807.

Hall married Mary Weldon, the daughter of William Weldon and granddaughter of Lieutenant [Colonel Samuel Weldon](#) ^[10], an officer of North Carolina militia during the [American Revolution](#) ^[11]. By her he left a large number of children, including Dr. Issac Hall, a physician in Warrenton and later of Pittsboro, who married Eliza, the daughter of Peter Evans, and Judge Edward Hall, who occupied a seat on the Superior Court bench in 1840–41.

Hall was also an enslaver. The amount of people that Hall enslaved varied throughout his life. According to the 1800 census, Hall was the enslaver of 19 people. By the 1820 census, Hall was the enslaver of 34 people. By 1830, the last census before Hall's death, he was listed as the enslaver of 33 people. Lastly, Hall's will (dated January 13, 1833) also names many of the people he enslaved explicitly. Lizzie, Eliza, Nat, Nancy, Peter, Polly, Everia, Fanny, Mary, Celia, Frances, Henry, Trim Lefevé, Isaac, Hannah, James, Martha, Ivauna, Thomas, and Alice are all named among those that were enslaved by Hall.

Hall initially was a [Presbyterian](#) ^[12], but he eventually joined the [Episcopal](#) ^[13] church. He received its sacraments upon his death. Hall died on January 29, 1833 at age 65 from throat cancer. On January 31, when news of the death of Judge Hall reached Raleigh, a joint meeting of the bench and bar was held in honor of his memory. At this meeting Chief Justice Leonard Henderson presided, and William H. Haywood, Jr., afterwards a U.S. senator, acted as secretary. Among other resolutions it was resolved that, "in testimony of this respect and affection, we will wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days." Hall [was buried](#) ^[14] at the Hall Family Burial Ground in Warrenton.

An oil portrait of John Hall hangs in the Supreme Court, Raleigh, and another is owned by the Masonic Grand Lodge of North Carolina.

References:

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John H. Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina* ^[20] (1851).

Additional Resources:

"John Hall 1767-1833." N.C. Highway Historical Marker E-93, N.C. Office of Archives & History. <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program/Markers.aspx?sp=Markers&k=Markers&sv=E-93> ^[21] (accessed June 13, 2013).

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