

Long, Nicholas ^[1]

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by E. T. Malone, Jr., 1991

ca. 1726–97

Nicholas Long, deputy quartermaster general under General [George Washington](#) ^[2], [militia](#) ^[3] colonel, and [Revolutionary statesman](#) ^[4], also represented [Halifax County](#) ^[5] for several terms in both houses of the [state legislature](#) ^[6]. He was the son of Gabriel Long and moved to North Carolina about 1750 from eastern Virginia. A wealthy planter, Long was a literate man, but existing records cast no light on how or where he was educated.

A member of the Halifax County [Committee of Safety](#) ^[7] in 1774, Long was one of two representatives from his county elected as delegates to the First [Provincial Congress](#) ^[8] in New Bern, 25–27 August. He was one of three men sent from Halifax to the Second Provincial Congress in New Bern, 3–7 Apr. 1775, and one of five sent to the Third Provincial Congress at Hillsborough, 20 Aug.–10 Sept. 1775. On 9 September the Hillsborough congress appointed Long as colonel to command the 500 men of the Halifax battalion, one of six militia units to be raised in the province. When deposed royal governor Lord Dunmore of Virginia was leading raids against the Patriot forces, Colonel [Robert Howe](#) ^[9], commander of the Second North Carolina Continental Regiment, offered to send troops under his command to assist the Virginians. The Virginia Convention accepted the offer, and 150 volunteer militiamen from the Halifax District under [Nicholas Long](#) ^[1] arrived in time to participate in the American victory of 9 Dec. 1775 at Great Bridge, Va. This is the only combat where it can be said for certain that Long led any troops. His Halifax battalion of 500 took part in the mopping-up action after the surrender at Black Mingo Creek in February 1776 of the retreating [Loyalist](#) ^[10] army of [Highlanders](#) ^[11] led by General [Donald MacDonald](#) ^[12].

On 17 Apr. 1776 the [Provincial Congress](#) ^[8] named Long acting quartermaster for North Carolina and requested the Continental Congress to appoint him "Quarter Master General to the Southern Department, to rank as Colonel." A month later [Joseph Hewes](#) ^[13], a North Carolina delegate in the [Continental Congress](#) ^[14], communicated home the news that Long had been appointed deputy quartermaster general. He served in that capacity throughout the war and was heavily involved in the acquisition, transportation, and dispersal of materials. Workshops were set up on his property to manufacture military clothing and implements. The First North Carolina Continental Regiment, commanded by Colonel [Francis Nash](#) ^[15], sent to protect the meeting of the Provincial Congress in October 1776 in Halifax, camped for three days along the [Roanoke River](#) ^[16] in one of Long's old fields. At one point there was an investigation into Long's alleged misuse of funds. Not only was he found innocent of any wrongdoing, but the Continental Congress discovered that Long had been using his personal fortune to pay for quartermaster goods and reimbursed him several dollars. Long returned to the state legislature in Hillsborough as a Halifax representative in the [House of Commons](#) ^[6] during 19 Apr.–3 June 1784. He served two terms, in the New Bern Assembly of 1784–85 and Tarborough Assembly of 1787, as a senator from Halifax.

Except for his nearby neighbor, [Willie Jones](#) ^[17], Long was the largest slaveholder in Halifax County. He owned ninety-three slaves when he was enumerated on 24 Dec. 1785 in the state census. His holdings had diminished slightly, to eighty-nine slaves, by the first federal census in 1790.

Long was married twice. His first wife was Mary Reynolds (1736–58), of Virginia, whom he wed in 1752; they had two children: Gabriel (b. 1754), who married Sarah Ann Richmond, daughter of William Richmond, who was the brother-in-law of Sir Peyton Skipwith; and Anne, who married William Martin of Halifax. On 24 Aug. 1761 Long married Mary McKinne. They had eight children: Nicholas, Jr. (m. Rebecca Hill; d. 22 Aug. 1819), Mary (m. Bassett Stith of Virginia), Richard H. (m. Betsy Pasture), Lunsford (m. first Rebecca Edwards and second Mary Copeland), Martha (m. General William Gregory), George Washington (m. Sarah C. Jones), John Joseph (m. Frances Quintard), and Lemuel McKinne (m. Mary Amis). The second Mrs. Long was active in supporting the work of her husband. When the army of British commander Lord Cornwallis quartered in Halifax on its way to Yorktown, Va., an officer of the staff of Colonel Banastre Tarlton appropriated her riding horse. The lady, according to a family story, approached Tarlton and demanded, in no uncertain terms, the return of her mount. Apparently, she impressed the old soldier, who granted her request. Surviving for many years after her husband's death, she died at home on 21 Nov. 1821. Long and both his wives were buried at their plantation, Quanky, in Halifax County.

Perhaps because of the repeated use of the Christian name Nicholas in the Long family over a number of generations, there have been some errors in statements regarding the activities and dates of the first Nicholas Long. Carrie L. Broughton's *Marriages and Death Notices* (1966) erroneously cites 21 Nov. 1821 as the death date of "Col. Nicholas Long," when the person who actually died on that date was his widow, Mary. Jasper L. Long's *Long Family Records* (1965) confuses and combines the military records of Colonel Nicholas Long the elder, who fought only in the Revolution and died in 1797, and Colonel Nicholas Long, Jr., who fought in both the Revolution and the [War of 1812](#) ^[18] and died in 1819. In that volume, both records are mistakenly credited to the elder Long.

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Subjects:

[American Revolution \(1763-1789\)](#) [23]

[Biographies](#) [24]

[Military personnel](#) [25]

[Militias](#) [26]

[Public officials](#) [27]

Authors:

[Malone, E. T., Jr.](#) [28]

Origin - location:

[Halifax County](#) [29]

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