

Hairston, Peter ^[1]

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Hairston, Peter

by Peter Wilson Hairston, 1988

24 Feb. 1752–1 Dec. 1832



Peter Hairston. Image courtesy of the Digital NC Library.

^[2]Peter Hairston, [Revolutionary War](#) ^[3] officer, North Carolina state senator, planter, iron manufacturer, and merchant, was born in [Franklin County](#) ^[4], Va. His father was Robert Hairston, a landowner and officer, and his mother was Ruth Stovall Hairston.

Peter Hairston, who was named for his grandfather, a Scottish immigrant, was—judging from the voluminous records he left—a man of some education. It is said that he could spell but often he did not. In 1780, he moved with his father's family to that part of Pittsylvania that later became Henry County, Va. In the [American Revolution](#) ^[3] he took part in the 1776 raid against the [Cherokees](#) ^[5], in the first battle of the Shallowford, and, as a captain, in the [Battle of Guilford Court House](#) ^[6].

In 1782 Hairston was a deputy under his father, who had been appointed sheriff of Henry County. In April of the same year he married Aylcie Perkins, a daughter of Peter Perkins. Hairston, as early as 1781, began acquiring large tracts of land in [Stokes](#) ^[7] (then Surry) County, N.C. In the spring of 1786 he moved with his wife and only daughter, Ruth Stovall Hairston (1784–1867), to upper Saura Town. There he engaged in many business enterprises including ironworks, a country store in Germanton, the exporting of ginseng and bearskins, and increasingly large tobacco and corn plantings. Hairston also served four terms in the North Carolina state senate (1792–1800) as a [Federalist](#) ^[8]. In 1814, his wife died and his daughter Ruth took over much of his record keeping. Ruth married her cousin Peter Wilson Hairston and their only child, Agnes, married Samuel Hairston.

In 1817, Peter Hairston purchased from Jesse Pearson the 2,300-acre Cooleemee Plantation in [Davie](#) ^[9] and [Davidson](#) ^[10] counties, thereby adding cotton growing to his enterprises. His landholdings extended over 12,000 acres in [Piedmont](#) ^[11] North Carolina. He died and was buried at Saura Town. His property was willed to his daughter and her descendants, except Cooleemee, which was devised separately to a great-grandson, Peter Wilson Hairston.

References:

Berry Hill Papers, Peter Wilson Hairston Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill).

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Norman Eliason, *Tar Heel Talk* (1956).

Elizabeth S. Hairston, *The Hairstons and Penns and Their Relations* (1940).

Frances H. Hurt, *An Intimate History of the American Revolution in Pittsylvania County, Virginia* (1976).

Legislative Papers and Senate Journals of North Carolina, 1792, 1796, 1799, 1800 (North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh).

Tombstone of Peter Hairston, Saura Town, Stokes County.

Wills of Peter Hairston and Ruth S. Hairston (Office, Clerk of Superior Court, Danbury).

Additional Resources:

Peter Wilson Hairston Papers, 1773-1986 (collection no. 00299). The Southern Historical Collection. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/h/Hairston,Peter_Wilson.html ^[12] (accessed August 14, 2013).

Search results for Peter Hairston (1773-1832) in the UNC Libraries Catalog:<http://search.lib.unc.edu/search?Ntk=Subject&Ntt=Hairston,%20Peter,%201752-1832>. ^[13]

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Authors:

[Hairston, Peter Wilson](#) ^[19]

Origin - location:

[Davidson County](#) ^[20]

[Davie County](#) ^[21]

From:

[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#).^[22]

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