

Exerpt from

*The Monuments at Guilford Courthouse National Military Park, North Carolina,*  
by Thomas E. Baker (1979)

### **Hooper-Penn**

The most historically significant graves on the battlefield at Guilford Courthouse National Military Park are those of William Hooper and John Penn, two of North Carolina's signers of the Declaration of Independence.

William Hooper, born in Boston, June 17, 1742, practiced law in that city until he moved to the vicinity of Wilmington, North Carolina, about 1765. Hooper served with Governor Tryon's militia which smashed the Regulator movement at the Battle of Alamance in 1771. In 1774 he was elected head of the North Carolina delegation to the Continental Congress, serving until 1777. In that year he returned to North Carolina where he served in the state legislature until the end of the war. William Hooper died in Hillsborough, North Carolina, on October 4, 1790.

John Penn was born in Caroline County, Virginia, May 17, 1741. He moved to Granville County, North Carolina, in 1774, and the following year was elected to the Continental Congress. In 1780 Penn was elected to the North Carolina Board of War, and in that capacity helped supply North Carolina's guerillas and militia units. He died at his estate near Stovall, North Carolina, in 1788.

North Carolina's third signer, Joseph Hewes, was born in Kingston, New Jersey, in 1730. About 1760 he moved to Edenton, North Carolina, where he became a successful merchant. Hewes was a member of the North Carolina Committee of Safety and the Continental Congress. In Congress, Hewes chaired the committee which was responsible for fitting out the first American warships. As such he is considered the first civilian head of the United States Navy. Joseph Hewes died in Philadelphia on November 10, 1779. After a state funeral he was buried in Christ Churchyard, Philadelphia. By 1897 the exact location of Hewes' grave had been lost, and therefore his remains could not be moved to Guilford Courthouse.

The remains of Hooper and Penn were moved to Guilford Courthouse and a monument to the three signers was dedicated on July 1, 1897. The monument is inscribed:

IN MEMORIAM  
WILLIAM HOOPER AND JOHN PENN  
DELEGATES FROM  
NORTH CAROLINA 1776 TO THE  
CONTINENTAL CONGRESS AND SIGNERS  
OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

THEIR REMAINS WERE REINTERRED  
HERE 1894, HEWES GRAVE IS LOST  
HE WAS THE THIRD SIGNER

"LEE, HENRY, AND HOOPER WERE THE  
ORATORS OF THE CONGRESS"  
JOHN ADAMS' DIARY VOL. 2. P. 196, 1774