

## Drummond, William (from Research Branch, NC OA&H) <sup>[1]</sup>

### WILLIAM DRUMMOND

**Governor: 1665-1667**

by Dennis F. Daniels

Research Branch, NC Office of Archives and History, 2005.

<https://www.dncr.nc.gov/about-us/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program> <sup>[2]</sup>



"America septentrionalis," was published about the time of Governor Drummond's leadership. Click the image for a larger version.

<sup>[3]</sup>William Drummond (ca. 1620-1677), first governor of Albemarle County <sup>[4]</sup>, was given the responsibility by the Lords Proprietors <sup>[5]</sup> to establish a government. He proved to be a capable leader whose efforts laid the foundation for representative government in North Carolina. Born and educated in Scotland, Drummond settled in Virginia as an indentured servant to Theodore Moyer in 1637 and later to Stephen Webb in 1639. He was not a docile servant becoming involved in a plan with other indentured servants to run away; however, the plan was a failure. For his role, Drummond received a public flogging and an extension of his servitude by a year.

Drummond greatly improved his position in Virginia society by the 1650s. He became a large landholder, a prosperous attorney, and evidently a merchant. He also served as a justice of the peace and the high sheriff of James City County. In the early 1650s, Drummond married Sarah Prescott; they had at least five children. The Lords Proprietors commissioned Drummond as the first governor of Albemarle County in December 1664. Proprietor and Virginia Governor William Berkeley apparently was influential in securing the position for Drummond because of their friendship.

The Lords Proprietors furnished Drummond with instructions to create a government composed of a council and an assembly that had authority over 1600 square miles. Drummond wasted little time in establishing a functioning government. The first assembly convened by June 1665. Among its first actions was the issuance of a petition to the Lords Proprietors requesting a liberalization of the land policies.

The first governor of Albemarle County provided competent leadership for the developing colony. Drummond proposed new land policies to the Lords Proprietors because he felt the existing policies discouraged new settlers and forced current ones to leave. The proprietors, however, did not act upon his proposal. Drummond worked to settle the boundary problem between Albemarle and Virginia. Following attacks by Tuscarora Indians on Chowan River settlements in 1666, Drummond mobilized the colony for possible war. The troubles were settled before the fighting spread. He negotiated an intercolonial agreement with Virginia and Maryland to stop the planting of tobacco from February 1667 to February 1668. The hope was that, by stopping the planting of tobacco for a year, prices for the commodity would rise. However, Maryland pulled out of the plan causing it to fail. During his governorship, Drummond's friendship with Berkeley deteriorated. He openly accused Berkeley of trying to hurt the development of Carolina. The animosity between the two apparently started over a dispute regarding land leases in Virginia.

Drummond's term as governor ended in 1667. He returned to his Virginia plantation and remained active in business affairs. In 1676 Drummond joined with Nathaniel Bacon in the rebellion against the government of Governor Berkeley. After the defeat of Bacon's followers, Berkeley's army captured Drummond on January 14, 1677. Six days later, he appeared before a court martial board charged with treason and rebellion against the king. Drummond was found guilty and was hanged that same day.

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WorldCat <sup>[7]</sup> (Searches numerous library catalogs)

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