

Jenkins, John ^[1]

JOHN JENKINS

Governor: 1672-1675; 1676-1677; 1678-1679; 1680-1681

by Dennis F. Daniels

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

See also: [John Jenkins](#) ^[3], *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*

John Jenkins (d. December 17, 1681) served more times as proprietary governor than any other person, taking the seat no less than four times. He achieved power with the backing of the anti-proprietary faction (pre-1663 settlers) of which he was a leader. Jenkins, a native of England, married a woman named Johanna. By the 1650s Jenkins evidently lived on 400 acres in Northampton County, Virginia, known as Egge Neck, receiving the land in return for bringing eight settlers to Virginia. By 1662 he had moved to the Albemarle region. In September 1663 Virginia Governor William Berkeley issued a 700-acre grant to Jenkins on Harveys Neck for bringing fourteen people to Virginia. Jenkins had been involved in maritime activities since 1653 when the English Council of State licensed him to command the ship *King of Poland* to take twenty-three men and one hundred pairs of shoes to Bermuda.

Jenkins began his governmental career as a member of [Governor Samuel Stephens's](#) ^[4] council. [Governor Peter Carteret](#) ^[5] appointed Jenkins acting governor in April 1672. Carteret then sailed to London to meet with the [Lords Proprietors](#) ^[6] to seek redress for Albemarle's problems. Carteret never returned, so Jenkins remained in charge. By fall 1674 Jenkins and other officials were governing with expired commissions since the Lords Proprietors never renewed the four-year commissions issued in 1670. Jenkins remained as de facto governor for about a year. In September 1675, as stipulated by the Fundamental Constitutions, the colonists elected a new assembly. The proprietary faction (post-1663 settlers) gained control of the assembly and elected [Thomas Eastchurch](#) ^[7] as speaker. Eastchurch, who wished to be governor, had Jenkins arrested and imprisoned for "several misdemeanours." Eastchurch assumed the role of governor, but not the official title.

In the spring of 1676 the anti-proprietary faction forcibly released Jenkins and restored him as governor. Both Jenkins and Eastchurch apparently tried to lead Albemarle for a time. Eastchurch departed for London to appeal to the Lords Proprietors. By the fall of 1676 Jenkins was in control after he and his followers forcibly dissolved the assembly and overturned the leadership. Jenkins' second tenure lasted until July 1677 when he relinquished power to [Thomas Miller](#) ^[8]. The colonists disliked Miller because of his abuse of power. The anti-proprietary faction overthrew the government and imprisoned Miller and his followers in the series of events known as Culpeper's Rebellion. The rebel government with Jenkins as its leader presided over Albemarle through 1678.

Following his appointment by the proprietors, [John Harvey](#) ^[9] assumed the position of chief executive in July 1679. Harvey was highly respected and backed by the anti-proprietary faction. Due to his untimely death, Harvey's tenure lasted only six months. The council chose Jenkins to become acting governor. During Jenkins's fourth time as governor, Albemarle was fairly quiet, and the government was relatively stable. He remained in the post until his death on December 17, 1681.

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