Benbury, Thomas [1]

Benbury, Thomas

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28 Nov. 1736–6 Feb. 1793

Thomas Benbury, revolutionary leader, was born in Chowan County [2] of English ancestry. His father was John Benbury; his grandfather, William Benbury, came from England to settle near Edenton [3] about 1701. A planter, Thomas Benbury entered political life at an early age. He became sheriff of Chowan County [2] by 1769 and a member of the provincial legislature by 1773. As the Revolution [4] approached, he became an ardent Whig [5] and sat in the five provincial congress [6]es, beginning with that at New Bern in August 1774. He served on various committees in the congresses and was also a member of the committee of safety in Chowan County. When the revolutionary military forces were organized, he entered as a major in the Chowan militia and rose to the rank of brigadier general. He served in the state legislature from 1776 to 1782 and was elected speaker of the house for the terms from 1778 to 1782. He was succeeded in the legislature as delegate from Chowan County by his son, Richard Benbury.

After the war, in 1784, Benbury was appointed collector of customs for the State of North Carolina at "Port Roanoke," which included all the Albemarle [7] Sound area. After North Carolina ratified the Constitution in 1789, President George Washington [8] appointed him federal collector of customs for the Port of Edenton [9].

In addition to his other duties, Benbury served most of his adult life as a justice of the peace and as a vestryman in the Anglican church in Edenton. He died in Edenton and was buried in the Episcopal [10] churchyard there.

Thomas Benbury was twice married: first to Thamir Howcott, in 1761, and second to Elizabeth (maiden name unknown), in 1769. By his first wife he had two sons, Thomas and Richard, and by his second wife, a daughter, Mary. A great-grandson, Captain John Benbury of the First North Carolina Regiment in the Confederate Army [11], was killed at the battle of Malvern Hill, 1 July 1862. Another great-grandson, Richard Benbury Creecy [12], was a well-known journalist in Elizabeth City for many years.

Additional information from NCpedia editors at the State Library of North Carolina:

This person enslaved and owned other people. Many Black and African people, their descendants, and some others were enslaved in the United States until the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery in 1865. It was common for wealthy landowners, entrepreneurs, politicians, institutions, and others to enslave people and use enslaved labor during this period. To read more about the enslavement and transportation of African people to North Carolina, visit https://aahc.nc.gov/programs/africa-carolina-0 [13]. To read more about slavery and its history in North Carolina, visit https://www.ncpedia.org/slavery [14]. - Government and Heritage Library, 2023

References:

Samuel A. Ashe, ed., *Biographical History of North Carolina*, vol. 1 (1905).

Richard B. Creecy, Memoirs of the Creecy and Benbury Families (Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), clippings.

North Carolina Booklet, vol. 18 (1919).

William L. Saunders and Walter Clark, eds., *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*, 30 vols. (1886–1914).

Sons of the American Revolution, North Carolina Society, *Lineage Book of Past and Present Members* (1951).

Additional Resources:

Colonial and State Records Documents by Benbury, Thomas, Documenting the American South, UNC: https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/creators/csr11071 [15]

Edenton (N.C.) Port Book, 1790-1795 (collection no. 03428-z). The Southern Historical Collection. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/e/Edenton(N.C.)Port_Book.html [9] (accessed April 4, 2013).

Edenton (N.C.) Papers, 1717-1937 (collection no. 01910). The Southern Historical Collection. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/e/Edenton(N.C.)Papers.html [16] (accessed April 4, 2013).

"North Carolina: Introduction, First Census Act, Summary Tables, & County Tables: Edenton District, Bertie County - Fayette District, Robeson County." *1790 Census: Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790*. United States Census Bureau. 1790. Accessed April 21, 2023 at: https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1907/dec/heads-of-families.html [17].

Subjects:
American Revolution (1763-1789) [18]
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Public officials [22]
Authors:
Johnson, Elmer D. [23]
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From:
Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.[25]

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Links
[1] https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/benbury-thomas [2] https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/chowan [3] https://www.ncpedia.org/edenton [4] https://www.ncpedia.org/american-revolution [5] https://www.ncpedia.org/whig-party [6] https://www.ncpedia.org/provincial-congresses [7] https://www.ncpedia.org/albemarle-and-chesapeake-canal [8] https://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/georgewashington [9] http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/e/Edenton%28N.C.%29Port_Book.html [10] https://www.ncpedia.org/religion/episcopal-church [11] https://www.ncpedia.org/confederate-army-structure [12] https://www.ncpedia.org/creecy-richard-benbury [13] https://aahc.nc.gov/programs/africa-carolina-0 [14] https://www.ncpedia.org/slavery [15] https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/creators/csr11071 [16] http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/e/Edenton%28N.C.%29Papers.html [17] https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1907/dec/heads-of-families.html [18] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/us-revolution [19] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/biography-term [20] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/soldiers [21] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/planters [22] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/subjects/public-officials [23] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/authors/johnson-elmer-d [24] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/coastal-38 [25] https://www.ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/dictionary-no