

Dawson, John ^[1]

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by Jaquelin Drane Nash, 1986

ca. 1690–1761 or 1762

John Dawson, member of the Assembly for Bertie ^[2] and Northampton ^[3] counties, justice of the court, and member of the governor's council, was born in Isle of Wight County, Va. His grandfather, William Dawson, had come to Virginia about 1621. His father, Henry Dawson, lived first in Warwick County, Va., and later in Isle of Wight. His mother was Martha (probably Shepard) of Warwick.

Dawson, the second son of his parents, came with his family to Bertie County ^[2] about 1732. He first represented that county in the Assembly of 1735. After the formation of Northampton County ^[3], he continued as representative of the new county. He became justice of the peace in 1739 and later sheriff. He was a member of the commission to lay out the town of Windsor. During the Spanish alarm of 1748, he was made colonel of the Northampton Regiment. He became an associate justice of the North Carolina court in 1751. In the same year, Governor Johnston ^[4] proposed his name to the Board of Trade ^[5] as a member of his council; Dawson was sworn in on 28 May 1752. He remained a member of the council until his death, serving under both Governors Johnston and Dobbs ^[6].

Dawson married first Elizabeth Thomas Boddie, sister of Barnaby and Philip Thomas and widow of John Boddie (d. 1720). By Elizabeth, he had a son, Henry, and a daughter, Mary. By his second wife, Charity Alston, he had two daughters, Charity and Elizabeth, and a son, John. His second wife having been an heiress of considerable fortune, a marriage settlement was made to provide equitably for the children of the first wife and for the possible issue of the second. The family lived in Northampton County on the banks of Bridgers Creek. Dawson's will suggests a ménage of more than usual comfort, if not elegance, for that period in North Carolina. His two sons served in the North Carolina Assembly: Henry, from 1766 until his death in 1770; and John, from 1780 to 1782 and again from 1787 to 1798.

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