

Dobbs, Edward Brice ^[1]

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by William S. Price, Jr., 1986

1729–February 1803

Edward Brice Dobbs, colonial official, was born to [Arthur](#) ^[2] and Annie Osburne Norbury Dobbs at Castle Dobbs in Carrickfergus, Ireland. Little is known about his early life, but in October 1754 he accompanied his father to North Carolina where the elder Dobbs served as royal governor from 1754 to 1765. Brice, as he was called by his contemporaries, was a professional soldier and held a captain's commission in the British army. His interest in military life found an outlet in the growing colonial hostilities with the [French and the Indians](#) ^[3]. Early in 1755 he was captain of two companies of North Carolina militia going to Virginia to serve under General Edward Braddock. Although he did not play a direct part in Braddock's defeat on the Monongahela in July (his forces being held in reserve), Dobbs suffered temporary blindness after the action apparently due to contact with a poisonous weed. He remained in a defensive station in Virginia until he led his troops to New York late in 1756. Eventually commanding three companies there, he was temporarily promoted to the rank of major but returned to North Carolina in the spring of 1757 suffering from what his father described as rheumatism.

Dobbs was sworn in as a royal councillor of North Carolina on 17 May 1757. Thus the Privy Council honored father and son for their service in the war with France. The younger Dobbs attended sessions of the Council regularly until March 1759 when he left the province. Before his departure his father in October 1758 named him naval officer for the whole colony—a lucrative position in terms of fee collections. What drew him away from North Carolina was the chance to command a company of English fusiliers at Gibraltar. In reply to a letter from Governor [William Tryon](#) ^[4], which had reached him in Scotland in 1767, Brice Dobbs said he would never return to North Carolina and would willingly resign his Council seat. Before all of the necessary paperwork was processed, he was suspended from the Council for nonattendance in November 1769.

After 1770 Dobbs apparently spent most of his life in his native Carrickfergus and twice served as its mayor. He and his brother, Conway, submitted claims in excess of £11,000 for confiscation of their North Carolina property during the [American Revolution](#) ^[5], but they received only about £1,000 each in compensation.

References:

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Arthur Dobbs, Loyalist claims (North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh).

William L. Saunders, ed., *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vols. 5–7 (1887–90).

Additional Resources:

Edward Brice Dobbs to William Tryon, Aberdeen, January 26, 1767. Colonial and State Records of North Carolina. Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

<https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr07-0161> ^[6] (accessed February 19, 2013).

"Warrant appointing Edward Brice Dobbs, Esq. to be a councillor in North Carolina." *The State Records of North Carolina*, Volume 11. Winston [N.C.]: M.I & J.C. Stewart, Printers to the State. 1895. 125-126. <http://books.google.com/books?id=nLQNAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA125&pg=PA125#v=onepage&q&f=false> ^[7] (accessed February 19, 2013).

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