

## **Halton, Robert** <sup>[1]</sup>

## **Halton, Robert**

by William S. Price, Jr., 1988

### **d. Mar./Apr. 1749**

Robert Halton, colonial official, first appears in North Carolina when he took the oaths of a royal councillor in [Edenton](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, 25 Feb. 1731. He seems to have been a soldier in England and may have known Governor [George Burrington](#) <sup>[3]</sup> through the army. When Burrington came to North Carolina from England in 1731, Halton probably accompanied him on the voyage. The governor nominated Halton as one of the earliest members of North Carolina's first royal council, and during the initial year of Burrington's administration he supported the volatile chief executive in all crucial votes. His early loyalty was rewarded when Burrington named Halton as provost marshal of Bath County in March 1731. This office was a profitable one by any measure; when it was abolished by the shift from precinct to county organization in 1738, Halton was allowed £2,000 in provincial currency as compensation.

By the fall of 1732, Halton probably realized the risk of being too closely identified with the uneven Burrington and did not attend council sessions after October. Two years later the governor suspended him for excessive absences, but [Gabriel Johnston](#) <sup>[4]</sup> restored Halton to his council seat in November 1734. From the earliest days of Johnston's administration Halton was a firm supporter of the governor, and he was rewarded handsomely in return. He became a justice of the peace for New Hanover Precinct in December 1734, apparently having moved there from Edenton during 1732 or 1733. In March 1735 he was made a collector of [quitrents](#) <sup>[5]</sup> and an usher of the Exchequer Court. Two years later he served as a commissioner for running the boundary with South Carolina. During the controversial maneuvers to incorporate [Wilmington](#) <sup>[6]</sup> in 1739, he voted with the pro-Wilmington faction in the council to push through the crucial measure. His loyalty here further endeared him to Governor Johnston, and he became one of Wilmington's original commissioners in 1740 and an assistant justice of the [General Court](#) <sup>[7]</sup> in 1743.

During late 1740 and early 1741 Halton served as a captain of North Carolina troops going to Jamaica and Cartagena. As a man of some military experience, Halton was a colonel in the New Hanover militia. He also participated in the earliest part of the [Granville District](#) <sup>[8]</sup> survey in 1744 and, in September 1746, became an agent for the sale of such lands. Earlier in 1746, Halton journeyed to England (possibly to seek the office of land agent from Earl Granville) and appeared before the [Board of Trade](#) <sup>[9]</sup> to discuss conditions in North Carolina.

Halton remained active until his death. He spent roughly the last sixteen years of his life at his plantation, called Halton's Lodge, on Smith's Creek near Wilmington. However, he returned to Edenton to die, as his will was written there on 22 Mar. 1748/49. In his will Halton named a wife, Mary, who was residing in England, but he left the bulk of his estate to Sarah Groves and his son by her, Robert Halton, Jr.

### **References:**

Tillie Bond Manuscripts and Governors' Office Papers (North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh).

Donald R. Lennon and Ida B. Kellam, *The Wilmington Town Book* (1973).

William L. Saunders, ed., *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vols. 3–5 (1886–87).

### **Additional Resources:**

*The North Carolina Historical and Genealogical Register, Volume 1*. [http://books.google.com/books?id=j9YUAAAAAJ&dq=robert+halton+1749&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=j9YUAAAAAJ&dq=robert+halton+1749&source=gbs_navlinks_s&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false) <sup>[10]</sup> (accessed August 21, 2013).

Memorial from members of the North Carolina Governor's Council to Gabriel Johnston concerning sectional dispute over North Carolina General Assembly sessions and representation. Rice, Nathaniel, d. 1753; Moore, Roger, 1694-1751; Allen, Eleazer, 1692-1750; Rowan, Matthew, d. 1760; Halton, Robert, d. 1749 1744 Volume 04, Pages 1198-1201, Documenting the American South, UNC Libraries: <https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr04-0391> <sup>[11]</sup>

Letter from Gabriel Johnston to the Board of Trade of Great Britain. Johnston, Gabriel, ca. 1698-1752. May 10, 1749 Volume 04, Pages 935-936. Documenting the American South, UNC Libraries: <https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr04-0289> <sup>[12]</sup>

### **Subjects:**

[Biographies](#) <sup>[13]</sup>

[Colonial period \(1600-1763\)](#) <sup>[14]</sup>

Public officials <sup>[15]</sup>

**Authors:**

Price, William S., Jr. <sup>[16]</sup>

**Origin - location:**

Chowan County <sup>[17]</sup>

New Hanover County <sup>[18]</sup>

**From:**

Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.<sup>[19]</sup>

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