

Harris, Edward ^[1]

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by Jon G. Crawford, 1988

5 Mar. 1763–29 Mar. 1813

Edward Harris, attorney, judge, and legislator, was born in Iredell County ^[2], the son of James and Rebecca Morrison Harris. James Harris, a native of Harrisburg, Pa., moved in 1758 to that part of Rowan County ^[3] that later became Iredell where he was a justice of the peace. His son Edward was educated under the Reverend James Hall ^[4] at the noted Clio's Academy ^[5], then read law with William Sharpe ^[6]. After being licensed he practiced law in New Bern where he was living by 1791. Harris married Sarah Roulhac of Orange County ^[7] but they had no children. His second wife was Sarah H. Kollock, of Elizabeth Town, N.J., whom he married on 5 July 1809.

In the spring of 1802 Harris was appointed to the bench of the United States Court for the Fifth Judicial District to fill the unexpired term of Henry Potter ^[8]. Only three months later, this temporary court passed out of existence, but Harris had apparently made a mark as a judge. In November 1802 he was sent to the legislature as the borough representative of New Bern, and he served in the same capacity the following year. From 1805 until his death he was a trustee of The University of North Carolina ^[9]. In 1807 he represented Craven County ^[10] in the legislature, and in 1811 he was elected by the General Assembly to the Superior Court bench.

Harris had a reputation for honesty and learning which he used to good effect in difficult cases. On one occasion in 1810 he argued unsuccessfully in the case of Earl Granville, who was attempting to enforce a title obtained in 1744. The appeal to the United States Supreme Court was never prosecuted due to the outbreak of the War of 1812 ^[11]. Harris's judicial career was terminated by his untimely death after less than two years on the bench. He died while holding court in Lumberton and was buried there.

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Additional Resources:

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