

Gale, Edmund ^[1]

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Gale, Edmund

by William S. Price, Jr., 1986

d. December 1738

Edmund Gale, provincial official, was the son of Miles (1647–1721) and Margaret Stone Gale. His father, an Anglican clergyman, was rector of Keighley in Yorkshire, England; his mother was a daughter of the chancellor of York. The third of four sons, Edmund spent most of his life in the shadow of his eldest brother, Christopher.

Edmund first appears in North Carolina in 1715. By January of the following year he was serving in the Assembly ^[2]. He was again elected to the lower house in November 1723. Unquestionably Gale benefited from a name made prominent by his brother. During the early part of his life in the colony, he lived in Pasquotank Precinct and was named to the vestry of Southwest Parish there in 1715. In 1734, he purchased a house in Edenton ^[3] where he spent the rest of his life. As he grew older, Gale attained increasingly more significant political positions. He was treasurer of Pasquotank in 1720. In April 1722 he became a justice of the General Court and served for four years. Elevated to Governor Richard Everard ^[4]'s council in the summer of 1725, Gale remained a member for three years. In this position and because of his kinship with Christopher, he gained the enmity of George Burrington ^[5]. Robert Forster, the clerk of the council in the late Proprietary period, said in 1730 that he had heard Burrington promise revenge on certain councillors who had caused him trouble in 1725—Edmund Gale being one of those named. Yet when Burrington arrived in the colony to assume his duties as royal governor in February 1731, he and the younger Gale developed a growing friendship. One of the things that drew Burrington to Edmund was his opposition to Edmund Porter, ^[6] the unpopular vice-admiralty court judge. Gale and John Lovick ^[7] had led a group that violently disrupted Porter's court in January 1731. Burrington wished to remove Porter from the royal council and, through a questionable emergency appointment, elevated Gale to the council on 26 July 1731. Despite his difficulties with every other councillor seated in 1731, Burrington retained Gale until his own removal as governor in November 1734. Gale's tenure on the council ended at the same time.

Gale succeeded Edmund Porter as vice-admiralty court judge in January 1732, and he served as naval officer for the port of Roanoke ^[8] the following year. When Gale died in 1738, he left a widow, Mary, and two sons, Roger and Edmund. His will listed eleven slaves, and his whole estate was valued in excess of £8,000.

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