

Owen, William ^[1]

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by William S. Price, Jr., 1991

d. May 1734

William Owen, colonial official, was appointed an assistant justice of the North Carolina General Court by Governor [George Burrington](#) ^[2] in October 1732. He quickly appealed to Burrington, who was seeking able allies in his quarrels with leading families of the colony. In January 1733 the governor elevated Owen to the royal Council as his own emergency appointment. Three months later both [Nathaniel Rice](#) ^[3] and [John Baptista Ashe](#) ^[4] of the Council [protested](#) ^[5] Owen's appointment because a majority of the councillors had not concurred in it. Burrington ignored their protests, and his enemies soon characterized Owen as "a very weak and ignorant man of bad (not to say infamous) Character."

Owen attended his first Council meeting in March 1733. In the following months, the governor made him a justice of the peace for Beaufort and Hyde precincts. Owen returned the governor's favor by voting consistently for Burrington's position in the Council. However, by May 1734 Owen was dead.

Described as a bachelor, Owen in his will named his sister, Elizabeth Owen, as his "only next of kin." His uncle and "principle creditor," Thomas Walker, was the administrator of his estate.

References:

J. R. B. Hathaway, ed., *North Carolina Historical and Genealogical Register*, vol. 3 (July 1903).

William S. Price, Jr., "'Men of Good Estates': Wealth among North Carolina's Royal Councillors," *North Carolina Historical Review* 49 (January 1972).

William L. Saunders, ed., *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 3 (1896).

Additional Resources:

Memorandum from Nathaniel Rice and John Baptista Ashe to the North Carolina Governor's Council concerning an additional council member, March 1733. *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/csr03-0162> ^[5] (accessed March 5, 2013).

Minutes of the General Court of North Carolina concerning the dispute between George Burrington and some members of the North Carolina Governor's Council. *Colonial and State Records of North Carolina*. Volume 03, 385-391. Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr03-0136#p3-390> ^[6]

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[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography](#), University of North Carolina Press, ^[12]

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