Jenings (or Jennings), William [1]

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by Mattie Erma E. Parker, 1988

d. 1687

William Jenings (or Jennings), Council member, leader inCulpeper's Rebellion [2], and member of the "Rebel Assembly," is thought to have been the William Jenings to whom Virginia authorities granted 350 acres of land in Surry County, Va., in 1657 and 550 acres on New Begun Creek, in the Albemarle area, in 1663. He had moved to the northern Carolina colony, then called Albemarle, by 27 Apr. 1672, when he was a member of the Council. He also was on the Council as of 25 May 1673. The exact length of his tenure cannot be determined because of the sparseness of surviving records of the period.

Jenings took part in the uprising called Culpeper's Rebellion, which occurred in December 1677. He and his son-in-law, William Seares, were leaders of a group of armed men who seized and imprisoned the acting governor, Thomas Miller [3], and two Council members at the beginning of the uprising. Subsequently, Miller was held prisoner at Jenings's house. Jenings was elected to the Assembly chosen by the colonists after the overthrow of Miller's government.

He lived in Pasquotank Precinct [4] at "the upper end of Pasquotank River," probably on the land granted him by the Virginia governor and Council in 1663. He and his wife, Martha, had at least three children: John, Ann, and another daughter, apparently named Margaret, who married Ralph Garnet. Ann was married first to William Seares, who died about 1679, and later to Paul Lathum. John probably was the John Jenings who in 1684 was a justice of the County Court of Albemarle and subsequently justice of the Pasquotank Precinct Court. A William Jenings who was active in the colony in the 1690s and early 1700s seems to have been John's son.

Jenings died between 24 Jan. 1686/87, when he made his will, and April Court, 1687, when the will was proved. His legatees were his son, John, whom he named executor; his daughter, Ann Lathum; his son-in-law, Ralph Garnet; a granddaughter, Mary Garnet; and a godson, William Barcocke. Presumably, his wife and the daughter who married Garnet died before the will was made.

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