

Porter, John ^[1]

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by Claiborne T. Smith, Jr., 1994

ca. 1710–43

John Porter, legislator, was born in Bath, the son of [John Porter](#) ^[2] and Sarah Lillington and the third of the name to be prominent in the politics of colonial North Carolina. Mentioned as "nephew John Porter of Cape Fear" in the will of [Edmund Porter](#) ^[3] in Chowan in 1737, he, in 1739, petitioned for a confirmation of title to 1,200 acres of land at Bluff Point in Chowan which had been in his family's possession for thirty-four years.

John Porter was recommended for the Council as early as 1730, but probably due to the enmity that developed between Governor [George Burrington](#) ^[4] and the Moore family connection, no action was ever taken. Representing [New Hanover](#) ^[5] in the Assembly in 1733, he was a justice in 1738 and an original commissioner of the new town of [Wilmington](#) ^[6] in 1740. Porter was again elected to the Assembly in 1742 but died sometime late in 1743, when a new writ of election was issued.

John Porter married Elizabeth, the daughter of [Colonel Maurice Moore](#) ^[7]. In 1736 his father-in-law conveyed to him one-half of his interest in the town of Brunswick. Porter and his wife were the parents of two children; Mary and John Swann. Mary was the first wife of her cousin [Samuel Ashe](#) ^[8], later governor of the state, and the mother of three sons. John Swann, the last of his name in North Carolina, died unmarried at Rocky Point, [New Hanover County](#) ^[5], in 1770. He left his estate to members of the Ashe family.

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1 January 1994 | Smith, Claiborne T., Jr.

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