

Archdale, John ^[1]

JOHN ARCHDALE

Governor: 1683-1686; 1694-1696

by Dennis F. Daniels

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<https://www.dncr.nc.gov/about-us/history/division-historical-resources/nc-highway-historical-marker-program> ^[2]

See also: [Archdale, John](#) ^[3]



Virginia and Florida as they appeared to European settlers in 1607. Click on the map to see it in detail.

^[4]John Archdale (ca. May 5, 1642-ca. July 4, 1717) served as [Albemarle County](#) ^[5]'s acting governor between 1683 and 1686 and as Carolina's provincial governor from 1694 to 1696. He was born in Buckinghamshire, England, to Thomas and Mary Nevill Archdale in 1642. His grandfather Richard Archdale was a London merchant who established the family among the English gentry. In 1664 the Gorges family (Archdale's sister Mary married Ferdinando Gorges) sent Archdale to Maine as a commissioner to help reestablish their claim to that colony. Archdale married Ann Dodson Cary, a widow with two children, in December 1673 and fathered four children. Archdale converted to Quakerism, apparently between 1673 and 1681.

In 1681 Archdale purchased John Berkeley's Carolina proprietorship and worked with proprietor William Craven to improve the [Lords Proprietors](#) ^[6]' investment. In 1683 he arrived in Albemarle as Carolina's collector of [quitrents](#) ^[7]. Being the resident proprietor, he filled in as governor when Seth Sothel was out of the colony. As acting governor, Archdale worked to prevent war with the Indians. During his tenure the number of Quakers increased and Archdale protected them from prosecution. He was back in England by 1686.

In August 1694 the proprietors appointed Archdale as Carolina's provincial governor. Archdale reached North Carolina in June 1695 and remained for six weeks helping to restore order and invigorating the Quakers. He retained [Thomas Harvey](#) ^[8] as deputy governor. Archdale arrived in Charles Town in August 1695. His tenure lasted about a year. He focused his attention on South Carolina and allowed Harvey to implement his reforms in North Carolina.

Archdale appointed his nephew John Blake as South Carolina's deputy governor. Trying to maintain balance, he both placed Quakers and Anglicans on his council. The assembly enacted legislation referred to as "Archdale's Laws" that remained the basis for South Carolina's legal system for two decades. Archdale improved relations with the Indians and the Spanish and built better roads and fortifications. Conscientious objectors were provided with an exemption from military service. He attempted to rectify the problems between French [Huguenots](#) ^[9] and English settlers. Archdale also pursued a course of religious tolerance. The North Carolina and South Carolina assemblies passed messages of gratitude to Archdale for his efforts.

John Archdale was no longer a proprietor when Thomas Archdale sold the proprietorship to his cousin Joseph Blake. John Archdale won a seat in the House of Commons in 1698, but was never sworn. In 1705 Archdale bought William Berkeley's proprietorship. As a proprietor Archdale worked to overturn laws that hurt non-Anglican religious groups. In 1707 Archdale published a pamphlet entitled *A New Description of the Fertile and Pleasant Province of Carolina with a Brief Account of Its Discovery and Settling and the Government thereof to the Time, with Several Remarkable Passages of Divine Providence during my Time*. In 1708 he gave his proprietorship to his daughter Mary and her husband John Danson. He spent the remainder of his life at his manor and died in 1717.

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