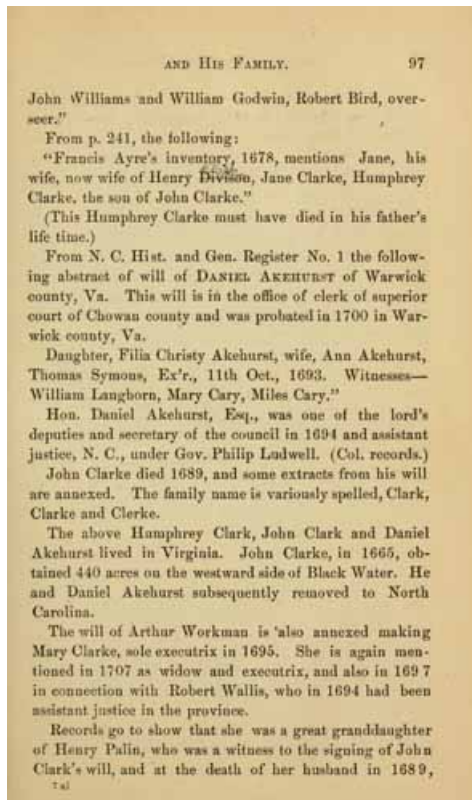


Akehurst (Ackhust, Acorst, Akust), Daniel ^[1]

Akehurst (Ackhust, Acorst, Akust), Daniel

by Mattie Erma E. Parker, 1979

ca. 1653–ca. Dec. 1699



Abstract of Akehurst's will. Click to see larger and for more information. The Internet Archive.

^[2]Daniel Akehurst (Ackhust, Acorst, Akust), [colonial](#) ^[3] official, was born in England, probably in Sussex. He settled in North Carolina in the early 1680s. Akehurst was a devout [Quaker](#) ^[4] and served as a minister much of his life. In 1671 he was seized at a Quaker meeting in Hastings, Sussex, and was fined and imprisoned in "a nasty hole called the Darkhouse" for participating in the meeting. In 1675 he made a missionary trip to New England. Akehurst's permanent removal to America was associated with his appointment to the North Carolina council as proprietor's deputy by a fellow Quaker, [John Archdale](#) ^[5], who had recently bought a proprietorship in Carolina. The appointment was made 26 Mar. 1681. Akehurst arrived in North Carolina at some date before December 1684, by which time he owned a plantation in Pasquotank Precinct. His official position was then only nominal, for John Archdale also had come to the colony and was himself performing the governmental duties he had delegated to Akehurst. It is not certain that Akehurst actively served as council member at any time in the 1680s, although Archdale returned to England in 1686. Of the sparse surviving records of that decade, only one, a will proved before him in 1688, indicates that Akehurst held an office of any sort. His earliest service on the council for which there is clear evidence was in January 1693/94.

At some time after 1 Sept. 1688, Akehurst moved to Warwick County, Va., probably because of the disorders attending the banishment of [Governor Seth Sothel](#) ^[6]. Although Akehurst subsequently returned to North Carolina in active official service, he claimed Warwick County as his residence the remainder of his life.

In early December 1693 Akehurst was at his Virginia plantation preparing to return to North Carolina. By that time the Carolina proprietors were reorganizing the government of their colonies and making other reforms to alleviate the grievances that had led to the earlier disorders. Akehurst was to be secretary of the colony as well as council member in the reorganized government.

By January 1693/94 Akehurst was in North Carolina serving as secretary and council member, positions in which he was active until his death. There is indication, but no clear evidence, that he also served as acting chief executive for brief intervals in early 1694, when [Philip Ludwell](#) ^[7], then acting governor, was frequently absent from the colony.

As member of the council, Akehurst was *ex officio* justice of the general court until the fall of 1697, when the composition

of the court was changed. He was *ex officio* justice of the court of chancery throughout his tenure as council member. In 1695 he was appointed deputy collector of customs for Pasquotank and Little River District. In 1696, and probably other years, he was escheator for the colony. In the spring of 1699, he and [Henderson Walker](#)^[8] were sent to Virginia to settle the long-standing boundary dispute, but the mission failed, when Virginia officials refused to recognize the commissions held by the North Carolina agents. Later that year Akehurst served on a commission to investigate a charge of murder, subsequently found false, brought against a group of Indians.

In private life Akehurst was a planter^[9] and attorney. He owned plantations in both Virginia and North Carolina. In the 1690s, however, he did not live on his Pasquotank property but made his North Carolina home on a plantation, leased from John Archdale, on New Begun Creek.

Akehurst was John Archdale's personal attorney as well as his governmental deputy. He not only handled legal matters for Archdale but also managed the proprietor's North Carolina properties. Other clients included residents of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Bermuda as well as North Carolinians.

Akehurst was active in Quaker affairs in both Virginia and North Carolina. He was associated with the Little River Monthly Meeting in North Carolina and with the Warwick River meetings in Virginia. In 1698 and 1699 he entertained Thomas Story, the English missionary, in his Virginia home, where Story preached several times. He accompanied Story on visits to other Virginia meetings, to a number of which Akehurst himself had preached. North Carolina Quakers, in recording Akehurst's death, paid tribute to the fervor of his ministry among them.

There are minor discrepancies in the records about the date of Akehurst's death, but it seems clear that he died in Virginia in November or December 1699 or January 1700. Akehurst was survived by his wife, Ann, and a daughter, Philochrista (Filiachristy, Filia). There are indications that Ann was Akehurst's second wife, but the records are not clear. His first wife may have been a Mary Akehurst who, like Philochrista, was listed without identification among Akehurst's "transports" when he proved his [headrights](#)^[10]. No other reference to Mary Akehurst has been found in North Carolina records. Ann, whose name does not appear among the "transports," seems to have lived chiefly on the Virginia plantation, which appears to have been her own property before her marriage to Akehurst. Philochrista was in North Carolina with her father much of the time. By July 1699 she had married a North Carolinian, Joseph Jordan.

Akehurst bequeathed his North Carolina property to Philochrista and his Virginia property to his wife. For some years after her father's death, Philochrista and her husband lived on the plantation that Akehurst had rented from John Archdale. Ann continued to live on her Warwick River plantation.

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