

Crawford (Crafford), William ^[1]

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by Mattie Erma E. Parker, 1979

ca. 1638–ca. 1700

William Crawford (Crafford), council member and leader in [Culpeper's Rebellion](#) ^[2], came to the North Carolina colony, then called Albemarle, in his mid-twenties. A contemporary document calls him a New England man, but the reference may have arisen from his business and political interests, which were the same as those of the New Englanders who traded with the colony. Other sources suggest that he may have come to North Carolina from Virginia.

Crawford was associated with the North Carolina colony by 1665, in connection with the supply of [livestock](#) ^[3] and goods to a plantation on Collington Island, operated as a private venture by several of the Carolina [proprietors](#) ^[4]. The enterprise was then under the oversight of Captain John Whitty, who transported passengers and "commodities" between England, Virginia, and Albemarle. Crawford apparently continued his association with the venture after supervision was taken over in 1665 by [Peter Carteret](#) ^[5], then secretary and council member for Albemarle and later governor.

By 1670, Crawford had become a member of the Albemarle council. He was also on the council in 1673 and from 1679 until at least 1681 probably 1683. Crawford was one of the chief leaders in the uprising called Culpeper's Rebellion. He helped organize the revolt and was a member of both the assembly and the council in the rebel government. For a time his house was used as a prison for several of the ousted officials, including [Thomas Miller](#) ^[6], who had been acting as governor.

At the time of the uprising, Crawford lived in Pasquotank Precinct. He also lived for a time in Chowan Precinct, where he held a tract of land granted him by patent. He no doubt was a planter, but he seems also to have been engaged in shipping, either as a shipmaster or through investments. The title captain, seldom omitted in references to him, probably indicated his status as seaman, not as soldier.

Crawford, who made frequent trips to England, was given power of attorney over the Albemarle affairs of several Londoners. One of these was Peter Carteret, who had gone to London intending to return to Albemarle but had found it advisable to remain in England. In 1676, Carteret made Crawford his attorney, apparently for liquidation of his Albemarle interests.

About the middle of the 1680s, Crawford and his wife, Margaret, left Albemarle. They probably moved to Norfolk County, Va., where a William Crawford, whose wife was named Margaret, died about March 1699/1700. A William Crawford who represented Norfolk County in the Virginia assembly in 1688 and 1696 and was justice of the Norfolk County court in 1691 may have been the Albemarle Crawford.

The names of Crawford's children are not known. One of his grandsons was William Crawford of Chowan Precinct, who died about January 1735. A William Crawford who represented Norfolk County in the Virginia assembly from 1714 to 1747 may have been another grandson, or perhaps a son.

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