

Jarvis, Thomas ^[1]

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by June Dunn Parker, 1988

d. 1694

See also [Thomas Jarvis](#) ^[2], Research Branch, NC Office of Archives and History

Thomas Jarvis, landowner, member of the Grand Council, and deputy governor of the [Albemarle](#) ^[3], was one of the earliest settlers in the Carolinas. His birthplace, birthdate, and parents are unknown although he was of English descent. Among his descendants were [Samuel Jarvis](#) ^[4], leader of the Albemarle militia during the Revolutionary War, and [Thomas Jordan Jarvis](#) ^[5], a governor of North Carolina.

Nothing is known of Jarvis's education, religion, or early life. He probably arrived in the Albemarle region (which included the [precincts](#) ^[6] of Perquimans, Pasquotank, Currituck, and Chowan) from Virginia, as did the other settlers of the time. He was in the Albemarle as early as 1663, when Governor [William Berkeley](#) ^[7] of Virginia announced on orders from England that settlers on the Roanoke Sound should make claims to their land through the procedures set down in the Virginia law. Among the patents for land issued by Governor Berkeley was one for a tract owned by Captain [John Jenkins](#) ^[8]. The tract was described as being bound on the west by the great swamp that divided that land from the land of Thomas Jarvis. This description places Jarvis's land in what is now known as Harveys Neck in [Perquimans County](#) ^[9].

In 1672 Jarvis was a member of the governor's Grand Council. He was one of the nine signers of the Council's instructions to be presented to the [Lords Proprietors](#) ^[10] in England by Governor [Peter Carteret](#) ^[11] of the Albemarle region. During Carteret's absence, disputes about taxes and control of the area eventually led to what is known as [Culpeper's Rebellion](#) ^[12] in 1677 during which [Thomas Miller](#) ^[13], a representative of the Proprietors, and most of his officials were overthrown. [Thomas Eastchurch](#) ^[14], appointed governor by the Proprietors, was prevented from entering the region by armed forces. Thomas Jarvis was a member of the "rebel" parliament of eighteen men created by Zachariah Gillam, a shipmaster and another one of Miller's opponents. Jarvis may have then returned to Virginia for a short time, for a man by that name served in the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1682.

When [Philip Ludwell](#) ^[15] was appointed governor in 1689, the area of Albemarle included sixty to seventy scattered families. Jarvis acted as Ludwell's deputy from November 1690 to November 1691. On 6 July 1690 one [John Gibbs](#) ^[16], who had protested Ludwell's appointment, had entered the precinct courts in Albemarle, seized two magistrates, and taken them to Virginia. Afterwards Jarvis and his Council wrote letters to [Francis Nicholson](#), then lieutenant governor of [Virginia](#) ^[17], and to Governor Ludwell, who was absent from Albemarle at the time, asking for help.

Ludwell's appointment in 1689 differed from that of his predecessors in that he was appointed governor not only of the county of Albemarle but also of the part of the Carolina province north and east of [Cape Fear](#) ^[18]. In November 1691, the Lords Proprietors made Ludwell governor of the entire province of [Carolina](#) ^[19] with the power to appoint a deputy in North Carolina. Jarvis again served as Ludwell's deputy governor until September 1694. Records show that he was paid no salary.

It is probable that Jarvis died early in September 1694. On 24 September [Thomas Harvey](#) ^[20] was acting as the deputy governor. Foster Jarvis, Thomas Jarvis's son, appeared before the General Court on the twenty-third and asked that the estate of the deceased Thomas Jarvis be divided between himself and Charles Neal in behalf of Neal's wife Dorkas, the daughter of Jarvis, and their daughter Dorcas Neal. No mention was made of Thomas Jarvis's wife, and no portrait of him exists.

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