

## **Peyton, Benjamin** <sup>[1]</sup>

## **Peyton, Benjamin**

by Claiborne T. Smith, Jr., 1994

**ca. 1700–1748**

Benjamin Peyton, colonial official and legislator, was born in Gloucester County, Va., the son of Robert Peyton. His grandfather, Robert Peyton, who settled in Virginia prior to 1680, was the son of Thomas and Elizabeth Yelverton Peyton of Rougham, County Norfolk, England. With the death of Sir John Peyton of Isleham without heirs in 1721, John Peyton of Gloucester County, Va., first cousin to Benjamin Peyton of [Beaufort County](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, N.C., inherited the baronetcy.

Benjamin Peyton with his father and his brother Robert moved to North Carolina prior to 1728 and settled in what was then Beaufort Precinct of [Bath County](#) <sup>[3]</sup>. There is some indication in the fragmentary records of Gloucester County that the elder Peyton was in financial difficulty. In 1731 Benjamin Peyton was a justice of Beaufort-Hyde <sup>[4]</sup> and was listed as provost marshal or sheriff for Bath County, which at the time extended from the [Albemarle](#) <sup>[5]</sup> to the [Cape Fear](#) <sup>[6]</sup>. In 1738, when the precincts comprising it were themselves made counties, Bath County ceased to exist. At a session of the Assembly in 1731, Peyton was accused of having erased the name of the duly elected representative from [New Bern](#) <sup>[7]</sup> Town and of having inserted the name of another person. In 1733 Mosely Vail, the clerk of the Assembly, complained that the register of Beaufort-Hyde having died, Benjamin Peyton had taken the writings and books belonging to that office, pretending to have a commission from the governor for the same, and carried them from the town of Bath against the law. Both of these accusations against Peyton probably involved his performance of his duties as chief officer or marshal of the county of Bath. Vail went on to describe Peyton as a person of ill fame and character. Whether or not this opinion was justified, Benjamin Peyton was elected to the Assembly from Beaufort County in 1739, a position to which he continued to be elected until his death. In 1745 he also was a commissioner of Bath Town and colonel of the county militia.

Benjamin Peyton resided at The Garrison, a plantation on Durham's Creek on the south side of the [Pamlico](#) <sup>[8]</sup>. When he made his will on 30 Sept. 1746, he stated that he intended going on an ocean voyage. Peyton died in Beaufort County. His will, probated late in that year, mentioned his wife, five daughters, his sloop *Savannah*, then on a trip to Boston, and the tract of land in Gloucester County, Va., that his father had formerly lived on.

Peyton married Eleanor (surname unknown), who had been married previously to a Mr. Bell. As Eleanor Peyton she left a will in Beaufort County, dated 1751 and probated in 1753. Benjamin and Eleanor Peyton were the parents of five daughters: Mary, Elizabeth, Sarah, Eleanor, and Grace. Mary married Captain Henry Snoad in the lifetime of her father. Elizabeth married first her cousin John Peyton Porter and second the Reverend Alexander Stewart. The daughters Sarah, Eleanor, and Grace are said to have married respectively, Thomas Bonner, William Tripp, and Lionel Reading.

### **References:**

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### **Subjects:**

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[Military](#) <sup>[15]</sup>

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### **Authors:**

[Smith, Claiborne T., Jr.](#) <sup>[17]</sup>

### **Origin - location:**

[Beaufort County](#) <sup>[18]</sup>

[Bath](#) <sup>[19]</sup>

[Craven County](#) <sup>[20]</sup>

[New Bern](#) <sup>[21]</sup>

[Hyde County](#) <sup>[22]</sup>

[Ocracoke](#) <sup>[23]</sup>

Pamlico County <sup>[24]</sup>

Stanly County <sup>[25]</sup>

Albemarle <sup>[26]</sup>

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