

Pollock, Cullen ^[1]

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by Vernon O. Stumpf, 1994

1697–1750

Cullen Pollock, colonial official, was the son of acting governor [Thomas Pollock](#) ^[2] by his first wife, Martha Cullen West Pollock, the second of their three sons and one daughter who lived to adulthood, Thomas, George, and Martha. Cullen and his brothers received much of their formal education in Boston, where their father had property and business connections. He also probably read law under his father. The three brothers benefited from their father's political and landowning interests in North Carolina; they held many colonial offices and owned large tracts of land themselves in Chowan, Bertie, Edgecombe, and Tyrrell precincts. Thomas Pollock II sat on the Council, while his brother Cullen was a member of the Assembly from Chowan and George was a successful merchant. Later Cullen served on the Council after his older brother retired.

As a child Cullen was a member of St. Paul's Parish in [Edenton](#) ^[3], but with its division in 1722 he became a vestryman of the South Shore Parish. When his father was acting governor, after the death of Governor [Charles Eden](#) ^[4], Cullen was appointed a judge of the General Court of Oyer and Terminer. He received another appointment as associate justice of the supreme court from royal governor [Gabriel Johnston](#) ^[5] in 1734. He also held assorted minor offices and served for several terms as assembly-man for [Chowan County](#) ^[6]. In 1733 he was made a member of the Council, a post he held for the remainder of his life.

The practice of factional politics is an ancient one in North Carolina; Governor Pollock had to wrestle with factions and so did his sons. The records reveal one incident involving violence, and when Cullen Pollock was summoned by Chief Justice [Christopher Gale](#) ^[7] in October 1722 to answer charges that he had beaten and abused Thomas Cooke ^[8] "very notoriously"—and which was proved before the court—he was fined forty shillings and required to post a security bond of twenty pounds on condition that if he behaved himself until the third day of the next General Court, the sentence would be voided. Pollock complied with these terms, but he appeared in court on other occasions for minor misdeeds. He also was involved in disputes over land claimed by [Christoph von Graffenried](#) ^[9] and the [Palatines](#) ^[10] who established New Bern.

Pollock married his cousin, Frances West, and they were the parents of two sons, George and Cullen, and three daughters, Martha, Frances, and Mary. He instructed the executors of his will that his minor children should have as good an education as could be had in the province after which his two young sons should be sent to Boston for further study until they were eighteen.

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Additional Resources:

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