

Sanderson, Richard ^[1]

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Sanderson, Richard

by Mattie Erma E. Parker, 1994

d. 1733

Richard Sanderson, councilman, assemblyman, and justice, was the son of [Richard Sanderson](#) ^[2] (ca. 1641–1718), a longtime member of the Council who had settled in the [Currituck](#) ^[3] area in 1661. The young Sanderson no doubt grew up on his father's plantation in Currituck, where he may have been born. Neither his mother's name nor the date of his birth is known.

Sanderson's public career began before September 1694, by which time he was a justice of the [Currituck Precinct Court](#) ^[4]. He appears to have remained on the court at least through February 1702/3. He held a seat in the lower house of the Assembly about 1703 and also in 1709 and 1715; in 1709 he was elected speaker.

In 1712 Sanderson was commissioned justice of the General Court, and he was recommissioned from time to time for more than a decade. He seems, however, to have attended the General Court only occasionally, for his name seldom appears as one of the justices present when the court sat.

About 1717 Sanderson was appointed to the Council, on which he was active through 1730. As councilman he sat ex officio as justice of the Court of Chancery. He also sat in the upper house of the Assembly in 1722–23, 1725, and 1727.

Apparently he was active in the militia, as he bore the title colonel in later years. His earlier title, captain, denotes his rank as master mariner, although he may also have held that appellation in the militia at some period. Like his father, he was an Anglican and served as a vestryman of Currituck Parish. He later sat on the vestry of Perquimans Parish, to which he had moved.

Sanderson lived in Currituck Precinct until 1714 or early 1715, when he moved to Little River in [Perquimans Precinct](#) ^[5]. The Assembly met at his house in Little River in the fall of 1715, and the Council, Court of Chancery, and General Court met there in 1715 and 1716.

In [Perquimans](#) ^[6] and elsewhere Sanderson acquired extensive landholdings. His properties included [Cape Lookout](#) ^[7] and [Ocracoke Island](#) ^[8], on which he raised horses, cattle, sheep, and hogs. He also cultivated one or more plantations in Perquimans. As a young man he was a master mariner and commanded various vessels in the coastal trade, including the *Richard*, a shallop that his father owned. He later engaged in the coastal trade on his own account and traded with Bermuda and probably the West Indies. He owned three vessels: the *Seaflower*, a brigantine of forty tons' burden; the *Thomas*, a sloop of eight tons; and the *Lark*, a sloop of ten tons. At various times his son Richard served as master of these ships. Sanderson disposed of the *Thomas* during his lifetime but owned the *Seaflower* and the *Lark* at the time of his death.

He was married at least twice. The earliest marriage of which record has been found occurred about 1711, when he wed Elizabeth Mason, widow of Thomas Mason of Norfolk County, Va. About 1727 he married Ruth Minge, widow of James Minge of Perquimans and daughter of [Benjamin Laker](#) ^[9]. Ruth died before 29 Jan. 1727/28, when her will was proved.

Sanderson died between 17 Aug. 1733, when he made his will, and 15 Oct. 1733, when the will was proved. He was survived by his son Richard and daughters Grace, wife of Tulle Williams, and Elizabeth, wife of [Thomas Pollock](#) ^[10], son of the former governor Thomas Pollock. Sanderson's son died before October 1737, survived by his wife Hannah and at least two children, John and Elizabeth.

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