

Starkey, Edward ^[1]

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by Tucker Reed Littleton, 1994

d. 18 Oct. 1789

Edward Starkey, assemblyman, councillor of state, justice of the peace, and merchant, was the son of Peter and Sarah Starkey and a native of the White Oak River area of [Onslow County](#) ^[2]. He was thus a member of colonial Onslow's wealthiest and most distinguished family and a nephew of Colonel [John Starkey](#) ^[3], the Southern District treasurer. Like his uncle, Edward served as the executor of numerous wills and as a justice of the peace for Onslow County. In 1773 he entered the House of Commons as the representative of Onslow. In 1775–76 he was one of Onslow's delegates to the Second, Third, and Fifth [Provincial congresses](#) ^[4] and served in the [Assembly](#) ^[5] from Onslow during the years 1779–81, 1783–84, and 1787. Elected to the first [Council of State](#) ^[6] in 1776, he rendered important service in that capacity during the [Revolutionary War](#) ^[7] years of 1777–79. In 1779 and again in 1784 Starkey was unsuccessfully nominated for delegate to Congress. In 1783 he was unanimously elected speaker of the House of Commons. He ended his political career as a delegate to the [North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1788](#) ^[8].

On the local level, Starkey was associated during the Revolution with the [court of admiralty](#) ^[9] at Bogue (now Swansboro). In 1779 he was nominated for treasurer of the Wilmington District, and in 1783 he was one of the incorporators and trustees of the Innes Academy at Wilmington. Also in 1783 he was named a trustee of the school at "the Rich Lands of [New River](#)" ^[10]. Starkey served during part of the Revolution as one of the commissioners for the Wilmington District, and in 1784, as a prominent Swansboro merchant (importer-exporter), he was appointed to the commission for the navigation of Bogue Inlet.

In the Assembly Starkey was deeply involved in the Patriot cause as a member of the committee to ascertain the needs of the army, the committee to consider sending aid to South Carolina, and numerous committees of lesser importance associated with the Revolution. He was one of the committee of three appointed to superintend the outfitting of North Carolina's war vessels. In addition, he served on the committees of privileges and elections, propositions and grievances, claims, public accounts, ways and means; the committees to review the treasurer's accounts, to consider bills of public utility, and to set proper allowances; and several committees to prepare specific legislation. Starkey also introduced the bill to continue the executive powers of the government of the independent state. One reference implies that he served for a time as state auditor and resigned from that position in 1780.

Onslow County records reveal that Edward Starkey was the brother of Peter, Jr., William, John, Jr., Mary Eaves, Anna Wallace, and Elizabeth Haslin. He had a daughter, Sarah Dudley. In 1766, following his father's death, Starkey appeared in court to choose his guardian—evidence that he was not then twenty-one. However, his appointment to the grand jury in January 1769 implies that by that time he had reached his twenty-first birthday. Thus Starkey was born between 1745 and 1748. He is presumed to have been buried in the Starkey family cemetery at the Bluff, four miles above Swansboro on the White Oak River.

References:

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