

The Edward Moseley Map of North Carolina, 1733

From: William P. Cumming, The Southeast in Early Maps

“This very rare map extends from ‘Cape Carteret or Cape Roman’ to ‘Part of Virginia’ (33 °12’ to 36 °37’). It gives a great number of the names of settlers and plantations on Albemarle Sound and the rivers flowing into it, on Pamlico River, on Neuse River and its tributaries, on Cape Fear River and its tributaries, and in the vicinity of the Waccamaw Lake. The delineation of the coast and nomenclature along it provide the first detailed and accurate cartographical survey of the North Carolina coastal area.

Moseley’s map is one of the most important type maps in the history of the North Carolina cartography, directly influencing Wimble 1738, Collet 1770, Mouzon 1775, and other less important maps, for the area Moseley covers... Unfortunately, Moseley’s map never was, so far as is known, published in convenient or inexpensive form; and no later map attempted to give in full the detailed information concerning settlers found on Moseley’s map.

As early as 1709 there are references in the Colonial. Records are to Moseley’s participating in surveying the North Carolina-Virginia line; and this map of 1733 was probably used in the dispute over the North Carolina-South Carolina boundary line, a controversy then at its height. The fullness of information concerning settlements around Lake Waccamaw and on the banks of the Cape Fear River lends support to this view, as that was the focal point of the dispute between the two provinces.

Edward Moseley, who died in 1749, was a surveyor general as early as 1710, succeeding John Lawson. Other general surveyors followed him; but in 1723 he was again appointed and remained in the office until about 1730. Moseley was one of the notable characters in the early history of Carolina. By 1705, he was a member of the Council and landowner; in 1714 he was licensed to practice law and became the foremost lawyer in the Province; he was Commissioner for the North Carolina-Virginia, North Carolina-South Carolina, and Granville-North Carolina boundary lines. He was Public Treasurer, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and Associate Justice of North Carolina, maintaining a reputation for impartial justice and the hatred for oppressive government.”

For further information, see Cumming, The Southeast in Early Maps (Princeton, 1958) and Cumming, North Carolina in Maps (Raleigh, 1966).