

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

The John Allen House and Tryon's Palace:
Icons of the North Carolina Regulator Movement

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*“For there are deeds that should not pass away,
And names that must not wither.”*

– Plaque in St. Philip’s Church
Brunswick Town, North Carolina

Abstract

A defining feature of North Carolina is her geography. English colonists who founded the first settlements in the east adapted their old lifestyles to their new environs, and as a result, a burgeoning planter and merchant class emerged throughout the Tidewater and coastal regions. This eastern gentry replicated the customs, manners, and traditions of the Old World: donning the latest London fashions, hosting lavish balls, horseraces, and foxhunts, and erecting homes furnished with luxurious appointments. In the Piedmont, in what was then the western frontier, German and Scots-Irish immigrants streamed down the Great Wagon Road in search of similar opportunities. Theirs was a hardscrabble existence, forged from raw wilderness through sheer perseverance and self-reliance. Over time, members of the eastern gentry also drifted westward, looking to capitalize on their connections with the colonial legislature to establish a backcountry elite. These men, many of them corrupt, permeated local governments, occupying the offices of sheriff, clerk of court, and register of deeds—often simultaneously. They exerted their influence to collect excessive taxes, extort illegal fees, and conduct illicit land deals at the expense of unsuspecting settlers. When the backcountry immigrants grew weary of these “courthouse rings,” they organized to *regulate* provincial administration. Although the backwoods insurgents failed in their objective, state legislators addressed many of their grievances in 1776, incorporating Regulator proposals into North Carolina’s first constitution. The architecture of the period helps illustrate these two worlds—an eastern mansion reveals the luxury of the well-born, while a log cabin embodies western austerity—with each one symbolizing the social, economic, and political divides separating the classes.

Chapter 1

“A Well-Documented Picture of North Carolina History”

Following the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766, the colony of North Carolina entered a phase of internal disquiet defined by harsh economic and political tumult. The years spanning 1768–1771, known as the Regulator era, witnessed intense social conflict between impoverished backwoods farmers and coastal elites. Styling themselves *Regulators*, the yeomen sought to stabilize local governments and promote egalitarianism among all North Carolinians in what one scholar has called “the largest mass uprising in colonial American history.”¹ Indeed, historians have produced no dearth of written accounts on this subject. While those narratives are vital to understanding the causes and effects of the Regulator insurrection, they cannot convey the privations endured by the backcountrymen at the hands of the upper class. For this, one must turn to the living symbols of that age itself—the John Allen House and Tryon Palace.

Six miles outside present-day Burlington, North Carolina, at Alamance Battleground Historic Site, the John Allen House represents a forgotten gem of eighteenth-century frontier living. Allen’s house, relocated to its present location in 1967, boasts a rudimentary style of artisanship that reflects a rustic but understated charm. This cabin offers prototypal elements indicative of many colonial American homes of that period; even more significant, it is representative of a standard of living exhibited by most backcountry settlers on the eve of the Revolutionary War.² One hundred eighty miles to the southeast sits a different kind of dwelling. This mansion, an English country house modeled on the Palladian style, overlooks the Trent

¹ Milton Ready, *The Tar Heel State: A History of North Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 96.

² J. Timothy Allen, *Snow Camp, North Carolina* (Charleston: The History Press, 2013), 25–30; Carl Lounsbury, *Alamance County Architectural Heritage* (Graham: The Alamance Historic Properties Commission, 1980), 4–7.

River—stately, elegant. Tryon Palace is a vestige of the provincial era when British noblemen traversed the seas to command the reins of colonial leadership. Such homes embodied the wealth and extravagance of a privileged few, like the man who lent it his name. Royal Governor William Tryon’s lavish waterfront manor embodied the lifestyle of an eastern gentrified society, Tidewater citizens who aped the customs and manners of the European aristocracy.³ Although the Allen House dates to 1782, Tryon commissioned his “palace” during the bitter Regulator years.⁴

Class conflict aside, most historians agree that excessive taxation, exorbitant fees, and governmental malfeasance helped ignite the backcountry rebellion now called the Regulator movement. The settlers who first organized at Sandy Creek in Orange County, and later, restructured themselves under the more militant appellation, *Regulators*, sought to expose the rampant corruption perpetrated by dishonest sheriffs, clerks of court, and registers of deeds. When their efforts at a legal redress of grievances failed, the Regulators turned violent, seizing provincial officials, rioting in the streets, and finally, mobilizing against the militia forces commanded by William Tryon. The insurgency culminated in the Regulators’ crushing defeat during a pitched battle near Great Alamance Creek in what was then Orange County, on May 16, 1771. As the two-hundred fiftieth anniversary of this ill-fated encounter approaches, it is critical to remember how and why the Regulator protest originated.

A poll tax levied in 1767 to finance a “Province House” at New Bern fell especially hard upon impoverished citizens residing in the log cabins that defined backcountry living.⁵ For

³ Herbert Eugene Bolton and Thomas Maitland Marshall, *The Colonization of North America, 1492–1783* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), 333.

⁴ Excepting the west wing, today’s Tryon Palace is an exact replica of the original edifice, much of which burned in 1798. See Hoke P. Kimball and Bruce Henson, *Governor’s Houses and State Houses of British Colonial America, 1607–1783: An Historical, Architectural, and Archaeological Survey* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2017), 254.

⁵ Alonzo Thomas Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 17, 131-132; Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 243n.

decades, North Carolina's colonial seat was perambulatory, moving with the governor wherever he resided.⁶ Seeking to placate the Crown, William Tryon sought to change that. King George III had for years desired a permanent capital in the colony, thereby ensuring the political stability within the province.⁷ Tryon's refusal to stint on the minutest details of a house designed "in the plainest manner"—at a staggering cost of £15,000—illustrated just how out-of-touch he was with rural taxpayers.⁸

Backwoods farmers did not sit idly by. "We are determined not to pay the Tax for the next three years, for the Edifice or Governor's House," declared Regulator leader William Butler. "We want no such House, nor will we pay for it."⁹ His was not an isolated sentiment. One Mecklenburg Country resident observed that "not one in twenty of the four most populous counties will ever see this famous house when built, as their connections and trade do, and ever will, more naturally center in South Carolina."¹⁰ More than one hundred fifty miles separated Hillsborough from New Bern. When conducting business, backcountrymen inclined themselves along the shortest route possible.¹¹ William Tryon, meanwhile, viewed New Bern as a central location between Edenton in the northeast and Wilmington in the southeast.¹² Historians posit that while the citizens of these coastal towns were unhappy with Tryon's choice, their fear that

⁶ Carole Watterson Troxler and William Murray Vincent, *Shuttle & Plow: A History of Alamance County, North Carolina* (Graham: Alamance County Historical Association, 1999), 62-63.

⁷ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 122.

⁸ Troy L. Kickler, "N.C. History Project's Troy Kickler Discusses Controversy Surrounding Tryon Palace," interview by Donna Martinez, *Country Journal Radio*, Program No. 546, John Locke Foundation, November 4, 2013; William Tryon to Earl of Shelburne, February 23, 1767, in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, ed. William Saunders, vol. 7 (Raleigh: P.M. Hale and Josephus Daniels, 1886-1890), 442, hereinafter cited as *CR*. The figure cited, £15,000, reflects Tryon's initial cost estimate. The palace cost twice as much, requiring increases to the poll tax in 1767 and 1768.

⁹ Deposition of Tyree Harris Concerning the Resolutions of the Regulators, August 03, 1768, in *CR*, vol. 7, 798.

¹⁰ William S. Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 148.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² William Tryon to the Board of Trade, April 1, 1765, in *CR*, vol. 6, 1320.

he would situate the capital within the more densely populated backcountry—in Hillsborough, perhaps—united them behind his choice of New Bern.¹³

Nowhere in the Thirteen Colonies were economic issues, and the rebellions springing thereof, more prevalent than North Carolina. Indeed, the state boasts a tradition of tax resistance dating to 1677. Recognizing this tradition is vital to understanding the impetus behind the Regulator movement. From the colony’s earliest days, squabbles had arisen over any number of issues, such as the lack of specie, quitrents, land tenure, sectionalism, class conflict, governmental corruption, the improper collection of fees, unlawful distraint of property, vestry taxes, and a lack of legislative representation. Most historians argue that similar concerns underscored tax resistance throughout British North America. Others see a direct correlation between these troubles and those raised by Patriot leaders at the onset of the Revolutionary War. Because the Regulator movement occurred after the Stamp Act Crisis but before Lexington and Concord, early scholars regarded these events as another step in the eventual march toward independence. Contemporary viewpoints have since dispelled such notions. Regardless, there were factors specific to North Carolina that did precipitate bloodshed at Alamance.

The Restoration of Charles II had ushered in radical changes to the colony. His father, Charles I, had granted proprietorship of the region lying between Virginia and Florida to Sir Robert Heath, his attorney-general, in 1629, a colonizing arrangement that never materialized.¹⁴ As repayment of his political debts, Charles II issued a new charter to Carolina in 1663, granting ownership to eight men of influence who had facilitated his return to the throne.¹⁵ These

¹³ Alan Ray Stokes, “‘The Most Proper and Convenient Place’: The Debate Over North Carolina’s Seat of Government, 1676-1791” (Master’s Thesis, College of William and Mary, 1990), 77-78.

¹⁴ Paul E. Kopperman, “Profile of Failure: The Carolana Project, 1629-1640,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 59, no. 1 (January 1982): 4–13.

¹⁵ Hugh F. Rankin, *Upheaval in Albemarle: The Story of Culpeper’s Rebellion, 1675–1689* (Raleigh: The North Carolina Charter Tercentenary Commission, 1962), 2-3.

noblemen established a permanent settlement along the rivers and tributaries of Albemarle Sound.¹⁶ They based their government on John Locke's 1669 treatise, *Fundamental Constitutions*, the ostensible "Grand Model," which, as it turned out, called for establishing a provincial capital at a critical riverport that would remain "a port town forever."¹⁷ Locke's provisions, which relied on quitrents as a source of revenue, resembled an antiquated feudal system destined to fail in the free air of America.

In concept, quitrents were monies collected as a percentage of a tenancy's real property value. Farmers "quit" their tax obligations by either paying the rents in cash or with a percentage of their harvests; in an unfruitful season, a planter might offset his debt in labor.¹⁸ Inducements offered by the Proprietors—sixty acres to each freeman with the guarantee of the same to his wife—lured new settlers to the region.¹⁹ Many of the same problems that would later plague the Regulators also incited unrest in early Albemarle. Fee schedules, money shortages, quitrents, bills of exchange, and commodity money—dilemmas all tied to currency—were ingredients in an economic stew that soon reached the simmering point.²⁰ Supplementary to this, import duties arising from the British Navigation Acts sparked an uproar in the Albemarle Region during 1677 in what became Culpepper's Rebellion, North Carolina's first example of tax revolt.²¹

¹⁶ Robert E. Gallman, "Influences on the Distribution of Landholdings in Early Colonial North Carolina," *The Journal of Economic History* 42, no. 3 (1982): 550-551.

¹⁷ Stokes, "'The Most Proper and Convenient Place,'" 8.

¹⁸ Lawrence N. Morgan, "Land Tenure in Proprietary North Carolina," *The James Sprunt Historical Publications* 12, no. 1 (1912): 52-53; Noeleen McIlvenna, *A Very Mutinous People: The Struggle for North Carolina, 1660-1713* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 169n.

¹⁹ Lords Proprietors' Instructions to Governor Samuel Stephens, October 8, 1667, in *Ye Countie of Albemarle in Carolina: A Collection of Documents, 1664-1675*, William S. Powell, ed. (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1958), 22.

²⁰ Alan D. Watson, *Money and Monetary Problems in Early North Carolina* (Raleigh: Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1980), 17-21.

²¹ McIlvenna, *A Very Mutinous People*, 46-70.

Following the French and Indian War, the issue of taxation arose again. Concerns over a royal treasury depleted by years of sustained conflict led Parliament to approve the Stamp Act of 1765. Coming on the heels of the Sugar Act, which that body had enacted eleven months before, these taxes conspired to stir up a hornet's nest of controversy. Nine of thirteen provincial assemblies denounced the Sugar Act, but only New York and North Carolina mounted blatant challenges to the law's constitutionality. At issue was the question of Parliament's right to place a direct tax on the American dependencies, since up to that time, this was a role reserved for the colonial legislatures.²² Inspired by firebrands like James Otis of Massachusetts, who equated a lack of legislative representation with tyranny, the Americans based their objections on the 1689 English Bill of Rights, which in their view, forbade the Crown from imposing any taxes upon them.²³

In North Carolina, opposition to the Stamp Act was fiercest in the Lower Cape, unsurprising since the measure struck at the very heart of the coastal economy. The law placed a duty on all commercial and legal documents generated in America. Not only must stamps appear on newspapers and law licenses, but Parliament also required them on shipping clearances, manifests, and bills of lading, crippling an already fledgling export market and halting the outflow of naval stores and other various agricultural commodities.²⁴ Those who protested the stamp duties were planters and merchants, the upper crust of eastern society, men who enjoyed the attendant advantages that came with being neighbors of Governor Tryon. The Stamp Act had far less impact on backcountry residents.

²² Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution 1763–1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 72-73.

²³ Richard Samuelson, ed., *Collected Political Writings of James Otis* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, Inc., 2015), vii.

²⁴ Lawrence Lee, "Days of Defiance: Resistance to the Stamp Act in The Lower Cape Fear," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 43, no. 2 (April 1966): 189.

Men like Roger Moore, William Dry, and John Ashe could afford to flaunt imperial authority with relative security. Whereas backcountry sheriffs exacted revenge against the recalcitrant Regulators, in the east, not only did authorities overlook episodes of civil disobedience, they may have been willing participants.²⁵ There is little doubt why westerners regarded Tryon as a simpering sycophant. Stamp protests erupted throughout the autumn of 1765 in Wilmington, New Bern, and Edenton. Demonstrators in the port city marched through the streets, lit bonfires, hanged Crown ministers in effigy, and buried the likeness of Lady Liberty in the churchyard. Still, the governor invited fifty prominent men from New Hanover and Brunswick Counties to dine with him. During their meeting, Tryon offered to pay out-of-pocket some lesser tavern duties from which he, by statute, stood to profit.²⁶ He offered no similar inducements to help ease the tax burdens of backcountry taxpayers.

Bowing to colonial pressure, Parliament rescinded the Stamp Act in 1766. In the west, backcountry denizens—and Herman Husband in particular—watched the unfolding crisis with interest. Although Jones has argued that the historical record reveals little about backcountry reaction to the Stamp Act, Husband’s writings indicate that he recognized the success of eastern planters and merchants who sowed their seeds of discontent, cultivated their displeasure, and reaped their reward.²⁷ Moreover, he drew a direct comparison between the Stamp Act protests and the Regulator movement. The Low Country’s triumph over royal authority was a source of inspiration for the Quaker. “That great good may come of this great design’d evil, the Stamp

²⁵ Bradford J. Wood, *This Remote Part of the World: Regional Formation in the Lower Cape Fear, North Carolina, 1725–1775* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 171-172; Donna J. Spindel, “Law and Disorder: The North Carolina Stamp Act Crisis,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 57, no. 1 (1980): 1–16.

²⁶ Articles from the *North-Carolina Gazette* concerning a meeting with William Tryon on the Stamp Act and the commission of William Houston as Distributor of Stamps for North Carolina, November 20, 1765, in *CR*, vol. 7, 127–130; Blackwell P. Robinson, *Five Royal Governors of North Carolina, 1729–1775* (Raleigh: The Carolina Charter Tercentenary Commission, 1963), 51.

²⁷ Mark Haddon Jones, “Herman Husband: Millenarian, Carolina Regulator, and Whiskey Rebel” (PhD diss., Northern Illinois University, 1982), 94.

Law,” he wrote, “while the Sons of Liberty withstand the Lords in Parliament . . . let not Officers under them carry on unjust oppression in our own Province.”²⁸ Piedmont response to Parliament’s stamp duty appears limited to isolated incidents in Cross Creek (Fayetteville), where citizens hanged the stamp distributor in effigy; and Salisbury, where the townsfolk seemed “restive.”²⁹ Writing years later, Husband confessed, “When the Opposition to the Stamp Act began, I was Early Convinced that the Authors who Wrote in favour of Liberty was Generally Inspired by the Same Spirit that we Releigious Professors Called Christ.”³⁰ Indeed, over time, Husband adopted similar strategies to combat corruption.³¹ Alas, he soon learned that Tryon would offer the Regulators, whom Tryon viewed as a mob, no similar forbearance. The eastern gentlefolk were Tryon’s social equals. Husband may have erred in drawing encouragement from the events of 1765-1766. Hogeland suggests that by establishing a correlation between the Stamp Act protests and the Regulators, Husband failed to recognize that the landed gentry and merchants, many of whom later joined the Continental effort for American freedom, would never endorse the Regulator movement because they feared the backcountrymen would weaken their control over the provincial legislature.³²

Opposition to the Stamp Act derived from a lack of representation in Parliament. Likewise, the Regulator movement sprang from underrepresentation in the provincial assembly. Because men like Samuel Adams and Thomas Jefferson later took up many of the same issues raised by the Regulators, and because some scholars date the revolutionary period from 1765–

²⁸ Herman Husband, “A Fan for Fanning, and a Touch-Stone to Tryon,” in *Some Eighteenth-Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina*, William K. Boyd ed. (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1927), 351.

²⁹ Jones, “Herman Husband,” 94.

³⁰ Susan Juster, “The Evangelical Ascendency in Revolutionary America,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution*, ed. Jane Kamensky and Edward G. Gray (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 408.

³¹ Mary Elinor Lazenby, *Herman Husband: A Story of His Life, 1724–1795* (Washington, D.C.: Old Neighborhoods Press, 1940), 33-34.

³² William Hogeland, *Founding Finance: How Debt, Speculation, Foreclosures, Protests, and Crackdowns Made Us a Nation* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), 34.

1783, early historians alleged the Battle of Alamance was the opening salvo of the War for Independence. Others insist the Regulator movement was an isolated sectional dispute more closely aligned with Bacon's Rebellion of 1676.

Early patriot monographs ignored the Regulators altogether. Among the first historians to examine the Regulator cause was Eli Caruthers, a Presbyterian minister who employed a romanticist retelling of events from a Whig perspective. In his *Sketch of the Life and Character of the Reverend David Caldwell, DD* (1842), Caruthers incorrectly argued that the backwoods rebels quarreled over the abuses they suffered at the hands of their elected officials and their form of government. Moreover, he sought Regulator sympathy where it did not exist.³³ To his credit, Caruthers relied on manuscripts written by former Regulators to craft his narrative, albeit accounts made less reliable by the fact they occurred seven decades after the Battle of Alamance.³⁴ Bernard Bailyn questioned Caruthers's sources, doubting that men in their affirm could be relied upon for accuracy. Although Caruthers vouched for his data, his failure to vet the old Regulators' testimonies undermined his credibility.³⁵

The idea of the Regulators as honest men driven to open resistance by the king's military men was a concept advanced by William Foote. A contemporary of Eli Caruthers, Foote offered *Some Sketches of North Carolina* in 1846. His gross mischaracterization of the provincial militia helped cement a longstanding notion among North Carolinians—which persists into the twenty-first century—that the Regulators fought against redcoats during the Battle of Alamance when in

³³ William H. Bailey, "The Regulators of North Carolina," in *The American Historical Register*, ed. Charles Henry Browning, vol. 3 (Philadelphia: The Historical Register Publishing Company, 1896), 313–334, 470.

³⁴ Caruthers's sources included a Tennessee newspaper and an academic associate, likely the Rev. Elisha Mitchell from the University of North Carolina. See Eli Washington Caruthers, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell* (Greensboro: Swaim and Sherwood, 1842); also, *Revolutionary Incidents: And Sketches of Character: Chiefly In the "Old North State,"* (Philadelphia: Hayes & Zell, 1854).

³⁵ Stephen C. Compton, "'James Pugh,' Regulator Sharpshooter: A Conundrum Unfolded," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 90, no. 2 (2013): 177–179.

fact, William Tryon was the only commissioned British officer in attendance that day. Foote struck a biblical inference in his work. The bloodshed of May 1771 was the penance paid by innocent farmers, he said, as atonement for the sins of those in authority over them, evil men who had denied them the right of equitable taxation.³⁶ John Hill Wheeler continued the trend of “first battle” narratives. In his pro-democratic *Historical Sketches of North Carolina* (1851), he depicted the Battle of Alamance as the first American blood spilled in the fight against imperialism. To make his case, Wheeler vilified William Tryon, depicting him as a tyrant who imposed the king’s desires on his unwilling subjects.³⁷

William L. Saunders’s ten-volume collection of *Colonial Records of North Carolina* (1886–1907) represents the most substantial assortment of primary source documents dating to the Regulator era. This compendium of official letters, court and council minutes, newspaper articles, and private correspondence also contained Saunders’s prefatory notes, which advanced his nationalist interpretation of events. Saunders, too, came to the defense of the Carolina Regulators. While he admitted they were violent and unlearned men, hostile to all forms of government and taxation, Saunders viewed their opposition as justified since legislators later incorporated many of their proposed reforms into the state constitution.³⁸ Continuing in this vein, John Fiske’s *The American Revolution* (1891) credited Orange County as the first site of armed resistance against the Crown. Fisk argued that only Tryon’s military intervention prevented Alamance from becoming synonymous with Lexington and Concord.³⁹

³⁶ William Henry Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of Her Early Settlers* (New York: Robert Carter, 1846), 36; 54-55.

³⁷ John Hill Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina from 1584–1851*, vol. 1 (Raleigh: William L. Pomeroy, 1851), 59-60.

³⁸ *CR*, vol. 8, xv-xxii.

³⁹ John Fiske, *The American Revolution*, vol. 1 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1891), 75-76. See also George R. Adams, “The Carolina Regulators: A Note on Changing Interpretations,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 49, no. 4 (April 1972): 347.

Nationalist interpretations waned as John Spencer Bassett took center stage during the watershed of Imperialist and Progressive historiography. Bassett maintained that the Regulation was not a revolution, but a peasant's uprising borne of economic and political disparity. The outraged farmers exhibited no inclination to overthrow the existing government, he said, but sought only to stop the pervasive exploitation overspreading the Piedmont. Bassett found "no continuity of influence" between the Battle of Alamance and American freedom.⁴⁰ He further maintained that the Regulator insurgency was neither a religious nor sectional conflict, yet he devoted much discourse to the spiritual makeup and topographical design of the backcountry.⁴¹ Although he found it impossible to associate faith and geography with this uprising, Bassett unwittingly affirmed the significance of these factors to the broader historical narrative.

Two notable works appeared in the decade after Bassett published his account. Marshall DeLancey Haywood, who traced his ancestry to Plymouth Rock, was a longtime advocate for the North Carolina chapter of the Society of Sons of the Revolution. This group dedicated itself to preserving the legacies of notable patriot leaders.⁴² Haywood's *Governor William Tryon, and His Administration in the Province of North Carolina, 1765–1771*, which appeared in 1903, was surprising because the author approached the Regulator movement from Tryon's point of view, thereby establishing a precedent upon which future historians could construct similar arguments.⁴³ A decade and a half later, William Edward Fitch wrote *Some Neglected History of North Carolina*

⁴⁰ John S. Bassett, "The Regulators of North Carolina, 1765–1771," in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for 1894* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1895), 192–211.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 142–151.

⁴² The North Carolina Society Daughters of the Revolution, "Biographical and Genealogical Memoranda: R. D. W. Connor, Clyde L. King, Marshall DeLancey Haywood," *The North Carolina Booklet* 8, no. 1 (July 1908): 80–83.

⁴³ John Spencer Bassett, "A Revival of Interest in North Carolina History," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 3, no. 4 (October 1904): 373; Jeffrey J. Crow and Larry E. Tise, eds., *Writing North Carolina History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 27.

(1914). Fitch reverted to nationalist form, insisting the Battle of Alamance was the first battle of the Revolution. The author himself was the descendant of a Regulator, and Fitch had grown up hearing the stories about his warmongering ancestor, all of them allegedly true.⁴⁴

A string of authors from the Progressive School succeeded Haywood, Bassett, and Fitch. It fell to Frederick Jackson Turner to introduce a fresh perspective on this backwoods movement. His 1921 book, *The Frontier in American History*, portrayed the Battle of Alamance as the penultimate show of force—an initial battle of the Revolutionary War—following years of conflict resulting from an imbalance of political power.⁴⁵ Also that year, Curtis Nettels introduced *The Roots of American Civilization: A History of American Colonial Life*, with an eye toward factors affecting socioeconomic development. He proposed that a stratified society fostered instability that, in turn, created a disproportionate imbalance of wealth.⁴⁶ Robert DeMond viewed the Regulator movement through a similar Progressive lens. *The Loyalists in North Carolina During the Revolution* (1940) discussed a tradition of malfeasance that pervaded North Carolina from her inception. DeMond considered the “courthouse rings,” multiple officeholding politicians who controlled provincial appointments, to be the leading source of backwoods dissent.⁴⁷ Samuel Morison and Henry Commager went further, suggesting that only the outbreak of war with Britain had prevented civil war in North Carolina. They later modified their ideas about sectionalism, reassigning causality to localized corruption.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ William Edward Fitch, *Some Neglected History of North Carolina* (New York: William E. Fitch, 1914), 15.

⁴⁵ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), 116–120; 248; 348. For a dispute of such claims, see Lamar Middleton, *Revolt U.S.A.* (New York: Stackpole Sons Publishers, 1938), 121.

⁴⁶ Curtis P. Nettels, *The Roots of American Civilization: A History of American Colonial Life* (New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., Inc., 1938), 537–542. See also Michael Kammen, “Curtis P. Nettels: American Scholar, 1898–1981,” *The History Teacher* 16, no. 3 (1983): 385–386.

⁴⁷ Robert O. DeMond, *The Loyalists in North Carolina During the Revolution* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1940), 3–10; 34–46.

⁴⁸ Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, *The Growth of the American Republic*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1942), 95, 171. See also Adams, “A Note on Changing Interpretations,” 351n.

Also published in 1940, Mary Elinor Lazenby's biography, *Herman Husband: A Story of His Life, 1724–1795*, enjoyed mixed reviews. Julian P. Boyd chastised Lazenby for her glaring omissions, stating that Husband, as a significant pamphleteer, agitator, and Regulator leader, deserved better than a “buttermilk school” retelling of facts.⁴⁹ Defending herself against Boyd's attacks, Lazenby challenged the assertion that Herman Husband had fought against lawful authority, noting that the Regulator leader had instead fought against local corruption.⁵⁰ Concluding the work of this decade, John C. Miller struck an opposing theme in his *Origins of the American Revolution* (1943). He found that inequitable representation gave coastal districts disproportionate control over the west, and this sparked outrage and dissent that boiled over into armed conflict.⁵¹

After World War II, scholars of the Regulator movement synthesized Neo-Whig and New Social History elements of interpretation. In a short work that he developed as a teaching resource for his students, William S. Powell found that the Battle of Alamance was significant because it motivated Americans to consider armed force as a way to defend their civil liberties.⁵² Leaning toward the Progressive end of the spectrum, Hugh Lefler teamed with Paul Wagner in 1953 to produce a small volume titled *Orange County 1752-1952*. These scholars disputed any connection between Alamance, Lexington, and Concord. They stressed that the Regulators' defeat was a temporary setback in a broader campaign against regional politics.⁵³

⁴⁹ Julian P. Boyd, “Book Review: Hermon Husband. A Story of His Life. By Mary Elinor Lazenby,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 65, no. 2 (April 1941): 240-241.

⁵⁰ Mary E. Lazenby to *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, undated, Mary Elinor Lazenby Papers, University of Pittsburgh Library.

⁵¹ John C. Miller, *Origins of the American Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1943), 319-320.

⁵² William S. Powell, *The War of the Regulation and the Battle of Alamance, May 16, 1771* (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1949), 5; 28.

⁵³ Hugh T. Lefler, “Orange County and the War of the Regulation,” in *Orange County 1752-1952*, eds. Hugh Lefler and Paul Wagner (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 39.

Alonzo Dill produced a fundamental survey of *Governor Tryon and His Palace* in 1955. The result was a reasonable, albeit sectional, account of the Regulator movement. For Dill, the men who fought against oppression were enterprising souls in search of honest government, and they defied the totalitarian authority of the royal governor.⁵⁴ The author laid much credit for the Regulator uprising at William Tryon's feet, emphasizing that increases to the colony's poll tax, earmarked to finance the construction of the executive mansion at New Bern, hit impoverished backcountrymen especially hard. Dill further underscored the symbolism behind Tryon Palace as a discernable paragon of eastern rule, a tangible reminder of the persecution that Piedmont farmers endured at the hands of the governing elite.⁵⁵

Also published in 1955, *Rebels and Democrats* by Elisha P. Douglass upheld the idea of the Regulator movement as an example of class conflict. Douglass recognized that dissent took its roots from a tradition of elitist influence over colonial affairs. As proof, he pointed to the legislative conflicts between the Albemarle and Cape Fear regions during the proprietary years.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, John R. Alden presented an opposing view in *The South in the Revolution, 1763–1789*, released in 1957, wherein he argued that east-west tensions had little to do with backwoods troubles. Alden did concede, however, that sectional strife persisted into statehood.⁵⁷ A decade later, David Hawke drew similar conclusions in *The Colonial Experience* (1966). Political struggles in provincial Carolina, he said, failed to produce any lasting enmity between the peoples of the Tidewater and Piedmont regions.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Alan D. Watson, "The Origin of the Regulation in North Carolina," *Mississippi Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (September 1994): 593.

⁵⁵ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 126-127, 131-132.

⁵⁶ Elisha P. Douglass, *Rebels and Democrats: The Struggle for Equal Political Rights and Majority Rule during the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 71-72.

⁵⁷ John Richard Alden, *The South in the Revolution, 1763-1789* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1957), 143; 152-153; 162-163.

⁵⁸ David Hawke, *The Colonial Experience* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966), 506–509.

Three additional titles from the late sixties further advanced twentieth-century Progressive views. First, Richard B. Morris illustrated how unrest in a distressed region could flashover into social anarchy.⁵⁹ Next, Ray Billington revived the frontier hypothesis first introduced by Turner. His *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier* (1967) compared the Regulators in North and South Carolina and found a corollary between these uprisings and pronounced sectionalism.⁶⁰ Merrill Jensen, in *Founding of a Nation: A History of the American Revolution 1763–1776* (1968), expounded on prevailing notions that the Regulator movement was the result of intense social diversity. Jensen believed that North Carolina’s Regulators harbored certain unfounded assumptions about their role in society. The upper class, he posited, had an obligation to protect the civil liberties of all North Carolinians.⁶¹

William S. Powell made further historical contributions while compiling the “Regulator Papers.” This collection of primary source documents, archived at the University of North Carolina, contained material heretofore unassembled. Working alongside James K. Huhta and Thomas J. Farnham, Powell published his results in a 1971 book, *The Regulators in North Carolina: A Documentary History, 1759-1776*, timed to coincide with the bicentennial of the Battle of Alamance. The real value here was that Powell’s volume supplemented the data found within Saunders’s *Colonial Records*. Otherwise, Powell’s endeavor suffered from rushed production deadlines and sloppy editing. While his efforts proved “laudable,” the overall result was an “inferior piece of scholarly editing” fraught with historical inconsistencies.⁶²

⁵⁹ Richard B. Morris, *The American Revolution Reconsidered* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 71.

⁶⁰ Ray Allen Billington, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 99–102.

⁶¹ Merrill Jensen, *The Founding of a Nation: A History of the American Revolution 1763–1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 10; 30-31, 166.

⁶² Richard Maxwell Brown, “Reviewed Work(s): The Regulators in North Carolina: A Documentary History, 1759-1776 by William S. Powell,” *The American Historical Review* 77, no. 5 (December 1972): 1504.

Writing at the time of the American bicentennial, Marvin L. Michael Kay offered the “first major reinterpretation” of the Regulator movement.⁶³ Kay recognized the shared sense of economic inequality existing among colonial North Carolinians, leading him to emphasize the impact that excessive taxation, currency shortages, and corruption had on the peasantry. He drew a sharper distinction between the Regulator movement and plebian society than Bassett would have allowed. Nonetheless, colonial tax lists and court records gathered by Kay helped substantiate his claims that class warfare stirred the undercurrents of backcountry discontent.⁶⁴ James Whittenburg, writing in 1977, identified another source of backcountry displeasure: the growing merchant class, who, along with unscrupulous attorneys and wealthy planters, comprised a backcountry elite. Men like Edmund Fanning and John Frohock made a practice of fleecing unsuspecting farmers through illegal taxes and fees—and did so while holding themselves out as beyond reproach. Whittenburg argued it was more than economic imbalance between the classes that sparked dissent; anger erupted on a personal level when Fanning et al., continued to frustrate Regulator efforts to exact legal redress.⁶⁵

A. Roger Ekirch published a series of Regulator-themed articles that resurrected the Whig ideology of Bernard Bailyn. Ekirch associated the Regulators with the Boston and Philadelphia patriots, and he harmonized backcountry efforts to defend social freedoms with the broader assault on civil liberties. Although their movement failed, the Regulators managed to prove that their local sheriffs and other officials acted in the interests of self-gain rather than in the public weal. Unlike the fight for American independence, though, the Regulator movement

⁶³ Christopher Graham, “Historiographical Notes: Reading the Regulators,” *Journal of Backcountry Studies* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 2.

⁶⁴ Marvin L. Michael Kay, “Provincial Taxes in North Carolina During the Administrations of Dobbs and Tryon,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 42, no. 4 (October 1965): 73–108.

⁶⁵ Graham, “Historiographical Notes,” 3.

was not a radical attempt to topple royal authority. Instead, it constituted a conservative attempt to enact governmental reforms.⁶⁶

A contemporary study of the Regulators, while maintaining Progressive School thought, also resulted in an introduction of Social History concepts. Alan D. Watson, in his *Money and Monetary Problems in Early North Carolina* (1980), found William Tryon sympathetic to Regulator complaints. However, the Englishman's sense of military duty required him to defend his integrity and that of the British government, even if it meant piling on additional tax debt to quell the Regulators.⁶⁷ At the opposite end of that decade, William S. Powell introduced his *North Carolina Through Four Centuries* in 1989. This text was by no means comprehensive, nor could it be, given the sheer volume of material Powell had to wade through. Still, he managed to pack essential data into a thick tome that Barnes described as "a thorough and well-documented picture of North Carolina history."⁶⁸ Powell characterized William Tryon as a willing instrument of the eastern gentry, sympathetic to their concerns at the expense of those needs radiating from the backcountry. Besieged by high taxes and administrative abuse, settlers residing on the frontier regarded the construction of a governor's residence to be a frivolous waste of economic resources. Moreover, distrust among yeomen farmers and local elites—elected officials, lawyers, and merchants, further divided the poor from the rich along class lines.⁶⁹

The following year, Paul David Nelson produced a notable biography of North Carolina's fourth royal governor. In *William Tryon and the Course of Empire* (1990), Nelson utilized Dill's sectional approach, and, through a straightforward retelling of events, he emphasized the

⁶⁶ Graham, "Historiographical Notes," 4.

⁶⁷ Watson, *Money and Monetary Problems*, 9–11; 32–33; Circular letter from William Tryon to Commanding Officers of the North Carolina Militia, March 19, 1771, in *CR*, vol. 8: 540–542.

⁶⁸ Jeanne L. Barnes, "Deconstructing Tryon Palace: Exploring the Colonial Revival in Twentieth Century New Bern, North Carolina" (Master's Thesis, University of North Carolina Wilmington, 2005), 2.

⁶⁹ Powell, *North Carolina Through Four Centuries*, 146–159, 162–166.

incompetence exhibited by backcountry officers who administered colonial affairs. The root cause of the rebellion, he said, was local corruption.⁷⁰ At mid-decade, Johanna Lewis penned *Artisans in the North Carolina Backcountry* (1995). Lewis focused on skilled workers in Rowan County and their interactions with the Regulators. She examined how the Moravians became unwilling pawns in a chess match between the militants and Governor Tryon, with each side demanding the Pietists' support. Like Dill, Nelson, and Powell, Lewis acknowledged the sectional differences that existed between the east and the west. She identified the cultural distinctions between these regions and highlighted the lack of backcountry representation in the assembly, citing both as sources of controversy.⁷¹

Moravian and Quaker church records suggest a connection between popular religion, Great Awakening revivalism, and political dissent. Marjoleine Kars pioneered this concept in her seminal study, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in North Carolina* (2002), and to date, no modern author has made a more considerable impact on the existing Regulator scholarship than she has. Her book remains one of only two contemporary full-length works dedicated to the backwoods insurgency. Kars concluded that spirituality was a primary influence among the men who devoted themselves to the Regulator cause, which they demonstrated through millennialist ideals about the Second Coming. Herman Husband, a proponent of such notions, adapted his faith, a hybrid of denominational theologies, to Whig politics as a way of combating the rampant graft permeating the backcountry.⁷² Kars further connected the Regulators to free-market capitalism. The real underlying cause of the uprising, she determined, was a

⁷⁰ Watson, "The Origin of the Regulation in North Carolina," 593.

⁷¹ Johanna Miller Lewis, *Artisans in the North Carolina Backcountry* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 113–138.

⁷² Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 77–175.

prevailing fear that the political elite would usurp the chances for prosperity from ordinary farmers who had moved to North Carolina in search of social, religious, and economic gain.

James Broomhall suggested in 2008 that, as the colony's leaders became less responsive to their needs, the Regulators turned to allegory to fight government malfeasance. Associating their struggles with icons representing oppression, and they targeted each one for destruction. When legal redress failed, they disrupted the courts and sacked the town of Hillsborough. When Fanning ridiculed them as no better than mongrels, they pillaged his house. When Tryon arrested their most prominent leader, Herman Husband, they threatened to destroy his elaborate palace.⁷³ Broomhall's work comes closest to identifying the emblems defining the Regulator movement. He stopped short, however, of drawing adequate comparisons between the backcountry and the east. The images he offered represented the antithesis of change, and he failed to identify even one such image that signified everyday living from a backwoods perspective.

Carole Watterson Troxler buttressed the religious hypothesis advanced by Kars with theological presuppositions of her own. Her work, *Farming Dissenters: The Regulator movement in Piedmont North Carolina* (2011), acknowledged that religious principles indeed influenced the thinking of the Regulators. Rather than linking religion with free-market capitalism, Troxler examined the connection between political and religious dissenter traditions emanating from Britain. Newcomers to the North Carolina Piedmont in the mid-eighteenth century brought with them ideas of self-reliance, notions that influenced their political, economic, and theological worldviews. In a separate work from 2017, Troxler addressed alternate sources of Regulator

⁷³ James J. Broomhall, "'Making a Considerable Tumult in the Streets': Protest and Place in the North Carolina Regulation," *Journal of Backcountry Studies* 3, no. 1 (2010): 1-19.

discontent. She determined that illegal fees, vestry taxes, and land tenure also contributed to the backwoods tumult.⁷⁴

Building on Troxler's dissenter paradigm, David Hackett Fischer illustrated how tax resistance was also a tradition carried over from Europe. Although he avoided discussion of the Regulator movement, Fischer's work did explain how a pattern of resistance took root in the Atlantic World. The Britons who migrated to North America brought with them the principle of *lex talionis*, a Hammurabian code of retributive justice that operated in the absence of social order. Most settlers to Carolina—first to the vast Albemarle Region and later to the backcountry—equated order with self-sovereignty. A standard convention among early frontiersmen suggested that “every man should be sheriff on his own hearth.”⁷⁵ From this concept derived a fundamental distrust of the law that began to manifest itself almost from the very moment that the first Europeans inhabited the province.

Current historiography on the Regulators includes a 2014 book written by a Charlotte corporate attorney. Scott Syfert addressed the combative atmosphere of the backcountry, a region rife with poverty and hardships, where extreme taxation and corruption drove ordinary men to foment rebellion. Syfert characterized the Regulators as desperate vigilantes who roamed the interior, meting out justice. While he captured the prevailing hopelessness of the situation, Syfert overdramatized the backcountry unrest by depicting the Regulators as an unruly mob bent on undermining social order.⁷⁶ In 2019, Jeff Broadwater and Troy L. Kickler released *North*

⁷⁴ Carole Watterson Troxler, *Farming Dissenters: The Regulator movement in Piedmont North Carolina* (Raleigh: Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2011), 19–66; Carole Watterson Troxler, “Land Tenure as Regulator Grievance and Revolutionary Tool,” in *New Voyages to Carolina*, ed. Larry E. Tise and Jeffrey J. Crow (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 110–143.

⁷⁵ David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 765.

⁷⁶ Scott Syfert, *The First Declaration of Independence? The Disputed History of the Mecklenburg Declaration of May 20, 1775* (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2014), 51–57.

Carolina's Revolutionary Founders, a compilation of essays about key figures who forged American independence. Although this book did little to advance existing Regulator historiography (the Federalist era was its general focus), the editors established that by utilizing legal channels to reform government, the Regulators had provided a groundwork for statehood.⁷⁷ Lastly, Bruce E. Stewart's *Redemption from Tyranny: Herman Husband's American Revolution* (2020) resurrects the Lazenby focus on the pseudo-leader of the Regulator movement. Stewart discusses Husband's theology and subsequent spiritual rebirth, which the Quaker associated with personal liberty and freedom. Husband sought to restore honesty to government by limiting the concentration of wealth among the upper class.⁷⁸

Collectively, these bodies of work pursue similar themes. Each one attempts to establish causality for how and why the Regulators challenged established order. Most explain the lengths to which the Regulators went in seeking a legal redress of their grievances. Some offer an appraisal of why the Regulator movement deteriorated into anarchy. A fusing of these accounts reveals that many factors came into play, and what they really prove is that "the Regulators may have lost the war, but they certainly won the history."⁷⁹ What is missing from the historiography, however, is a twenty-first-century look at colonial living spaces during the Regulator era. By comparing the typical log cabin to the eastern manor house, one may bring into sharp relief the cultural differences between the backcountry and the Tidewater. The John Allen House and Tryon Palace are two prime examples. This study seeks to pick up where existing scholarship leaves off, by aligning hardship with luxury to understand what motivated

⁷⁷ Jeff Broadwater and Troy Kickler, eds., *North Carolina's Revolutionary Founders* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019), 5.

⁷⁸ Bruce E. Stewart, *Redemption from Tyranny: Herman Husband's American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020), 14–27, 40-73.

⁷⁹ Carl Bridenbaugh, *Myths & Realities: Societies of the Colonial South* (New York: Atheneum, 1970), 163.

the poor to resist provincial authority while compelling the rich to crush their efforts with brute force.

Chapter Two examines the Allen House and its implications for frontier living. This log cabin is indicative of the lack of material comfort experienced by most rural homesteaders running up to the Battle of Alamance. William Tryon, touring the back settlements in 1766, reported finding a people “active, and laborious,” yet who had “not more than a sufficiency to erect a Log House for their families and procure a few Tools to get a little Corn into the ground.”⁸⁰ North Carolina’s new governor had arrived two years before his sojourn into the west. The delay between his arrival at Cape Fear and his visit to the hinterlands demonstrates both eastern perceptions of the region as a remote place and the sense of detachment that easterners felt with interior communities.⁸¹

In Chapter Three, the discussion delves deeper into frontier living, fraught with political and economic injustice. Currency shortages exacerbated conditions between the electorate and the elected, as local officials devised schemes for fleecing backwoods settlers out of what little money they did have. Additional discourse will study various forms of taxation, including poll taxes, road taxes, and vestry taxes; and, methodologies of tax collection, which often involved the imposition of illicit penalties and unlawful distraint. The structure of North Carolina’s provincial government fostered a climate of cronyism and multiple officeholding—problems not necessarily unique to this colony, but certainly, issues that sparked violence as a means of bringing about reform. British protest traditions gave impetus to the etymological origins of the Regulator appellation. In assigning this title to their cause, the Regulators conveyed not only

⁸⁰ Richard R. Beeman, *The Varieties of Political Experience in Eighteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 175; William S. Powell, “Tryon’s ‘Book’ On North Carolina,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 34, no. 3 (July 1957): 411.

⁸¹ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 18-19, 21.

their intentions to effect needed changes, they implied the very government itself was corrupt, a concept emanating from the Stuart Reformation.

The focus of this study shifts to Coastal Carolina in Chapter Four. Whereas the previous section explores the Regulator movement from the viewpoint of the participants themselves, this part of the discussion will spotlight the royal response to the insurgency. To best understand William Tryon's impression of the disgruntled farmers and to help explain why he reacted to their cause as he did, it is imperative to recognize his sense of duty brought about by a life of imperial service. Tryon was, foremost, a soldier by trade. Even before he departed Great Britain in 1764, the Englishman had in mind to fix a permanent capital in North Carolina.⁸² In attendance was John Hawks, a renowned architect brought to America for the express purpose of designing, among other public edifices, a house for Tryon.⁸³ The result was a "government house" unlike any in the Thirteen Colonies.⁸⁴ Regardless of how his constituents perceived his palace, his construction project on the shores of the Trent River enjoyed the English monarchy's full support.

Tryon viewed the Regulator uprising as an insult to royal authority. While he proved a capable administrator in matters related to eastern affairs, in the backcountry, he earned a reputation for being a ruthless tyrant. Contrary to what his critics said of him in the Whig press, Tryon was not blind to the rampant corruption pervading the Piedmont counties—even if his record indicates a pattern of repeated indifference. "The Sheriffs have embezzled more than one half of the Public Money ordered to be raised and collected by them," he observed the year

⁸² Paul David Nelson, *William Tryon and the Course of Empire: A Life in the British Imperial Service* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 9–12.

⁸³ Kimball and Henson, *Governor's Houses*, 251.

⁸⁴ Lefler, "Orange County and the War of the Regulation," 30.

before the Regulators organized at Sandy Creek.⁸⁵ Still, Tryon's halfhearted attempts at reforming currency shortages, tax collection, and government malfeasance paled in comparison to the glare of opulence emanating from New Bern. For the Regulators, Tryon's "palace" became a symbol of all that was wrong socially, politically, and economically in North Carolina.

The focus of Chapter Five is two-pronged. First, it will seek the relevancy of Alamance Battleground and the restored John Allen House to the actual events of 1768–1771. Second, it will explore the significance behind the restoration of Tryon Palace. Visitors to the site where William Tryon crushed the Regulator rebellion can see for themselves where the farmers made their final stand, including a large rock protruding above ground. Legend has it that here, Regulator James Pugh crouched while firing his musket at Tryon's militiamen.⁸⁶ Nearby, the John Allen house beckons. From the moment sightseers cross the threshold, they find themselves thrust back into the eighteenth-century where they can witness firsthand the austere living conditions endured by most Regulators and their families.⁸⁷

John Allen, a brother-in-law of Herman Husband, traced his Quaker roots back to Dublin in the early 1700s. Although marriage united them, these men did not share the same political ideals, for Allen never joined the Regulator cause.⁸⁸ Another of Husband's brothers-in-law, Quaker Simon Dixon, must have tolerated Husband's rhetorical efforts to some extent, for the

⁸⁵ William Tryon to the Earl Shelburne, July 4, 1767, in *The Correspondence of William Tryon and Other Selected Papers*, William S. Powell, ed., vol. 2 (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History Department of Cultural Resources, 1981), 531–532. Afterward, *CWT*.

⁸⁶ Walter Whitaker, *Centennial History of Alamance County, 1849–1949* (Burlington: Alamance County Historical Association, 1974), 62; Lazenby, *Herman Husband*, 112; Compton, "'James Pugh,' Regulator Sharpshooter," 179–180.

⁷⁹ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places: Alamance Battleground State Historic Site (March 1971)*, by John B. Wells, III (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1971), 2.

⁸⁸ At least one account disputes this, calling John Allen a "supporter" of the Regulator movement. See Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, *The National Register of Historic Places, 1972* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1972), 345.

record shows that he allowed his sister's spouse to distribute anti-government paraphernalia among the members of Cane Creek Meeting. Some congregants forewent their pacifist leanings and joined the movement; the Meeting later expelled them. Most historical accounts agree that John Allen merely sympathized with the Regulators, although others name Simon Dixon as an active participant in the cause. Regardless, the record suggests that both men avoided public discussion of the insurgency, and Allen's cabin still represents a direct link between himself and the rebels.⁸⁹ There can be no doubt that the same privations that assailed most backcountry residents during those years also touched the Allen family.⁹⁰

Fire destroyed most of Tryon Palace at the end of the eighteenth century. An initial concept to reconstruct this grand house emerged in the 1920s. Led by the state chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), restoration efforts gathered steam over the next few decades, but it was not until April 1959 that the rebuilt edifice opened to the public.⁹¹ Reconstructing Tryon Palace was a monumental undertaking, made possible only with legislative backing. It involved the removal or relocation of at least fifty buildings, rerouting North Carolina Route 70, and the construction of a new bridge spanning the Trent River. The mansion's furnishings derived from Hawk's letters and Tryon's inventory. For the second time, Tryon Palace stood in all its glory, and at an extravagant cost—3.5 million dollars, monies obtained

⁸⁹ Don Bolden, assoc. ed., "Allen House Holds Unique Distinction in County," *The Daily Times-News*, May 29, 1967, B1, and A. Howard White, ed., "National Battleground Story," *The Daily Times-News*, June 3, 1971, A4; Don Bolden, assoc. ed., "Allen House is Dedicated," *The Daily Times-News*, May 29, 1967, A1; A. Howard White, ed., "Plans Made to Move Allen House to Battleground Site," *The Daily Times-News*, January 19, 1966, 1B, 3B; A. Howard White, ed., "Battleground Work Needs More Funds," *The Daily Times-News*, April 21, 1967, B1; A. Howard White, ed., "Logs Needed for Structure," *The Daily Times-News*, June 11, 1966, B1; Dennis Sanders, "Allen House to be Dedicated at Battleground," *The Daily Times-News*, May 23, 1967, B1; and, Dorothy Gilbert Thorne, "North Carolina Friends and the Revolution," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 38, no. 3 (July 1961): 327.

⁹⁰ Cane Creek Meeting of Friends, *From Whence We Came: Cane Creek Friends Meeting* (Snow Camp: Cane Creek Friends Sesquicentennial Committee, 1942), 3–13.

⁹¹ Barnes, "Deconstructing Tryon Palace," 22–30; Kimball and Henson, *Governor's Houses*, 254.

from both private donations and funds appropriated by the General Assembly.⁹² One scholar has observed how, nearly two hundred years later, construction efforts involving Tryon Palace again broke along social and economic lines. Because the restorationists cared more for reasserting their Anglo-Saxon heritage than for historical preservation, the palace “no longer represented Governor Tryon’s power and authority, but the power of elite white culture in North Carolina that financed and participated in the restoration.”⁹³

To achieve a balanced picture of how the two “sides” lived during the Regulator era, visitors to Alamance Battleground should also call on Tryon Palace. Once in New Bern, tourists brush past the front gates, down a cobbled drive, and into a manicured courtyard before climbing the front steps. Mobcapped reenactors usher spectators into the great hall, where a mahogany staircase is the entryway’s defining feature. This engineering marvel—Hawks concealed all signs of structural support from sight—the stairs wrap along three walls and ascend to living quarters on the second floor. There is little doubt why Tryon called his house “a lasting Monument to the Liberality of this Country.”⁹⁴ In reality, Tryon Palace represented an abomination in the face of hardship and poverty existing within the interior regions of his colony.

Still, immigrants continued to pour into North Carolina. Around 1720, one man new to the area wrote to his family in Ulster to extol the benefits of this land of milk and honey. Here, he said, God had provided deliverance from fiscal disparity and despotism. “All that a man works for is his own,” he enthused, “and there are no revenue hounds to take it from us here . . .”⁹⁵ His convictions captured the hopes and expectations of scores of Europeans who came to America in search of

⁹² Kimball and Henson, *Governor’s Houses*, 254.

⁹³ Barnes, “Deconstructing Tryon Palace,” 53–56.

⁹⁴ Elizabeth A. Fenn and Peter H. Wood, *Natives and Newcomers: The Way We Lived in North Carolina Before 1770* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 85–87.

⁹⁵ Charles Adams, *Those Dirty Rotten Taxes: The Tax Revolts That Built America* (New York: The Free Press, 1998), 8.

religious, political, and economic prosperity. In North Carolina, what they found was an entrenched culture of external control and internal special interests. Originally, the Lords Proprietors had limited the number of acres that one man could own. Over time, the disorganization of the patent system and circumvention of the legal system allowed for the concentration of wealth, making a poor Irishman's dreams harder to realize. By the mid-eighteenth century, freedom and fortune were luxuries made available only to a privileged—and often corrupt—few.

Chapter 2

“Valley of Humility Between Two Mountains of Conceit”

The North Carolina Piedmont encompasses a broader spatial region extending north to the Pennsylvania-Maryland border and stretching some six hundred miles south to the Savannah River. It ranges in breadth from twenty miles wide at its narrowest point to more than one hundred fifty miles wide in places. Originating west of the Monocacy River in Maryland, the Piedmont spreads down into Virginia west of Charlottesville and throughout mid-North and South Carolina, fanning outward between the fall line and the Great Smoky Mountains. To this extent, it covers an area larger than the Chesapeake and the Carolinas combined. Occupied only by the occasional visiting white hunter-trapper, the principal residents of North Carolina’s Piedmont in 1730 were flora, fauna, and various native tribes, including Occaneechi (Saponi), Sissipahau (Sissipahaw), and Catawbor (Catawba).¹

During the 1750s, this began to change. “Great numbers of Families keep daily crowding into the Back Parts of this Country,” Governor Gabriel Johnston announced, adding, “they come in Waggons by Land from Pensylvania, a hardy and laborious Race of Men.”² The promise of cheap land drew them south. Agents who represented speculator Henry McCulloh “[hawked land] about in small quantities thro’ all the back parts of the Province and quite thro’ America even to Boston.”³ Such statements reflect the fact that colonists interchanged the terms *Piedmont* and *Back Parts*, even though the American backcountry was an even larger geographic area that

¹ Bridenbaugh, *Myths & Realities*, 120-122; Forest Hazel, “Occaneechi-Saponi Descendants in the North Carolina Piedmont: The Texas Community,” *Southern Indian Studies* 40 (October 1991): 6–14; Jane Madeline McManus and Ann Marie Long, *Alamance County Archaeological Survey Project, Alamance County North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: Research Laboratories of Anthropology, University of North Carolina, 1986), 21–23; Lewis, *Artisans in the North Carolina Backcountry*, 116.

² Stewart, *Redemption from Tyranny*, 38.

³ Troxler, “Land Tenure as Regulator Grievance,” 119.

ranged as far north as Maine.⁴ Into this vast wilderness arrived settlers of English, German, and Scots-Irish persuasion—some sixty thousand strong by the onset of the American Revolution—many of them searching for self-sufficiency, prosperity, or religious freedom. What they found was subservience, economic disparity, and a new royal governor anxious to reestablish the influence of the Church of England here, in what one twentieth century historian allegorized as an unassuming vale wedged between two pretentious neighbors.⁵

So intense was the outpouring of immigrants from the Middle Colonies that Frederick William Marschall, a Moravian elder, likened them to sheep. Marschall resided in the Wachovia tract in Western Rowan County, and he compared the flood of new settlers at mid-century to a herd, one following the other without any comprehension why.⁶ Marschall himself represented one unique group: the German, technically Bohemian, people euphemistically called “Pennsylvania Dutch.” These religious Pietists journeyed from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to the Yadkin and Catawba River Valleys, located within the vast Granville District. Here they founded the settlements of Bethabara, Bethania, and Salem. They christened their new home *der Wachau*, translated “meadow stream,” after their ancestral homeland.⁷

Rowan County, together with neighboring Orange, recognized substantial growth between 1747–1769.⁸ William Penn had recognized the benefits of this territory six decades before,

⁴ Beeman, *The Varieties of Political Experience in Eighteenth-Century America*, 157.

⁵ Bridenbaugh, *Myths & Realities*, 121; Mary Oates Spratt Van Landingham, “A State’s Scant Literature: The Native Literature of North Carolina: Influences of the Past; Prospects for the Future,” (address delivered before the Mecklenburg Historical Society, March 6, 1900), in *Glowing Embers* (Charlotte: The Observer Printing House, 1922), 30. Variations of this expression, such as “veil of humility,” are attributable to other notable Americans, including Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, North Carolina Governor Zebulon Vance, and John Andrew Rice.

⁶ Bridenbaugh, *Myths & Realities*, 122.

⁷ Harry L. Watson, *An Independent People: The Way We Lived in North Carolina, 1770–1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983), 8; Fries, Adelaide L. ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, vol. 1 (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Co., 1922–1969), 25–69, hereinafter, *RMNC*.

⁸ A. Roger Ekirch, “‘A New Government of Liberty’: Hermon Husband’s Vision of Backcountry North Carolina, 1755,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (October 1977): 632.

finding the Piedmont topography conducive to settlement.⁹ John Lawson echoed these findings when he visited the Saponi Indians residing along the Yadkin River in 1701.¹⁰ Like Penn, Lawson had discovered an abundance of arable land, which he described as a pleasant, sparsely wooded savannah.¹¹ This scarcity of timberland posed a dilemma for homebuilders. According to the Reverend Jethro Rumble, one old-timer, whom he identified only as “a venerable citizen,” reported that when his father had arrived in Rowan County around 1750, he found the territory “destitute” of trees and had to haul the logs for his first home from miles away.¹²

To lure settlers to North Carolina, the Albemarle legislature around 1666-1667 exempted new arrivals from taxation for one year, and negated any existing debts for five years, preventing creditors from bringing suit against them.¹³ At once, the Piedmont became the most sought-after geographical region of the colony. It is important to understand the connotations behind those synonyms used to describe this area, especially considering the frontier theses advanced by Turner and Billington. Indeed, historians use these terms synonymously. *Frontier*, a more abstract term than *backcountry*, denotes a destination that draws people toward it, a zone existing between shifting cultures, whereas *backcountry* is an Anglo-Saxon concept of a place dominated by white settlers.¹⁴ Bernard Bailyn used various sobriquets to describe the immigration into

⁹ William Penn to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders, August 6, 1683, in *Coleman's Re-Print of William Penn's Original Proposal and Plan for the Founding & Building of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, America, in 1683*, print. James Coleman (London: James Coleman, 1881), 3-9. Spelling and grammar modernized for clarity.

¹⁰ James H. Merrell, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1989), 1-7.

¹¹ John Lawson, *The History of Carolina; Containing the Exact Description and Natural History of That Country; Together with the Present State Thereof. And a Journal of a Thousand Miles, Travel'd thro' several Nations of Indians. Giving a particular Account of their Customs, Manners, &c.* (London: T. Warner, 1718), 45-46.

¹² Jethro Rumble, *A History of Rowan County, North Carolina, Containing Sketches of Prominent Families and Distinguished Men* (Salisbury: J. J. Bruner, 1881), 33.

¹³ Sallie Walker Stockard, *The History of Alamance* (Raleigh: Capital Printing Company, 1900), 31; Rebecca Taft Fecher, “The Trading Path and North Carolina,” *Journal of Backcountry Studies* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 2.

¹⁴ Cory Joe Stewart, “The Affairs of Boston in the North Carolina Backcountry During the American Revolution” (PhD diss., University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2010), 7-8.

British North America's less populated locales, including “*far periphery, outback, far marchlands, and borderland,*” but he never used *frontier*. Finally settling on backcountry, Bailyn acknowledged that even this term conveys both pejorative and ethnocentric qualities, for as one scholar has pointed out, “South Carolina’s backcountry was Cherokee *front-country*.”¹⁵

One reason that historians have struggled to define the southern backcountry is because the geography of this vibrant region was ever-changing. At various times throughout the colonial period, backcountry boundaries experienced intense fluidity. The Virginia Piedmont, for example, more closely resembled the Tidewater by the mid-eighteenth century. Tobacco cultivation and a burgeoning slave trade had transformed the back parts of that colony into an extension of those regions inhabited by a more stratified society. By comparison, the North Carolina interior more aptly fit the designation, backcountry; by the 1780s, many North Carolinians resided in what is now Eastern Tennessee. Rural inhabitants of Rowan and Orange Counties were quite isolated, living far from local seats of government or vital economic hubs on the coast. In 1758, William Few, Jr., later a member of the Continental Congress and a signer of the United States Constitution, described Orange County as a desolate place bereft of infrastructure.¹⁶

Interior waterways dictated much about Piedmont movement. Alamance Creek drained into the Haw River, which emptied into the Cape Fear. This dendritic pattern encouraged a more “vertical” route of travel for prehistoric peoples while restricting their activities east to west.¹⁷ Hence, many mid-century residents conducted their business along a north-south trajectory, following the ancient Indian Trading Path that cut along portions of the modern-day I-85

¹⁵ Nathaniel Turk McLeskey, “Across the First Divide: Frontiers of Settlement and Culture in Augusta County, Virginia, 1738–1770” (PhD diss., College of William and Mary, 1990), 28. Punctuation altered for clarity.

¹⁶ Fenn and Wood, *Natives and Newcomers*, 76-77. The Fews fled to Georgia following the Battle of Alamance; William represented that state in these legislative bodies.

¹⁷ McManus and Long, *Alamance County Archaeological Survey Project*, 6.

corridor.¹⁸ Hillsborough became the so-called economic and political “capital” of the backwoods, in part, because several major roadways converged there. The Old Trading Path, which originated in Petersburg, Virginia, ran west to Salisbury in Rowan County, and another route from Virginia trekked south to Cross Creek (Fayetteville).¹⁹ William Tryon, visiting the settlement when it was known as Orange Court House, observed no greater than twenty families residing there, but predicted “it will be in the Course of a few Years the most considerable of any Inland Town in [the] Province.”²⁰ The rising prominence of an interior township encouraged an absence of interaction with coastal North Carolinians, fueling the notions of sectionalism that some historians attribute as one of the causes of the Regulator movement.²¹

More than the allure of inflorescence and serenity attracted some to North Carolina. Unscrupulous land agents saw an opportunity to bilk unsuspecting immigrants out of their savings by selling the same tracts of land to multiple buyers. At the height of resettlement, the back parts had acquired a reputation for being a place of perverse corruption. Visiting the area around the time of the Battle of Alamance, one Baptist minister lamented conditions in this “poor and unhappy province where superiors make complaints of the people. . .”²² Unbridled acts of fiscal defalcation, coupled with political and religious traditions of dissent that new settlers brought with them, ignited tensions throughout central North Carolina.

Many of those families who moved south were already fleeing the specter of war. The prospect of renewed conflict in the decade following the “War of Jenkins’ Ear” prompted an

¹⁸ G. Rebecca Dobbs, “Backcountry Settlement Development and Indian Trails,” *Social Science Computer Review* 27, no. 3 (August 2003), 331-333.

¹⁹ Annie Sutton Cameron, *Hillsborough and the Regulators* (Hillsborough: The Orange County Historical Museum, 1964), 8.

²⁰ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 21; William Tryon to the Earl of Shelburne, January 31, 1767, in *CWT*, vol. 1, 411-414.

²¹ Creston S. Long, III., “Southern Routes: Family Migration and the Eighteenth-Century Southern Backcountry” (PhD diss., College of William and Mary, 2002), 6–24.

²² Morgan Edwards’ History of the Baptists in North Carolina, in *CR*, vol. 8, 654–657.

exodus from New Jersey and Pennsylvania, as residents of rural communities in the Middle Colonies found themselves vulnerable to Indian attack. Moravian Bishop August Spangenberg cited another reason for this sustained southward trek: the outrageous cost of land in Pennsylvania. A scarcity of acreage and a pervading Native American threat also appears responsible for prompting Virginia residents to seek new opportunities in North Carolina, even though many of them were recent arrivals in the Shenandoah Valley from Western Pennsylvania or Western Maryland. Shifts in demography drove migration patterns in the Chesapeake. With a rise in the number of slaves came an increase in land prices and labor production, and poor white settlers in Eastern Maryland had little choice but to pull up stakes. They drifted into Virginia and eventually, many of them trickled into North Carolina.²³

Prospects for material gain and a quest for religious freedom drew Quaker Herman Husband to the Carolina Piedmont in 1751. Soon afterward, he devised plans for establishing a “new government of liberty” for white settlers to the region.²⁴ Husband counted it a divine right to possess the vacant lands in Orange County, yet he could never have imagined the obstacles some settlers would face when attempting to secure clear titles to land. Between 1751–1771, Husband amassed over nine thousand acres in present-day Randolph, Rowan, and Cumberland Counties. He envisaged another Pennsylvania where newcomers might attain acreage of their own and enjoy the untrammelled resources that the region had to offer, a place with no established church and where minorities could live free from oppression. Because the land office for the enormous Granville District, which encompassed the upper half of the province, operated

²³ Robert W. Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747–1762* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), 16–18; Stewart, *Redemption from Tyranny*, 13.

²⁴ Herman Husband to John Earl Granville Viscount Carteret etc., August 9, 1756, in A. Roger Ekirch, “‘A New Government of Liberty’: Hermon Husband’s Vision of Backcountry North Carolina, 1755,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (October 1977): 637–644. Spelling altered for clarity.

from faraway Edenton, and because he possessed the economic means to fulfill such a role, Husband offered to serve as an agent for those newcomers to the region who had encountered resistance when trying to make land purchases.²⁵

Disputes arising over land tenure was another impetus for the Regulator uprising. The Granville District's owner, John Carteret, the Second Earl Granville, neither managed nor asserted any control over his American holdings. Instead, he supervised in absentia, outsourcing direct oversight to men of spurious character who, in turn, subcontracted their duties to equally dishonest individuals. The quitrent system was itself reasonably straightforward. To acquire a land patent, settlers paid the requisite fees and recorded an entry with the location and number of acres in the Edenton patent office. If unclaimed, land officials ordered a survey and afterward, issued an official patent to the purchaser.²⁶ In the Granville District, agents Francis Corbin and Thomas Childs exerted such influence that on separate occasions, the town of Hillsborough bore each of their names. In Rowan County, Agent James Carter pocketed entry fees paid by farmers who developed the land but failed to register those improvements, thereby forfeiting their claims to said properties.²⁷ Husband, writing to a disinterested Granville, bemoaned the hurdles that settlers must clear when trying to purchase property in his district.²⁸ Bishop Spangenberg attributed these troubles to the lack of an accurate surveyor's map, which propounded confusion over what parcel of land belonged to whom.²⁹

Husband's "second" Pennsylvania proved an unattainable goal. What most immigrants found when they arrived in the North Carolina backcountry was an economic and political

²⁵ Troxler, *Farming Dissenters*, 44.

²⁶ Stewart, *Redemption from Tyranny*, 32.

²⁷ Troxler, "Land Tenure as Regulator Grievance and Revolutionary Tool," 120-121.

²⁸ Herman Husband to John Earl Granville Viscount Carteret, in Ekirch, "A New Government of Liberty," 639.

²⁹ Fries, *RMNC*, vol. 1, 32-35.

climate uncondusive to their dreams of success. One should understand that the designation, *backwoods*, did not automatically infer *backward*. Visitors to the region did not share this opinion. Most people of that age—Anglican missionary Charles Woodmason, for one—regarded the backcountry as primitive. However, an entrenched backcountry elite seized control of local governance starting about 1760, and these men used their positions of power to extort unreasonable fines and fees exclusive of legitimate taxes owed. The Regulators, then, organized in response to the settlers’ unreasonable expectations. Sheriffs, constables, justices of the peace, clerks of court, and registers of deeds posed an impediment to their peace and prosperity.³⁰

Another factor contributing to corruption may have been the perceived ignorance of the new settlers. Throughout the 1750s and 1760s, Benjamin Franklin estimated the numbers of Scots-Irish and German immigrants to North Carolina in the tens of thousands.³¹ Those emigrating from Pennsylvania appeared to share a distinct commonality: they were either landless or held only a few acres in their names.³² By 1770, an estimated two hundred thousand persons resided colony-wide. Within twenty years, that figure doubled, making North Carolina the third most populous state in America. Arriving from the Old World, Gaelic-speaking Highland Scots moved up the Cape Fear River—in keeping with the longstanding Celtic reverence for moving water—settling as far inland as Bladen, Cumberland, and Anson Counties.³³ English Virginians living among immigrant minorities may have, in some cases, helped the latter group assimilate to existing backcountry norms; however, this also broadened the possibility of conflict. As ethnic newcomers sought to acculturate themselves to their new environs, they also fought to hold onto

³⁰ Andrew C. Denson, “Diversity, Religion, and the North Carolina Regulators,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 72, no. 1 (January 1995): 32-33.

³¹ Long, III., “Southern Routes,” 138; Watson, *An Independent People*, 8-10.

³² Long, III., “Southern Routes,” 109.

³³ Watson, *An Independent People*, 8-10; Peter Ross, *Scotland and the Scots: Essays Illustrative of Scottish Life, History and Character* (New York: “Scottish-American” Office, 1889), 144-145.

their distinctly unique cultural dissimilarities with other people groups. Together, backcountry settlers reshaped the political and cultural landscape as they connected with established seaboard communities. Although significant differences existed among backwoods settlers, “those societies nevertheless shared a sufficiently similar path of historical development”—a collective “backcountry experience.”³⁴

Because they spoke in their native languages, carried out old traditions like kilt-wearing or dancing about the Maypole, or indulged in unfamiliar religious practices such as the Moravian *Singstunde*—or simply because they were poor and uneducated—these new residents acquired a reputation for being lazy and uncivilized.³⁵ William Byrd, while laying off the North Carolina-Virginia border in 1728, called those backcountrymen he encountered “indolent wretches” who lived no better than Indians.³⁶ At the time of the Regulator uprising, attitudes remained little changed. Charles Woodmason, who traveled more than six thousand miles throughout the pinewoods, found rural North Carolinians in a worse state of existence than Eastern European peasants.³⁷ Diverse though they might be, the white frontier settlers who came to the colony at mid-century ensconced themselves in the Piedmont, and to the chagrin of the unscrupulous land agents, often ignored established boundaries and land surveys to put down stakes where they desired. Thus, “it was the efficient, extralegal, and decidedly imprecise ways that [these

³⁴ Beeman, *The Varieties of Political Experience in Eighteenth-Century America*, 157.

³⁵ Watson, *An Independent People*, 9; Robert J. Myers, *Celebrations: The Complete Book of American Holidays* (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972), 135–139; Christopher E. Hendricks, “And Will You There a City Build”: The Moravian Congregation Town and the Creation of Salem, North Carolina, *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* 20, no. 2 (Fall 2013): 83. See also Fries, *RMNC*, vol. 1, throughout.

³⁶ Gregory H. Nobles, “Breaking into the Backcountry: New Approaches to the Early American Frontier, 1750-1800,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (October 1989): 644.

³⁷ Troy L. Kickler, “Piedmont’s Backcountry’s Religious Fervor Contributed to Freedom,” *Carolina Journal* 15, no. 6 (June 2006), 21; Charles Woodmason to John Rutledge, in *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant*, ed. Richard J. Hooker (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 272–278.

newcomers] claimed space that helped make [them] such a dynamic, successful, and destructive force on the frontier.”³⁸

Cultural geographers cite several socio-ethnic characteristics that best defined the immigrants to the Piedmont region. First, the prevailing social unit was the nuclear family, a trait dominant among peoples who tended to settle remotely rather than cluster in villages. They shared a universal contempt for abuses of authority. They lacked a sense of attachment to place; whenever perceived threats to their freedom arose, they moved on. Hence, their sense of mobility explains why they ignored ecology. Instead, they employed agricultural methods like slash-and-burn, or fire-fallow, cultivation, which allowed for quick provisioning and enabled families to uproot themselves with little advance notice.³⁹ Surveying the wilderness regions of New York and Pennsylvania at the close of the French and Indian War, Michael Guillaume Jean de Crevecoeur, Anglicized John Hector St. John, condemned the assault on the forests perpetrated by men so eager to cultivate their fields that they exhibited “the distressing habit of looking at the trees only as enemies.”⁴⁰ Often, extended families migrated south as a communal unit, and they resettled as such. In these cases, their destinations had much to do with available acreage.⁴¹ James Few, Jr., recalled his family relocating from Baltimore County, Maryland when he was ten years old. Besides his immediate family, several other relatives accompanied them south.⁴²

The development of North Carolina’s colonial infrastructure evolved as settlers acclimated old habits to their new subtropical environs. Architectural historians regard the log cabin as the

³⁸ Cameron B. Strang, “Michael Cresap and the Promulgation of Settler Land-Claiming Methods in the Backcountry, 1765–1774,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 118, no. 2 (April 2010): 107.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 108–110.

⁴⁰ Michel Guillaume Jean de Crevecoeur, *Eighteenth Century Travels in Pennsylvania and New York*, ed. and trans. Percy G. Adams (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1961), 43.

⁴¹ Long, III, “Southern Roots,” 143–144.

⁴² Charles C. Jones, ed., “Autobiography of Col. William Few of Georgia,” *The Magazine of American History* 7, no. 5 (November 1881): 343.

defining attribute arising from this period.⁴³ Aesthetics was of little concern. Often meant as temporary lodging—trees fashioned in the blockhouse style had the bark remaining on two sides—the log house appealed to backwoods settlers because it offered security against marauding tribes and foraging wildlife, and because it required little time and skill to assemble.

By their very nature, however, these houses could survive for decades, long after a family moved on. For example, eleven Moravian Brethren sent from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to scout the Carolina wilderness survived the harsh winter of 1753-1754 only after finding an abandoned cabin in which they could shelter until springtime.⁴⁴ Clearing forest for agricultural use was backbreaking labor, and while some farmers felled trees and burned the rubble, leaving only blackened stumps among which they planted corn or wheat, others killed trees by girdling. This process involved removing a ring of bark to expose the sapwood, thereby bleeding the tree.⁴⁵ Timber left to die in this fashion resulted in lightwood, a resinous material that was hard as stone, was water and insect resistant, and was seemingly permanent. The O'Quinn House, located in Moore County, dates to the mid-nineteenth century, but it represents the best example of a log cabin set upon a lightwood-block foundation still surviving today.⁴⁶

The John Allen House represents not only backcountry living, but it also typifies most rural homesteads dating to the Regulator period. Located today at Alamance Battleground Historic Site, the cabin once occupied a plot on John Allen's farm in Snow Camp. Allen's descendants donated the structure to the state for restoration in 1966. Since then, it has remained

⁴³ Catherine W. Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 1; Harold R. Shurtleff, *The Log Cabin Myth: A Study of the Early Dwellings of the English Colonists in North America* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1939), 184-185.

⁴⁴ Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture*, 5-7, 40.

⁴⁵ Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York: Penguin, 2001), 145.

⁴⁶ Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture*, 5-7, 40.

a key attraction at the battleground.⁴⁷ The cabin is the oldest colonial house still surviving in Alamance County and dates to 1782.⁴⁸ This simple log structure first occupied a six-hundred-acre parcel granted to John Allen's father by Granville's agents in 1756, and it was the second house that Allen built after he moved to the area.⁴⁹ While the cabin that visitors tour today was crude even by eighteenth-century standards, it was nonetheless a more substantial building than the average backcountry residence described William Byrd in 1728:

“Most of the Houses in this Part of the Country are Log-houses, covered with Pine or Cypress Shingles, [three] feet long, and one broad. They are hung upon Laths with Peggs, and their doors too turn upon Wooden Hinges, and have wooden Locks to secure them, so that the building is finisht without nails or other Iron-work.”⁵⁰

Those cabins appearing in the North Carolina backcountry varied in style depending on the origins of their builders. Germans who arrived in Pennsylvania in 1710 hearkened from Upper Bavaria, Saxony, the Black Forest, and Switzerland, and brought with them a blockhouse type of dwelling with dovetailed corners and clay daubing in the interstices. Although the Moravian settlers at Wachovia also used logs to construct their buildings, they preferred framed structures, or *Aufgeschlagen*, which required the skilled labor of both free and enslaved carpenters.⁵¹ Irish Protestants who migrated from Ulster around 1718, the ostensible Scotch-Irish, also utilized the blockhouse style. They adapted their version of the log cabin to frontier living, with higher, garrison-like walls meant to deter Indian attack. Researchers are unable to date when cabins made of rounded logs with crisscrossed corners originated in New England.

⁴⁷ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. *National Register of Historic Places: Allen House (April 1971)*, by John B. Wells, III (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1971), 3.

⁴⁸ Alamance County was part of Orange County until 1849.

⁴⁹ Lounsbury, *Alamance County Architectural Heritage*, 4.

⁵⁰ Colonel William Byrd, March 27, 1728, in *The Writings of "Colonel William Byrd of Westover in Virginia Esqr."* ed. John Spencer Bassett (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1901), 78-79.

⁵¹ Nathan Love, "The Men Who Built Salem: A Biographical Look at the Builders of the North Carolina Moravian Town," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 37 (April 2016): 251.

This English assembly method would persist for the next half-century before succumbing to the standard blockhouse convention.⁵² Swedish settlers, meanwhile, produced a log cabin comprised of rough timber, notched and fitted at both ends and stacked in an alternating sequence from end to side. A mixture of chips, clay, and moss made a chinking to seal any cracks between the logs.⁵³

Windows were rare. While a few backwoods structures contained openings covered with oiled paper or horn scraped to near-transparency, glass was a superfluous luxury.⁵⁴ For one thing, any opening in a backcountry house mitigated its security. For another, glass was a taxed commodity; settlers such as John Allen avoided the additional cost of leaded panes. Allen fashioned his family home from hand-hewn logs of oak and ash daubed with clay and straw, and, unlike the O'Quinn House, seated it upon a stone foundation. The timbers intersected at the corner joists via the familiar V notch. Single storied, with a main downstairs living area and a loft for sleeping, Allen's home also included a cellar, a front and back porch, and a small room off the rear exit, suggesting the Allens enjoyed some economic advantage over their neighbors since most Piedmont families resided in simple one-room structures with dirt floors.⁵⁵

A unique feature of the Allen House is the cantilevers, or support beams, which run the full length of the house front to back. These poles, consisting of a single log, support the overhangs above the front and rear elevations.⁵⁶ Most Piedmont cabins measured twenty feet by eighteen feet.⁵⁷ Deforestation in later years reduced the likelihood of such cantilevered roofs.

⁵² Shurtleff, *The Log Cabin Myth*, 175–179.

⁵³ Edwin Tunis, *Colonial Living* (Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1957), 25–26.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁵⁵ Allen, *Snow Camp, North Carolina*, 25–26; U.S. Dept. of Interior, *Allen House*, 2.

⁵⁶ Lounsbury, *Alamance County Architectural Heritage*, 6.

⁵⁷ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form: Log Buildings in Alamance County, North Carolina, c. 1780–c. 1930 (March 1993)*, by Patricia S. Dickinson (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1993), 3.

By the time he constructed this house, Allen would have been fortunate to find trees of a suitable height to make such supports possible; not long afterward, the practice fell from custom.⁵⁸ Colonists residing in the back parts did not restrict themselves to log houses. They also constructed barns, smokehouses, kitchens, jails, and courthouses from roughhewn timber.⁵⁹ Spruill has suggested that the presence of such exterior buildings undoubtedly led to the main dwelling earning the moniker, “great house,” rather than that descriptor being an indicator of a home’s size.⁶⁰ Moreover, these rudimentary structures gave the backcountry a distinct feel, reflecting an obvious, simpler way of life as opposed to the ostentation displayed by men of wealth like William Tryon.

Compared to clapboard houses owned by more prosperous residents of the interior towns or coastal communities, backcountry home furnishings illustrated the socioeconomic differences separating the Tidewater and Piedmont regions. Rural inhabitants survived by subsistence farming, at least through the Regulator period. They were self-dependent when fabricating necessary everyday household items, including furniture, cooking utensils, cloth, soap, and candles—everything but iron and salt.⁶¹ The hearth was an essential element of every colonial house. In the South, it was customary for homebuilders to locate their fireplaces along an exterior wall, with the chimney rising at least a foot above the roofline to minimize the risk of fire.⁶² An added advantage offered by exterior chimneys was that they allowed space for a central hall in more substantial dwellings, to encourage cross-ventilation on sweltering summer

⁵⁸ Lounsbury, *Alamance County Architectural Heritage*, 6.

⁵⁹ John V. Allcott, *Colonial Homes in North Carolina* (Raleigh: The Carolina Charter Tercentenary Commission, 1963), 26-27.

⁶⁰ Julia Cherry Spruill, *Women’s Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1972), 22.

⁶¹ Bridenbaugh, *Myths & Realities*, 143.

⁶² Tunis, *Colonial Living*, 82.

days. Interior chimney placement was preferable in northern homes, to promote heat conservation during winter months.⁶³

The Allen House was a notable exception. John Allen placed his stone chimney inside the cabin, where it dominated much of one wall and consumed one-quarter of the main living space.⁶⁴ When the fire burned low, Allen may have also used a crusie lamp, also called a betty lamp, to light his home. These wrought iron, triangular-shaped receptacles, measured about six inches long, had a carrying handle, and burned animal fat or grease. They were among those items that German migrants brought with them from Pennsylvania. This method of lighting dated to Roman days and first came to America with the Pilgrims.⁶⁵ “Bring paper and linseed oil for your windows,” Edward Winslow had instructed prospective pilgrims, “with cotton yarn for your lamps.”⁶⁶ Eastern Pennsylvania Germans called their crusies the *schmutze* lamp, which typically did not contain a drip catcher, thus, they made an untidy mess because their wicks absorbed the oil faster than it burned.⁶⁷

Besides generating food and warmth, the hearth also provided light for what was often a bare room containing a plain chest and split-log benches. Bedsteads, if they existed, contained straw ticking with rope or rawhide strips for support. Some settlers were so destitute that they slept on straw pallets on the floor.⁶⁸ Rachel Allen was one of those fortunate backcountry housewives whose husband was also a carpenter. Upon his death in 1826, John willed to Rachel

⁶³ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses: The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), 160.

⁶⁴ U.S. Department of the Interior, *Log Buildings in Alamance County*, 11.

⁶⁵ Robert Thomason, “German Christmas in the Carolinas,” *Times-News*, December 4, 2017, <https://www.thetimesnews.com/photogallery>; Lawrence S. Cooke, ed. *Lighting in America: From Colonial Rushlights to Victorian Chandeliers* (Pittstown: The Main Street Press, 1984), 16-17.

⁶⁶ Edward Winslow to George Morton, December 11, 1621, in *Mourt's Relation; or, Journal of the Plantation at Plymouth, 1622*, ed. Henry Martyn Dexter (Boston: John Kimball Wiggin, 1865), 131-142.

⁶⁷ Walter Hough, *Fire as an Agent in Human Culture* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1926), 236; Cooke, *Lighting in America*, 16-17.

⁶⁸ Tunis, *Colonial Living*, 82.

“2 chists,” one of which may survive to this day and which visitors can see when touring the house museum.⁶⁹ When restorationists moved Allen House to Alamance Battleground in the late 1960s, many of the original furnishings remained, including a Chippendale desk and six-drawer chest, a tilt-top candlestand, a ladderback chair, and a longcase clock.⁷⁰ The quality of these furnishings again indicates that Allen achieved some meager social status, at least under local norms, and by the economic criteria of his native Chester County, Pennsylvania. This placed him among the ranks of the middling sorts.⁷¹

In addition to the light generated by their fireplaces, settlers lit their homes with rushlights, or with pine knots gathered from the forest. Antiquarians have discovered rushlight holders dating to the provincial era, thus confirming their use in early America, but little evidence exists to suggest that colonists used rush lighting on a widespread basis, particularly in New England.⁷² The use of pine knots appears more likely in North Carolina, given the prominence of that species throughout the region. There were obvious downsides; such devices produced “much fuliginous smoak” and oozed rosin and pitch.⁷³ Candles were the most common form of illumination among rich and poor alike, but they were another luxury that backwoods citizens could ill afford.

At butchering time, colonists maximized all an animal’s innards except the “squeal.” Wives retained hog fat and beef suet for candle- and soap-making.⁷⁴ Since the sixteenth century, Tusser had advised womenfolk to “make thine owne candle, spare pennie to handle.”⁷⁵ Consequently, it is

⁶⁹ June Lucas, “The Early Furniture of North Carolina’s Cane Creek Settlement,” *American Furniture 2016*, n.p., <http://www.chipstone.org/issue.php/41/American-Furniture-2016>.

⁷⁰ Allen, *Snow Camp, North Carolina*, 25-26.

⁷¹ Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, 434, including notes; James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man’s Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1972), 4–13.

⁷² Cooke, *Lighting in America*, 13.

⁷³ Marshall B. Davidson, “Early American Lighting,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 3, no. 1 (Summer 1944): 34.

⁷⁴ Barbara Greenwood, *A Pioneer Sampler: The Daily Life of a Pioneer Family in 1840* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1994), 184.

⁷⁵ Thomas Tusser, *Five Hundred Pointes of Good Husbandrie* (London, Trubner & Co., 1878), 177.

doubtful that many ordinary pioneer women ever considered purchasing commercially-produced candles like those found in finer homes. Benjamin Franklin, for lack of a more inventive solution, conceded that the only wise choice to creating an artificial source of light was to forego it altogether; his answer was to employ daylight-saving time.⁷⁶ Common folk made candles from melted tallow in great kettles suspended over the hearth or an outdoor fire. Securing six to eight hemp wicks to a rod, the candlemaker would dip the wicks in repeated succession until her candles acquired the proper diameter. In time, tin or pewter molds lessened the amount of labor involved. More fortunate women whose husbands kept bees had access to real wax for candle-making.⁷⁷

Ladies residing in coastal areas had an advantage over their western counterparts. “Bayberries yield a wax,” reported John Lawson, “which . . . makes Candles that, in burning, give a fragrant Smell.”⁷⁸ Mark Catesby made similar observations. He disclosed a process of boiling, skimming, and clarifying that could take an entire family upwards of four weeks to complete. While a husband roamed sea banks looking for wax myrtles, his children harvested the fruits from the plants he had cut. His wife watched the kettle.⁷⁹ In terms of time and effort, the production of bayberry candles represented another distinction between the east and west—affluent gentlewomen residing in Tidewater regions enjoyed the benefits of slave labor when putting by their household supply of candles. By one nineteenth-century account, however, Martha Tabb Dyer distrusted her servants to do the job properly, and she dipped her own candles. Upon completing the task, Martha put the final product under lock and key.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Davidson, “Early American Lighting, 30.

⁷⁷ William Backus Guitteau, *Our United States, A History* (New York: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1919), 136.

⁷⁸ Lawson, *The History of Carolina*, 90.

⁷⁹ Mark Catesby, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*, vol. 1 (London: C. Marsh and T. Wilcox, 1754), 69. Punctuation altered for clarity.

⁸⁰ Wilma King, *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 29.

Janet Schaw observed that despite the abundant availability of bayberries in Coastal Carolina, few wives bothered with harvesting them. She also noted that poorer sorts burned lightwood and the wealthy used spermaceti, and if a planter's wife resorted to the use of green wax, she reserved it for kitchen use.⁸¹ Philip Fithian, who tutored the children of Virginian Robert Carter at Nomini Hall plantation, marveled at the luminosity and brilliance of a candlelit room. Carter could well afford such light; he owned as many as five hundred slaves.⁸² By comparison, William Tryon, regarded a North Carolina plantation with seventy human chattels to be a substantial enterprise.⁸³ The *New-England Weekly Journal* found in 1728 that families of middling means consumed no more than three candles per evening. Twenty years later, the President of Harvard College recorded that his household had produced seventy-eight pounds of candles. Six months later, the family had exhausted that supply.⁸⁴

Affluent colonists such as the Carters relied on spermaceti candles, made from the liquid head matter of sperm whales. Because a few wealthy New England mercantilists controlled the whaling industry, the cost of these candles exceeded the economic reach of ordinary citizens.⁸⁵ George Washington estimated the cost of burning one taper five hours a night at £8 per annum. Although the expense was considerable when compared to tallow, spermaceti candles lacked the disagreeable odor of melted beef, venison, or port fat, and they smoked less than homemade

⁸¹ Janet Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality; Being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal, in the Years 1774 to 1776*, eds. Evangeline Walker Andrews and Charles McLean Andrews (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923), 203-204.

⁸² Davidson, "Early American Lighting, 30.

⁸³ William Tryon to His Uncle, July 26, 1765, in *The North Carolina Experience: An Interpretive and Documentary History*, ed. Lindley S. Butler and Alan D. Watson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 92.

⁸⁴ Davidson, "Early American Lighting, 30.

⁸⁵ Gary Westfahl, *A Day in a Working Life: 300 Trades and Professions Through History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2015), 841.

varieties. Even so, visitors to Mount Vernon retired “soon after candlelight,” rising before daybreak as admonished by Poor Richard Saunders.⁸⁶

Given Washington’s social status, one can surmise that William Tryon also burned spermaceti candles in his New Bern mansion. Few records exist to substantiate this theory since Tryon Palace burned in 1798.⁸⁷ An inventory of furnishings for Tryon’s New York home, following his removal to that colony in 1771, included a pair of plated candlesticks and three pairs of pillar candlesticks. When his successor, Governor Josiah Martin, fled New Bern at the onset of the American Revolution, he left behind a single “candle boor.”⁸⁸ Tryon’s inventory also listed “tin lamps and frames,” as thinner construction materials become more prevalent in the later eighteenth century.⁸⁹

Without putting too fine a point on it, simple factors such as how colonial North Carolinians illuminated their homes reveal a great deal about their standard of living and help explain the hardships faced by one group of people—difficulties unimagined by the better half. Even among those families who could afford humbler (yet not manor) houses of milled lumber, frugality remained an inherent trait among them. It is true that postmedieval dwellings often reflected elegant craftsmanship. Still, functionality remained a paramount concern. On the frontier, ostentation was all but nonexistent; the settlers who arrived at mid-century concerned themselves more with sheer survival than with keeping up with their neighbors. The rise of a backcountry elite, therefore, posed a threat to that survival, and as Kars has suggested, backwoods farmers reacted violently when corrupt sheriffs and other officials threatened their

⁸⁶ Davidson, “Early American Lighting, 30-32.

⁸⁷ Lindy Cummings, Research Historian at Tryon Palace, e-mail message to author, May 6, 2020.

⁸⁸ B. D. Bargar, “Governor Tryon’s House in Fort George,” *New York History* 35, no. 3 (July 1954): 302, 305; Sale of Gov. Martin’s Property, in *The State Records of North Carolina*, ed. Walter Clark, vol. 22 (Goldsboro, Nash Brothers, 1907), 880-889, hereinafter, *SR*; Lindy Cummings, e-mail message to author, May 6, 2020.

⁸⁹ Bargar, “Governor Tryon’s House in Fort George,” 304.

financial security. Within a few years of their arrival in North Carolina, the Pennsylvania Dutch and Scots-Irish immigrants from the Middle Colonies faced an impossible dilemma: they could either turn a blind eye to extortion and rapine, or they could join the Regulator movement and stand and fight.

Chapter 3

“The Growing Weight of Oppression Which We Lye Under”

Immigration represented but one example of people movements in colonial America. While average farm families comprised the bulk of those surging into North Carolina during the eighteenth century, the newcomers also included opportunists who sensed a chance for upward mobility, and they challenged the traditional elites' grip on sociopolitical power.¹ Edmund Fanning—who, after William Tryon, became the man most hated by the Regulators—saw the Piedmont as forbidden fruit ripe for picking. Attorney Francis Nash, an opponent of the Regulator movement who witnessed firsthand the Hillsborough riot in September 1770, was an acquaintance of Fanning's. While the two men were social equals, Nash offered an unbridled judgment of Fanning's experiences in North Carolina:

To this town, in 1762, came Edmund Fanning, lawyer, scholar, gentleman, and adventurer, but withal, overbearing, unscrupulous, and a libertine. In March, 1763, he qualified as Register of the county, and thereafter purchased several town lots, built himself a fine mansion . . . and proceeded to make himself an unconscious provoker, if not maker, of much North Carolina history. In Hillsboro . . . it was with such a populace as this, ignorant, violent, headstrong, lawless, *having the Anglo-Saxon instinct to resist oppression* . . . that Edmund Fanning, gentleman adventurer, educated lawyer and haughty man, came in conflict. The result, of course, was disaster to both parties.²

Life on the frontier was enough of a struggle for families to endure. In North Carolina, the additional financial burden placed upon ordinary settlers through the imposition of excessive taxes and illegal fines and fees compounded the usual difficulties attendant to backwoods living. Depending on the time of year, rural families might engage in any number of sundry chores within a given day: planting or harvesting; woodcutting and log splitting;

¹ Jack P. Greene, “The Social Origins of the American Revolution: An Evaluation and an Interpretation,” *Political Science Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (March 1973): 7-8.

² Francis Nash, *Hillsboro: Colonial and Revolutionary* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Company, 1903), 6, 11. Emphasis added.

building repairs and shingle-making; cooking, pickling, and canning; slaughtering, curing, and smoking meat; spinning wool or flax, weaving, and sewing; candle- and soap-making; and, in the case of Rachel Allen, cultivating a medicinal garden and attending the ill. An inventory of kitchen items at the Allen farm provides insight into how labor-intensive the preparation of food could be, for it included a sauerkraut cutter and a fermenting barrel.³ Mary Cooper, a Long Island, New York housewife, reported such tasks as drying apples, cooking, washing dishes, cleaning house, doing laundry and ironing, all of which left her without “one minute’s rest;” retiring at eventide, she often described herself as being “tired almost to death.”⁴ In an entry in Cooper’s journal dated July 13, 1769, Mary revealed, “This day is forty years since I left my father’s house and come here, and here have I seen little else but hard labor and sorrow, crosses of every kind.”⁵ Michel Crevecoeur acknowledged the importance of a good housewife, insisting that no matter how hard a farmer might toil, without female economy his failure was assured.⁶

Edmund Fanning, too, hailed from Long Island, but he enjoyed a comfortable upbringing. At age nine, his father, a British army captain, sent him to grammar school, and from there, Fanning went on to study at Yale College, graduating in 1757 with honors. He then studied at Harvard, earning a master’s degree before studying law at King’s College, now Columbia University. Fanning relocated to Childsburgh (later Hillsborough), where he intended to open a law practice. Soon enough, he found himself scooped up in the swirl of backcountry politics. Elected a trustee and a commissioner for the town, Fanning also represented Orange County in the Lower House of the Assembly. He became the epitome of multi-officeholding. He served as

³ Allen, *Snow Camp, North Carolina*, 26, 28.

⁴ Field Horne, ed., *The Diary of Mary Cooper: A Farm Wife on Long Island, 1768–1773* (Oyster Bay: Oyster Bay Historical Society, 1981), n.p., <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org>. Edited for clarity.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ St. John de Crevecoeur, *Sketches of Eighteenth Century America*, eds. Henri L. Bourdin, Ralph H. Gabriel, and Stanley T. Williams (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), 40-41.

a Crown prosecutor, a borough representative, public register, judge of superior court, and a militia colonel.⁷ Rednap Howell, a schoolteacher and the self-styled balladeer of the Regulator movement, chronicled Fanning's rise to fortune and fame:

*“When Fanning first to Orange came
He looked both pale and wan,
An old patched coat upon his back
An old mare he rode on.*

*Both man and mare wa 'nt worth five pounds
As I've been often told,
But by his civil robberies
He's laced his coat with gold.”⁸*

There was much truth in Howell's bawdy doggerel. In July 1767, Fanning indeed ordered gold lace, gold doublet, and the finest duroy from which to make a suit of clothes.⁹ The fact that he managed to acquire numerous elected offices and appointments within so short a time speaks to the persistent evil within the provincial government, one made possible by centralized control. The governor possessed the power to appoint registers, militia officers, and justices of the peace. In turn, they presented candidates for the office of sheriff, which the governor also then selected. The governor chose a clerk of the pleas—it was their role to appoint county clerks. This interwoven system of county and provincial government made possible the evolution of “courthouse rings,” men who, in effect, locked down all administrative control.¹⁰ Considering this, there is no doubt why James Oglethorpe insisted the Colony of Georgia remain “free from that pest and scourge of mankind called lawyers.”¹¹

⁷ William S. Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 2 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 181-183.

⁸ Arthur Palmer Hudson, “Songs of the North Carolina Regulators,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (October 1947): 476-477.

⁹ Edmund Fanning to Richard Bennehan, July 13, 1767, in *CR*, vol. 7, 506-507.

¹⁰ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 129-130.

¹¹ Hugh McCall, *The History of Georgia, Containing Brief Sketches of the Most Remarkable Events, Up to the Present Day*, vol. 1 (Savannah: Seymour & Williams, 1811), 54; Orville A. Park, comp., *The History of Georgia in the Eighteenth Century* (Macon: Georgia Bar Association, 1921), 24.

Because the same persons controlled multiple offices at once, there was little difficulty in overcharging fees and pocketing the difference. Often, sheriffs dispensed with overinflating costs altogether, simply keeping the proceeds for themselves. Governor Arthur Dobbs noted as early as 1755 that it was “too much a Practice in this Province that those who are intrusted in the collecting or laying out of Publick Money keep it in their hands and lay it out for their benefit.”¹² Moreover, he added, there was no system in place for prosecuting wrongdoers, and even if arrested on charges of embezzlement, these dishonest individuals simply fled the colony before they came to trial.¹³ Dobbs was not the only royal administrator to make such assertions. William Tryon’s successor, Josiah Martin, witnessed for himself the impropriety that persisted in backcountry governance even after Tryon’s bloody suppression of the Regulators in 1771. The people fell victim, he said, to “mercenary tricking Attornies” and other officers of the court who “practiced upon them every sort of rapine and extortion.”¹⁴ George Sims, a schoolmaster from Granville County, was more acerbic in his assessment. The government, he declared, consisted of “cursed hungry caterpillars,” feeding off the Commonwealth who must cease lest they destroy the provincial infrastructure.¹⁵

The backcountrymen were hardly gullible. A heritage of vigilantism existed among those North British migrants who moved south of the Allegheny Mountains in the mid-eighteenth century. Their brand of resistance employed the use of organized violence based upon English, Scottish, and Ulster traditions, and was often made manifest through brutal acts including tarring and feathering, flogging, and lynching.¹⁶ Although infrequent in North Carolina, isolated incidents involving a tar

¹² Arthur Dobbs to the Legislature, September 25, 1755, in *CR*, vol. 5, 497.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Governor Martin to Secretary Hillsborough, August 30, 1772, in *CR*, vol. 9, 329–333.

¹⁵ An Address to the People of Granville County by George Sims, June 6, 1765, in *The North Carolina Experience*, ed. Butler and Watson, 111–112.

¹⁶ Michael J. Pfeifer, *The Roots of Rough Justice: Origins of American Lynching* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 14.

brush did occur.¹⁷ Those men who later pledged their allegiance to the Regulator movement may have recalled, whether firsthand or through stories passed down through the generations, local incidents of violence back in the New England or Middle Colonies, which revealed a willingness to mete out their brand of colonial justice. For example, Connecticut landowners in 1722 challenged a court order that compromised their real estate holdings. During an economic crisis in 1682, Virginia tobacco growers destroyed their young crops after the governor called them into a special session of assembly. Because of a surplus of tobacco, his lordship had intended to monopolize the planters' time, thus thwarting their cultivation efforts. As was the case throughout the North Carolina Stamp Act Crisis, local magistrates often countenanced or partook of mob activities, such as in the bawdy house riot in Boston circa 1734, or the Norfolk smallpox riots in 1768-1769.¹⁸

North Carolina's Regulator movement rose to new extremes. At the very foundation of this rebellion lay issues related to currency shortages, but this was an issue not limited to the Piedmont backcountry. Citizens of Pasquotank County petitioned Governor Tryon for relief, stressing that "currency of all kinds [had] become so very scarce that the whole of it now within this county (and what there is being in a few hands) . . . would not be sufficient to pay the taxes only."¹⁹ The colony's lack of a suitable cash crop, until naval stores production commenced in earnest after 1729, resulted in a complex system of currency issuance and exchange.²⁰ The first release of paper

¹⁷ Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality*, 190, 332.

¹⁸ Pauline Maier, "Popular Uprisings and Civil Authority in Eighteenth-Century America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (January 1970): 4-7; Patrick Henderson, "Smallpox and Patriotism: The Norfolk Riots, 1768-1769," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 73, no. 4 (October 1965): 414, 416; and, Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 29.

¹⁹ Petition of Pasquotank Inhabitants, November 20, 1766, in *CWT*, vol. 1, 369-370. Spelling and punctuation altered for clarity.

²⁰ Report by George Burrington Concerning Acts of the North Carolina General Assembly Passed in 1715, in *CR*, vol. 3, 185-186; Acts of the North Carolina General Assembly, 1735, in *SR*, vol. 25, 217-218; Report Concerning Currency in North Carolina, January 23, 1740, in *CR*, vol. 4, 418-419; Alvin Rabushka, *Taxation in Colonial America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 228-232, 699; Cory Cutsail and Farley Grubb, "The Paper Money of Colonial North Carolina, 1712-1774," No. w23783, National Bureau of Economic Research, 2017, 16-27.

money in the colony financed the Tuscarora War in 1712 with another issue the following year, which the Proprietors accepted as payments for quitrents. Six subsequent issues resulted in a depressed economy and a depreciated legal tender.

The paper emissions-to-sterling ratio caused disruptions in trade. In 1759, British merchants insisted that the North Carolina Assembly guarantee the discharge of debts in sterling. Paper bills were suitable in cases where the consignee agreed to accept credit as payment.²¹ Despite the recommendation of Governor Arthur Dobbs, North Carolina's legislature resisted these proposals. "The Depretiation of our Currency is too well known and felt," lawmakers declared; adding that as old and worn bills fell from use, the lack of new money Enhance[d] their Value."²² Thus, paper money was essentially worthless since there was no hard specie with which to back it up. In 1764, Parliament passed the Currency Act, which forbade any further issuance of bills of credit in North Carolina. Four years later, Governor Tryon permitted the issuance of £20,000 in debenture notes (certificates of indebtedness).²³ Although this move circumvented Parliament's 1764 law, Tryon accepted this compromise because the colony still owed £5,000 in debts related to the Regulator uprising and because he was short of cash to complete the construction on his New Bern palace.²⁴

While some scholars regard poll taxes as a standard method of obtaining public monies, in North Carolina, these were but one tool that legislators employed to raise revenue. Provisional land taxes and bills of credit were the chief sources of income.²⁵ The poll tax itself was a concept

²¹ Jack M. Sosin, "Imperial Regulation of Colonial Paper Money, 1764–1773," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 88 no. 2 (April 1964): 177–178.

²² Minutes of the Lower House of the North Carolina General Assembly, November 23, 1759–December 31, 1759, in *CR*, vol. 6, 139.

²³ Minutes of the Upper House of the North Carolina General Assembly, November 1, 1770–December 5, 1768, in *CR*, vol. 7, 912.

²⁴ DeMond, *The Loyalists in North Carolina During the Revolution*, 22–24.

²⁵ Minutes of the Upper House of the North Carolina General Assembly, December 12, 1754–December 31, 1754, in *CR*, vol. 5, 214.

borrowed from mid-seventeenth century England; by 1799, the system proved too ineffectual to persist.²⁶ A real issue with poll taxes was the fact they were inequitable. During the period dating 1748–1771, an overwhelming majority of the taxes levied were poll taxes or duties on imported spirits, with poll taxes outpacing liquor taxes by a three-to-one margin.²⁷ The Assembly exempted land taxes except under extraordinary circumstances, thus, poll taxes fell especially hard on the poor.

The law required all landowners to list their tithables each year, comprised of all income-producing persons in their households. This included all white males aged at least sixteen years, and all slaves, regardless of gender, over age twelve.²⁸ Not counted were white women and youngsters.²⁹ Also subject to the parochial tax, free persons of color paid a disproportionate share of the head tax, once as an income-producing male and once as a black person aged twelve and over.³⁰ Constables devised county tithables lists each year, which they filed with the county treasurer for collection. Sheriffs collected the fees.³¹ For farmers such as John and Rachel Allen, who bore twelve children, poll taxes could become especially harsh as their offspring aged.³² Moreover, currency values in 1768 equated to five shillings per head, while the tax rate per tithables equaled seven shillings plus sixpence.³³ The increases in the poll tax that the Assembly approved to finance construction costs of Tryon Palace—costs which turned out to run twice

²⁶ Charles B. Lowry, “Class, Politics, Rebellion and Regional Development in Proprietary North Carolina (1697-1720)” (PhD diss., University of Florida, 1979), 7.

²⁷ Kay, “Provincial Taxes in North Carolina During the Administrations of Dobbs and Tryon,” 440.

²⁸ An Additional Act to an Act for Obtaining an Exact List of Taxables; and for the Effectual Collecting as Well All Arrears of Taxes, as All Other Taxes, for the Future Due and Payable, Laws of North Carolina 1749, in *SR*, vol. 23, 345.

²⁹ Jacquelyn H. Wolf, “Patents and Tithables in Proprietary North Carolina, 1663-1729,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 56, no. 3 (July 1979): 270–272.

³⁰ Acts of the North Carolina General Assembly, November 23, 1723, in *SR*, vol. 23, 106; Marvin L. Michael Kay, “The Payment of Provincial and Local Taxes in North Carolina, 1748–1771,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 26, no. 2 (April 1969): 220-221.

³¹ Wolf, “Patents and Tithables in Proprietary North Carolina,” 270–272.

³² Allen, *Snow Camp, North Carolina*, 26.

³³ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 6.

higher than expected—caught the attention of colonists residing outside North Carolina. The *Maryland Gazette* disparaged the “enormous Sum, for building a House for the Governor,” while the *Boston Chronicle* “observed that ‘a man that is worth [£]10,000 pays no more than a poor back settler that has nothing but the labour of his hands.’”³⁴

Compounding matters was the scarcity of specie or proclamation money, which made the payment of taxes all but impossible. Thus, colonial officials introduced a barter system known as “commodity money” around 1700, a seventeenth-century concept borrowed from New England and New York.³⁵ As a result, North Carolinians could satisfy their tax debts by paying in produce, animal skins, or dairy products.³⁶ British coins—guineas, sovereigns, shillings, and half-crowns—were almost non-existent in North Carolina. The primary form of coinage colony-wide, indeed, throughout the Western Atlantic World, was Spanish specie, including milled dollars, pesos, and pieces of eight. French, Portuguese, Dutch, and Scandinavian coins also circulated throughout the province.³⁷ The Spanish dollar, often divided into pistareens (fourths) or reals (eighths), assumed considerable intrinsic value, and royal administrators and colonial legislatures overvalued Spanish monies as a way of funneling more of it into their colonies.³⁸

In response to the 1764 Currency Act, representatives from Pasquotank County petitioned the Lower House of the Assembly for relief of money matters, addressing the “great hardships” endured by most inhabitants because of a lack of paper currency and specie. A House commission intended to take up the issue and petition the king for redress. Before the group could do its work, Governor

³⁴ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 132.

³⁵ John J. McCusker, *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600–1775: A Handbook* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 117–118.

³⁶ Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *North Carolina: History of a Southern State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), 157–159.

³⁷ Alan D. Watson, “Counterfeiting in Colonial North Carolina: A Reassessment.” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 79, no. 2 (April 2002): 183.

³⁸ Memorandum Concerning the Governments of Proprietary Colonies, 1701, in *CR*, vol. 1, 541; Watson, *Money and Monetary Problems*, 2.

Tryon offered to intercede with his uncle, the Earl of Shelburne, but the petition died in committee.³⁹ By 1767, currency shortages had become so pronounced that one Beaufort County minister announced that “so great is the distress of the people for want of a currency, that Mobs and Riots are frequent, and in many places where there are Officers they dare not distrain for any Dues whatsoever.”⁴⁰ John Stringer, a presumed Regulator, confirmed that observation while bemoaning “the growing Weight of oppression which we lye under.”⁴¹ Within a year, residents along the western banks of the Haw River were alleging that Orange County’s total tax debt exceeded the number of taxables, a figure that surpassed the assessment for any surrounding county.⁴²

Carolina lawmakers ignored complaints about excessive taxation. Governor Tryon insisted that poll taxes were not especially onerous, declaring “the Indispensable Lot of Mankind who lives in Society [is] to give a part of their Property to that Government, which affords them a secure and quick Employment of the Remainder.”⁴³ These sentiments echoed those of social and political philosophers who argued that personal freedom was a right guaranteed by the ownership of property. The power of taxation, said John Locke, resided with the people. Governments could only function if citizens were willing to submit themselves to assessment, but Locke pushed back against regimes that levied taxes on private property without consent.⁴⁴ Adam Smith, like Tryon, believed that taxpayers should contribute a share commensurate to the services provided by the government.⁴⁵ Edmund Burke, a member of the House of Commons and

³⁹ Robert M. Weir, “North Carolina’s Reaction to the Currency Act of 1764,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 40, no. 2 (April 1963): 186-187.

⁴⁰ Alexander Stewart to the Secretary for the Propagation of the Gospel, in *CR*, vol. 7, 492-496.

⁴¹ John Stringer to Mr. C—, May 14, 1768, in *Regulator Papers, 1766-1781*, William S. Powell, ed., The Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library.

⁴² Regulators’ Advertisement No. 5, March 22, 1768, in *CR*, vol. 7, 699.

⁴³ Nelson, *William Tryon and the Course of Empire*, 72-73.

⁴⁴ John Locke, “Second Treatise of Government,” in *Classics of Moral and Political Philosophy*, ed. Steven M. Cahn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 487-488.

⁴⁵ Adam Smith, “The Wealth of Nations,” in *Classics of Moral and Political Philosophy*, ed. Steven M. Cahn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 677.

a staunch defender of American liberties, noted that revenue *was* the state; without a public treasury, civil administration would collapse.⁴⁶ One reason the issue of taxation galvanized the Thirteen Colonies in the mid-1760s derived from the lack of parliamentary representation. William Pitt, speaking in the decade before the Revolution, derided George Grenville's claims of "virtual" representation as "the most contemptible idea that ever entered into the head of a man," adding that such a question lacked merit to warrant debate.⁴⁷ Citizens residing in the North Carolina Piedmont also lacked representation at the provincial level. By 1769, they had grown so weary of having their interests ignored by men like Edmund Fanning that, during elections that year, they returned Herman Husband and Christopher Nation to the colonial legislature in his place.⁴⁸

Backcountry grievances took their roots in the soil of local government. The Lower House controlled the purse strings and, like lawmakers in the New England and Middle Colonies, Tidewater assemblymen took issue when Parliament passed the Stamp Act in 1765. Judge Maurice Moore, a member of a venerated low-country family whose father founded the town of Brunswick Town on the Cape Fear River, likened virtual representation to slavery, insisting that Parliament had usurped colonial legislatures of their constitutional rights. Moore's tract, "The Justice and Policy of Taxing the American Colonies in Great-Britain, Considered," borrowed from Samuel von Pufendorf's notions of natural rights.⁴⁹ The authority

⁴⁶ Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the French Revolution* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1910), 223.

⁴⁷ Jensen, *The Founding of a Nation*, 240-241.

⁴⁸ Marvin L. Michael Kay and Lorin Lee Cary, "Class, Mobility, and Conflict in North Carolina on the Eve of the Revolution," in *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution*, Larry E. Tise and Jeffrey J. Crow, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), 139-141; Minutes of the Lower House of the North Carolina General Assembly, October 23, 1769 - November 06, 1769, in *CR*, vol. 8, 106-107.

⁴⁹ Maurice Moore, "The Justice and Policy of Taxing the American Colonies in Great-Britain Considered" in W. D. Barnes, et al., eds., *The North Carolina University Magazine*, vol. 1 (Raleigh: Office of the "Weekly Post," 1852), 87. See also Samuel Pufendorf, *The Whole Duty of Man According to the Law of Nature*, ed. Knud Haakonssen. (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, Inc., 2003), 218-219.

to tax, colonial legislators maintained, resided with them alone. “The Assembly think themselves entitled to all the Privileges of a British House of Commons,” Arthur Dobbs complained of the willful colonists.⁵⁰ Days before the first stamped paper arrived in Cape Fear aboard the sloop-of-war, *Diligence*, John Ashe, Speaker of the House, confirmed the governor’s assertions, declaring that provincial lawmakers would resist with blood or until death any attempt to foist the stamp duties upon them or to strip them of their inherent right to impose taxes for the colony.⁵¹

Among backwoodsmen, taxation was not so much the issue as was the fact that what they contributed to the provincial treasury had a way of disappearing—without them ever receiving proper credit for monies paid. Often, the sheriffs collected double or treble the amounts due.⁵² Residents of Anson County accused sheriffs of filching one-quarter of all revenue collected for distress even when no arrearage existed that would justify lawful distraint.⁵³ The role of tax collection commenced with the constabulary. Whereas in England, constables acted as spokesmen for the villages they represented, in the colonies, constables filled an intermediary position between citizens and the judiciary, for provincial justices of the peace and high sheriffs attuned themselves more closely to the needs of the people. This “hands-on” approach was not, however, always in the best interests of taxpayers. It was the constable’s job to assess taxables (tithables) within a county and to then submit his yearly lists to the county treasurer, then to the clerk, and finally to the justice of the peace. Cross-referencing among these various lists ensured accuracy, at least in theory, and helped ferret out unreported taxables and prevented

⁵⁰ Arthur Dobbs to the Board of Trade, August 3, 1760, in *CR*, vol. 6, 279.

⁵¹ Cyrus Lee Hunter, *Sketches of Western North Carolina, Historical and Biographical* (Raleigh: The Raleigh News Steam Job Print, 1877), 10; John Ashe to Arthur Dobbs, October 32, 1764, in *CR*, vol. 6, 1260-1261.

⁵² Regulators’ Advertisement No. 11, in *CR*, vol. 7, 759–766.

⁵³ Address to William Tryon from the Inhabitants of Anson County, August 15, 1768, in *CWT*, vol. 2, 171–175.

constables from dispensing acts of charity by overlooking certain debts. Constables also performed other administrative functions, but as was the case with dishonest sheriffs, colonial county records show a pattern of negligence among the constabulary as well, including the failure to serve warrants, return executions, or make proper accountings.⁵⁴

A 1746 law required the public displaying of tax lists on courthouse doors. Sheriffs retained a second copy. Through an intricate web of collection practices, sheriffs gathered county, vestry, and provincial taxes, while clerks amassed fines imposed by the courts and fees owing to the governor.⁵⁵ Other fees imposed by sheriffs assumed an arbitrary nature. In 1768, Orange County Sheriff Tyree Harris mandated further hardship on backwoods residents. Rather than visiting each farmstead in person to collect taxes—including the increase meant to subsidize the construction of Tryon Palace—he announced he would only accept payments at any one of five collection points throughout the county.⁵⁶ Farmers who failed to appear at one of these locations were subject to an additional fee of two shillings and sixpence. Considering the size of Orange County at that time, these arrangements not only inconvenienced and annoyed taxpayers, but also provided the sheriff with yet another opportunity to fleece the citizenry. Moreover, collection dates set by the sheriff often caught cash-poor farmers unaware, and the need to travel great distances to pay their taxes compounded their financial burdens.⁵⁷

While the governor asserted only nominal control over the office of sheriff, he could revoke the order appointing a man to the office of sheriff since each candidate pledged to serve

⁵⁴ Alan D. Watson, “The Constable in Colonial North Carolina,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 68, no. 1 (January 1991): 1–15.

⁵⁵ Alan D. Watson, “‘A Great Number of Pore People Is a Relying on His Conduct & Politeness’: The County Clerk in Colonial North Carolina,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 85, no. 2 (April 2008): 145–147.

⁵⁶ Stewart, *Redemption from Tyranny*, 51; Abby Chandler, “Unlawed by the Laws of Their Country: Local and Imperial Legitimacy in North Carolina’s Regulator Rebellion,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 93, no. 2 (April 2016): 124.

⁵⁷ Brother C. Edward, “The Regulators: North Carolina Taxpayers Take Arms Against the Governing Elite,” *American History Illustrated* 18, no. 2 (April 1983), 43–44.

at the governor's pleasure. In reality, royal administrators rarely asserted their influence over county matters lest they should invoke the ire of the legislature, which was, in turn, populated by sheriffs, clerks, and justices.⁵⁸ Not everyone appointed sheriff abused the citizenry. Although officials relieved Morgan Brown, sheriff of Anson County, of his duties because of "his lenity to the People in their impoverished circumstance," he sold his estate in order to reimburse the colony for public monies he should have collected from taxpayers. As fate would have it, the buyer of Brown's property defaulted, and Brown faced arrest for his failure to settle his accounts. He petitioned the courts for relief, pointing out that if imprisoned, such action would "ever Deprive him of paying the Publick."⁵⁹

Other variations of "invisible" taxation existed. As with most other forms of revenue-raising, such methodologies were regressive and disproportionately affected the poor.⁶⁰ Rural North Carolina was, in many ways, much like bucolic England. Methods of expropriation had developed along hierarchical lines wherein landlords gained control over parochial affairs. Road service was a medieval construct tying agrarian labor to wealthy property owners and resulted in the poor expending their time and labor to benefit the upper class.⁶¹

To fulfill his road duty, the average man must perform about two weeks' worth of maintenance per year. The work involved the leveling of roadbeds and filling potholes, clearing underbrush and debris, and bridgebuilding.⁶² Here again, the rich held a distinct advantage. As

⁵⁸ Julian P. Boyd, "The Sheriff in Colonial North Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 5, no. 2 (April 1928): 158-159.

⁵⁹ Session Records, Session of November-December, 1771: Lower House Papers; November 12 and 27, Petitions rejected or not acted on. State Archives of North Carolina. General Assembly Records.

⁶⁰ Alan D. Watson, "County Fiscal Policy in Colonial North Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 55, no. 3 (July 1978): 285.

⁶¹ Marvin L. Michael Kay and William S. Price, Jr., "'To Ride the Wood Mare': Road Building and Militia Service in Colonial North Carolina, 1740-1775," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 57, no. 4 (October 1980): 378-379.

⁶² Acts of the North Carolina General Assembly, July 31, 1740-August 22, 1740, in *SR*, vol. 23, 139; Report by Patrick Gordon Concerning Government in North Carolina, Including Cover Letter from William Tryon to William Petty, Marquis of Lansdowne, June 29, 1767, in *CR*, vol. 7, 480-481, 489.

one scholar has noted, the road service system enabled the gentry to appropriate their share of the tax by capitalizing on their tenantry. In other words, plantation owners could order their slaves to perform their share of road duty, thus “exempting” themselves from the manual labor—and the social stigma—associated with this tax.⁶³

Another form of labor tax included militia service. Every man, aged sixteen to sixty, and appearing on the tax rolls participated in musters twice annually.⁶⁴ In 1755, the General Assembly expanded the enlistment requirements to include Quakers, whom they deemed worthy “of some service;” instead of firearms, members of the Society of Friends were “obliged to muster as other Pioneers with a good axe, spade, shove, or Hoe.”⁶⁵ Given the sheer size of Orange and Rowan Counties, musters sometimes occurred far from home. Herman Husband estimated that the average person expended close to £2 per year through militia participation alone. Again, this expense benefitted slaveowners most. The presence of armed militia encouraged obedience among slaves and dissuaded any attempt to bolt.⁶⁶

Church taxes of one variation or another were additional sticking points. Although not technically an ecclesiastical assessment, the cost of marriage licenses provided yet another way for county clerks to gouge exorbitant fees in exchange for the lawful performance of their duties. The cost of a marriage license in 1771 was twenty-five shillings, but the *Boston Gazette* reported that people could not obtain licenses for less than thirty shillings.⁶⁷ Eli Caruthers alleged that John Frohock, the Rowan County clerk of court, had charged five or six dollars as his recording

⁶³ E. P. Thompson, “Patrician Society, Plebian Culture,” *Journal of Social History* 7, no. 4 (Summer 1974): 389.

⁶⁴ Troxler, “Land Tenure as Regulator Grievance,” 123.

⁶⁵ Minutes of the Upper House of the North Carolina General Assembly, January 1, 1755–January 15, 1755, in *CR*, vol. 5, 269. Punctuation added for clarity.

⁶⁶ Kay and Price, Jr., ““To Ride the Wood Mare,”” 390.

⁶⁷ Article from the *Boston Gazette* Concerning Opposition to Taxes and Fees for Public Officials in North Carolina, October 21, 1771, in *CR*, vol. 8, 643–648.

fee for a marriage license, thus realizing as much as a six hundred percent profit and forcing citizens to forego the formality by marrying in the Quaker tradition, promising before witnesses to enter the bonds of matrimony and to remain faithful until death.⁶⁸ As an interesting aside, another marriage custom, this one originating in Cumberland, England and which Britons brought with them to America, was the *clay-daubin*. Friends and relatives of newlyweds gathered to build the couple a cabin. The name for these communal celebrations came from the chinking material used to fill the interstices between the logs.⁶⁹

Vestry taxes presented another source of great contention. Longstanding grievances against the Anglican Church sparked controversy throughout North Carolina, a place where ties to the established church were never strong to begin with—despite the efforts of William Tryon. Herman Husband, an Anglican by birth, left that faith behind him in Maryland in pursuit of his inner light. There, he said, “arrogant gentry-born ministers . . . told people what to believe, upholding the authority of the state and a society openly based upon class as ordained by God.”⁷⁰ Husband was one of those rare personages who harbored notions of justice and equality, traits that flew in the face of tradition. His determination to build a New Jerusalem in the North Carolina backcountry propelled him into political activism. As Stewart and Kars have suggested, Husband saw this as a means of ensuring the religious rights of everyone. Moreover, the colonial evangelical counterculture advocated thrift, restraint, and spiritual parity, traits that challenged the more secular worldviews of Anglican elites.⁷¹

⁶⁸ Caruthers, *Revolutionary Incidents*, 20-21.

⁶⁹ Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 658.

⁷⁰ Wythe Holt, “The New Jerusalem: Herman Husband’s Egalitarian Alternative to the United States Constitution,” in *Revolutionary Founders: Rebels, Radicals, and Reformers in the Making of the Nation*, ed. Alfred F. Young, Gary B. Nash, and Ray Raphael (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), 254.

⁷¹ Stewart, *Redemption from Tyranny*, 24.

Vestry taxes, therefore, proved especially onerous for Piedmont farmers. The Carolina interior was a region populated by “all sects and denominations—a mixed medley from all countries and the off scouring of America,” according to Charles Woodmason.⁷² Urged on by the Reverend George Whitefield and Herman Husband, plain folk came to believe that discernment of moral truth derived not from the church, but from within themselves. Slowly, they attained the courage necessary to oppose governmental abuses of power. Soon, they were demanding justice and equality for everyone residing in the back parts, regardless of their faith.⁷³

Quakers, specifically, since the days of George Fox, had refused to pay any form of tithe. “Tithes were before the law,” Fox had insisted, “and tithes were in the law; but tithes, since the days of the apostles, have been only since the false church arose.”⁷⁴ When the Reverend George Micklejohn delivered a sermon to Tryon’s militia before the Battle of Alamance, he took as his text Romans 13, reiterating one of two biblical precedents upon which the Society of Friends established their resistance to taxation.⁷⁵ St. Paul’s passage admonished early Christians to subject themselves to governing authorities. Quakers believed that Acts 5 superseded the former commandment, reminding the faithful that their allegiance was to God and not to man. The Friends at first justified their tax resistance because some tax monies funded the militia, a direct contradiction of their pacifist principles. They later insisted that tithes paid to the established church helped to perpetuate a false doctrine.⁷⁶ Members of other dissenting faiths likewise rejected the payment of vestry taxes for similar reasons. There may have existed a more overriding reluctance among Quakers to submit to confiscatory taxation: an innate repudiation of authority. Such a tendency then made it

⁷² Woodmason Diary, September 21, 1766, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution*, 6-7.

⁷³ Kickler, “Piedmont’s Backcountry’s Religious Fervor,” 21.

⁷⁴ *Journal of George Fox*, ed. Wilson Armistead, vol. 1 (London: W. and F. G. Cash, 1852), 164.

⁷⁵ Colin Bonwick, “The American Revolution as a Social Movement Revisited,” *Journal of American Studies* 20, no. 3 (December 1986): 359.

⁷⁶ David M. Gross, *American Quaker War Tax Resistance* (Scotts Valley: D. M. Gross, 2011), xxi-xxviii.

possible for Herman Husband to stir up mass opposition to all instances of graft, but most especially those acts of malfeasance emanating from the offices of county leaders.⁷⁷

Some historians argue that church taxes, while not especially “onerous to planters and entrepreneurs like Husband, . . . [were] an affront to Protestants who opposed ‘hireling clergy’ not under the regulation of the separate congregations.”⁷⁸ Although a source of irritation, Husband possibly overlooked the issue of vestry taxes while still residing in Maryland because these assessments posed no serious financial detriment for him or his family.⁷⁹ Other scholars suggest that long-simmering resentments over Anglican privilege were intrinsic components of the dissenter tradition arising from the political instability of seventeenth-century England. The overthrow of Charles I and the subsequent reinstatement of the monarchy in the 1660s thrust many ordinary citizens into political activism for the first time. Grassroots movements to unseat the king grew out of the local congregations, which, unlike the Anglican Church, emphasized the importance of the individual over the corporate.⁸⁰ The Regulator movement eventually grew out of this tradition.

Among the earliest ecclesiastical laws in North Carolina was the 1715 Act for Establishing the Church and Appointing Select Vestries.⁸¹ A later 1754 edict provided for the election of a twelve-man vestry responsible for setting parish tax rates in North Carolina, for paying ministers, and for dispensing the widows’ mite. Because this act stipulated that only freeholders owning at least fifty acres (or a town lot) could participate in the elections, the vestry was a veritable “who

⁷⁷ Richard Stone, “‘Shew Yourselves to be Freemen:’ Quakers, Presbyterians and the North Carolina Regulators” (Senior Thesis, University of North Carolina at Asheville, 2012), 3.

⁷⁸ Jones, “Herman Husband,” 57.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

⁸⁰ Troxler, *Farming Dissenters*, 34.

⁸¹ Act of the North Carolina General Assembly Concerning Establishment of Churches, 1715, in CR, vol. 2, 207–213. Spelling altered for clarity.

was who” among the elite.⁸² The Crown later disallowed this law because it shifted too much authority away from England and placed it under provincial purview.⁸³ The five-shilling tax imposed additional privation on Piedmont farmers and exposed them to further liability when they were unable to meet this obligation. In his letter to Lord Granville in 1756, Herman Husband remarked on taxes being twice what they had been in the years before the passage of the Vestry Act, and the only option for many citizens was to submit to the distraint of their property in satisfaction for their tax debts. Backcountry Protestants were unwilling to pay tithes to anyone except their ministers; moreover, as Husband warned, the imposition of a tax designed for the sole maintenance of the Anglican Church opened up the possibility for further fiscal misconduct among men sworn to uphold the faith. That same year, 1756, members of the Presbyterian synod petitioned Granville for an exemption from paying quit rents and parish taxes. Nothing came of this organizing attempt, although as many as seven hundred persons had petitioned for tax relief.⁸⁴

Like their neighbors to the south, Virginians also found no immunity from vestry taxes. Indeed, the parish assessment represented the highest tax paid by them during the eighteenth century.⁸⁵ It is evident from colonial records that most North Carolinians simply ignored vestry taxes altogether. By 1760, church buildings at Wilmington and Brunswick Town stood unfinished. Anglican clergymen evaded assignments to the colony because of the long overseas voyage required to reach their destinations and because of persistent rumors about the subtropical

⁸² Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 107-108.

⁸³ Paul Conkin, “The Church Establishment in North Carolina, 1765-1776,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 32, no. 1 (January 1955): 2.

⁸⁴ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 107-108.

⁸⁵ John A. Ragosta, “Fighting for Freedom: Virginia Dissenters’ Struggle for Religious Liberty During the American Revolution,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 116, no. 3 (July 2008): 227.

climate.⁸⁶ Another factor that dissuaded ministers from ecclesiastical service in North Carolina involved the combative political atmosphere, which, in turn, often resulted in a lack of salaries.

The Reverend Andrew Morton, while en route to his parish in Mecklenburg County, turned back after receiving reports of a general aversion to the established church among the dissenters who resided there.⁸⁷ One clergyman admitted his inability to support himself because political disturbances throughout the colony prevented the collection of parish or other public fees.⁸⁸ William Tryon made it a cornerstone of his administration to promote Anglicanism in North Carolina. He sought to exert social influence by using the hierarchical structure of the church as a control mechanism, ignoring the traditions of resistance that existed in a province defined by its diversity.⁸⁹ The Orthodox Clergy Act, passed in 1765, fixed salaries, established glebes, and set marriage and funeral fees.⁹⁰

A favorite tool utilized by sheriffs against delinquent taxpayers was distraint.⁹¹ Colonial records reflect more than thirty depositions taken by residents of the back parts who had their property confiscated and sold for nonpayment of excessive taxes or fees.⁹² Two notable examples illustrate the level of emotional distress that common folk endured at the hands of dishonest lawmen. Caruthers reported an incident (whether fact or legend, one cannot say) involving the wife of a poor farmer who had fallen into arrears on his taxes. When the sheriff appeared at the man's farm without notice and demanded payment-in-full, the wife explained that she had no money to give him. Finding nothing that satisfied his demands, the sheriff

⁸⁶ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 108.

⁸⁷ Andrew Morton to Daniel Burton, August 25, 1766, in *CR*, vol. 7, 252-253.

⁸⁸ Charles Cupples to Daniel Burton, April 25, 1771, in *CR*, vol. 8, 551-553.

⁸⁹ Gary Freeze, "Like A House Built Upon Sand: The Anglican Church and Establishment in North Carolina, 1765-1776," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 48, no. 4 (December 1979): 405.

⁹⁰ Conkin, "The Church Establishment in North Carolina," 409-410.

⁹¹ Petition from Some Inhabitants of Orange County Concerning Complaints Against Public Officials, May 1768, in *CR*, vol. 7, 770-771.

⁹² Depositions Concerning Complaints About Taxes and Fees for Public Officials, in *CR*, vol. 7, 773-782.

relieved the woman of her homespun dress—which she was wearing at the time—and instructed her to make another. He sold the dress at auction to satisfy her husband’s debt.⁹³ A similar episode in 1768 involved the distress of a farmer’s mare. When Sheriff Tyree Harris and his deputies seized the horse and her bridle and removed them to Hillsborough, he encountered a level of resistance heretofore not seen in the backcountry.⁹⁴ By then, residents had grown weary of the corruption and extortion pervading the Piedmont, and they decided to strike back.

Organizational efforts first commenced in August of 1766 when a group of farmers met with Herman Husband at Sandy Creek to determine whether they “labored under any abuses of power.”⁹⁵ Some historians divide Husband’s Sandy Creek Association and the Regulator movement into separate factions. They see the former group as a political crusade utilizing religious pacifist ideals to resist elitist encroachment upon their civil liberties. The latter party encompassed the most organic, radically minded substrata of backwoods society. These were acquisitive men who wished to eradicate crime, not for the mere sake of reform, but so that personal ambition and free-market enterprise could flourish.⁹⁶ Realistically, when the attempts put forth by the Sandy Creek Association failed, Husband’s disciples grew desperate and turned to violence to exact needed reforms.

The very use of the name, *Regulators*, harkened to a tradition of resistance against authority and oppression that Europeans brought with them to America. English farmers residing along the Thames River called themselves regulators during the food riots of the sixteenth- and

⁹³ Caruthers, *Revolutionary Incidents*, 21-22.

⁹⁴ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 136.

⁹⁵ Regulators’ Advertisement No. 1, August 1766, in *CR*, vol. 7, 249–250.

⁹⁶ Watson, “The Origin of the Regulation in North Carolina,” 591-592; Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760–1808* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 48.

seventeenth centuries.⁹⁷ During the English Civil War, opposition to government corruption earned ordinary citizens the title “regulators,” and this characterization grew to describe any concerted push for reform. Moreover, it also defined those individuals appointed by the Crown to address breakdowns occurring within the government.⁹⁸ In 1662, the political concept of “regulators” formally originated when Charles II appointed special bureaucrats to test the loyalty of local governors.⁹⁹ Then, thirty years before the Regulator movement erupted in North Carolina, as many as six hundred weavers from Cork, Ireland attacked customs officers for their severity regarding import-export duties. Reports of the incidents assigned responsibility at the feet of men called “regulators.”¹⁰⁰

William Tryon realized by 1768 that backcountry dissent would not merely dissipate. He ordered the arrest Herman Husband and William Butler, citing the Quaker leader as the chief cause of backwoods trouble.¹⁰¹ Sheriff Tyree Harris and Edmund Fanning moved under cover of darkness. They struck on May 1, 1768, acting “in violation of the protocols of riot and response.”¹⁰² The reaction of the Regulators proved violent and swift. Husband’s and Butler’s arrests galvanized the backcountry, and citizens who had, until that time, pledged neutrality, now

⁹⁷ Fenn and Wood, *Natives and Newcomers*, 88; John Bohstedt, *The Politics of Provisions: Food Riots, Moral Economy, and Market Transition in England, c. 1550-1850* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 23-48.

⁹⁸ Sarah E. King, “Regulating Babylon: Religion and Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina,” Honors Project, Illinois Wesleyan University, 2003, 1-2; Robert Kumamoto, *The Historical Origins of Terrorism in America: 1644-1880* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 41.

⁹⁹ Paul D. Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic: Partisan Politics in England's Towns, 1650–1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 244.

¹⁰⁰ D. Andrew Johnson, “The Regulation Reconsidered: Shared Grievances in the Colonial Carolinas,” *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 114, no. 2 (April 2013): 141; E. P. Thompson, “The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century,” *Past & Present* 50, no. 1 (February 1971): 107-108. The term “regulator” has an interesting etymology, evolving from citizen watchdog over government to government regulatory agency over broader public affairs.

¹⁰¹ Holt, “The New Jerusalem,” 256; Circular Warrant from William Tryon to North Carolina Militia Officers Concerning Assistance to Edmund Fanning in Orange County, April 27, 1768, in *CR*, vol. 7, 718-719; Warrant for the Arrest of Herman Husband, May 1, 1768, in *CR*, vol. 7, 742.

¹⁰² Wayne E. Lee, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina: The Culture of Violence in Riot and War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 55.

aligned themselves with the rebellion.¹⁰³ As many as seven hundred persons marched on Hillsborough to demand Husband's release. Only the Quaker's discharge prevented further violence like that which erupted in 1770.¹⁰⁴

By adopting the *regulator* appellation, militant-minded farmers residing in Piedmont cabins delivered a clear signal that they would not desist until some sense of political normalcy prevailed. Still, Tryon's keen sense of military honor would not allow him to acquiesce to mobocracy. The fact that backcountry residents labored beneath the weight of excessive taxation seemed not to move the intractable Englishman. Despite cries for redress from corruption and fiscal malfeasance, the governor's plans for his palace at New Bern proceeded regardless of the "public imposition upon a people, who from poverty, were hardly able to pay the necessary expense of government. [From this they] occasioned general discontent, [which] Tryon, with wonderful address, improved into a civil war."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Regulators' Advertisement No. 11, in *CR*, vol. 7, 765.

¹⁰⁴ Lazenby, *Herman Husband*, 54–58.

¹⁰⁵ "Atticus" to William Tryon, in *CR*, vol. 8, 718–727.

Chapter 4

“Great Elegance in Taste and Workmanship”

Throughout the late 1950s, North Carolina newspapers featured various articles describing the ongoing reconstruction of Tryon Palace in New Bern. In response to one such story, a Burlington resident lambasted William Tryon in the editorial pages, calling the resurrected governor’s mansion “the former hideout of one of the [cruellest] dictators of all times.”¹ Mac Taylor’s diatribe was sheer vitriol, a surprising reaction toward a man who had predeceased him two centuries ago. Taylor’s hatred for William Tryon, no doubt fueled by a sharp sense of nationalism—he referred to the 1771 skirmish at Alamance as “the battle for freedom”—reinforced a prevailing notion that Tryon himself was responsible for the rise and fall of the Regulator movement. In Taylor’s opinion, at least, Tryon’s palace at New Bern established a clear correlation between the royal governor’s antipathy for the backcountry multitudes in favor of his neighbors in the east, whom he regarded as social “betters,” if not his collective equals.²

Taylor’s inimical assessment of William Tryon, by turns comical if not jejune, nevertheless served as a reminder that most eighteenth-century North Carolinians viewed the grand house at New Bern as an extravagance the colony neither needed nor could afford. Tryon Palace was significant not because of its cost, but because it characterized those citizens who mimicked the English gentry, men and women who, by all accounts, resided in the most inferior of American provinces but hoped to maintain a social standing on a par with Tidewater residents of Virginia and South Carolina. The palace was notable for another reason. Stylish and regal, Tryon’s new home was representative of his power and authority. As an agent of the British

¹ B. Mac Taylor, “Open Forum,” *The Daily Times-News*, January 7, 1959, 2B.

² *Ibid.*

Crown, the architecture of John Hawks, which exemplified “great elegance both in the Taste and workmanship,” came to symbolize imperialism in North Carolina.³ Although the Regulators fought against the malfeasance suffusing their *local* governments, it is easy to discern why early historians associated the movement with the broader quest for American independence—especially given notions of William Tryon as a British tyrant, a man “so ruthless that he shot patriots in the back.”⁴

Around the mid-eighteenth century, Eastern North Carolina was an area defined by the cultural and socioeconomic advantages that distinguished that region from the backcountry. As the general site of earliest European inhabitation in North America, easterners claimed bragging rights even though Jamestown, not Roanoke, represented the first successful colonization attempt in North America.⁵ Regardless, some North Carolinians used geography to “lord” their status over those they considered inferior. Residents of the Albemarle, Pamlico, and Cape Fear regions displayed few signs of intimidation by the royal administrators sent to govern the colony, men with whom they rubbed elbows. First settled by Virginians who moved south after the founding of Jamestown in 1609, Albemarle had not progressed beyond the crude log cabin stage at the time of John Lawson’s visit in 1701. Although a few planters of substantial means resided there, most of the inhabitants were of a less-than middling sort who possessed very little.⁶ Lawson did record some Albemarleans that lived “nobly,” planters who constructed homes of chestnut wood with cedar shingles.⁷ Clapboard houses often signified a change in financial circumstances, for as one physician of the time noted, as a man’s lot improved, he replaced his cabin with a more

³ William Tryon to the Earl of Hillsborough, January 12, 1769, in *CWT*, vol. 2, 289.

⁴ Taylor, “Open Forum,” *Daily Times-News*, January 7, 1959, 2B.

⁵ Michael G. Moran, *Inventing Virginia: Sir Walter Raleigh and the Rhetoric of Colonization, 1584-1590* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2007), 6-8.

⁶ Spruill, *Women’s Life and Work in the Southern Colonies*, 28.

⁷ Lawson, *The History of Carolina*, 5, 96–100.

permanent dwelling.⁸ Captain Valentine Bird listed a household inventory in 1680 that included bedsteads, chests, tables and chairs, a dressing box and looking glass, and a warming pan—items indicative of seventeenth-century North Carolinians who comprised a better sort. Bird’s plantation, tended by twelve slaves, boasted plentiful livestock and several outbuildings.⁹

The earliest attempts at settling the Clarendon region met with failure during the 1660s, and it was more than a half-century before anyone again entertained a notion of taming this stretch of wilderness.¹⁰ Development of the Lower Cape fear commenced with a Tuscarora insurrection at Albemarle in 1711. Three contingents of South Carolina militia, commanded by the sons of the late governor, James Moore, marched north from Goose Creek to defend the white residents of the Neuse-Pamlico settlements. Maurice Moore, taken with the river lands near Sugar Loaf, conceived of relocating there. This move would not occur before 1725, when he and his brother, Roger, along with associates from Albemarle and Goose Creek, founded Brunswick Town on the western shore of the Cape Fear River. The village developed slowly, but this tiny seaport was a thriving shipping and mercantile hub by the time of the Regulator movement.¹¹ It would be years before great houses of Classic Revival architecture would rise along the river; until then, smaller dwellings fashioned from brick or oyster-shell (tapia) signified the residences of substantial Cape Fear planters.¹²

Scholars cite sectionalism as a leading cause of the Regulator movement. Regional rivalries transcended east-west differences, however, for the earliest political conflicts in North Carolina arose between planters residing in the Albemarle and Neuse-Pamlico districts following

⁸ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 18.

⁹ Spruill, *Women’s Life and Work in the Southern Colonies*, 28-29. One of Bird’s slaves was Native American.

¹⁰ Fenn and Wood, *Natives and Newcomers*, 33.

¹¹ James Sprunt, *Chronicles of the Cape Fear River* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Printing Company, 1916), 38-39; Michael J. Heitzler, *Historic Goose Creek, South Carolina, 1670-1980*, ed. Richard N. Côté (Easley: Southern Historical Press, 1983), 16, 112; John Brickell, *Natural History of North Carolina* (Duplin: James Carson, 1737), 8-9.

¹² Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 16.

the latter's settlement in the early eighteenth century. The establishment of the Cape Fear as a separate socioeconomic and political constituency after 1725 compounded problems.¹³

Moravian Bishop Spangenberg, recognizing these divisions, remarked, "North Carolina is a rather large Province, and the condition of the inhabitants varies so greatly that often what is good for the southern part is bad for the northern, and vice versa, which leads to continual strife between the two sections."¹⁴ William Tryon acknowledged that troubles among the various eastern districts arose over questions of who would control the colonial legislature, observing "the itinerant publick Assemblies [are] a great source of the contentions in this province."¹⁵

While the Assembly reserved the right to map out new legislative districts, members from the eastern counties, namely Chowan, Currituck, Perquimans, Tyrrell, and Pasquotank, which comprised the Albemarle contingent, resisted creating new counties since it would dilute their political power. As a voting bloc, these men enjoyed a considerable majority over the larger body, controlling legislation favorable to their economic and political interests. This arrangement dissatisfied the Moores of Brunswick County. Regardless, as new counties formed to the west, the Albemarle delegation managed to retain their eastern dominance despite the fact they represented fewer than half the number of persons residing in Orange County by 1766.¹⁶ Soon enough, the men of Cape Fear asserted their influence. Because the people of the Neuse-Pamlico region more closely identified with the concerns of Cape Fear, they sided with Maurice and Roger Moore against the Albemarle planters. The drama between the two larger factions played out during the administrations of George Burrington, Gabriel Johnston, and Arthur Dobbs, but by the

¹³ Lawrence F. London, "The Representation Controversy in Colonial North Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 11, no. 4 (October 1934): 255–260; Charles Lee Raper, *North Carolina: A Royal Province 1729–1775: The Executive and Legislature* (Chapel Hill: University Press, 1901), 42–44.

¹⁴ Spangenberg Diary, September 14, 1752, in *RMNC*, vol. 1, 35.

¹⁵ William Tryon to the Board of Trade of Great Britain, July 15, 1767, in *CR*, vol. 7, 510.

¹⁶ Lefler, "Orange County and the War of the Regulation," 26.

time William Tryon arrived in the colony, Cape Fear managed to assert her preeminence over colonial affairs. Brunswick County's rising political influence explains how the planters and merchants of Cape Fear managed to acquire Tryon's sympathy during the Stamp Act Crisis.¹⁷ Thereafter, these low country elitists dominated politics in colonial North Carolina and exerted control over the governor's council to a degree far surpassing that which was representative of a regional population.¹⁸

William Tryon dissolved the Assembly in 1769 and called for new elections. Herman Husband, already a homespun hero by this time and a staunch advocate of the beleaguered citizenry, challenged Edmund Fanning for the right to represent Orange County. Championed in song by Rednap Howell, who called Husband a "hum-dram old fox" capable of confronting corruption, Husband's reputation as a correspondent with Benjamin Franklin enhanced his status as a political demagogue.¹⁹ He would later pen *An Impartial Relation of the First Rise and Cause of the Recent Differences*, a fiery call to action urging his fellow countrymen to assume responsibility for the governance of their affairs:

Are you not sensible, Brethren, that we have too long groaned in Secret under the Weight of these crushing Mischiefs? How long will ye in this servile Manner subject yourselves to Slavery? Now shew yourselves to be Freemen, and for once assert your Liberty and maintain your Rights This, this Election let us exert ourselves, and show, that we will not through Fear, Favour or Affection, bow and subject ourselves to those who, under the Mash of Friendship, have long drawn Calamities upon us. . . .²⁰

The summer election was bitter; the Moravians residing in Bethania and Bethabara refrained from voting because they feared the penalties for taking sides.²¹ To the dismay of

¹⁷ London, "The Representation Controversy in Colonial North Carolina," 255–270.

¹⁸ Bradford J. Wood, "Politics and Authority in Colonial North Carolina: A Regional Perspective," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 81, no. 1 (January 2004): 13.

¹⁹ Stewart, *Redemption from Tyranny*, 62.

²⁰ Herman Husband, "An Impartial Relation," in *Some Eighteenth-Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina*, William K. Boyd ed. (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1927), 247–333.

²¹ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 170.

Edmund Fanning, whom Herman trounced by a margin of two-to-one, voters also elected Regulators from Rowan, Granville, Anson, and Halifax Counties to represent them in New Bern. Finally, the rebels might garner the legal redress they sought.²² Husband brought to governance the same folkly manner and “regulating principles” with which he approached all political affairs.²³ Tradition says he collected the monies due from Orange County taxpayers and delivered them to Governor Tryon during one legislative session. “Here are the taxes from my people,” he declared, tossing a bag of specie onto a table. “I brought it to you to keep it from dwindling, seeing that money, when it passes through so many hands, is like a cake of soap.”²⁴ In a similar version of the story, money was like butter that stuck to the scheming hands through which it passed.²⁵

Husband, along with John Pryor, the other Regulator representative from Orange, carried with him an entreaty penned by his constituents titled “Instructions from the Subscribers Inhabitants of Orange County to their Representatives in Assembly.” These directives, bearing the signatures of forty-seven residents from present-day Alamance, Chatham, and Randolph Counties, addressed issues relating to unfair taxation, rigged courts, land tenure, religious freedoms, and fair elections.²⁶ The Anson County delegation introduced a similar appeal signed by two-hundred-sixty-one men. Upon presentation of the Orange County petition, John Harvey, the Speaker from Perquimans County, tabled both documents for further consideration. He never introduced them to the full house for debate. Meanwhile, Richard Caswell, the future first

²² Troxler, *Farming Dissenters*, 78-79.

²³ Nash, *Hillsboro*, 19.

²⁴ Stockard, *The History of Alamance*, 42; Fitch, *Some Neglected History of North Carolina*, facing 52.

²⁵ Nash, *Hillsboro*, 21-22.

²⁶ Minutes of the Lower House of the North Carolina General Assembly, October 23, 1769 - November 06, 1769, in CR, vol. 8, 111.

governor of the State of North Carolina and a staunch opponent of the Regulation, ordered an investigation into the recent Orange County election, hoping to disqualify the results.²⁷

These events were a bitter pill for Herman Husband. Back home, ordinary citizens found themselves at the mercy of a privileged few who manipulated the legal system for their financial gain. Such malfeasance was possible because of the indifference of the royal governor. Here in the east, citizens elected to the legislature by legal means still had little hope of affecting real change. Their presence amounted to little more than cogs in a broken system of governance. Husband later couched his disappointment in millennialist language. He noted, “our Chance at the Law is entirely at this Time out of the Question, and that particular Horn of the Beast which reigns in our District not to be brought down now by a legal and constitutional manner.”²⁸

Once again, social divisions influenced the colonial government. Compared to the delegations from the interior counties of North Carolina, leaders from the Albemarle, Neuse-Pamlico, and Cape Fear regions comprised a provincial aristocracy who refused to upset the status quo. From an economic standpoint, these men, with a few notable exceptions such as the Moore family of Brunswick Town, still did not possess the appreciable wealth of larger tobacco or rice planters in Virginia or South Carolina. Nonetheless, they enjoyed a considerable advantage over the backcountrymen who resided in rough-hewn log cabins and opposed the sort of fiscal spending that would finance what many considered the “finest” public building in British America.²⁹ Not only was Tryon Palace a paragon of the excess of colonial governance, but it also offered a standard by which one can examine other eastern residences to understand

²⁷ Troxler, *Farming Dissenters*, 79–83.

²⁸ Herman Husband, “A Continuation of the Impartial Relation of the First Rise and Cause of the Recent Differences, in Public Affairs, in the Province of North-Carolina, &c.,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 18, no. 1 (January 1941): 76.

²⁹ Lefler, “Orange County and the War of the Regulation,” 29.

the social and economic differences that sparked political conflict in the 1760s. In fairness, one should not misinterpret the ease of residing in coastal Carolina as *easy*, for eighteenth-century living was an enduring struggle regardless of one's financial means.

William Tryon signed a contract with John Hawks on January 9, 1767, outlining the administrator's expectations and the builder's responsibilities regarding an edifice for the governor at New Bern. A set of drawings submitted to the Crown for approval in February, a copy of which survive today, called for a state house large enough to accommodate a chamber for the Council and the Assembly downstairs with ample living quarters upstairs. Tryon's objective was to exceed the scale of the larger Virginian plantation houses. Because there were no craftsmen qualified to erect such a building residing in North Carolina, Hawks sent for workers and materials from Philadelphia and London. Records left by colonial architects reveal that contractors used slave labor for making building components; some fingerprints found in bricks dating to that era are smaller than adult size, indicating that children also contributed to the construction efforts of America's finest buildings.³⁰ No documents describe what sort of workforce John Hawks assembled for Tryon Palace. One may reasonably assume that slaves or free black men assisted in the building effort, especially considering Jarvis Buxton and John West charged eight shillings per day for carpentry work they performed at the palace in 1772. Their "Negroe Labourers," meanwhile, earned three shillings a day.³¹

Construction on Tryon Palace began on August 26, 1767, which Hawks estimated would take three years. The original £10,000 allocation intended to fund the project expired long before

³⁰ Joseph McGill, "Tipping Point: And You Thought History Was a Snore" (TEDx lecture at Charleston Music Hall, Charleston, SC, October 19, 2016), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoRPRGaJwko>.

³¹ Lindy Cummings, e-mail message to author, June 10, 2020; Catherine W. Bishir, *Crafting Lives: African American Artisans in New Bern, North Carolina, 1770-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 55.

that. An additional £10,000, raised through a tax increase slated to take effect in 1770, would cover the deficit. In the short term, Tryon borrowed £8,000 from a local merchant to fund costs until sheriffs could collect the additional monies. (This tax hike exacerbated tensions since the final costs were at least twice what Tryon initially presented to the public.) Hawks missed his completion timeline as well. Although construction dragged on until 1772, builders had completed enough of the palace to allow for a late 1770 move-in date.³²

On December 5 of that year, the Tryons hosted a “Grand entertainment and Ball.” Attendees included members of the Council and Assembly, whom Tryon addressed with an elaborate speech, along with principal leaders of the town of New Bern. In honor of the king’s birthday, His Excellency feted his guests with a bonfire and a firework display on the rear lawn. For the general populace, there was an abundant supply of liquor.³³ By one account, given the sheer size of the crowd, even a house as large as Tryon’s failed to accommodate the throng gathered on this occasion. John Hawks, his wife Sarah on his arm, opened the festivities with a dance while their hosts and the other guests watched.³⁴ Haywood, who otherwise gave Tryon an impartial voice in affairs, cited a surprising and unflattering review of the evening as espoused by Maurice Moore, an account that also appeared in the *Virginia Gazette*. Writing under his usual pseudonym, “Atticus,” the Brunswick County judge condemned the governor, declaring, “the arrogant reception you gave to a respectable company at an entertainment of your own making, seated with your lady by your side on elbow-chairs in the middle of the ballroom, bespeak a littleness of mind.”³⁵

³² Kimball and Henson, *Governor’s Houses*, 251-252.

³³ Nancy E. Richards, Curator of Collections for Tryon Palace, e-mail message to author, July 16, 2007; Alex Purdie and John Dixon, publ., “Newbern, North-Carolina, December 7, 1770,” *The Virginia Gazette*, January 10, 1771, 1–3. See also the *Massachusetts Gazette; and the Boston Weekly News-letter*, February 1, 1770.

³⁴ Kate Van Winkle Keller, *Dance and its Music in America, 1528–1789* (Hillsdale: Pendragon Press, 2007), 139.

³⁵ Marshall DeLancey Haywood, *Governor William Tryon, and His Administration in the Province of North Carolina, 1765–1771* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell, 1903), 69; “Atticus” to William Tryon, November 7, 1771, in *CR*, vol. 8, 726.

Moore's comments are remarkable because they reflect a sentiment expressed by impoverished farmers in the Carolina back parts. Given the scope of Moore's influence throughout the Cape Fear region and beyond, one can assume that his verdict was not the only such opinion among the gentry. His remarks also suggest that Tryon's support among Tidewater denizens may have been superficial. Nevertheless, Tryon's housewarming party was a notable event, and it made news in nearby Virginia and faraway Massachusetts. No doubt it made news in backwoods taverns, too, and it seems unlikely that the backcountry residents would have drawn any distinction between the folks down east and the royal governor himself. The "Grand entertainment and Ball" was salt in an already festering wound, yet another example of the fiscal excess of a gentry far removed from the hardships of life on the frontier.

Once they departed Tryon's palace that evening, the elite returned to their own well-appointed homes, several of which remain in existence today. Many of these residences are open to the public, and, in comparison to John Allen's log cabin, they are luxurious. Foremost, many eastern colonial homes went along with landholdings and slavery. The institution of disenfranchised labor peculiar to the American South afforded Tidewater wives with a luxury unbeknownst to common hausfraus like Rachel Allen. While few backcountry women could rely on extra hands in the kitchen (other than those of her children), the gentlefolk of the east could devote more time to the art of entertaining. Lady Margaret Wake Tryon, a London heiress, assisted her husband in both the decorating of their new home in New Bern and in regaling important dinner guests.³⁶ She, too, enjoyed the benefits of slave labor. Even before they departed Brunswick Town for Craven County in 1770, Tryon listed eight male slaves and two female slaves for the tax

³⁶ Paul J. FitzPatrick, "Tryon Palace, New Bern, North Carolina: Royal Governor's Residence," *Social Science* 42, no. 3 (June 1967): 137-141.

year 1769.³⁷ History records at least two other enslaved persons in the Tryon household: a slave named Tom, whom Tryon purchased from James Murray and proved “a good Servant to so good a Master,” and a man called Surry, whom he sold to Attorney Isaac Edwards, his private secretary and aide-de-camp.³⁸ Edwards died around 1777, and shortly afterward, Surry escaped to freedom.³⁹

Although never the showplaces that Tryon Palace was, several other colonial homes, particularly in Eastern North Carolina, evinced affluence or, at the very least, a middling economic status far removed from the austerity of the log cabin. Even by backcountry standards, John and Rachel Allen’s house represented a distinction among similar Piedmont dwellings. Besides farming, records indicate that John was also a teacher and a merchant, operating a small store from his home. Rachel worked as a healer, which demonstrates her ability to distinguish between those herbs best suited for flavoring meat and those with medicinal properties.⁴⁰ Their efforts combined yielded a comfortable if basic existence, yet three household items, in particular, reveal their meager success. A walnut Chippendale desk, a grandfather clock, and a small book collection provide evidence of the Allens’ material accomplishments; tucked away in central North Carolina, these items undoubtedly shipped overland from Cross Creek (Fayetteville) or Petersburg, Virginia. “The juxtaposition of these luxuries with the simpler tools and furniture” found in the Allen House “serve as an appropriate expression of the aspirations of one pioneer family as well as the limitations of the backcountry environment.”⁴¹

³⁷ Tax Lists, Brunswick County, 1769, Secretary of State Records, State Archives of North Carolina, Tax Lists and Records.

³⁸ Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 2, 139-140.

³⁹ James Murray to William Tryon, May 31, 1766, in *CWT*, vol. 1, 303; Lee, “Days of Defiance,” 196–200; Lawrence Lee, *The Lower Cape Fear in Colonial Days* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 242–50; James Davis, print., “Three Dollars Reward,” *The North-Carolina Gazette*, July 25, 1777, 3.

⁴⁰ Watson, *An Independent People*, 19–20; John Parkinson, *Paradisi in Sole Paradisus Terrestris* (London: Humfrey Lownes and Robert Young, 1629), 3.

⁴¹ Watson, *An Independent People*, 22.

By contrast, eastern gentlewomen decorated their homes with walnut or mahogany furniture, damask draperies, brass candlesticks and lamps, and woolen rugs, yet their homes were but a few generations removed from the log cabin. The first settlers to Duplin and Sampson Counties erected temporary shelters. After they had acquired some wealth, they constructed clapboard houses with stone chimneys. As late as 1811, many residents of those areas continued to craft houses “in the old Stile.”⁴² While the builders of frontier homes had simplicity and functionality in mind, the limitations of construction materials also dictated the design and size of homes. From the earliest days of colonization in New England, houses followed three basic plans: one-room structures with an upstairs sleeping loft; two-room buildings with another chamber opposite the chimney and porch; and the lean-to house, which included an additional room at the rear of a two-room dwelling. These seventeenth-century examples were, by comparison to the houses of the next hundred years, as Spartan as log houses. Sarah Knight described one house she visited as “the wretchedest [hut] I ever saw as a habitation for human creatures.”⁴³

The significance for North Carolina, then, lies in the fact that migration patterns brought settlers of British descent to the colony in the mid-seventeenth century. These newcomers brought English-style architecture to the upper and central coast plains. Located in Bath, the elaborate craftsmanship of the Palmer-Marsh House testifies to the prestige of its original owner, Michael Coutanche, a French merchant who served as a justice and an assemblyman. Substantial clapboard-frame houses often boasted exposed outer hearths, but the immense double brick

⁴² Guion Griffis Johnson, “Family Life,” in *Unheard Voices: The First Historians of Southern Women*, ed. Anne Firor Scott (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993), 136-137. See also, A. R. Newsome, Thomas Henderson, T. McGimsey, Bartlett Yancy and William Dickson, “Twelve North Carolina Counties in 1810-1811,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 5, no. 4 (October 1928): 440, and Guion Griffis Johnson, *Ante-Bellum North Carolina: A Social History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1937), 224.

⁴³ James M. Volo and Dorothy Denneen Volo, *Daily Life on the Old Colonial Frontier* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 141-143.

chimney of the Palmer-Marsh house is a striking exterior aspect of this home. Double chambers on one end and a large room on the opposite side of the downstairs, which may have served as an office, are the distinguishing features of the floorplan.

The Newbold-White House, situated on the Perquimans River, is one of the oldest remaining eighteenth-century houses in North Carolina. Situated on a six-hundred forty-acre plantation initially owned by Quaker Joseph Scott, one glance at the imposing, multistoried brick edifice transports visitors to the moors of Northern England. Scott's house featured interior chimneys and a steep gabled roof, an entry-hall, and a smaller adjoining parlor with pine woodwork, a common arrangement for houses located along the Atlantic seaboard after 1700. The hall-parlor plan derived from English influences in the Chesapeake Region that persisted into the 1800s.⁴⁴ Janet Schaw, touring nearby Edenton around the onset of the Revolutionary War, observed that "the people [here] live decently, and tho' their houses are not spacious, they are in general very commodious and well furnished."⁴⁵

In the Lower Cape Fear, the piazza was a defining element of riverfront houses. More than an architectural element, street-side piazzas created a social zone where genteel society gathered to visit and catch up on the latest news. Two notable examples, one extant and one long reduced to rubble, best exemplify the distinctive porches that developed from West Indian, French, or African influences in the Caribbean. Sometimes referred to as galleries or verandas, these wide wraparound porches with balustrades convey a distinct equatorial flavor for those houses so adorned.⁴⁶ Russellborough, an old sea captain's house located at Brunswick Town,

⁴⁴ Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture*, 13–15, 18–20; U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. *National Register of Historic Places: Newbold-White House (May 11, 1971)*, by H. G. Jones, (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1971), 2-4. See also "Newbold-White House," VisitNC, Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina, <https://www.visitnc.com/listing/e2qZ/newbold-white-house>.

⁴⁵ Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality*, 155.

⁴⁶ Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture*, 343-35, 39.

today lies in ruins. Two and a half centuries ago, it was the home of governors. With the unexpected passing of Arthur Dobbs in March 1765, Lieutenant Governor William Tryon stepped in to fill the void left by his passing.

He and Lady Tryon took ownership of Dobbs's house, which they rechristened Castle Tryon. The young administrator wrote to his uncle about the repairs needed to make Russellborough livable: scouring and whitewashing ceilings and walls, re-plastering, and painting the exterior. Russellborough was a square edifice, with a piazza that ran around the house on two stories, which Tryon called "a great Security for my little girl."⁴⁷ Architectural research suggests that the rooms at Castle Tryon were low-ceilinged and included a parlor and drawing room, but nothing suggests a décor beyond anything functional.⁴⁸ While excavating at Brunswick Town in the 1960s, Stanley A. South discovered a masonry drainage tunnel in the cellar area, significant because of the rarity of the archaeological materials used and because such a feature was unusual for this region during the colonial era.⁴⁹ Tryon and his wife also kept houses at Wilmington and New Bern. The young governor wished to remain impartial, he told Sewallis Shirley, to appear unbiased toward any specific region of the colony.⁵⁰ In this, he failed miserably. Tryon's sensibilities never extended westward, into the Piedmont, and the majority of backcountrymen regarded him as aloof and unsympathetic to their everyday needs.

Situated on present-day Market Street in Wilmington, planter-merchant John Burgwin constructed a house in the 1750s that exemplifies West Indian regionality.⁵¹ Burgwin's

⁴⁷ Barnes, "Deconstructing Tryon Palace," 6–8; William Tryon to Sewallis Shirley, July 26, 1765, in *CWT*, vol. 1, 138-139.

⁴⁸ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 7-8.

⁴⁹ North Carolina Office of Archives and History, "Historical News," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 43, no. 4 (October 1966): 459.

⁵⁰ William Tryon to Sewallis Shirley, July 26, 1765, in *CWT*, vol. 1, 141.

⁵¹ Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 2, 274-275, 277.

townhouse rises above the street atop a ballast-stone basement and opens onto a sub-porch. Inside, a main staircase within the central hall separates a spacious parlor from two smaller rooms on the opposite side. In a fashion universal among the mercantilist elite, Burgwin positioned the principal room of the house, his drawing-room, on the second story. Paneled walls, fluted pilasters, and cornice moldings are the defining characteristics of this space. Outside, the ballast and brick wall, which extends a full story above street level, and the balustered piazzas on the middle and upper stories, provide the home with a distinct low country feel; moreover, these spaces provided a place where townsfolk could gather to socialize.

James Iredell, a future state attorney general and a justice of the United States Supreme Court, recorded numerous occasions where the exposed porches of Edenton homes provided a shared space for community living. According to him, noted planter-merchant Samuel Johnston, his family, and other acquaintances often chatted with neighbors in the open-air of their piazzas.⁵² Likewise, Eliza Pinckney, a Charleston socialite who moved to South Carolina from Antiqua in the 1730s, made observations of similar behavior. “The people in general [are] hospitable and honest,” she wrote, “and the better sort add to these a polite gentile behavior;” but of the lower classes, Pinckney was less hospitable, insisting, “[They] are the most indolent people in the world, or they could never be wretched in so plentiful a country as this.”⁵³ Such comments reinforce the claims of social historians who maintain that sectionalism was the root cause of the Regulator movement. There can be little doubt the eastern gentry viewed themselves as superior to westerners, and the records they left behind reveal a stark

⁵² Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture*, 35; Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 3, 253-254. See also the Diary of James Iredell, in *The Papers of James Iredell*, ed. Don Higginbotham, vol. 1 (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, 1976), 173, 178, 183, 188, 205, 207, 211.

⁵³ Eliza Lucas (Pinckney) to Thomas Lucas, May 22, 1742, in *South Carolina Naturalists: An Anthology, 1700-1860*, ed. David Taylor (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 28-29.

indifference to backcountry impoverishment. Moreover, because William Tryon catered to this class of North Carolinians, he exposed himself to the criticism that he played favorites and was out-of-touch with the overwhelming majority of those over whom he wielded control.

Iredell's mention of Samuel Johnston has significant ramifications for the Regulator movement for two reasons. First, following a particularly violent riot in Hillsborough in 1770, Johnston, who served in the Second Continental Congress and the United States Senate, sponsored legislation designed to punish unlawful congregants of ten or more. Second, Johnston's son would later build a plantation house on land inherited from his father, the construction of which bore striking similarities to Tryon Palace.⁵⁴ James Cathcart Johnston may have seen the governor's mansion as a youth before it burnt to the ground in 1798, and the architect he hired to design a house during the Federalist Era had arrived in the area before 1800, at a time when Tryon's influence—and that of his house—still hung thick in the air over New Bern.⁵⁵ Dismissing his father's admonition to pursue “a plain and simple stile of living to a gaudy and tinsel appearance,” the younger Johnston set out, in one historian's view, to erect the finest house in the state. In defense of young James, it is noteworthy that architectural historian, Mills Lane, suggests that Samuel Johnston built a stately manner of his own, a tripartite Palladian edifice that he may have based on renderings that John Hawks produced of Tryon Palace.⁵⁶ In any event, the specter of William Tryon's New Bern edifice loomed over the design and construction of Hayes Plantation. Like John Hawks, architect William Nichols selected a

⁵⁴ Act of the North Carolina General Assembly Concerning Riots, in *CR*, vol. 8, 481–186; Powell, *The War of the Regulation and the Battle of Alamance*, 17; Catherine W. Bishir, “Severe Survitute to House Building”: The Construction of Hayes Plantation House, 1814-1817, *The North Carolina Historical Review* 68, no. 4 (October 1991): 373–379.

⁵⁵ Bishir, “Severe Survitute to House Building,” 373–379.

⁵⁶ Paul Hardin Kapp and Todd Sanders, *The Architecture of William Nichols: Building the Antebellum South in North Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2015), 43-44.

Palladian blueprint, creating a central block with curved porticos and pedimented wings flanking each side. The inclusion of a hip-roof and windows shaded by two-tiered blinds lead the eye upward to a louvered cupola.⁵⁷ If it was, indeed, the intent of James Johnston to build the most extraordinary dwelling in North Carolina, he attained his goal.

To continue the present discourse would exceed the scope of this paper. It is sufficient to say that the number of exquisitely crafted homes dating to the colonial era far exceeds those extant specimens at the opposite end of the architectural spectrum. The John Allen House remains the notable exception among log cabins. (The O'Quinn house, still standing albeit dilapidated, dates to the mid-nineteenth century.) However, there is one additional dwelling to which a discussion remains warranted—the house belonging to Colonel Edmund Fanning, which the Regulators targeted on two separate occasions.

In 1768, when the Orange County sheriff distrained a farmer's mare for nonpayment of taxes, a mob estimated between sixty and one hundred persons converged on Hillsborough, determined to retrieve the horse and to exact revenge on the unscrupulous lawman. Scholars debate whether the Regulators forced the officer onto the horse, seated in reverse, but Lee asserts "the rest of the episode had all the trappings of a traditional English 'skimmington.'"⁵⁸ This custom, with antecedents in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain, involved parading the victim horseback through the town accompanied by rough music, serenading, loud racket such as beating on tin pots and kettles, and finally, a trip to the village pond for a good dunking. The skimmington, *charivari* (shivaree), or "riding the stag" as it was also known, originated as a punishment for certain domestic indiscretions and evolved into a form of political protest. In

⁵⁷ Bishir, *North Carolina Architecture*, 109.

⁵⁸ Lee, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina*, 51.

New England, a comparable display would have included tarring and feathering.⁵⁹ A skimmington did not typically involve the use of weapons, but on that occasion in 1768, some of the more militant Regulators in attendance produced “cloven Musquets,” which they used to fire several shots into Edmund Fanning’s house.⁶⁰ Hearing that the Regulators had made noise about disrupting the September session of superior court, Tryon raised a militia and marched on Hillsborough in July. By the time he arrived, the Regulators had assembled a force numbering about eight hundred, but seeing that Tryon had twice that many, they dispersed. There were no interruptions to that court docket that year, but 1770 would produce a far different scenario.⁶¹

This turn to violence marked a departure from Husband’s grasp on the reform movement and signaled that his moderate strategy had failed.⁶² Indeed, meager improvements pushed through the General Assembly in 1767-1768 represented “a mere pinprick against the hide of multi-officeholding,” and did nothing to reign in Edmund Fanning or his cronies or to staunch the flow of public monies into their private coffers.⁶³ Throughout 1769, the general populace grew restless with Husband’s repeated, but failed, attempts to exact change through legislative channels. A significant change in Regulator strategy occurred when Herman’s peaceful Sandy Creek men merged their ideas with those of more militant-minded farmers residing fifty miles northward, along the western tributaries of the Haw River.⁶⁴ Fanning had branded the Sandy Creek Organization as an insurrection. So long as Husband led the charge, he shackled the

⁵⁹ Troy L. Kickler, “Hillsborough Confrontation (1768),” North Carolina History Project. John Locke Foundation, <https://northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/hillsborough-confrontation-1768/>; Troy L. Kickler, “Skimmington,” North Carolina History Project, John Locke Foundation, <https://northcarolinahistory.org/encyclopedia/skimmington/>; Gilje, *Rioting in America*, 47; E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (New York: The New Press, 1991), 482, 492-493; Stewart, *Redemption from Tyranny*, 50.

⁶⁰ Nelson, *William Tryon and the Course of Empire*, 71.

⁶¹ William E. Nelson, “Politicizing the Courts and Undermining the Law: A Legal History of Colonial North Carolina, 1660-1775,” *North Carolina Law Review* 88, no. 6 (September 2010): 2190-2191.

⁶² Stewart, *Redemption from Tyranny*, 52.

⁶³ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 133-134.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 134.

tendency toward aggression by asserting Quaker pacifism.⁶⁵ As the two competing ideologies merged under the appellation, *Regulators*, there was a definite shift toward terrorism.

Mob violence was, according to one historian, an indigenous tradition among English colonists, and in employing destructive methods to deal with their political adversaries, the Regulators reached back into the seventeenth century for turbulent methodologies that defined them and other Americans during a transitional time “when English colonies became American provinces.”⁶⁶ In this regard, the Regulator movement indeed appears part of the broader push toward American independence, especially when comparing the activities of mobs in Hillsborough and Boston.⁶⁷ The September 1770 riot in Hillsborough resulted from more than Husband’s inability to make inroads in the legislature; instead, on numerous occasions, Regulator suits brought against members of the courthouse rings had come to naught. For example, although a judge found Edmund Fanning guilty of extortion in September 1768, he only fined the high-handed attorney one penny per offense. In September 1769 and March 1770, Fanning and John Frohock circumvented justice in similar lawsuits. Their vast wealth allowed them to buy the grand juries who heard the charges against them; thus, the Regulators turned to the only remaining card they had to play—armed resistance.⁶⁸

On Monday, September 24, 1770, Judge Richard Henderson reconvened superior court, and after dispensing with a few routine matters, “several persons stiling themselves Regulators” interrupted the proceedings, forcibly removing attorneys from the chamber and clubbing them in the courtyard. Hearing their demands to seat a jury of their peers to hear the cases brought

⁶⁵ Murray N. Rothbard, *Conceived in Liberty* (Auburn: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2011), 999.

⁶⁶ Richard Maxwell Brown, “Violence and the American Revolution,” in *Essays on the American Revolution*, ed. Stephen G. Kurtz and James H. Hutson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 87–94.

⁶⁷ Gilje, *Rioting in America*, 42.

⁶⁸ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 168-170; Troxler, *Farming Dissenters*, 84-85.

against them, Henderson adjourned the court and fled the bench.⁶⁹ The mob, now incensed, seized Edmund Fanning and dragged him outside, whipping him to within an inch of his life. The angry farmers stormed his house, destroyed the furnishings, broke up the furniture, smashed the china, and, taking his clothes, struck them through with a pole and paraded them through the town.⁷⁰ The *Boston Gazette* later estimated the damage to Fanning alone at £1,500.⁷¹ The Regulators also burned Fanning's papers. This act, says Gilje, was significant for two reasons: first, the documents they seized and destroyed represented Fanning's official capacity; second, the rioters likely feared that somewhere among those papers, Fanning had implicated them and they wished to destroy his evidence.⁷²

The term riot connotes unscripted chaos and terror. Demonstrations in Colonial America followed a traditional pattern, and there was little deviation in how the Regulators behaved in September 1770. Their intent, asserts Lee, was not to incite war but to make a public expression of backcountry grievances. Backwoodsmen had relied on the judicial system to impart fair and equal justice, and the system had failed them. Tryon's reaction to the Hillsborough riot reemphasized his lack of concern for the welfare of all his denizens, thus widening the divide between the haves and the have-nots. With their upending of the September session of court in 1770, the Regulators again sought to force change—without the use of firearms, without inflicting death on their enemies—but what they accomplished was to provoke Tryon into taking further military action.⁷³

⁶⁹ Hillsborough District Superior Court, Minute Docket, September 22–24, 1770, in *CR*, vol. 8, 235–240; Richard Henderson to William Tryon, September 29, 1770, in *CR*, vol. 8, 241–244.

⁷⁰ Richard Henderson to William Tryon, September 29, 1770, in *CR*, 8: 241–244.

⁷¹ Article Concerning Opposition to Taxes and Fees for Public Officials in North Carolina, October 21, 1771, in *CR*, vol. 8, 643–648.

⁷² Gilje, *Rioting in America*, 42.

⁷³ Lee, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina*, 66–68.

On a broader scale, Edmund Fanning’s house was symbolic of both his political power and his corruption. Francis Nash—who witnessed the carnage firsthand—suggested that the wrath of the mob extended to the attorney’s residence because he had built the mansion using money extorted from them. By some accounts, the Regulators pulled down Fanning’s house by the rafters; other reports say they burned it to the ground. Regardless, they destroyed the dwelling because of its conspicuous representation of Fanning’s political influence and wealth. Although no known descriptions of Fanning’s house exist, cartographer Stewart E. Dunaway indicates it was a stick-built structure based upon Fanning’s correspondence with William Johnston during June-August 1775. Johnston, a Hillsborough merchant, attorney, and a nephew of Samuel Johnston, confirmed Fanning’s purchase of bricks suitable for the construction of a house measuring fifty feet by thirty-two feet. By this time, Fanning had left the colony and followed William Tryon to New York; still, in Dunaway’s view, these letters suggest that Fanning intended to replace the residence destroyed by the Regulators in 1770 with a brick edifice.⁷⁴ Further, historians do know that the house that stood in Hillsborough in September 1770 was at least two stories high. During the 1768 altercation involving the distraught mare, Regulators shattered two glass panes in Fanning’s upper dormer windows.⁷⁵ Today, the house known as Twin Chimneys occupies the site of former Lots Twenty-One and Thirty-One sold in 1768 “to William Fanning who has built a Mansion House thereon.”⁷⁶

The shocking events of that September posed a real danger to social and political order. Shortly afterward, the Assembly passed the Johnston Riot Act, sponsored by merchant-attorney

⁷⁴ Stewart E. Dunaway, *Hillsborough, North Carolina: History of Town Lots* (Morrisville: Stewart E. Dunaway, 2016), 320; Fenn and Wood, *Natives and Newcomers*, 79-80.

⁷⁵ Regulators’ Advertisement No. 11, in *CR*, vol. 7, 764.

⁷⁶ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Hillsborough Historic District Additional Documentation (January 22, 2014)*, by Edson H. Beall (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 2014), 80.

William Johnston's uncle from Edenton.⁷⁷ As early as 1768, Edmund Fanning bemoaned the fact that Orange County had degenerated into "the very nest and bosom of rioting and rebellion." He reported to Governor Tryon that "the People are now in every part and Corner of the County, meeting, conspiring, and confederating by solemn oath and open violence to refuse the payment of Taxes and to prevent the execution of Law."⁷⁸ Still, he refused to accept his role in sparking the conflagration that burst out of control two years later. History also does not record any circumstance during which he sought to ameliorate the situation with the Regulators—instead, he provoked the insurgents on every occasion. Henceforward, the Regulator movement deteriorated further into armed conflict. Fanning's home, like Tryon Palace, was an everyday reminder of the greed and perversion that permeated the backcountry.

The relative isolation of colonial homes, particularly the rural plantations scattered about the central and upper coastal plains, had a profound impact on southern hospitality. Men like Edmund Fanning loved ostentation and show; entertaining was a way to build relationships, to visit old friends, and to reveal the splendor of a tastefully appointed home. Throughout the seventeenth century, as planters in Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina experienced upward mobility, their dinner parties, cotillions, and foxhunts assumed greater importance and conveyed their status within the social hierarchy. The more land that a planter acquired—George Washington's Mount Vernon sprawled across four thousand acres—the more detached he and his family became from their neighbors. In turn, a growing sense of remoteness intensified the need for social gatherings.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ William A. Link, *North Carolina: Change and Tradition in a Southern State* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2018), 118-119.

⁷⁸ Edmund Fanning to William Tryon, April 23, 1768, in *CR*, vol. 7, 713.

⁷⁹ Carl Holliday, *Woman's Life in Colonial Days* (Boston: The Cornhill Publishing Co., 1922), 174-175.

William Hugh Grove, touring the York River in the 1730s, observed the splendor of plantation houses situated alongside the waterway, many of which he equated with buildings located on the banks of the Thames. These houses followed a basic structure with a central hall that drew the air in summer, with two rooms on either side.⁸⁰ John Hammond had made similar comparisons more than a half-century before, noting that the “ordinary houses in England” were not as handsome as Chesapeake residences, which were, for the most part, similar one-story wood structures with spacious rooms and glazed windows.⁸¹ Regardless of the size of these earliest dwellings, gentility dictated a certain decorum when receiving guests. Servants announced callers at the door, and later, as the size of one’s house improved, a slave might first admit a visitor into the foyer before announcing her arrival. Elaborate entrance halls, with fluted pilasters and leaded fanlights, embodied hospitality, but the defining feature of these spaces was the grand staircase, which usually included a landing-and-turn about halfway between the ground floor and second story. Genteel wives often placed a mirror on their landings if there was no window, but these served a purpose beyond the mere decorative: from an upstairs doorway, the lady of the house could gaze into the looking glass and see the front entrance to determine whether to receive callers. She must beware, for if she could see her visitors, then they could see her, too.⁸²

By the time of the Regulator movement, the entrenched elite in North Carolina could afford to parrot the customs of their “conceited” neighbors to the north and south. Upper-class ladies dressed in the latest London brocades and piled their hair in ringlets, puffs, and curls,

⁸⁰ William Hugh Grove, Gregory A. Stiverson, and Patrick H. Butler, III, “Virginia in 1732: The Travel Journal of William Hugh Grove,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 85, no. 1 (January 1977): 26–28.

⁸¹ John Hammond, “Leah and Rachel, or, The Two Fruitfull Sisters Virginia and Mary-Land,” in *Original Narratives of Early Maryland 1633–1684*, ed. Clayton Colman Hall (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1910), 297–298.

⁸² A. Raymond Ellis, “Colonial Interiors,” *Women’s Home Companion*, October 1909, 27; Lucy Abbot Throop, “Halls, Stairs, Landings, and Dens,” *Woman’s Home Companion* January 1912, 31; M. L. Keith, publ., “The Doors of the Dwelling,” *Keith’s Magazine on Home Building* 27, no. 3 (March 1912): 163–169.

while their husbands donned greatcoats, silk waistcoats, periwigs, and lace cravats. After the American Revolution, when he and Martha retired to Virginia, George Washington admitted that it was the first time they had dined alone in some years.⁸³ Hospitality dominated colonial culture, especially among the privileged, and the idea of home as a private space was an unfamiliar concept among Anglo-Virginians. Regardless of social status, a man's house was an extension of himself that he shared on any given occasion. At the slightest pretext—a family moving into a new home, a birth, a death—a man and his wife would “make a *Ball* & give a supper,” inviting their neighbors to “dance, and be merry.”⁸⁴ Among the upper crust, one's social standing was evident from the seating arrangement at a dinner party. The skillful host, when wielding the carving knife, knew how to apportion his main course for the number of guests present and reserved “the best of Delacacies to the most eminent Persons.”⁸⁵ During the eighteenth century, the colonial elite began to emulate the English gentry's customs, introducing new foods, rituals, and manners to the American table, and these habits slowly trickled down to the common folk.⁸⁶

Food, which colonists had heretofore reserved for mere sustenance, acquired social significance. William Penn had forecast such an outcome. “If thou rise with an appetite,” he said, “thou art sure never to sit down without one.”⁸⁷ Likewise, Herman Husband exercised control over his passions through spiritual discipline, noting he ate to survive rather than living to indulge.⁸⁸ Penn could not have guessed it then, but the southern planter's table would supplant

⁸³ Holliday, *Woman's Life in Colonial Days*, 182–185.

⁸⁴ Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 70-71.

⁸⁵ Several Best Masters, *The Genteel Housekeepers Pastime, or, the Mode of Carving at the Table Represented in a Pack of Playing Cards* (London: J. Moxon, 1693), 4-5.

⁸⁶ John T. Schlotterbeck, *Daily Life in the Colonial South* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2013), 183.

⁸⁷ William Penn, *Select Works of William Penn*, vol. 5 (London: James Phillips, 1782), 127.

⁸⁸ Herman Husband, “Some Remarks on Religion,” in *Some Eighteenth-Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina*, William K. Boyd ed. (Raleigh: North Carolina Historical Commission, 1927), 224.

other modes of interaction through which a host and his guest could become acquainted, socialize, or strike an economic bargain. As important as the place setting, the food one served at a dinner party revealed his fiscal status. One Maryland gentleman, William Black, dined with the governor of that colony, Thomas Bladen, and enjoyed numerous courses prepared with exotic ingredients, followed by a dessert of ice cream.

The governor's formal dining room included a table and matching chairs, china, and silver, including the English fork—a recent innovation to the serving set. Black may have enjoyed any number of treats—roast beef, meat pies, stuffed birds, lamb, veal, shoats, turkey, or venison; boiled or stewed seasonal vegetables, including corn, rice, squash, and beans; followed by puddings, pastries, or stewed fruit and served with wine, punch, coffee, or tea.⁸⁹ By comparison, a meager carpenter's son recalled a standard fare of “meat, bread, and milk,” all of which his family produced on their farm, but they “made no use of *tea* or *coffee* for breakfast,” and sugar was a rare luxury.⁹⁰ By comparison, Rachel Allen's German neighbors used a Dutch oven to prepare a simple dish of red cabbage and apples—*rodekool met appeltjes*—for their families.⁹¹ Quaker cuisine, on the surface appearing as drab as the Friends themselves, was, in reality, so simplistic as to constitute complexity, says historian William Weaver.⁹² However, the Quaker manner of socializing was far different from that of the gentility, for George Fox had admonished his adherents to eschew “the world's vain fashions and customs, in their feastings, and revellings, and banquetings, and wakes.”⁹³

⁸⁹ Schlotterbeck, *Daily Life in the Colonial South*, 193–195.

⁹⁰ Devereux Jarratt, *The Life of the Reverend Devereux Jarratt, Rector of Bath Parish, Dinwiddie County, Virginia* (Baltimore: Warner & Hanna, 1806), 192.

⁹¹ Lisa Cox, “German Christmas in the Carolinas,” living history presentation at Alamance Battleground Historic Site, Burlington, NC, 2017, <https://www.thetimesnews.com/photogallery/nc/20171204/photogallery/120409994/ph/1>; Cooke, *Lighting in America*, 16–17.

⁹² Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 538.

⁹³ George Fox, Number 302, 1673, in *Selections from The Epistles, &c. of George Fox*, ed. Samuel Tuke (Castlegate: W. Alexander and Son, 1825), 230.

Among English-born homemakers, and particularly those with kitchen help, Hannah Glasse's *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* was an essential tool for food preparation. Written by a "lady" in everyday language comprehensible by lowborn servants, Glasse's bestselling cookbook explained how to perfect boiling and roasting, warned against the extravagance of French sauces, offered meals for holiday observances such as a Lenten dinner, listed foods for the sick, provided shipboard fare, and disclosed a vital panacea "for the Bite of a Mad Dog."⁹⁴ The first cookbook sold in the Thirteen Colonies, however, was Eliza Smith's *The Compleat Housewife: or Accomplish'd Gentlewoman's Companion*, which appeared circa 1742.⁹⁵ Smith's preface revealed much about her intended audience. It had become familiar, she said, for an author to include an introduction to their work. Thus, she acquiesced, not from nicety but because to delve right into her subject matter, "the Art of Cookery," would be as unfashionable as "[appearing] at a Ball without a Hoop-petticoat."⁹⁶ Only the most affluent of ladies would own such attire.

What distinguished Smith's work from that of Glasse was the inclusion of monthly bills of fare. These menus included elaborate multi-course meals: "Roasted Tongue and Udder, and Hare," "Westphalia Ham and Pigeons," and "Roasted Pike and Smelts."⁹⁷ Few such dishes would ever appear on a backcountry table. Smith's recipes appear designed for gentle living, and like the hoopskirt, only the wealthiest of housewives could afford such delicacies. Even then, gentlewomen set aside such elaborate courses for special guests and dinner parties.

⁹⁴ Hannah Glasse, *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* (London: W. Strahan, J. and F. Rivington, J. Hinton, et al., 1774), cover, i.

⁹⁵ Christine M. Mitchell, "Book Review: The Handy Homemaker, Eighteenth-Century Style." *JASNA News* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 22.

⁹⁶ Eliza Smith, *The Compleat Housewife: or Accomplish'd Gentlewoman's Companion* (London: J. Pemberton, 1734), A2-A3.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, A10-A13.

With the rise in entertainment came the mounting importance of presentation. What a society matron served her foods *in* became as relevant as *what* she served. The planter's wife was able to replace her pewter with silver as her husband's wealth increased. In addition to plated candlesticks, teapots, knives, forks, and spoons, she invested in china serving bowls and dishes, dinnerware, and dessert plates; she also purchased glassware, including crystal goblets and pitchers. Equally critical were the table linens. Mary Mullins of South Carolina spread a damask tablecloth on her table valued at £7; a separate linen set of two tablecloths and two-dozen napkins cost £36. "The polite living suggested by these many luxuries was by no means general," says Spruill, but "because of their appeal to the imagination and the pleasant glamour they give to the past, the spacious and sumptuous residences of the few have often been regarded as representative of southern colonial homes."⁹⁸

Planters' wives, in effect, often ran a household operation equivalent to modern-day small businesses. When Frances Bland married John Randolph of Chesterfield, Virginia, she assumed responsibility for the great house, her children, food preparation, clothmaking, spinning, and knitting. She also oversaw the enslaved house staff.⁹⁹ Rachel Allen's schedule was no less demanding. Besides her work as an itinerant doctor, she operated an herbal apothecary, concocting remedies from mercury, calomel, and arsenic, and dispensing a variety of other patent medicines to indisposed neighbors.¹⁰⁰ Rachel was also a mother, a cook, a seamstress, and a laundress, and she performed sundry other bone-wearying chores with which Mary Cooper could empathize.

⁹⁸ Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies*, 36–38.

⁹⁹ Angela Boswell and Judith N. McArthur, eds., *Women Shaping the South: Creating and Confronting Change* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 8–11.

¹⁰⁰ Allen, *Snow Camp, North Carolina*, 27.

Seasonal responsibilities included planting and harvesting vegetable gardens, butchering, brewing beer, butter making, cheese making, candle making, and soap making.¹⁰¹ The latter task alone was enough to make contemporary wives quit in disgust. Backcountry wives made their soap, a concoction rendered from animal fat and lye. To obtain lye, Rachel Allen used a hopper filled with wood ashes, which she rinsed with water. The strength of the resultant lye was crucial; if strong enough, it would cause an egg or potato to float on water. It required “six bushels of ashes and twenty-four pounds of grease” to yield one barrel of laundry soap. Bayberry soap, if available, was preferable for toiletry use.¹⁰² Janet Schaw noted that among the plantations she visited within the coastal plain, the soap produced “from the finest ashes in the world” nonetheless did little to aid in the task of laundry.¹⁰³ In her view, North Carolina wives were “the worst washers of linen I ever saw,” with all fabrics treated equally: “coarse and fine, bed and table linen, lawns, cambricks and muslins, chints, checks, all are promiscuously thrown into a copper with a quantity of water and a large piece of soap. This is set a boiling, while a Negro wench turns them over with a stick.”¹⁰⁴

Ordinary housewives like Allen and Cooper lacked the advantages enjoyed by Frances Randolph. They cooked in iron pots on an open hearth, and their serving sets included pewter spoons and earthenware dishes.¹⁰⁵ The food they served was a stark departure from that enjoyed by coastal elites. A chief advantage of the Columbian Exchange was the influx of new foods to America, many of which became basic staples in the colonial diet: potatoes, tomatoes, and carrots. Cornmeal mush, a

¹⁰¹ Brigitte Weinstein, “Fast Food in Colonial America,” *Medieval Technology and American History*, Pennsylvania State University Center for Medieval Studies, https://www.engr.psu.edu/mtah/articles/colonial_fast_food.htm.

¹⁰² Volo and Volo, *Daily Life on the Old Colonial Frontier*, 155-156; Watson, *An Independent People*, 20.

¹⁰³ Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality*, 204.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Watson, *An Independent People*, 18.

usual breakfast and supper dish for poorer North Carolinians, would not have been possible except for the introduction of Maize into the English diet. However, there was a distinct disadvantage to months of eating dried corn and beans, salt-cured ham and bacon, and pickles. By winter's end, the health of homesteaders suffered from a lack of fresh produce.¹⁰⁶

From the 1730s, John Brickell painted a rosier view of typical coastal fare; he cited a menu consisting “chiefly of Beef, Mutton, Pork, Venison in Abundance, Wild and Tame Fowl, Fish of several delicate Sorts; Roots, Fruit, several kinds of Sallads, good Bread, Butter, Milk, Cheese, Rice, Indian Corn, both which [the inhabitants] concoct like a Hasty-Pudding . . .”¹⁰⁷ Ministering in the Waxhaws in 1768, Charles Woodmason encountered people who “live[d] wholly on Butter, Milk, Clabber, and what in England is given to the Hogs and Dogs.”¹⁰⁸ On at least four occasions: January 25, 1767, April 10, 1768, June 24, 1768, and August 16, 1768, Woodmason described retiring at day's end without sufficient provisions to stave off hunger. The people he encountered, whom he described as “almost starving,” had little sustenance for themselves, much less a traveling preacher.¹⁰⁹ One clear example of the creolization of food stands apart from the rest. John Banister explained that a favorite Powhatan dish was “venison *barbecuted*,” a process later popularized by rich and poor alike; North Carolinians adapted the practice to pit-cooked pork. Another popular method included smoking meat, particularly salt-cured ham.¹¹⁰ During the Stamp Act Crisis of 1765, William Tryon prepared a barbecued ox for the Cape Fear militia, hoping to entice support for Parliament's stamp duty; instead, his angry guests hurled his feast into the river.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Kay K. Moss, “Your Food Has Ancestors, Too,” *Tar Hill Junior Historian* 46, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 5–8.

¹⁰⁷ Brickell, *Natural History of North Carolina*, 38.

¹⁰⁸ Woodmason Diary, April 4, 1768, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution*, 34.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 13, 35, 48, 52.

¹¹⁰ Robert F. Moss, *Barbecue: The History of an American Institution* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 11–17; Megan E. Edwards, “Virginia Ham: The Local and Global of Colonial Foodways,” *Food and Foodways* 19, no. 1-2 (February 2011): 58–62; Schlotterbeck, *Daily Life in the Colonial South*, 185.

¹¹¹ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 49; Moss, *Barbecue*, 20.

Likely, some of the same men who taunted Tryon on that November day answered his later calls to action. Passage of the Johnston Riot Act gave the governor greater flexibility in bringing key Regulators to heel, including Herman Husband, William Butler, and James Hunter. The first legislative sessions at Tryon Palace yielded no relief to the regressive tax system that encumbered backwoods farmers, and in fact, Tryon oversaw the passage of several measures designed to endear him to the Tidewater elite.¹¹² The final straw came on December 20, 1771, with the Assembly's unanimous decision to expel Husband on charges of libel and sedition.¹¹³ An anonymous article appearing in the *North-Carolina Gazette* had accused Maurice Moore of obstructing justice in 1768 when Edmund Fanning had stood trial for extorting illegal fees. Legislators pointed an accusing finger at Husband and, in a move designed to prevent Husband's return to Orange County, Tryon issued a warrant for the Quaker's arrest, inflaming an already intense atmosphere. Within days, rumors circulated that a horde of angry Regulators was marching east to break Husband out of the New Bern jail.¹¹⁴

Tryon flew into action. First, he stationed a guard at the palace gates.¹¹⁵ He called up the militia and instructed them to install trenches between the Trent and Neuse Rivers, and he fortified the town with six nine-pound swivel guns, along with several firelocks and ammunition, carried by schooner from Fort Johnston on the Cape Fear River.¹¹⁶ Meanwhile, in the west, militia participation dropped off, a clear indicator that Regulator strength was amassing and drifting eastward. The rebels' notoriety was also mounting. When backcountry farmers in Maine

¹¹² Minutes of the Lower House of the North Carolina General Assembly, December 5, 1770–December 31, 1770, in *CR*, vol. 8, 302–346.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 312; Minutes of the North Carolina Governor's Council, December 20, 1770, in *CR*, vol. 8, 268–270.

¹¹⁴ Stewart, *Redemption from Tyranny*, 69; Minutes of the North Carolina Governor's Council, December 04, 1770, in *CR*, vol. 8, 262.

¹¹⁵ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 149.

¹¹⁶ David Claude Bailey, "Rednap's Revenge," *O. Henry Magazine*, May 1, 2020, 51; Stewart, *Redemption from Tyranny*, 69; Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 149.

assaulted a justice of the peace over his perceived extortion, Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson feared that if left unchecked, the unruly settlers would become “as troublesome as the Regulators in North Carolina.”¹¹⁷ Long after this particular crisis passed, the vestiges of Tryon’s panic remained. Historian Francois Xavier Martin, who also published the *North-Carolina Gazette*, described Tryon’s redoubt as stretching from present Bern Street (then Muddy Street), fronting the Trent River, to Queen Street, which ended at the Neuse. Positioned only yards away from the palace and delineating the town’s outer limits, the cost of these fortifications totaled £500 and presented what the Bethabara residents called “a difficult undertaking” for the Regulator invaders.¹¹⁸

The attack on New Bern never materialized. By the spring of 1771, Tryon, already counting the days before he would depart the colony for his new post in New York, determined to suppress the Regulator uprising for good. Again, he called up the militia. The loyal men of Cape Fear answered once more—save for Jeremiah Pritchett, who mutinied against Tryon and received one hundred fifty lashes for his trouble—joined by a contingent from Salisbury under the command of General Hugh Waddell.¹¹⁹ Fortified by munitions and cannon supplied by General Thomas Gage, the Commander-in-Chief of British forces in North America, Tryon set his sights on the backcountry and a place the Indians once called *Alamons*.¹²⁰ There, near the “Noisy River” that fed into the Haw and eventually emptied into the mighty Cape Fear, the Regulator movement would meet its bloody demise.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 186-187.

¹¹⁸ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 149-150.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 150; Alfred Moore Waddell, *A Colonial Officer and His Times* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Publishers, 1890), 142-143.

¹²⁰ Thomas Gage to William Tryon, April 14, 1771, in in *CWT*, vol. 2, 663-664; Whitaker, *Centennial History of Alamance County*, 13-14.

¹²¹ Whitaker, *Centennial History of Alamance County*, 14.

Chapter 5

“We Have Until Very Recently Neglected Our Historical Sites”

A time-honored adage states that a man’s home is his castle. This notion, arising in English common law and later incorporated into the United States Bill of Rights, prospered in the free air of America during the eighteenth century, particularly among those colonists who enjoyed a standard of living superior to that of the farmers-turned-Regulators who resided in backwoods cabins.¹ The rural estates of wealthy planters became places of retreat among the gentry, safe from those lesser sorts who strove, but failed, to earn a leg up in the world. Invoking Micah 4:4, William Byrd epitomized this best. Here “we sit securely under our Vines and our Fig Trees,” he confessed, ignoring the fact that an overwhelming majority of colonists survived by bare sustenance.² Most North Carolina homes, like the John Allen House, reflected necessity rather than gracious living. Few average citizens ever laid eyes on Tryon Palace; had John and Rachel Allen walked the hallways of John Hawks’s architectural masterpiece, they would have likely viewed the pomp and ostentation as a frivolous waste of taxpayer money. In a colony where the purchase of a clock, a desk, and a few books represented extravagance, there is no question why most backcountrymen viewed Tryon Palace as a symbol of economic and political injustice.

In fairness to William Tryon, the Regulators had sometimes targeted attorneys and officials that had never engaged in skullduggery. They did so because these men made suitable scapegoats for the real culprits.³ On the other hand, Tryon’s firsthand knowledge of known miscreants, coupled with his failure to bring them to justice, aggravated the troubles permeating

¹ William Blackstone, “Offenses Against the Habitations of Individuals,” in *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, ed. William Carey Jones, vol. 2 (San Francisco: Bancroft-Whitney Company, 1916), 2427–2436.

² William Byrd II to Charles, Earl of Orrery, July 5, 1726, in “Virginia Council Journals, 1726–1753, Vol. 605-1418,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 32, no. 1 (1924): 26–28. Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the New King James Version (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1982).

³ Edward, “North Carolina Taxpayers Take Up Arms,” 45.

the backcountry. It also cost him the support of a citizenry otherwise loyal to the king.⁴ An ironic outcome of the Regulator movement was that most of Tryon's supporters later turned revolutionaries against the Crown, while many Regulators became avowed Loyalists during the Revolutionary War.⁵ Nonetheless, the governor's March 19, 1771 call for militia volunteers to aid in putting down the Regulator insurrection went little heeded until a forty-shilling per man incentive produced favorable results.⁶

By the time he marched into the Piedmont, Tryon's forces included seventeen companies from nine counties, together with light infantry from Cumberland County, an artillery detachment from Wilmington, and four companies from Orange County, only two of which marched on Alamance under the command of Colonel Edmund Fanning. General Hugh Waddell assembled three hundred forty men from Mecklenburg, Rowan, Tryon, and Anson Counties. Waddell's troops never saw action; Regulators encouraged the general to abandon his orders when he reached the Yadkin River.⁷ Tryon's heavy munitions totaled eight canons, including two three-pounders and six one-half pound swivel guns.⁸ The army set out from New Bern on April 27, with Tryon's men making a leisurely trek toward Orange County that resembled his 1767 excursion into Cherokee territory more than a military mission.⁹ On that former occasion,

⁴ William Tryon to John Frohock and Alexander Martin, April 5, 1771, in *CWT*, vol. 2, 654–655.

⁵ Troxler, "Land Tenure as Regulator Grievance and Revolutionary Tool," 117; Sarah Sadlier, "Prelude to the American Revolution? The War of Regulation: A Revolutionary Reaction for Reform," *The History Teacher* 46, no. 1 (November 2012): 101; Watson, "The Origin of the Regulation in North Carolina," 584.

⁶ Edward, "North Carolina Taxpayers Take Up Arms," 46; Circular letter from William Tryon to Commanding Officers of the North Carolina Militia, March 19, 1771, in *CR*, vol. 8, 541.

⁷ Sketch Notes on the Events during the Revolutionary War which bear on Wachovia to the end of 1779 (The Bagge Manuscript), in *RMNC*, vol. 1, 32–35.

⁸ Nelson, *William Tryon and the Course of Empire*, 82; William Tryon to Wills Hill, August 1, 1771, in *CR*, vol. 8, 649; Nash, *Hillsboro*, 23; Bryan Dalton, Site Manager, Alamance Battleground, e-mail message to author, December 14, 2007.

⁹ William Tryon to Thomas Gage, April 26, 1771, in *CWT*, vol. 2, 675–676; Agreement Between North Carolina and the Cherokee Nation Concerning the Boundary between North Carolina and Cherokee Land, in *CR*, vol. 7, 469–471.

the Cherokee chiefs had bestowed on him “the Name Ohaiah Equah, or “great Woolfe.”¹⁰ Now as he again traveled west, the Great Wolf came not to make peace, but to silence the voices of dissent emanating from the back parts, which had plagued him early in his administration.

On Thursday, May 9, Tryon’s contingent reached the Eno River, and there he camped about a half-mile from Hillsborough. The following day, he reviewed his troops and made repairs.¹¹ His chaplain, the Reverend James McCartney, delivered a sermon urging the men, “if you have no sword sell your garment and buy one,” but Tryon, disregarding the Lord’s qualification in Luke 22:38, resumed his march the next morning, taking with him a great deal more armament than the requisite two foils.¹² The Englishman expected resistance when he forded the Haw River. However, it was election day, and with voters distracted by choosing a replacement for Herman Husband’s assembly seat, Tryon caught the Regulators unaware and “this sudden movement of the Army defeated in that part of their Plan.”¹³ The ill-trained Regulators remained defiant, demanding of the governor, “Will nothing propitiate but our blood? We are determined at all events to fall like men and sell our lives at the very dearest rate.”¹⁴

Despite the efforts of prominent local clergymen to reach a compromise between the two sides, negotiations between provincial forces led by Governor William Tryon, and Regulator troops under the pseudo-command of William Butler and James Hunter, broke down in the early morning hours of May 16, 1771. As early as 1768, Anglican minister George Micklejohn had warned of the “DAMNATION OF HELL” should the backwoodsmen fail to desist in flaunting

¹⁰ William Tryon to the Earl of Shelburne, July 14, 1767, in *CWT*, vol. 1, 545-546.

¹¹ Journal of the Expedition Against the Insurgents in the Western Frontier of North Carolina, May 9-10, 1771, in *SR*, vol. 9, 839-840.

¹² Lawrence Foushee London and Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, eds., *The Episcopal Church in North Carolina, 1701–1959* (Raleigh: The Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, 1987), 50; Journal of the Expedition Against the Insurgents, May 12, 1771, in *SR*, vol. 9, 840.

¹³ Journal of the Expedition Against the Insurgents, May 12, 1771, in *SR*, vol. 9, 840.

¹⁴ Insurgents’ Letter to the Governor delivered by James Hunter when the Troops were on the march from Salisbury to Hillsborough, May 1771, in *CR*, vol. 7, 811-812. Punctuation altered for clarity.

royal authority.¹⁵ Now, Presbyterian pastor David Caldwell struck a conciliatory tone. To no avail, he rushed feverishly between the two army camps in the dark hours running up to the battle, hoping to mediate some settlement.¹⁶ Around noon, the militia, numbering fourteen hundred, met the Regulators, counted at about two thousand strong, in a meadow owned by loyalist Michael Holt. At first, the militiamen appeared reluctant to besiege their countrymen. Incensed, Tryon ordered his troops to fire on the traitorous farmers or turn their guns on him. Many of the unskilled Regulators had ammunition sufficient only for a day's hunting trip, while others wielded farm implements. Lacking leadership or training, and met by an army that used traditional field tactics and heavy artillery, the Regulators fought Indian style, hiding behind rocks and trees, some of them acting alone, while others fired in small clusters. During the two-hour battle, twenty-nine men died, including twenty insurgents and nine militiamen. An additional one hundred fifty men fell wounded. Hence, the Regulator movement disintegrated in humiliating defeat, concluding what early scholars perceived as the opening salvo of the American Revolutionary War.¹⁷

Reactions to the Battle of Alamance ranged from acclaim to denunciation in the colonial papers. One reader of the *Massachusetts Spy* called Tryon a "traitor and a villain," while another declared that "rulers, both at home and here, are oppressors, and consequently the disturbers of the public tranquility."¹⁸ Maurice Moore, writing under his nom de plume, Atticus, condemned

¹⁵ Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 1, 264-265; George Micklejohn, "On the important duty of subjection to the civil powers. A sermon preached before His Excellency William Tryon, Esquire, governor, and commander in chief of the province of North-Carolina, and the troops raised to quell the late insurrection, at Hillsborough, in Orange County, on Sunday September 25, 1768," in *CWT*, vol. 2, 198.

¹⁶ David Andrew Caldwell, "Rev. David Caldwell (1725-1824): Incarnation of a Cause, a Country, and an Age," *Journal of Backcountry Studies* 4, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 6.

¹⁷ Stockard, *The History of Alamance*, 123; Troy Kickler, "Fire, Fire on Them or on Me!" *North State Journal* 3, no. 12 (May 2018): A6.

¹⁸ Neil L. York, "Tag-Team Polemics: The 'Centinel' and His Allies in the *Massachusetts Spy*," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 107 (January 1995): 94-95.

the governor as “a dull, yet willing instrument, in the hands of the British ministry.”¹⁹ These statements bolster the “first battle” narratives of Regulator historiography and indicate that many colonists themselves viewed the struggles of the North Carolina farmers, along with their defeat, as one more step in the progression toward independence. Not all contemporary accounts of the battle came down on the side of the rebels, however. *The Virginia Gazette* heralded “the glorious and signal Victory of this Day, gained over a very formidable Body of Lawless Desperadoes.”²⁰ A Connecticut resident, pontificating in the pages of the *New-York Gazette* and the *Weekly Mercury*, extolled Tryon’s virtues, noting he had stabilized colonial government and quelled the “universal Revolt” that would have swept all Thirteen Colonies had the Regulators succeeded.²¹

The day after the battle, Tryon offered a pardon to those willing to surrender their arms, take an oath of allegiance, and pay their taxes. His offer excluded the twelve prisoners he had seized on the battlefield or key Regulator leaders who had fled the scene.²² Herman Husband had, by now, escaped the colony. Dismayed that his peaceful protest had disintegrated into anarchy, legend has it he mounted a swayback horse and rode away from Orange County, never to return. Stopped by his pursuers in Virginia, the Quaker, disguised as an old man in nondescript castoffs, tricked soldiers into believing he was a minister going “about [His] Father’s business.”²³ He would later resurface in Pennsylvania and become a bitter opponent of Washington’s Federalist government and a staunch advocate of the Whiskey Rebellion, suggesting perhaps, that Husband was more of a radical than he was willing to admit.²⁴

¹⁹ “Atticus” to William Tryon (as printed in the *Virginia Gazette*), November 7, 1771, in *CR*, vol. 8, 719.

²⁰ Alex Purdie and John Dixon, publ., “Newbern, May 24” (Account of the Battle of Alamance), *The Virginia Gazette*, June 13, 1771, 2.

²¹ Dill, *Governor Tryon and His Palace*, 158.

²² Proclamation of the Governor, May 17, 1771, in *CWT*, vol. 2, 741–742.

²³ Whitaker, *Centennial History of Alamance County*, 62–63.

²⁴ Stewart, *Redemption from Tyranny*, 101–130.

While historians kept alive the legacy of the Regulator movement through written accounts, the most prominent symbol of the era, Tryon’s manor house, gradually fell from public consciousness. By the time that George Washington visited New Bern in 1791, he found “what they call the Pallace—formerly the government House & a good brick building—now hastening to ruins.”²⁵ Within a decade, a fire ravaged the edifice, leaving only the kitchen office and stable wings. Residents demolished the kitchen wing in the early nineteenth century.²⁶ The Allen family, meanwhile, continued to inhabit John Allen’s house until 1929. According to Beulah Allen, who was instrumental in later the relocation efforts, five generations of Allens grew up in the tiny log cabin, with each of her relatives learning to love its simple architectural charm and its furnishings—including the clock—which she insisted had always remained in the house.²⁷

Completion of the Tryon Palace and Allen House restoration projects occurred about a decade apart, and together, they represented not only the reestablishment of the tangible icons of the Regulator movement but also demonstrated a need to preserve a vital part of North Carolina’s past. Governor Luther H. Hodges, just days before a restored Tryon Palace opened to the public, admonished his constituents, saying, “There can be no question about the fact that we in North Carolina, have until very recently neglected our historical sites.”²⁸ He cited two significant reasons for this: civic apathy, and—an issue all too familiar to residents of the Tar Heel State—a lack of public funds.²⁹ George Colclough, who, together with Staley Cook and Lillian Kernodle, was responsible for the 1952 recognition of Alamance Battleground as a State

²⁵ Entry dated April 21, 1791, *The Diaries of George Washington*, ed. Donald Jackson and Dorothy Twohig, vol. 6 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), 116-117. Verbiage omitted and punctuation added for clarity.

²⁶ “Stable Wing,” Tryon Palace, <https://www.tryonpalace.org/stable-office>.

²⁷ Bolden, “Allen House Holds Unique Distinction,” B1.

²⁸ Huskins, J.P., gen. mgr. “Tryon Palace’s Formal Opening Ceremony Held.” *Statesville Record & Landmark*, April 8, 1959, 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

Historic Site, echoed similar thoughts in 1964. A failure to take advantage of moving John Allen's house from Snow Camp to the battleground would result in a later sense of regret, Colclough observed.³⁰ While the two men agreed in principle, reconstruction efforts involving Tryon Palace and the John Allen House took different forms and signified conflicting ideologies behind remembering the Regulator movement.

Since before the days of its inception, the palace alongside the Trent River epitomized the desires of both royalty—the monarchs of England took great interest in the new capital building—and the inhabitants of Craven County.³¹ Local townspeople wished to “[engage] a large genteel House in Newbern, for the Governor's Residence,” rather than see the capital fixed at Cape Fear.³² By the mid-twentieth-century, with only the refurbished stable office serving as a “feeble idea of vanished splendor,” plans began in earnest to restore John Hawks's architectural wonder to its former glory.³³ With passage of the Antiquities Act on June 8, 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt had set in motion a new tradition of preservation of American historical sites.³⁴ The 1935 Historic Sites Act signed by another Roosevelt—the indomitable Franklin Delano—established a policy of preservation of places, structures, and artifacts possessing national merit.³⁵ In North Carolina, a restoration project the magnitude of Tryon Palace, for which there was no available funding, depended on philanthropical support. Social elites, led by the Daughters of the Revolution (DAR), did most of the heavy lifting. They worked to generate

³⁰ William Murray Vincent, *Historic Alamance County: A Biographical History* (San Antonio: Historical Publishing Network, 2009), 48; A. Howard White, ed., “George D. Colclough: Our County Historian,” *The Daily Times-News*, May 29, 1967, A3.

³¹ FitzPatrick, “Tryon Palace,” 136.

³² James Davis, printer, “Newbern, August 10, 1764,” *The North-Carolina Magazine; or, Universal Intelligencer*, August 3–August 10, 1764, 8.

³³ Fiske Kimball and Gertrude S. Carraway, “Tryon's Palace,” *The New-York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin* 24, no. 1 (January 1940): 22.

³⁴ Ronald F. Lee, “The Antiquities Act, 1900-06,” National Parks Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, https://www.nps.gov/archeology/pubs/Lee/Lee_CH6.htm.

³⁵ Barnes, “Deconstructing Tryon Palace,” 22.

interest, attract donors, and procure the talent needed for such an undertaking.³⁶ It was fortuitous timing that newly-elected Governor Clyde R. Hoey pledged support for the Tryon Palace endeavor, naming the restoration project as one of the chief historical initiatives of his administration.³⁷

Credit for the success of the Tryon Palace restoration goes to two women: Gertrude Sprague Caraway, the brains behind the project, and Maude Moore Latham, who possessed the financial brawn to make it happen. The president of the New Bern Historical Society, Nelson McDaniel, described Caraway as feisty and dogged, a person “who just flat out got it done.”³⁸ Indeed, Caraway’s pertinacious personality earned her friendships from the mayor’s office to the White House. She seldom backed down from a fight. When Eleanor Roosevelt attacked the DAR for their narrow mindedness and conservatism, Caraway, who headed the group, responded, “If being patriotic, with deep love of country and its welfare . . . can be considered ‘narrow and conservative,’ then we plead guilty.”³⁹ Maude Moore Latham was a different sort of restorationist. A wealthy New Bern socialite and wife of a Greensboro cotton magnate, Latham created a trust fund in 1944 dedicated to the restoration of Tryon Palace. Without her generosity—she later bequeathed the bulk of her estate to the trust—the project would have never gotten off the ground.⁴⁰

Rebuilding Tryon Palace involved more than a simple reconstruction of the physical structure. Following the removal of the state capital to Raleigh in 1794, the Palladian style

³⁶ David L. S. Brook, *A Lasting Gift of Heritage: A History of the North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, 1939-1974* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 6.

³⁷ Edwin Leland James, mng. ed., “In Carolina; Plans on to Restore Old Tryon Palace,” *The New York Times*, April 11, 1937, 3.

³⁸ Sarah Perry, “The Power of Gertrude,” *Our State: Down Home in North Carolina* 80, no. 4 (September 2012): 49.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Kimball and Henson, *Governor’s Houses*, 253; Perry, “The Power of Gertrude,” 52.

edifice fell into disuse. A cellar fire in 1798 destroyed the central domiciliary, leaving only the kitchen and stable dependencies. Citizens leveled the kitchen in the early 1800s, and, after that, the stable wing underwent several uses: it was a Masonic Lodge, a school (New Bern Academy), and a Sunday School for Christ Episcopal Church. In later years, carpenters subdivided the space into units for a boardinghouse. During the mid-nineteenth century, the town extended George Street over the original foundation to the Trent River, intersecting with a new bridge. Gradually, houses and buildings rose along George Street, all but eradicating any traces of William Tryon's former icon of power and prestige.⁴¹

Carraway, a graduate of the Women's College at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and later, Columbia University, held several honorary degrees, including Doctor of Laws, Doctor of Humanities, and Doctor of Humane Letters. She worked as a teacher, a journalist, and an editor for *The Sun Journal*, and served on the executive board of the North Carolina State Department of Archives and History from 1942–1967. Her many experiences enabled her to promote local restoration projects, but it was her prominence as the President General of the National Society of the DAR that best positioned her to advocate for the restoration of Tryon Palace. The DAR saw its peak membership during the Carraway years. From 1945–1956, she served as secretary of the Tryon Palace Commission (TPC), and in 1956, the commission appointed her the director of the palace restoration project.

Carraway enjoyed broad support, particularly from state leaders. Governor Luther Hodges maintained that Tryon Palace symbolized the state's colonial heritage. Rebuilding the palace, he said, indicated renewed efforts among the citizenry to memorialize their legacy. Still,

⁴¹ Kimball and Henson, *Governor's Houses*, 253; Vina Hutchinson-Farmer, *New Bern: Then & Now* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 74; Tryon Palace Commission, *Tryon Palace* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2015), 12.

a list of donors or TPC members exposes the same societal divide that spawned the Regulator movement in the first place. Instrumental to restoration efforts were Elizabeth Dillard Reynolds and Mary Lenora Irvin Belk, whose husbands owned R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and Belk Department Stores. Other notables included various dignitaries: state senators, judges, and former governors, members of the upper echelon of society who supported ripping out George Street and the destruction (or relocation) of ordinary homes and businesses. Their efforts appeared reminiscent of Tryon's determination to erect a house that symbolized economic oppression.⁴²

Concurrent with rebuilding the place came restoring William Tryon's image. Unsurprisingly, efforts to remove the tarnish from the governor's reputation began with a re-emphasis on his social status as a member of the nobility. Next came the varnishing of his role in the Regulator affair.⁴³ Following the Battle of Alamance, Tryon hanged six Regulators, razed Herman Husband's farm, and marched throughout the Piedmont in a show of force, requisitioning supplies from hapless backcountrymen and peace-loving Moravians. The governor revealed his indifference to backcountry concerns by announcing that the erstwhile Regulators were "much happier by losing the victory, than they would have been had they defeated his Majesty's forces."⁴⁴ Nonetheless, some TPC members rebranded Tryon's legacy in a way that conservative historians would consider presentism. Assuming the mantle of leadership after the death of her mother, Maude Latham, in 1951, May-Gordon Kellenberger strove to position Tryon as the best of North Carolina's colonial administrators.⁴⁵ She hoped to generate the best

⁴² Barnes, "Deconstructing Tryon Palace," 27-30, 56.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 56-60.

⁴⁴ Nelson, *William Tryon and the Course of Empire*, 85-86; William Tryon to Wills Hill, August 1, 1771, in *CR*, vol. 8, 650.

⁴⁵ Barnes, "Deconstructing Tryon Palace," 60.

possible publicity around rebuilding the palace. However, such views overlooked authentic historical reconstruction “by eliminating any mention of race, class, or gender, which created a false portrayal of the past . . . The reconstruction ignored the townspeople, servants, slaves, and workmen who were not prominent members of society, but who built the Palace and worked in and on the Palace grounds.”⁴⁶

Maude Moore Latham predicated her original \$100,000 endowment on the state’s ability to acquire the necessary acreage to achieve a proper reclamation of Tryon Palace. Thus, in 1945, the General Assembly appropriated \$150,000 for the project and appointed Latham as chairperson of the new TPC. Latham matched those funds in 1949 and, thereafter, the legislature chipped in another \$77,000. Latham also donated \$125,000 worth of English antique furniture to the project. After her death, she left an estate totaling more than one million dollars to the TPC in trust.⁴⁷ Unlike the later Allen House restoration—a grassroots effort made possible, in large part, with private funds—resurrecting Tryon Palace hinged upon soliciting vast contributions—including taxpayer monies. In this regard, rebuilding Tryon Palace constituted an odd case of déjà vu.

For a house first fashioned in “the plainest manner,” the TPC—like Tryon himself—spared little expense in their rebuilding plans. State leaders saw how the romanticizing of local history had proved beneficial in Colonial Williamsburg and Charleston, and they wished to capitalize on tourist dollars that the new architectural marvel could bring.⁴⁸ To make way for the palace edifice, the North Carolina Department of Transportation redirected North Carolina Route 70 and put up a new bridge spanning the Trent River. The project also required the removal of

⁴⁶ Barnes, “Deconstructing Tryon Palace,” 116; Perry, “The Power of Gertrude,” 52.

⁴⁷ Powell, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 4, 27-28.

⁴⁸ Barnes, “Deconstructing Tryon Palace,” 23; Noel Yancey, “Restored Colonial Mansion is Set to Lure Tourists to New Bern,” *The Daily Times-News*, January 1, 1959, 3C.

some fifty or so businesses and homes.⁴⁹ The Esso gas station and Parrott's Food Center, located on the southeast and northwest corners of George and South Front Streets respectively, were two of the more notable commercial enterprises affected, significant because small neighborhood stores, grocery stores, in particular, were typical in 1950s New Bern. A Shell station located on the corner of Pollock and George survived demolition when the TPC earmarked that building for a visitor's center. While most of the residents and store owners along South Front, George, and Metcalf Streets sold out to the commission, packed up, and moved, a few displaced owners mounted legal challenges to save their property.⁵⁰

Gertrude Carraway mobilized against these holdouts, declaring that they stood in the path to fiscal progress. Perry paints a rosy image of Carraway visiting a local radio station in a hat, high heels, and pearls, cheerfully chastising her fellow New Bernians for passing up an economic opportunity that other communities would covet.⁵¹ There was also an archaeological component to consider. As homes fell along the 200 block of George Street, demolition crews unearthed sections of the original palace's basement walls and discovered shards of plaster moldings, lead scraps from the original roof, and bits of marble and brass.⁵² Crews knocked down other shops near the waterfront to accommodate the estate's south lawn, and houses situated on the west side of Metcalf Street crumbled to make way for a brick retaining wall encircling the site.

Other homes lay in the path of the planned gardens reclamation.⁵³ This portion of the project sparked fresh controversy, as attorneys for the disgruntled landowners petitioned the Craven County Superior Court to review an application filed by the Department of Archives and

⁴⁹ Kimball and Henson, *Governor's Houses*, 254.

⁵⁰ Hutchinson-Farmer, *New Bern: Then & Now*, 72–91; Vina Hutchinson-Farmer, *New Bern* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 88–90.

⁵¹ Perry, "The Power of Gertrude," 52.

⁵² Hutchinson-Farmer, *New Bern*, 89.

⁵³ Hutchinson-Farmer, *New Bern: Then & Now*, 81, 87.

History for a Certificate of Necessity and Convenience. If approved, such action would allow the State Utilities Commission to invoke eminent domain and condemn the land between Front Street and the Trent River. The petitioners claimed that “no part of the property sought to be condemned . . . was ever within the palace grounds,” and therefore the Utilities Commission had acted in error.⁵⁴ At a hearing scheduled for January 12, 1956, lawyers for the claimants, Guy L. Hamilton, Nena Hamilton, Mrs. Norris Bray, Elie Dunn Hines, and Mark Stevenson Hines argued that the original place grounds had ended at South Front Street and not at the Trent River.

The Department of Archives and History contended that Tryon selected a site fronting the watercourse for two reasons: one, supplies and other goods critical to the functioning of the capital building relied on water transport; and, two, like other grand houses such as Mount Vernon, the riverfront provided a pleasing aesthetic. The colonial statute reserving the place site supported the State’s argument. His Excellency had “thought it most Proper and convenient that a Square in the said Town, containing Twelve Lots, bounded by Eden Street, Pollock Street, Metcalf Street and Front Street, *with the Water Fronts belonging thereto*, should be purchased for the said Intended Building.”⁵⁵ During the next meeting of the TPC on June 11, 1956, Dr. Charles Christopher Crittenden of the North Carolina Historical Commission announced that the petitioners had lost their challenge. To the delight of the restorationists, condemnation of the Hines and Hamilton properties could commence immediately.

Of paramount concern to the TPC was seeing the former state house “[rise] like a phoenix from its charred foundations.”⁵⁶ In 1939, Gertrude Carraway had located John Hawks’s

⁵⁴ Blackwell P. Robinson, *Three Decades of Devotion: The Story of the Tryon Palace Commission and the Tryon Palace Restoration* (New Bern: The Tryon Palace Commission, 1978), 105-106; Staley A. Cook, gen. mgr., “New Bern Group Tries to Block Property Sale,” *The Daily Times-News*, June 22, 1956, 6A.

⁵⁵ An Act for Vesting Certain Lots in the Town of New Bern in His Excellency the Governor, and His Successors, 1766, in *SR*, vol. 23, 708–711. Emphasis added.

⁵⁶ Staley A. Cook, gen. mgr., “Tryon Palace Opening Set,” *The Daily Times-News*, February 2, 1959, 12D.

original plans among his papers housed at the New York Historical Society. Dr. Crittenden verified these renderings against a second set of blueprints discovered in the Office of British Public Records.⁵⁷ Once the restoration project commenced, the TPC lured landscape architect Morley Jeffers Williams from academia to supervise the preliminary archaeological research at New Bern. The Boston architectural firm of Perry, Shaw, and Hepburn, Kehoe and Dean would oversee construction. Williams, known for his contributions to Stratford Hall and Mount Vernon, began work in June 1952. Excavation of the main building and the east wing, along with digs of exterior sites including wells and privy pits, continued into 1954. By 1955, having found no evidence of the original gardens, Williams designed a formal layout indicative of English gardens during the mid-eighteenth century. Unfortunately, his association with the project ended in 1962. Some speculate that Williams felt overwhelmed by the magnitude of the project. He failed to meet his obligation to catalog artifacts found at the palace site, nor did he submit the expected excavation reports to the TPC.⁵⁸

To his credit, Williams faced obstacles irrelevant to the Stratford Hall or Mount Vernon restorations. For one, following the palace fire in 1798, the palace grounds underwent subdivision and resale. From 1800 until the early 1950s, owners of these lots erected homes and outbuildings, most of which later underwent removal or demolition. At the onset of the rebuilding, two streets traversed the palace site, including George Street, which had passed directly over where the main domiciliary once stood. Only the outer shell of the west wing had survived, and workers had to chip away the outer stucco layer to expose the original brickwork.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Barnes, "Deconstructing Tryon Palace," 26.

⁵⁸ Thomas E. Beaman Jr., "The Archaeology of Morley Jeffers Williams and the Restoration of Historic Landscapes at Stratford Hall, Mount Vernon, and Tryon Palace," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 79, no. 3 (July 2002): 354-355, 363.

⁵⁹ Beaman Jr., "The Archaeology of Morley Jeffers Williams," 354-355, 363; Hutchinson-Farmer, *New Bern: Then & Now*, 81.

Williams's dig sites contained the contamination of a century-and-a-half of debris unrelated to Tryon's original dwelling. Hence, it is remarkable that he managed to extract any fragments original to the house at all. There was one notable similarity between the work crews that Williams assembled to assist him with the physical labor of digging and the presumed crew that John Hawk's put together in the 1760s: African-American men made up most of Williams's force. In addition to performing minor archaeological tasks, these men also moved debris, cut grass, cleared brush, hauled away dirt and other waste, unloaded materials, and assisted the carpenters and brick masons.⁶⁰

Competing restoration philosophies soon emerged between restoration architect William G. Perry and the TPC. While Crittenden favored an exact replication, Perry was willing to forego minor details to allow for an interpretation of what Governor Tryon would have permitted, considering the differences in available building materials and furnishings. Discrepancies between Williams's findings and the plans mapped out by Perry caused considerable consternation among TPC members. Crittenden worried that pieces of marble unearthed during excavation failed to match Perry's selection for the foyer floor. Crittenden also took issue with the shade that Perry selected for the green window glass because it failed to match the shards uncovered by Morley Williams. Moreover, the unembellished pieces of plaster that Williams recovered resembled nothing of the elaborate moldings that Perry proposed.⁶¹ Wreckage left by the 1798 fire yielded a basis for the interior design: marble tiling, moldings, brass fixtures, wall plaster (which revealed original paint schemes), ironware, glass, porcelain, delftware, slipware, and Wedgwood queen's ware.⁶² Structural remnants included the east and west foundation

⁶⁰ Beaman Jr., "The Archaeology of Morley Jeffers Williams," 367-368.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 366-367.

⁶² FitzPatrick, "Tryon Palace," 137-138.

walls of the main house, a section of the staircase, and interior basement walls. Five feet below street level, Williams found portions of the kitchen foundation. His crews also unearthed footings that once supported the colonnades and palisades connecting the main with the wings. They uncovered storm drains, a dry well, several privies, and a cistern dating to the nineteenth century, replete with a ballast foundation dating as early as 1710.⁶³

Once completed, the restored grand manor, flankers, iron grate, sentry boxes, and gateposts once again occupied their original locations or, in some cases, stood on their original foundations.⁶⁴ Despite his relaxed standards regarding architectural interpretation, Perry nonetheless believed that “the nature of the ‘Restoration’ [required] that all sound portions of the original walls be preserved,” while “exposed surfaces [be left] visible after construction [was] completed.”⁶⁵ He found the palace’s left wing, the only extant portion remaining of the original edifice, structurally sound enough to remain. Also salvageable to the sixteenth and eighteenth courses respectively, Perry repointed and waterproofed the foundations of the east and west walls in the central structure.⁶⁶ The original walls are evident in the finished structure today; Perry added outer brick courses for stability and permanence. All other foundational structures proved too fragile for inclusion in the final product. These, Perry removed.⁶⁷

Historians believe that John Hawks patterned Tryon’s home after Kew Palace, Surrey, the summer residence of King George III and Queen Charlotte. Today, portraits of both monarchs feature prominently inside the restored house. The central building boasted a hipped roof and parapet, cornice, and pediment—from which hung George’s coat-of-arms and which connected

⁶³ Beaman Jr., “The Archaeology of Morley Jeffers Williams,” 365.

⁶⁴ Cook, “Tryon Palace Opening Set,” 12D.

⁶⁵ Beaman Jr., “The Archaeology of Morley Jeffers Williams,” 365.

⁶⁶ A brick course refers to the height of the brickwork which was salvageable; sixteen bricks high in the east wall, and eighteen bricks high in the west wall.

⁶⁷ Beaman Jr., “The Archaeology of Morley Jeffers Williams,” 366.

the grand maw to the wings via a circular, colonnaded walkway. Inside, a domed skylight offered natural illumination and highlighted the great cantilevered staircase of San Domingo wood (mahogany). The original building materials included both domestically and imported goods, including locally made bricks and English mantelpieces and window sashes. In the entrance hall, allegorical representations of the four quarters of the world—Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas, gazed across a marble sea composed of black Belgian and white Italian tile. Each statute occupied its own arced niche.⁶⁸

Situated to the left of the entranceway, Tryon's Library contained more than five hundred titles, about four-fifths of which the TPC managed to replace. Tryon's complete collection, estimated at eight hundred volumes by 1781, identified him as a "Man of Parts," according to antiquities seller, Jeremy North.⁶⁹ Tryon's collection was a notable departure from the collection that John Allen willed to his heirs in 1826, which Watson has estimated at twenty books.⁷⁰ Passing through the library, the council chamber constituted the most important room in the house. One of the true success stories of the restoration was the discovery of a set of twelve Chippendale elbow chairs crafted in the Gothic style and dating to the mid-eighteenth century. This grouping, located in England and deemed by dealers as "impossible" to find, represent Thomas Chippendale's last collection, indicating they were fashionable when Tryon built his palace.⁷¹ The Council Chamber also doubled as a ballroom. It is logical to assume that Tryon hosted his "Grand entertainment and Ball" in this room, and it is likely that here, during his visit in 1791, President Washington

⁶⁸ FitzPatrick, "Tryon Palace," 135-136; UNC-TV and Our State Magazine, "Tryon Palace" (television segment), directed by Jim Bramlett, October 2, 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2L5VjHfjLM>; Tryon Palace Commission, *Tryon Palace*, 55.

⁶⁹ FitzPatrick, "Tryon Palace," 138; Molly Cherry Taylor, "Some 800 of Tryon's Books Gathered for Palace Library," *Rocky Mount Telegram*, Sunday June 7, 1959, 5A.

⁷⁰ Watson, *An Independent People*, 22.

⁷¹ Robinson, *Three Decades of Devotion*, 105-106.

danced the minuet.⁷² Tryon's table-desk and chair sat in the room's center, adorned today by a silver inkstand and candlesticks. A Charles Clay musical clock, initially wound in 1736, was purportedly "the first musical mechanical clock ever made," which Clay presented to the queen consort at Kensington Palace.⁷³ This stately timepiece signifies another significant distinction between the furnishings of Tryon Palace and the simply-crafted case clock owned by John and Rachel Allen, which would nonetheless have cost them a small fortune.

Household inventories left by Tryon and his successor, Josiah Martin, aided in the furnishing of the palace. Throughout the restoration project, the TPC continued to acquire antiques that were, if not identical to those owned by the Tryons, certainly illustrative of the pieces that existed inside the house until the family removed to New York in 1771. However, certain appointments reflect the preferences of Tryon's successors, Royal Governor Josiah Martin, or revolutionary-era administrators, Richard Caswell, and Abner Nash. For example, an upper guest room used by the Martin family included several prints depicting scenes in Antigua, where Martin owned a plantation. Helen Comstock highlighted the upstairs sitting room in her 1958 book, *The 100 Most Beautiful Rooms in America*, which featured English paneling taken from Teddesley Hall in Staffordshire.⁷⁴ John and May-Gordon Kellenberger often transported pieces by car from their home in Greensboro to New Bern, while her mother's antique collection traveled by motor van. The couple made numerous trips to New York and to England, procuring brass or crystal chandeliers, a Chinese Chippendale mirror, a Georgian-style mahogany bed with spiral fluting, carved brackets, and paw feet for the governor's room. Other furnishings included Ispahan carpeting, Italian red silk damask draperies, and gilt pier mirrors.⁷⁵

⁷² Tryon Palace Commission, *Tryon Palace*, 56.

⁷³ FitzPatrick, "Tryon Palace," 140.

⁷⁴ Tryon Palace Commission, *Tryon Palace*, 57–64.

⁷⁵ Robinson, *Three Decades of Devotion*, 101–104; FitzPatrick, "Tryon Palace," 140.

Accurate historical interpretation added the perfect accompaniment to these lavish surroundings. Gertrude Carraway, the palace's first director, took charge of training local women to serve as docents. These ladies, some of whom Carraway had to turn away because of the sheer number of volunteers, endured grueling history lessons and quizzes on various colonial subjects designed to prepare them for any visitor's question. The first costumes worn by the interpreters represented a historical compromise in favor of cost, availability, and durability. Over time, the materials used for palace garb shifted to natural fabrics including cotton, linen, and wool; other changes included replacing zippers with buttons. Most significant among the upgrades are the styles of dresses worn by the ladies. When the restored palace opened to the public on April 10, 1959, hostesses wore gowns like those worn by the gentry during the mid-eighteenth century. Today, many of the guides wear day dresses, some reflecting lower-class lifestyles, including that of enslaved Americans, which are more representative of the tasks these women perform for visitors: cooking, gardening, or housecleaning. Ballgowns appear during the reenactments of fancier social events, like lawn parties or cotillions.⁷⁶

Caraway's efforts to provide visitors to Tryon Palace with an accurate interpretation of colonial events suffered from the lack of African American participation. Since 1990, North Carolina's state historic sites have worked to correct racial inequity in the retelling of colonial history. They aim to accurately portray the roles played by minorities during the provincial era. At Tryon Palace, this means reflecting how enslaved members of the palace staff interacted with their white masters. Most sites now use the stories of African American reenactors, cultural exhibits, and other educational programs to convey this rich history. This initiative is especially

⁷⁶ Tryon Palace Commission, *Tryon Palace*, 65; J.P. Huskins, "Tryon Palace's Formal Opening Ceremony Held," 1.

important considering that, from 2010-2012, more than thirty thousand schoolchildren visited New Bern alone.⁷⁷

As tax records show, William Tryon owned eight slaves while residing in Brunswick Town. It is more than likely that some of these men and women traveled with him to New Bern. A list of his staff while later residing in New York comprised twelve persons, including Edmund Fanning, who served as his secretary, and a servant named Tom—perhaps the same slave named Tom that he purchased from James Murray in 1766.⁷⁸ Josiah Martin, Tryon’s successor and North Carolina’s last loyalist administrator, resided in the palace longer than the man who commissioned its construction. Martin utilized both free and slave labor while residing in Tryon Palace. While the precise number of servants attending the Martin family is unknown, at least four persons native to the Caribbean served the household, including a cook named Tool, a housemaid named Prima, and another woman named Kate. Kate’s daughter, Bess, served as a lady’s maid for Martin’s daughter, Mary.⁷⁹

In the twenty-first century, the administrators of Tryon Palace strive for inclusion among all visitors. The organization has best accomplished this by recognizing the integral role that African Americans have played throughout New Bern’s history.⁸⁰ The site offers an African American Lecture Series throughout the year, and observes the African American holiday, Jonkonnu, through authentic music, dance, and dress. The Palace celebrates Multicultural Day, acknowledging the cultural diversity of Eastern North Carolina, and now sponsors an interpretive unit of United States Colored Troops, the NC 35th, who portrays the lives of black soldiers

⁷⁷ Stephanie Hardy, “Shedding Light on Dark Truths: The Interpretation of African American History at Tryon Palace in New Bern, NC,” (Master’s Thesis, East Carolina University, 2014), 3.

⁷⁸ “Kitchen Office,” Tryon Palace, <https://www.tryonpalace.org/kitchen-office>.

⁷⁹ Amber Satterthwaite, “Life of Servants and Slaves,” *New Bern Magazine* 4, no. 10 (August 2018): 12.

⁸⁰ Regina A. Ochoa, “Tracing New Bern’s African American History,” *The Palace Magazine* 13, no. 1 (Summer 2018): 21.

during the American Civil War.⁸¹ These various programs expand the historical focus of the TPC, which first sought to convey the Regulators through a strictly Anglo-Saxon perspective, ignoring any contributions that persons of color might have made to the reconstructed palace complex. The renovations of the 1950s, alleges one scholar, contextualized “the aphorism of the Golden Rule, [which] is thus: he who has the gold makes the rule.” Indeed, “historic preservation has long been an upper-class interest.”⁸²

Efforts to restore the John Allen House took a much different route. Not only was this a more centralized project, relocating and refurbishing a log cabin was much less glamorous than erecting a palace from the ground up. Nonetheless, for the citizens of Alamance County, moving John and Rachel Allen’s house from its original location in Snow Camp to its present site at Alamance Battleground—a distance of fourteen miles—was significant. Almost a century before workers transported the cabin overland, on May 29, 1880, an estimated crowd numbering between three to four thousand persons assembled for the dedication of a monument at Alamance Battleground commemorating “the first struggle on American soil between the oppressed subjects of the British tyrant and the armed forces of the oppressors.”⁸³ The lingering perception of the “first battle” narrative constituted civic pride for the inhabitants of Alamance County, which until 1849 was part of Orange County and lay deep in the heart of former Regulator territory. The monument dedicated in 1880, a simple granite obelisk, perpetuated this legacy in the inscription that it bears to this day:

⁸¹ Amber Satterthwaite, “African American History at Tryon Palace.” *New Bern Magazine* 5, no. 4 (February 2019): 12.

⁸² Gareth Evans, “Retaining Wilmington: The Role of Class, Heritage and Memory in Historic Preservation, 1882-1963,” (Master’s Thesis, University of North Carolina Wilmington, 2006), 11. Grammar altered for clarity.

⁸³ T. B. Eldridge and J. D. Kernodle, eds., “Celebration of the Battle of Alamance,” *The Alamance Gleaner*, June 2, 1880, 2.

HERE WAS FOUGHT THE
BATTLE OF ALAMANCE
MAY 16, 1771
BETWEEN THE BRITISH
AND THE REGULATORS.⁸⁴

A separate marker, thirty-five feet in height, and bearing a life-size bronze statue of a colonial soldier—ostensibly Regulator “general” James Hunter—occupied a spot in Guilford Courthouse National Military Park for over sixty years. On September 18, 1962, crews under the direction of the Alamance Battleground Chapter of the DAR, with the cooperation of the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, began transferring the statue from Guilford Courthouse to Alamance Battleground. Mrs. William T. Lauten, Sr., a member of the James Hunter Chapter of the DAR and a descendant of Hunter’s, challenged that decision. The statue belonged in Guilford County, she alleged, because Hunter was a veteran of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. Walter Wooten, director of Alamance Battleground, pushed back.

Hunter fled North Carolina following the Battle of Alamance. Wooten insisted that, after returning to the colony, Hunter refused to serve in the Continental Army. The Guilford County sheriff imposed a £5,000 fine on his property and hired a substitute to fight in his stead. Mrs. Lauten had also charged that Hunter was not a resident of Orange County when the Battle of Alamance occurred. Therefore, Alamance County had no claim on his tribute. Wooten rebuffed her assertion, reminding her that Hunter owned a plantation near Julian, located about eleven miles southwest of the battlefield, which was part of Orange County until the Lower House of the Assembly carved Guilford County from Orange in early 1771.⁸⁵ Mrs. Lauten eventually lost her fight to reclaim the Regulator monument. To this day, the James Hunter statue guards

⁸⁴ Fitch, *Some Neglected History of North Carolina*, facing 262.

⁸⁵ James Ross, “Monument Project Brings Dispute,” *The Daily Times-News*, November 5, 1962, 1B, 5B; Minutes of the Upper House of the North Carolina General Assembly, January 1–26, 1771, in *CR*, vol. 8, 353. The bill also created Chatham, Wake, and Surry Counties to dilute Regulator strength in the region.

Alamance Battleground, its inscription heralding Hunter's contribution to liberty on the day "the first blood of the Revolution was spilled."⁸⁶

Alamance Battleground, a state historical site rather than a national battlefield like Guilford Courthouse, remains relevant because this was the scene of a critical conflict leading to the eventual establishment of a nation. Moreover, even if not the first skirmish in the War for Independence, the Battle of Alamance still characterized a period of foundational growth for the American colonies.⁸⁷ Both Alamance Battleground and the John Allen House occupy listings on the National Register of Historic Places, a distinction that, for all its splendor, not even Tryon Palace, can claim.⁸⁸ Except for the stable wing, Tryon's home is a fabrication; John Allen's house is original. The Tryon Palace complex includes four other restored dwelling places: the Dixon House, the Stanly House, the Hay House, and New Bern Academy Museum. Sightseers can visit the Pepsi Family Center and the Regional History Museum, shop in the museum store, watch a show in the performing arts hall, or lunch at Lawson's Landing Café.⁸⁹ The site has also provided support for the burgeoning Wilmington-area television and movie industry, serving as a backdrop for a documentary in 2007 and again in 2013, when three episodes of the FOX-TV series, "Sleepy Hollow," filmed there.⁹⁰ A docudrama titled "Alamance," which conveyed the Regulator story and aired on UNC-TV, also featured scenes shot at Tryon Palace, Alamance Battleground, and other historic locales throughout North and South Carolina.⁹¹

⁸⁶ W. M. Barber & Co., publ., "The Glorious Fourth," *The Greensboro Patriot*, July 1, 1901, 1.

⁸⁷ U.S. Department of the Interior, *Alamance Battleground State Historic Site*, 2, 4.

⁸⁸ A. Howard White, ed., "Allen House Now Listed in Register," *The Daily Times-News*, September 1, 1971, B1.

⁸⁹ "North Carolina's History Begins Here," Tryon Palace, <https://www.tryonpalace.org>.

⁹⁰ Craig Ramey, ed., "News & Notes: 'Sleepy Hollow' Films Episodes at Tryon Palace," *The Palace Magazine* 12, no. 1 (Winter 2013-14): 4.

⁹¹ UNC-TV History & Documentary, "Alamance" (docudrama), directed by Warren Gentry, 2004, <https://www.pbs.org/video/unc-tv-presents-alamance/>.

Driving south along North Carolina Highway 62 outside of Burlington, one will find on the left-hand side of the road, past a low split-rail fence, open grassland interrupted by shrubbery and the two Regulator monuments, and at the edge of the field near Clapp Mill Road, a covered map-marker showing battle positions. To the right, also past a rail fence, spectators find a Visitors' Center-Museum, a canon, another map-marker, Pugh's rock protruding above-ground, a wooden bridge constructed by local Boy Scout troops, and nestled among the pines amid a shallow clearing, the John Allen House, a smokehouse, and a shed. A fenced-in vegetable garden lies adjacent to the cabin.⁹² On either side of the highway, flagpoles dot the landscape; on commemorative occasions, red flags denote the positions of Tryon's militia on May 16, 1771, while blue flags represent the Regulators.⁹³

The Visitors' Center-Museum, built in the early 1960s at a modest cost of \$31,000, was a source of pride among historians and citizens of Alamance County.⁹⁴ Later enhancements included much-needed renovations and expansion to this facility. The \$50,000 allocated for these improvements came as the State Department of Archives and History, with the financial backing of the North Carolina General Assembly, had begun to ramp up efforts to purchase new properties and develop them as historical sites.⁹⁵ Stanley Albright Cook, an Alamance County native, was instrumental in obtaining state recognition for Alamance Battleground. As an editor and eventually, chief executive of the *Burlington Daily Times-News*, Cook utilized his public forum to spread awareness about the battleground; later, he served a term in the State House of

⁹² A. Howard White, ed., "Battleground Acquires New Feature," *The Daily Times-News*, February 10, 1969, D2.

⁹³ White, "National Battleground Story," A4.

⁹⁴ Walter R. Wooten, "North Carolinians Build Museum at Famed Alamance Battleground," *History News* 16, no. 8 (June 1961): 101.

⁹⁵ American Association for State and Local History, "North Carolina Gets Legislative Support," *History News* 24, no. 9 (September 1969): 206.

Representatives, and in 1950, joined the State Board of Conservation and Development.⁹⁶ For battlefield properties to qualify for the National Register, they must meet specific criteria, such as significant military, diplomatic, or economic contributions to the broader pattern of American history. Alamance Battleground qualified because of “the 1771 battle . . . between the State militia and the Regulators, which reflected the deep social divisions between the settled coastal areas and the Piedmont frontier.”⁹⁷

Throughout the 1960s, other advancements at Alamance Battleground State Historic Site included “a new, completely automatic audio-tape orientation program, with twenty-eight color slide illustrations.”⁹⁸ Other preservation efforts—with indirect links to Alamance—included Stanley A. South’s archaeological excavations at St. Philips Church and Russellborough in Brunswick Town.⁹⁹ Around 1965-1966, public interest intensified around adding a house with Revolutionary War connections to the Alamance Battleground site. Although attendance had grown, with a total of 22,000 visitors in 1965, proponents of the colonial killing field recognized the need for added attractions.¹⁰⁰ A genuine Regulator dwelling fit the bill.

In 1964, Sam Tarleton, head of North Carolina’s historic sites initiative, traveled along West Greensboro-Chapel Hill Road between Snow Camp and Kimesville when he chanced upon the John Allen House. An inquiry into the home’s history convinced him that this was the property the Battleground sought. George D. Colclough, manager of the Burlington Merchants Association and Alamance County’s unofficial historian, voiced concerns like those expressed by Dr. Charles

⁹⁶ Vincent, *Historic Alamance County*, 30-31.

⁹⁷ U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating, and Registering America's Historic Battlefields*, by Patrick W. Andrus (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service National Register, History and Education, 1999), 9.

⁹⁸ North Carolina Office of Archives and History, “Historical News,” 458-459.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ White, “Plans Made to Move Allen House to Battleground Site,” 1B, 3B.

Crittenden at the time the Tryon Palace restoration commenced. Failure to act on the acquisition and moving of the Allen House would lead to later regret and represent a failure to capitalize on a critical moment in historic preservation.¹⁰¹ This simple piece of antiquity, located near a modern roadway, represented a real architectural find. Allen had constructed his cabin during the desired period. He had direct ties to the Regulator movement. He and Rachel had instilled in their family love and appreciation for their home. The old cabin had passed through the generations and, by 1964, remained in a condition conducive to restoration. “Our story is not sensational,” remarked George C. Allen, Sr., a descendant of John Allen’s, “but it is valid history of an era that is only a memory.”¹⁰² Indeed, the Allen House renovation was an actual reclamation project.

Like the standards necessary for a battlefield to meet National Register status, the National Historic Landmarks Program used several benchmarks to determine the importance of a structure. For Allen’s house to qualify as historically relevant, it had to rise to several established standards. One, it must exhibit significance along broad socioeconomic and sociopolitical lines. Two, it must have a direct connection with compelling persons, especially those who advanced unique ideals. Three, it must be representative of a specific style or period of architecture or reflect the master builder’s work. Four, it must possess historical integrity. Five, it must display original quality and craftsmanship.¹⁰³ Under these terms and conditions, John Allen’s cabin was a fitting candidate for historical preservation.

Unlike the Tryon Palace restoration, which represented the culmination of efforts by persons with no direct link to the original dwelling, John Allen’s descendants shared a piece of

¹⁰¹ White, “George D. Colclough: Our County Historian,” A3.

¹⁰² Libby Gorman et al, *Century Farms of North Carolina: 100 Years of Continuous Agricultural Heritage* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Agriculture, 1989), 42.

¹⁰³ Stanley South, “The Log Cabin Syndrome,” *The Conference on Historic Site Archaeology Papers 1970*, Volume 5 (1971): 103-105.

living history with the local public by refurbishing what already existed. Erecting the former governor's house from the ground up was more a dream realized by Maude Moore Latham. As a girl growing up in New Bern, she had heard the stories about the grand English manor that once stood in the middle of George Street. She probably strolled about that very spot. For Beulah O. Allen and George C. Allen, Sr., moving their ancestor's log cabin to Alamance Battleground breathed new life into a vital historic structure that was, by the time of its removal, "hastening to ruin," to parrot George Washington's phrase.

There were no million-dollar bequests for the Allen House restoration. A four-thousand-dollar grant from the Richardson Foundation and private donations from residents and business owners in the amount of \$22,000 comprised the bulk of the monies needed to finance a project estimated at \$30,000. Besides Colclough and Cook, Reid A. Maynard offered invaluable assistance to the relocation effort, serving as chairman of fundraising.¹⁰⁴ The Allen House renovation was not without its share of minor controversy. After the Burlington City Council approved a one-thousand-dollar donation to the preservation venture, payable from non-taxable liquor funds, Councilman C. W. Burke questioned the legality of the gift since Alamance Battleground fell outside the city limits. Despite Burke's protest, the council passed the measure, and the disputed monies went into the preservation coffers.¹⁰⁵

Because the Allen cabin consisted of two-hundred-year-old wood, those involved with the actual transport of the structure feared it might collapse during the move from Snow Camp to the battleground. Over the years, various members of the Allen Family had sought to improve the structure, such as adding glass windows to the front and nailing clapboards over the house's two

¹⁰⁴ Bolden, "Allen House is Dedicated," 1A, 4A; A. Howard White, ed., "Maynard Heads Fund Campaign," *The Daily Times-News*, December 28, 1965, B1.

¹⁰⁵ A. Howard White, ed., "Council Approves Donation," *The Daily Times-News*, January 4, 1967, B1.

end sides.¹⁰⁶ Blum Construction Company, known for its restoration work at Old Salem, carried out much of the renovations. Work crews re-shingled the roof and replaced the oak puncheon flooring, removed the windows, and peeled off the siding to expose centuries of rot and decay. Because there were no available funds to purchase replacement logs, a call went out for twenty-foot sleepers—substantial timbers capable of redistributing intense weight—hewn by hand on a single side, and three door-sills measuring eight-by-eight inches. Elwin Pedelty provided wood components suitable for the front porch, and a barn owned by Mrs. Ula Wicker yielded the other necessary lumber. Clay for chinking derived from the house’s original location. Overall, however, the old cabin was in surprisingly good condition.¹⁰⁷

The vegetable garden at Alamance Battleground was quite unlike the formal English rose gardens at Tryon Palace. Volunteers laid off a tract measuring thirty-by-forty-two feet, with the labor for building a fenced enclosure provided by Alamance County Grangers. J. L. Sizemore Sons Lumber Company supplied the necessary materials. C. B. Coble and his wife, who supplied seeds for planting, also supervised the fence building. Meanwhile, M. C. Loy and his spouse pitched in wherever a need existed. Mr. and Mrs. Sam Cooper and Mr. and Mrs. Norman Alexander contributed to the garden planting, while Mrs. E. K. Hensley, president of Burlington’s Council of Garden Clubs, planted roses and shrubbery.¹⁰⁸ These efforts were representative of a grassroots organization comprising local citizens united in historical preservation to benefit their community. Although there was little honor or prestige involved, the Allen House restoration did not go unnoticed. The endeavor received a Halifax Resolves Award on April 12, 1968, for

¹⁰⁶ Allen, *Snow Camp*, 29.

¹⁰⁷ A. Howard White, ed., “Allen House Restoration Begins,” *The Daily Times-News*, September 29, 1966, B1; A. Howard White, ed., “Battleground Has Gain in Activity,” *The Daily Times-News*, February 6, 1967, C1, C10.

¹⁰⁸ White, “Allen House Restoration Begins,” B1.

“outstanding accomplishment in historical restoration in North Carolina.”¹⁰⁹ George Colclough accepted the honor, which the Historical Halifax Restoration Association regarded as “a unique historical discovery.”¹¹⁰

Furnishings for the cabin were also a departure from the silk tapestries and Persian rugs installed in Tryon Palace. With the house, the Allen family donated the original furniture, including the clock, desk, and book collection. Charles H. Nicholson, a local farmer, donated thirty-four items to the project. Most of these pieces were antique, some of them valuable, including a rope bed, two spinning wheels, two shuttles, a pair of straight-backed chairs, stone jars and crocks, a fire shovel, and several kitchen utensils—a skillet, forks, and a tablespoon.¹¹¹ As simplistic—and trivial—as some of these items seem, they are indicative of backcountry living during the Regulator era and offer a three-dimensional perspective of the hardships posed by daily frontier living. Gazing upon the Spartan appointments scattered about John Allen’s little cabin, it is hardly surprising that residents of the back parts lashed out in anger at the very notion of their tax dollars funding an unimaginable lifestyle of luxury.

Another divergence from Gertrude Carraway’s mobcapped interpreters involved the volunteers that donated their time to historical reenactment at Alamance Battleground. Ted Henson was one such volunteer who for years portrayed Rednap Howell, replete with dulcimer, his accompaniment for the many Regulator ballads he performed while in character.¹¹² At least twice yearly, during the “Fight for the Backcountry” celebration in May, and “Colonial Living Week” during October, visitors to the site watched live cooking demonstrations on the hearth,

¹⁰⁹ A. Howard White, ed., “Allen House Project Gets State Honor,” *The Daily Times News*, April 13, 1968, B1, B10.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ Dennis Sanders, “Valuable Antiques Given to Allen House Project,” *The Daily Times-News*, May 25, 1967, B1, B8.

¹¹² Bailey, “Rednap’s Revenge,” 48–53.

witnessed candle-making, saw a blacksmith at his forge, and observed a militia muster. “German Christmas in Colonial Carolina” in December offered another opportunity to explore German food, culture, and rituals representative of those Pennsylvania settlers who flooded into the area during the mid-eighteenth century. Lucky participants sampled red cabbage and apples, a traditional German dish, cooked over live coals.¹¹³ More recently, the battleground has planned events centered around Rachel Allen and her role in breaking the traditional barriers of women during the colonial era.¹¹⁴

Dr. Christopher Crittenden, instrumental for his contributions to the Tryon Palace restoration and influential in the Allen House preservation, recognized the need to preserve historic sites so that each generation might “take stock of what [they] have accomplished, what [they] have failed to accomplish, and what [they] may perhaps hope to achieve in the future.”¹¹⁵ Historic preservation is about more than boosting tourism revenue. It involves studying spatial data to understand how colonial North Carolinians dealt with everyday living—from the candles they burned to the dishes they cooked. It requires understanding what motivated backcountry residents to political action in the face of intense economic and social disparity. It requires an awareness that, in likelihood, the differences between the people involved in these cataclysmic events boiled down to one side misjudging the other. Historians have offered every conceivable explanation for why the Regulator movement sprouted deep in the Piedmont backwoods, before flourishing into a full-blown sociopolitical protest that engulfed the entire colony. Visiting the John Allen House and Tryon Palace offers tangible reminders of the two people groups that persevered throughout this period. One faction included immigrants who, through a sense of

¹¹³ Thomason, “German Christmas in the Carolinas,” n.p.

¹¹⁴ “Events,” Alamance Battleground, <https://alamancebattleground.org/events/>.

¹¹⁵ Christopher Crittenden, “We’ve Come a Long Way: History and Historical Activities in North Carolina,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 36, no. 2 (April 1959): 153.

idealism, uprooted themselves from the Middle Colonies and came south in search of prosperity. The other class involved traditionalists who clung fiercely to their Anglo-Saxon heritage with their left hand while cultivating their vines and fig trees with the right.

Comparing the vast differences of these architectural icons, visitors may wonder if historians have gotten Regulator historiography right. Monuments situated at Alamance Battleground embrace the first battle narratives of the early archivists. Moravian and Quaker church records support the notion that religion played a motivating factor in the rebellion. Some scholars believe that sectionalism accentuated key distinctions between the lifestyles of coastal and western residents. The economic advantages presented by large landowners in the east allowed for a more dynamically socioeconomic and hierarchical elite. In the Piedmont, ethnic diversity and economic similarity promoted individualism and political independence.¹¹⁶ Still others have argued that rhetoric springing from class antagonisms ignited the fuse of warfare.¹¹⁷ Watson concedes that Connor has, to date, best elocuted the sectionalist hypothesis: “The Regulation had its origin in the social and economic differences between the Tidewater section and the ‘back country’ of North Carolina,” he wrote a century ago.¹¹⁸

By studying late-1700s architecture and its attendant prototypal elements in conjunction with the basic “hardware” of living—candlesticks, kraut cutters, and the like—there emerges a pattern by which to distinguish one social class from another. Control of the provincial government resided within the upper echelons of society; hence, colonial administrators more closely aligned themselves with upper-class needs. William Tryon pandered to the eastern gentry because he recognized them as the American equivalent of his English peerage. Ignored were the

¹¹⁶ Watson, “The Origin of the Regulation in North Carolina,” 587.

¹¹⁷ Lee, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina*, 47-48.

¹¹⁸ R. D. W. Connor, *History of North Carolina*, vol. 1 (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1919), 302.

ordinary settlers of German or Scots-Irish descent who struggled to eke out a hardscrabble existence in the impoverished backcountry. Many poor whites residing in the North Carolina Colony fared hardly better than enslaved blacks, and wealthy, powerholding planters ignored the economic and political concerns of an overwhelming majority of the population. The Regulator movement was, in some ways, more akin to the French Revolution than the independence effort that swept America in the 1770s and 1780s. As in France during the close of the century, the proletariat could remain silent only so long before rising to confront the injustices pervading the back parts. Alas, the Regulators lacked the power to exact real and meaningful change.

Today, the John Allen House remains the best remaining example of daily life in rural 1760s North Carolina. On the other hand, Tryon Palace is a symbol of the wealth and privilege of English imperialism. When William Tryon transported this ideology to the New World, he sparked a civil war that, for many colonists, was the forerunner of the broader fight for American freedom. Tryon, a royal soldier, won the Regulator war. He left behind an entrenched social hierarchy that perpetuated feelings of sectionalism among backcountrymen, resentments that would simmer into statehood. As Bridenbaugh has suggested, however, it was the Regulators who have since controlled the narrative. Their legacy lives on in the vestiges of liberty and independence upon which patriot leaders founded this nation. As he faced the gallows, Regulator James Pugh memorialized this backwoods brotherhood, predicting their efforts would survive. “The blood that we have shed will be as good seed sown in good ground,” he declared, “which will soon reap a hundredfold.”¹¹⁹ In John Allen’s log house and William Tryon’s brick manor, North Carolinians can find countless ways in which a rich heritage—shaped by regulating principles—still endures.

¹¹⁹ Whitaker, *Centennial History of Alamance County*, 65. Spelling altered for clarity.

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