

Names of North Carolina Regulators

A to M

Acuages John	Cox, David	Hamilton, Matthew
Adams, James	<u>Cox, Herman</u>	Hamilton, Ninian
Adams, Thomas	Cox, Joseph	Hamilton, Ninian Bell
Adams, William	Cox, Solomon	Hamilton, Thomas
Aiken Jones	Cos, Thomas	Hammer, Abraham
Albright, William	Cox, William	Harden, Stephen
Aldridge, James	Craswell, John	Haridon, James
Aldridge, Nathan	Craswell, William	Harland, Aaron
Aldridge, Nicholas	Craven, John	Harland, Reuben
Alexander, William	Craven, Joseph	Harlow, Eron
Alexander, Thomas	Cravan, Peter	Harmon, Zach
Allen, Joseph	Cravan, Thomas	Harper, Abraham
Allen, Samuel	Creaton, Patrick	Harper, Samuel
Almond, Edward	Creson, Abraham	Harper, Thomas
Allmond, James	Crofts, Solomon	Harris, Joseph
Almond, Seamore	Croswell, Gilbard	Harrison, Jesse
Allrid, William	Croswell, John	Harrison, Joseph
Andriss, Adam	Croswell, William	Hart, John
Andriss, Conrad	Crow, John	<u>Hartzo, John</u>

Armstrong, Isaac	Crow, Mansfield	Hartso, Philip
Armstrong, James	Culberson, Samuel	Helms, Jonathan
Arnett, James F.	Culbison, Andrew	Henderson, Argulus
Arrington, Thomas	Davis, Enoch	Henderson, John
Ashley, Nathaniel	Culpepper, Daniel	Helms, Tilmon
Ashley, Robert	Culpepper, John	Henderson, William
Ashmore, Walter	Culpepper, Thompson	Hendry, George
Awtray, alex	Culpepper, William	Hendrye, Thomas Jr.
Baile, John	Cure, Ezekel	Hendrye, Thomas Sr.
Bailey, John	Curey, John	Henry, George
Baily, Thomas	Curtiss, Samuel	Henson, Charles
Balice, Thomas	Dark, Samuel	Henson, John
Bannistor, William	Davis, Gabriel	Henson, Joseph
Brber, richard	Davis, James	Herndon, James
Barber, William	Davis, John	Henson, Joseph
Barindine, James	Davis, Jonathan	Herndon, James
Barindine, William Jr. & Sr.	Davis, Matthew	Henson, William
Barker, james	Davis, Robert	Herring, Delany
Barker, Nicholas	Davis, Thomas	Herrman, Henry
Barker, Samuel	Davis, William	Hickman, William
Barnes, Brincelay	Debury, Samuel	Hielerman, Nicholas
Barnes, James	Delap, James	Higgins, James
Barnes, John	Delap, Robert	Higgins, John
Barritt, Benjamin	Denson, james	Higgins, William

Barrets, Thomas	Denson, Shadrach	Hill, Thomas
Barton, John	<u><i>Deviney, Samuel</i></u>	Hilton, Abraham
Barton, William	Digges, William	Hilton, John
Baxter, John	Dinkins, thomas	Hindes, Joseph
Beaty, Thomas	Dison, Charlie	Hines, Charles
Beck, Jeffrey	Dixon, Simon	Hinsinbru, Jason Iron
Beel, Thomas	Dobbins, Jacob	Hintrand, William
Belhany, Thomas	Donner, Thomas	Hogins, Thadwick
Bell, John	Dorset, Francis	Hogon, William Griffin
Bellew, Abraham	Dowd, Dyer	Holley, Julius
Belvin, George	Dowdy, Daniel	Honest, Michael
Belvin, Isaac	Dowas, Richard	Hopper, Thomas
Bennett, John	Dinkins, William	Hore, William
Benton, William	Dray, Jacob	Horn, Jacob
Bery, John	Drinkin, William	Hornbeck, John
Beten, William	Duckworth, Jeremiah	Howard, Nehemiah
Bignour, James	Dumas, Benjamin	Howe, John
Billingsley, James	Dumas, David	Laws, Dan
Binnun, James	Dunem, John	Layn, Marveric
Blewett, William	Dunn, Bartholomew	Leak, Richard
Bly, James	Dunn, John	Leary, William
Boatman, Waterman	Dunn, Simon Jr.	Leaton, William
Boe, John	Dunn, William	Leveritt, John
Boggan, Patrick Jr.	Edwards, Meager	Leveritt, William

Boggs, Joseph	Edwards, Josua	Liles, James
Boilston, Will	Ellis, James	Liles, John
Bond, John	<u>Emmerson, James</u>	Lille, Muicher
Bond, W.C.B.	English, Joseph	Lindley, Thomas
Boothe, Charles	English, Matthew	Linterman, Henry
Boring, Joseph	English, William	Litten, Mincher
Bosil, William	Erwin, John	Llewellyn, Jonathan
Bound, James	Estress, George	Lloyd, Thomas
Bradley, Abram	Estress, William	Lloyd, Iomond
Bradley, Lawrence	Evans, Aaron	Logan, Andrew
Brady, Ayen	Evans, James	Long, John
Branson, Ely	Falconbery, Andrew	Lord, Lewis
Branson, Thomas	Falconbery, Henry	Lowe, James
Brantley, James	Falconbery, Isaac Sr.	Lowe, John
Braswell, Benjamin	Falconbery, Isaac Jr.	Lowe, Samuel
Braswell, Richard	Falconbery, John	Lowery, James
Bray, Edward	Fall, Christen	Lowery, Lewis
Bray, Henry	Fannin, John	Lowery, Robert
Brewer, Nickless	Fanning, Thomas Sr.	Lucas, William Jr.
Bricks, John	Fanning, Thomas Jr.	Luin, John
Brisley, Peter	Fany, William	McCaul, James
Broadway, Robert	Few, Benjamin	McCay, Daniel
Brooks, Isaac	Few, James	McClewland, John
Brooks, Jacob W.	Few, William Sr.	McCoy, Archibald

Brooks, James	Fields, Jeremiah	McCoy, John
Brooks, Jacob W.	Fields, William	McDaniel, Jacob
Brooks, James	Fielding, William	McIlvaily, John
Brooks, John	Fike, John	Mackejh, James
Brown, Daniel	Filker, Jacob	McMeot, James
Brown, David	Firnier, Marton	McNish, John
Brown, James	Flack, Thomas	McPherson, Joseph
Brown, Robert	Flake, Samuel	McPherson, Alexander
<u>Brown, William</u>	Flemmin, John	MacPherson, William
Brox, John	Forbis, John	McQuinton, John
Brur, Noel	Fortenbury, Henry	McSwaine, Patrick
Brus, John	Fortenbury, John	Macvay, John
Bruton, Samuel	Foshea, Joseph	Maner, Richard
Bryan, John	Fox, Thomas	Marchbanks, George
Buchanan, Samuel	Franklin, Leonard	Marfay, Roger
Bullen, John	French, Neal	Marmane, Larence
Bumpass, John	French, Joseph	Marsevaine, John
Bunt, Benjamin	Fruite, John	Marshall, Jacob
Burcham, Henry	Fudge, Jacob	Marshall, John
Brucham, James	Fuller, John	Martin, Joseph
Burcham, John	Fuller, Josua	Martin, Zachariah
Burcham, Joseph	Fuller, Thomas	Mason, John
Burgies, James	Futrelle, Thomas	Mason, Ralph
Burns, Darass	Fyke, Malachy	Mason, Thomas Jr.

Burns, William	Gapen, John	Mason, Thomas Sr.
Burt, William	Gardner, Parish	Masset, William
Burtson . John	Garran, James	<u>Mateer, Robert</u>
Bush, Stephen	Gaylord, Samuel	Mathew, Ned
Buskin, Abraham	Gearner, Thomas	Mathews, Anthony
Butler, John	George, Joseph	Mathews, James
<u>Butler, William</u>	Gibson, James	Mathews, John
Busen, William	Gibson, Silverster	Mathin, Anthony
Calley, Patrick	Gibson, Walter	Maudlin, Benjamin
Cane, William	Gibson, William	Maudlin, John
Capin, John	Gideon, Gilbert Sr.	Maudlin, Jonie
Caps, William	Gideon, Gilbert Jr.	Meadow, Jason Jr.
Carpenter, Jobs	Gilbert, Jonathan	Meadow, Jason Sr.
Carr, Joseph	Gilbert Joshua	Melon, Thomas
Cartwright, John	Gillespie, Daniel	Melton, Jeremiah
Caterham, John	Gillespie, John	<u>Mercer, Forester</u>
Caruthers, Robert	Gillmore, William	Merns, Thomas
Ceingt, Peter	Gilmer, John	Merree, John II
Chafen, Joseph	GINIL, Peter	<u>Merrill, Benjamin</u>
Chambers, Edward	Glase, Christian	<u>Messer, Captain</u>
Cheek, Randolph	Glase, George	Miles, Charles
Cheny, Francis	Glase, Philip Jr.	Miles, John Sr.
Christian, Christopher	Glase, Philip Sr.	Miles, John Jr.
Christian, Thomas	Glase, Powel	Miles, Thomas

Christman, Jacob	Glover, Thomas	Miller, Jero
Cilleadon, Job	Goble, George	Mills, John
Clanton, Benjamin	Gible, John (Goble?)	Mims, John
Clapp, Barney	Goble, Nicholas	Mims, Thomas
Clap, George	Goff, Solomon	Mims, William
Claps John	Goldstone, Charles	Mitchell, William
Clapp, Ludwig	Gordon, Frank	Moffitt, James
Clap, Tobias	Gowers, Thomas	Mofitt, William
Clark, Elijah	Gowers, Jonathan	Montgomery, Captain
Clark. John	Graham, James	Moon, Thomas
Clark, Joseph	Graves, John	Moore, Edward
Clark, Samuel	Greaves, Thomas	Moore, Thomas
Clauton, Charles	Green, William	Moorman, Bennakia
Cochran, Benjamin W.	Greers, William	Moorman, Thomas
Cockerham, John	Griffin, Andrew	Morgan, Goin C.
Code, Timothy	Griffin, James	Morgan, John
Colbon, James	Grigg, Jacob	Morgan, James
Coleman, John	Gring, Fagan	Morgan, Ruddy
Coleman, William	Gross, Solomon	Morgan, Solomon
Collins, Jacob	Grubbs, Benjamin	Morris, Edward
Collons, Josua	Grubbs, John	Morris, John
Conkwrite, Harklis	Gugle, John	Morris, Joseph
<u>Copeland, James</u>	Hadley, James A.	Morris, William Sr.
Copeland, William Jr.	Hadley, Jesse	Morris, William Jr.

Copeland, William Sr.	Hadley, Joshua	Morrow, William
Coplin, Nicklos	Hadley, Simeon	Moses, Adam
Coplin, Thomas	Haley, Isam	Muchecenes, Larence
Corry, John	Haley, Silas	Mullen, Patrick
Gortner, George	Haley, William Sr.	Murphy, John
Cortner, Peter	Haley, William Jr.	Murphy, John
Covington, Benjamin	Hamilton, Archibald	Murray, James
Cowen, John	Hamilton, Hanson	

N to Z

Nanit, George	Schwenck, Matthew	Thornsbury, William
Nation, Christopher	Searcy, Reuben	Thornton, Abraham
Needham, Thomas	Self, Job	Thornton, Thomas
Needham, William	Sellars, Thomas	Thorton, David
Nelson, Dennis Sr.	Senderman, Henry	Thredhill, William
Nelson, Dennis Jr.	Shaw, Philip Jr.	Tomlinson, Turner
Nelson, Thomas	Shaw, Philip Sr.	Tomson, William
Newberry, William	Shepherd, John	Tonenberg, Samuel
Noe, John	Shoemaker, Conrad	Torrance, John
Norton, William	Shor, John	Touchberry, John
Odle, Nehemiah	Short, Daniel	Tree, Thomas
Oliver, James	Short, James	Treeneen, William
O'Neal, John	Short, William	Trull, Thomas
Owens, Stephen	Sidden, William	Tukins, Timothy

Paine, William	Sidewell, John	Turner, Jonathan
Par, John	Sike, Christian	Tynor, William
Park, Joseph	Simmons, John	Upton, James
Parks, Samuel	Sims, George	Ussery, Thomas
Parsons, George	Sitton, Philip	Ussery, Welcome
Paterson, John	Skin, Samuel	Ussery, William
Paygee, John	Skinner, John	Vernon, Amos
Payne, William	Skipper, Barnabee	Vickory, John
Pelyou, Abraham	Skipper, George	Vickory, Marmaduke
Penton, John	Slaughter, Owen	Vonstraver, Peter
Person, Thomas	Smith, Abner	Wade, Henry
Phelps, David	Smith, Alexander	Wagner, Samuel
Phipps, John	Smith, Benjamin	Wainscott, Isaac
Phipps, Joseph	Smith, Charles	Walker, John
Pickett, Edward	Smith, Daniel	Walker, Silvanus
Piecock, Stephen	Smith, David	Walker, William
Pickral, Henry	Smith, David	Walkers, Robert
Piles, John	Smith, Edward	Walkinford, Charles
Pilgrim, Amos	Smith, Francois	Wallas, Jesse
Pleourt, John	Smith, Henry	Waller, Thomas
Polk, Thomas	Smith, John	Walsh, Walter
Pooley, Francis	Smith, John	Ward, William Jr.
Pooley, Umfrey	Smith, Moses	Ward, William Sr.
Porter, James	Smith, Peter	Warse, Hysom
Poston, Jonathan	Smith, Richard	Watson, Jacob

Poston, J. Jr.	Smith, Robert	Watson, William Jr.
Powell, Nathaniel	Smith, Will	Watts, John
Preslar, Thomas	Smith, Zachariah	Watts, Malachi
Preslie, John	Snider, John	Webb, Beaty
Prestwood, Augustine	Sondhill, John S.	Webb, John
Pryor, John	Soots, Jacob	Webb, Joseph
Pugh, Enoch	<u>Southerland, Raleigh</u>	Webb, Leonard
<u>Pugh, James</u>	Soewll, Charles S.	Webb, Richard
Pugh, Jesse	Sowel, John	Webb, Robert
Pugh, John	Sowell, Sam	Webb, William
Pugh, Thomas	Sowel, Lewis	Wed, John
Raiford, Matthew Jr.	Sowel, William	Welch, Henry
Raiford, Matthew Sr.	Spinks, William	Welch, Walter
Raines, John	Springfellow, William	Wellborn, Thomas
Ramsay, James	<u>Stewart, James</u>	Whit, Ulrich
Ramsay, John	Stewart, John	White, Augustine
Ramsouer, Michael	Stinkberry, John	White, Charles
Raney, William	Stinton, Eron	White, James
Ranetalor, Thomas	Stokes, Henry	White, James
Rankin, William	Stollie, Jacob	White, John
Ratcliff, Elisha R.	Strader, Henry	White, Joseph
Ratcliff, Sam Jr.	Stringer, John	White, William
Ratcliff, Samuel	Strongfellow, William	Whitt, Jacob
Ray, Samuel	Stroud, Abraham	Wilbourne, Thomas
Rennolds, Peth	Suggs, John T.	Wilcox, John

Richardson, Sam	Sutton, John	Wilkerson, James Sr.
Richardson, Joseph	Sweany, James	Wilkins, Alexander
Richerson, Peter	Sweany, Joseph	Wilkins, John
Riddle, thomas	Swearington, Van	Wilkins, Robert
Roberson, Thomas	Swearinger, Samuel	Wilkins, William
Robertson, James	Swearinger, Thomas	Willet, James
Robeson, William	Swearinger, Thomas	Williams, Eshmael
Robins, James	Swift, Thomas	Williams, James
Robinson, Charles	Swing, Barnet	William, John
Robinson, Luke	Swing, Lodwick	Williams, John
Rogers, Hiram	Swor, John Jr.	Williams, Nehemiah
Rogers, jacob	Swor, John Sr.	Williams, Samuel
Robinson, Tirey	Swor, Jonathan Jr.	Williams, Solomon
Rogers, Josiah	Tallant, Moses M.	Williams, Theofilis
Rogers, Sion	Tallant, Thomas	Wills, James
Rogers, William	Tapley, Hosea	Wilson, George
Roles, Damsey	Taylor, thomas	Wilson, James
Rollins, Drury	Teague, Abraham	Wilson, John
Round, James	Teague, Edward	Wilson, Thomas
Routh, Joseph	Teague, Elijah	Wineham, Richard
Rudd, Burlingham	Teague, John	Winkler, John
Ruine, David	Teague, Joshua	Winter, Daniel
Rushen, Mark	Teague, Moses	Wood, Nathaniel
Ryle, John	Teague, William	Wood, Robert
Ryan, John	Telfair, Jacob	Woodward, Reuben

Sally, George A.	Temply, Frederick	Woody, Robert
Sanders, David	Thomas, John	Word, Thomas
Sanders, James	Thomas, Samuel	Wren, Prusley
Sanders, Thomas E.	Thomas, Zekial	Wright, Philbert
Sanders, William	Thompson, Elisha	Wright, Thomas
Sanderson, Reuben	Thompson, John	Wyley, Hugh
Sands, Richard	<u>Thompson, Robert</u>	Yeamons, Stokey
Sappenfield, Matthias	Thompson, Samuel	York, Robinson
Sounders, Patrick	Thompson, William	York, Seymour
Saxon, Benjamin	Thorn, Robert	Youngblood, John
Saxon, Charles	Thornsbury, Edward	Younger, James

[SONS OF DEWITT COLONY TEXAS](#)

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Captain Benjamin Merrell & The Regulators of Colonial North Carolina

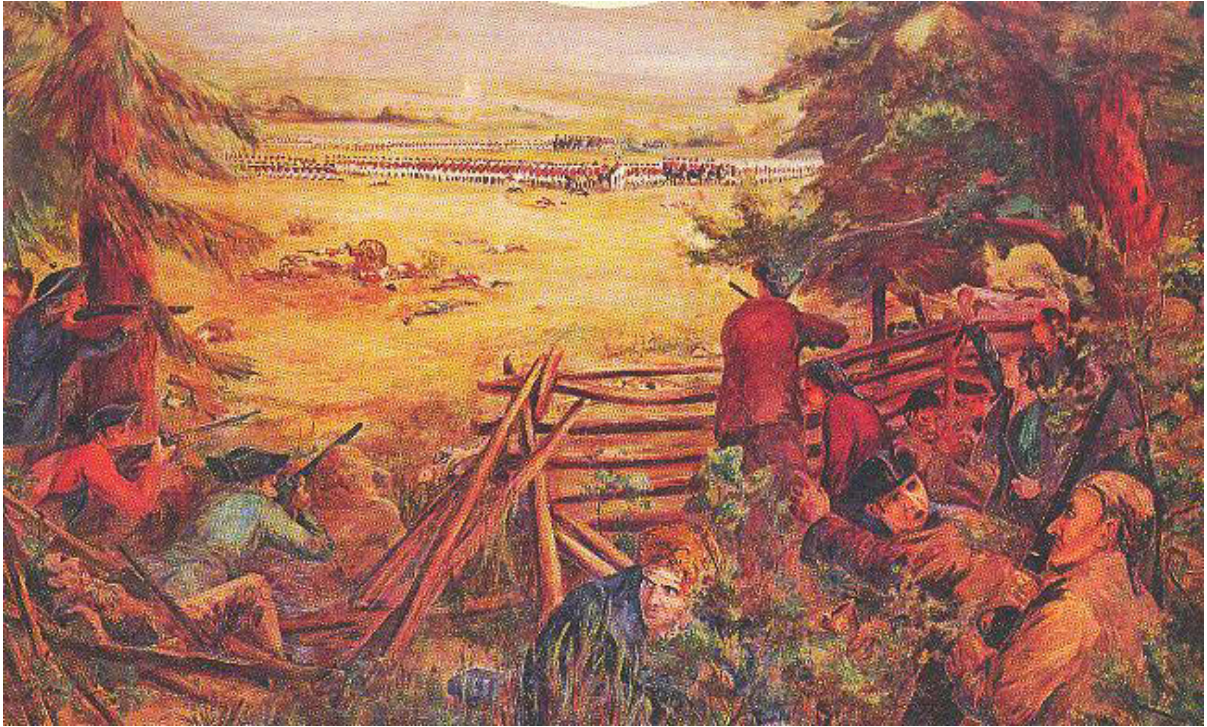
What is history but a fable agreed upon?" - Napoleon B.

"The struggle for American Liberty and Independence...began at the "Battle of Alamance".... kindled the flame...that eventually.....spread with the rapidity of a wild forest fire, until the oppressed of the thirteen colonies were aflame with righteous indignation and unitedly determined to throw off forever the YOKE of British oppression.....at the hands of historians has never received due mention or proper credit...the "Battle of Alamance" WAS THE FIRST BATTLE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION"---[W.E. Fitch](#) 1905

"With the defeat of the South in the War for Southern Independence, American history was subsequently written by the victors, ignoring contribution of the south, the west and our [Spanish allies](#) to the American War of Independence against Great Britain."--[Don Guillermo](#)

[On the gallows, James Pugh] told them that "his blood would be as good seed sown on good ground, which would produce an hundredfold"....recapitulated the causes of the late conflict....Regulators had taken the life of no man previous to the battle, nor had they aimed at anything more than a redress of grievances.....suddenly interrupted, and the barrel on which he was standing was turned over at the instigation of Fanning....[Pugh] a patriot and seer swung out between the heavens and the earth a lifeless corpse....

....."good seed sown on good ground, which would produce an hundredfold," was voiced five years four months and five days later by Nathan Hale, of Connecticut....."I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country"...honored by monuments erected at Hartford, Conn., and New York City to his memory.....James Pugh.....lies in an unmarked grave on the green sward by the old Eno, near Hillsborough.--W.E. Fitch 1905



Drawing from cover of the Commemorative Souvenir Program, Battle of Alamance Bi-centennial, 1971

Men will not be fully able to understand North Carolina till they have opened the treasures of history and become familiar with the doings of her sons, previous to the Revolution; during that painful struggle; and the succeeding years of prosperity.--W.H. Foote

Preface to Some Neglected History of North Carolina

by William Edwards Fitch, 1905.

North Carolinians have for decades past been interested to an unusual degree in the Provincial and Colonial history of the "Old North State." A growing taste for history and antiquities has become apparent in our history, as has been manifested in various quarters by some of the gifted sons of the Old North State diving among the records and searching the traditions of the past for incidents and subjects worthy of patriotic commemoration. No State in the Union can present a wider or more diversified field for historical inquiry than North Carolina. On her shores the first settlement of English colonists in America was established; within her borders the first resistance to British authority was organized; by her people, the first battle of the American Revolution was fought; and the first actual declaration of independence was made, and some of the most brilliant and important transactions of the Revolutionary period took place upon her soil.

The "Battle of Alamance" and the tyrannical oppression and extortion preceding this most important event in our provincial history is of great moment to all liberty-loving North Carolinians. Recorded instances of oppression and extortion at the hands of all public officers, from the chief magistrate down to the sheriffs,

when no longer endurable called forth the spirit of successful resistance which culminated in taking up arms against the officers of the Crown. But in the study of the events before us---the causes leading up to the "War of the Regulators," the "Battle of Alamance," the first battle of the American Revolution---we see the colonists (Regulators) wearing a heavy yoke of British oppression, which they were attempting to throw off by means of arbitration, and when failing in this, although without an army, no ammunition, not organized, with no General to lead them in battle, unused to military tactics, but firmly and unitedly asserting their rights, and in their defense boldly stepping forth to meet a well-organized and properly-officered army led by Tryon, Governor-General of the Province of North Carolina.

The struggle for American Liberty and Independence which began at the "Battle of Alamance" was a momentous event in the great drama of the world's history, which led up to the signing of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. At the "Battle of Alamance" was kindled the flame, though small in the beginning, that eventually, Vesuvius-like, spread with the rapidity of a wild forest fire, until the oppressed of the thirteen colonies were aflame with righteous indignation and unitedly determined to throw off forever the YOKE of British oppression. The incidents of extortion from 1765 to 1771 were fraught with such momentous consequences upon the destinies of civilization throughout the world that we can never tire in contemplating the instrumentalities by which, under Divine guidance, the liberty and independence of the Colonists were effected. The "War of the Regulators" has taught mankind that oppression, misrule, and extortion tinder any government tends to weaken and ultimately destroy the power of the oppressor; and that a people united in the cause of freedom and their inalienable rights are invincible by those who would enslave them.

Being a descendant of a Regulator, and having his childhood and early manhood in Alamance County, North Carolina; and having practiced his profession for three years in and around the spot made hallowed by the blood of patriots shed at the "Battle of Alamance" where he has listened with enraptured delight to the narration of thrilling scenes and circumstances occurring previous to, during, and after the "Battle of Alamance" all tending to make indelible impressions upon the tablet of memory, the author feels a willingness to "contribute his mite" to the store of accumulated materials relating to the "War of the Regulators" and the "Battle of Alamance" which at the hands of historians has never received due mention or proper credit. The author in this small volume has undertaken to prove that the Regulators were not as Tryon and his sympathizers would have you believe, a mob made up of rowdy characters, but "the staunch yeoman of the province;" and that the "Battle of Alamance" **WAS THE FIRST BATTLE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION**. And if his feeble efforts in this undertaking shall impart additional information, assist in elucidating the justness of the cause of the Regulators, and add to the already glorious history of the Old North State, by causing the Battle of Alamance to be recognized as the first struggle for American Liberty and Independence, his highest aspirations will be amply gratified and his agreeable labors abundantly rewarded.



Capture, Trial and Execution of Captain Benjamin Merrell and Fellow Regulators

From Some Neglected History of North Carolina by W.E. Fitch, 1905 (pg. 239-256)

[After leaving the battlefield of Alamance and] after leaving camp at the Moravian settlement on June 7, 1771, Governor Tryon's forces started on their return trip toward Hillsborough. After a circuitous route through the Moravian settlements

in Stokes County, by way of Big Troublesome in Rockingham County, he came to Guilford Court House on

the High Rock Road, some eight or ten miles northwest of the present city of Greensborough, where he went into camp for a day or two. During all his marches after leaving the battle-field at Alamance he passed through the country dragging his prisoners (30) in chains as "scare crows" to others; administering his new-coined oath of allegiance; disarming the inhabitants; burning houses; destroying all growing crops; levying contributions of beef and flour for his army; insulting the suspected; holding courts martial, which took cognizance of civil as well as military offenses, extending their jurisdiction even to ill-breeding and want of good manners.

"After his return from the western tour, sixty head of cattle, as I have been informed, were collected from the plantations around his camp in Guilford County, and were driven from that place, under charge of John Gilbert, to Tryon's camp on the Eno at Hillsborough. These cattle were collected around Greensborough, and it is probable that similar contributions were demanded through the whole western tour for the support of his army, while his Excellency was engaged in burning the homes of the Regulators, destroying their crops, and hanging traitors." (Caruthers's Life of Dr. Caldwell, p. 160.)

One of the most amusing incidents of Tryon's campaign occurred on June 1, just after the army crossed Abbot's Creek and went into camp on *Benjamin Merrill's* plantation, a valuable tract of well-cultivated land in the Jersey settlements, near the Yadkin River. The horses belonging to the army had been turned loose at night to graze, each animal having a bell tied to its neck to aid in finding any which might stray. In the immediate neighborhood was the residence, gardens and grounds of Benjamin Merrill, a planter, who owned and took great pride in an extensive apiary which was located in the gardens. A foraging party from Tryon's army were attempting to steal honey from this place, and in the darkness several beehives were overturned and the bees began stinging both men and horses. The horses thereupon began to run pell-mell at a full gallop around and through the camp, ringing several hundred discordant bells, the sound of which made the night hideous. The sentinels, guards and pickets fired off their pieces, and the cry "stand to your arms!" rung throughout the camp. Tryon no doubt thought all the Regulators in the world had suddenly swooped down upon him. However, the cause of the tumult was soon ascertained and quiet was restored. (State Rec. of N. C., Vol. 19, P. 849.)

Before breaking camp at Guilford CourtHouse Tryon issued his proclamation outlawing certain Regulators. (Tryon's Order Book, Campaign Against Regulators; Col. Rec. of N. C., Vol. 8, p. 617; Wheeler's History of North Carolina.)

Guilford Court-House Camp, 9th day of June, 1771. By His Excellency William Tryon Es. His Majesty's Captin General and Governor in chief in and over the said Province. A PROCLAMATION. Whereas, Harmon Husband, James Butler, Rednap Howell, and William Butler are outlawed and liable to be shot by any person whatever, I do therefore, proclaim that they are to be punished for the Traitorous and Rebellious crimes they have committed, issue this my proclamation hereby offering a reward of 100 pounds sterling, and 1000 acres of land to any person or persons who will take dead or alive and bring into mine or General Waddell's camp either or each of the above-named outlaws. Given under my hand and seal in the said province of Bathabara-this ninth day of June in the year of our Lord, 1771. WILLIAM (Seal) TRYON. By His Excellency's command, John Hawke, P. S.

After issuing his "outlawing" proclamation, he rested a few days before resuming his march toward Hillsborough, where he ended his tyrannical campaign of burning houses and destroying crops, arriving there on the 19th of June, 1771. A special term of court of oyer and terminer was at once held, presided over by Chief justice Howard, with Associate justices Maurice Moore and Richard Henderson. (Col. Rec. of N. C., Vol. 8, p. 650.) Lossing, in his Field Book of the Revolution (Vol. 2, P. 578), says:

"At Hillsborough he held a court martial for the trial of the prisoners, twelve of whom were condemned to death. Six were reprieved and the other six hung, among whom was Captain Messer." The prisoners were all

indicted for high treason, found guilty and condemned to death. On six of them---James Pugh, Benjamin Merrill, Robert Matear, Captain Messer, and two others-the sentence was executed on the 19th of June, 1771; the other six-Forrester Mercer, James Stewart, James Emmerson, Herman Cox, William Brown, and James Copeland-were respited until the King's pleasure could be known. (Col. Rec., Vol. 8, p. 635; Vol. 9, PP. 36, 37, 274,311-)

"The unfortunate prisoners captured by Tryon were tried for a crime made capital by a temporary act of the General Assembly, of less than twelve months' duration. This act [["Riot Act," see Appendix C](#)] had, in great tenderness to His Majesty's subjects, converted riot into treason. The terror of the examples now proposed to be made under it was to expire in less than nine months thereafter. The offenses of the prisoners were derived from public and private impositions; and they were the followers and not the leaders in the crimes they had committed. Never were prisoners more entitled to the leniency of the law. The Governor shamefully exerted every influence of his nature against the lives of these wretched prisoners. As soon as he was informed that one day had been granted to two of the prisoners, by the court, to send for witnesses, who actually established their innocence and saved their lives, Tryon sent an aide-decamp to the judges and Attorney-General, advising them that he was dissatisfied with the inactivity of their conduct, and threatened to represent them unfavorably in England if they did not proceed with more spirit and dispatch. Had the court submitted to Tryon's influence, all testimony on the part of the prisoners would have been excluded, and the poor wretches to a man would have been executed." (judge Maurice Moore in the "Atticus" letter, published in Virginia Gazette, November 7, 1771.)

The Chief justice in pronouncing sentence upon each of the condemned Regulators used the form prescribed by the laws of England in cases of treason. He concluded as follows:

"That the prisoner should be carried to the place from whence he came; that he should be drawn from thence to the place of execution and hanged by the neck; that he should be cut down while yet alive; that his bowels should be taken out and burned before his face; that his head should be cut off, and that his body should be divided into four quarters, which were to be placed at the King's disposal, and may the Lord have mercy on your soul." (Col. Rec. of N. C., Vol. 8, p. 643.)

We are not told whether the execution was carried out in all of its details according to the English form or not, but does the reader for one instant doubt that one of Tryon's bloodthirsty nature would let an opportunity pass to make the execution as horrifying as he possibly could to the miserable wretches; and thereby lose his first opportunity to carry into effect his newly created [act, wherein riot was made treason](#). A general who would order fire set to the woods on a battle-field covered with dead and wounded soldiers, as Tryon did at Alamance, would not hesitate very long about carrying out the letter of the law governing the trial and execution of prisoners indicted for high treason.

According to Caruthers (Life of Dr. Caldwell, pp. 160, 161),

"on the day of the execution Tryon had the whole army drawn out under arms, except the quarter-guard and sentinels. They formed and marched in a hollow, oblong square-the first line the right, and the second line the left face; the main guard marching in the center, with the sheriff and prisoners, and the light-horse covering the outside to keep off the crowd. This order of march had been sketched out and given in general orders by the Governor himself, who stopped in this manner to point out the spot for the gallows, and gave orders for the clearing of the field around to make room for the army."

As Maurice Moore in his "Atticus" letter observes,

"the Governor's minute and personal attention to these particulars left a ridiculous idea of his character behind him, bearing a strong resemblance to that of the undertaker at a funeral. These brave men, whose only

sin was having warred against corruption and oppression, deserved a different fate; but Tryon was not like Fingal, who never injured the brave, though his arm was strong."

Others of them had not warred in any way, Robert Thompson, for instance; nor had they done anything "worthy of death" or even "stripes," and none of them deserved the ignominy which they received. But they had fallen into the hands of one who neither acknowledged the claims of justice nor was capable of appreciating merit, especially in those who, like Husband, Hunter, and their followers, could not and would not bow to his haughty mandates. Rev. Dr. Caldwell traveled a distance of forty-six miles to attend the trial of the prisoners, ---though it is said none of them belonged to his churches,---for the purpose of testifying to the character of such of them as he personally knew, and to be present, as a minister, to intercede on their behalf; and should he fail in that, to comfort them by his councils and his prayers in preparing them for the solemn change which awaited them. As to the former, his efforts were unavailing; but as to the latter, his labors, it is hoped, were not in vain in the Lord, and he probably felt rewarded for his journey and his trouble.

The place of execution where the six Regulators suffered such an ignominious death is just outside the town limits of Hillsborough, a few hundred yards in front of the residence of the late Paul C. Cameron, and only a short distance from the historic Eno River, where Governor Tryon encamped in his march against the Regulators. In a grove of natural growth covering many broad acres rests a large marble slab which was placed there by Mr. Cameron's orders to mark the spot where the brave patriots suffered death. Surrounding this spot is a large, well-kept lawn, crossed by a small brook. "It is a traditionary legend that along this brook in the olden times was an 'Indian trading path,' now overgrown with grass." Everything is beautiful, serene, and peaceful, with nothing but the musical notes of the indigenous songbirds and the murmur of the waters of the old Eno which roll hard by. One finds difficulty in realizing that this spot, in all its natural grandeur, was in the long ago the scene of such horrifying details as the one Tryon personally supervised in the old "Colonial days." (Haywood's Life of Tryon.)

"If those noble oaks and the historic Eno hard by possessed the power of speech, how strange a legend they would tell us.

Old trees at night are like men in thought,
By poetry to silence wrought;
They stand so still and look so wise



With folded arms and half-shut eyes,
More shadowy than the shade they cast
When the wan moonlight, on the river past;
The river is green and runneth slow
We cannot tell what it saith;
It keepeth its secrets down below,
And so doth death."

One among the staunchest Regulators was *James Pugh*, a brother-in-law of Harmon Husband. He was a gunsmith by trade, and repaired many a weapon for the Regulators prior to the Battle of Alamance. During the battle he lay behind a ledge of rocks and killed fifteen of Tryon's artillerymen, and was still shooting when surrounded and captured. After his capture he was dragged around the country in chains through the western settlements, and as we have just read, tried and condemned for treason. According to Caruthers (Life of Caldwell, p. 165) and Foote (Sketches of North Carolina, p.

64), when placed on the gallows for the execution, he appeared perfectly calm and composed; said that he had long been prepared to meet his God in another world; refused to make any acknowledgments for what he had done; and requested of the Governor, who was present, permission to speak to the people in his own defense for one-half hour. Having obtained this permission, he then told them that his blood would be as good seed sown on good ground, which would produce an hundredfold. He recapitulated the causes of the late conflict; asserted that the Regulators had taken the life of no man previous to the battle, nor had they aimed at anything more than a redress of grievances; charged the Governor (Col. Rec. of N. C., Vol. 8, Pref. Notes, P. 31) with having brought an army among them to murder the people instead of taking sides with them against a set of dishonest sheriffs' clerks, and other country officers; advised him to put away his corrupt clerks and roguish sheriffs and be a friend to the people whom he was appointed to govern. But when he said that Colonel Fanning was unfit to hold any office, he was suddenly interrupted, and the barrel on which he was standing was turned over at the instigation of Fanning, before Pugh was through speaking, and a patriot and seer swung out between the heavens and the earth a lifeless corpse.

Here is an instance of bravery and defiance on the part of the patriot James Pugh in rebuking Governor Tryon for his tyranny and unjust dealings with the people. His saying that his life and that of others whose blood was shed for American independence would be "as good seed sown on good ground, which would produce an hundredfold," was voiced five years four months and five days later by Nathan Hale, of Connecticut, who was captured by the British on Long Island and hanged as a spy. At his execution he was refused a Bible or the comfort of a minister, and his letter to his mother was torn up before his eyes. His last words were, "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country." The State of Connecticut has honored Hale by having his statue erected in Hartford, and another in City Hall Park, New York City, while James Pugh's memory, unhonored until a few years ago when, through Col. Joseph M. Morehead's patriotic influence, a modest monument was erected to his memory. Shame on North Carolina for want of more patriotism! For bravery and defiance, the execution of Pugh for high treason and his rebuking words to the Governor on the one hand, and the execution of Hale as a spy and his regrets that he had only one life to lose for his country, on the other, are scarcely comparable; yet the latter is honored by monuments erected at Hartford, Conn., and New York City to his memory, while the former lies in an unmarked grave on the green sward by the old Eno, near Hillsborough.

Robert Matear, one of the unfortunate victims, was a quiet, inoffensive, upright man, who had never joined the Regulators. On the morning of the battle, May 16, 1771, he visited Tryon's camp with Mr. Robert Thompson and Dr. David Caldwell, and he and Thompson were detained as prisoners. No man in the community was more esteemed while living or more lamented when dead; and he had from the first to the last taken no part in the riots or in the resistance which was made to the government. There seemed to be a peculiar hardship in this case, for Matear had never openly joined the Regulators or committed any overt act which would have made him liable for the punishment which he received. According to Caruthers in his Life of Caldwell, a few years before the battle he went to Newberne to sell a load of produce, and Tryon, having learned where he was from, as there were no mail lines in those days, made him the bearer of a letter to Alexander Martin at Salisbury. Matear had for a long time been uncertain as to what his actions should be with reference to joining the Regulators, or what his duty was in the matter. To get rid of this suspense and if possible be enlightened, it may have occurred to him to read the letter which he was carrying to Martin, and not knowing or thinking of the consequence, he opened the letter on the road as he was returning home and read it. He was so disgusted with the haughtiness and tyranny which it manifested, that he handed it over to one of his neighbors who was friendly to the Regulators. Through their carelessness or intemperate zeal, it became known, and was the sole cause of his death.

Captain Messer, who, as you remember, was captured just after the battle, along with the poor unfortunate Few, who was hanged on the battle-field without trial by jury or by court martial, was to have been hanged the following day, but owing to a very affecting incident already noted, he was reserved for the Hillsborough fete, June 19, 1771.

Capt. Benjamin Merrill, of the Jersey settlements near Salisbury, was another of the unfortunate victims of Tryon's brutal tyranny. He was on his way to join the Regulators at Alamance, with a company of more than three hundred men (see Waddell's resolutions passed at Potts Creek, Salisbury, and Capt. Alexander's oath, p. 198), when he intercepted Gen. Hugh Waddell and forced him to flee to Salisbury, after taking most of his command prisoners. Captain Merrill was within one day's march of the Alamance when he heard the cannonading, and soon afterwards heard of the victory of the Governor's army. He is said to have regretted that he was not present with his men to have bled with those who fought for liberty. After hearing of the defeat of his comrades he disbanded his men and returned home. He was taken prisoner (State Rec. of N. C., Vol. 19, P. 849) by a detachment under Colonel Fanning, and brought to Tryon's army, encamped at "Jersey Settlement Camp," on Saturday, June 1, 1771; to the west of the Jersey settlement near the Yadkin River, and put in chains with the other prisoners and dragged through the country to Hillsborough, where with his life he paid the forfeit. In this trying situation he gave his friends satisfactory evidence that he was prepared to die, for he not only professed faith in Christ, his hope of heaven, and his willingness to go, but sang a psalm very devoutly, like the Covenanters in the grass market in Edinburgh, and died like a Christian and soldier. On being permitted to speak just before the execution, he said that fifteen years previously he had been converted, but had back-slidden, yet now felt that he was freely forgiven and that he would not change places with any one on the grounds. In conclusion he referred feelingly to his wife and eight children, saying, "I entreat that no reflection be cast upon them on my account"; and requested that some part of his estate be spared for the widow and fatherless. It is said that one of Tryon's soldiers was heard to declare that if all men went to the gallows with a character such as Captain Merrill's, "hanging would be an honorable death." If Captain Merrill with his three hundred men had reached the Alamance the day before the battle, the Regulators would have had a commanding officer, and the result might have been quite different from what it was.

These men may have been rash, but they were not cowards; they may have been imprudent, but they were suffering under wrong and outrage, and the withholding of justice and the proper exercise of the law. And if oppression and extortion will make a wise man mad, then ten years of oppression and extortion which these men suffered would have proved them fit for subjection had they been submissive. Capt. Benjamin Merrill's friend, Capt. Raleigh Southerland, coming with the force of Surry County to help the Regulators, when hearing from a distance the guns at the Battle of Alamance, wept because he was not there with his countrymen "who were shedding their blood in defense of their rights." He was animated by the same patriotic spirit which led Gen. Francis Nash to say with his dying breath, on the field of Germantown, "From the first dawn of the Revolution I have been on the side of liberty and my country." The difference was in Southerland's favor, that he was the first to recognize the dawn of liberty's morning. (McCorkle in North Carolina Booklet.)

The apologists of Tryon and Fanning stigmatize the Regulators as "outlaws and rebels," "marauding, lawless, irresponsible mob," made up of ignorant men of the lower classes. The petitions of the Regulators were couched in their own language. In one addressed to Tryon they said: "*We tell you in the anguish of our souls, we cannot go to law with our powerful antagonists. Such a step, whenever taken, will terminate in the ruin of ourselves and families.*" Their experience with the courts at Hillsborough had been that they could not get justice. "*All we want,*" said they to the Governor's secretary, "*is liberty to make our grievances known,*" so confident were they of the justness and righteousness of their cause. Such petitions do not speak of the unreasonableness of a "mob."

They were men of lawful and law-abiding spirits, men of strong convictions, with manhood to back them up, for they stood up against Tryon at the Battle of Alamance without a commanding officer, without cannon or proper military equipment, unprepared for battle. Did they lack patriotism? Did they lack courage? Were they ignorant, unprincipled men? Did they hate law and order? Some of Tryon's apologists would have you believe that the answers should be in the affirmative. To have submitted to the peremptory, insulting demands of Tryon's proclamation just before the battle would have been to exhibit the cringing spirit of

slaves, so, with the courage of true martyrs and heroes, they stood their ground when Tryon precipitately began the battle. "Thus," as says Caruthers, it was shown the first expression of the principle and spirit which covered the men of 1776 with immortal glory.

Baptists, the Regulators and Capt. Benjamin Merrill

From History of the Liberty Baptist Association by Elder Henry Sheets, 1907, Edwards & Broughton of Raleigh, N.C.

Chapter XVII (page 151). THE BAPTISTS and the REGULATORS--Their Probable Connection with the Movement says:

This subject is discussed here because of the fact that Captain Benjamin Merrill was said to have been a member of Jersey church and that he commanded a company of three hundred men, supposed to have been mainly from Jersey Settlement, in what is now Davidson County.

The organization in North Carolina a few years previous to the war of the Regulators, was of much more than ordinary importance: not so much for what was accomplished in visible results as that for which it stood, It was in fact the outburst of that great patriotic spirit which developed into the Revolution that made the American people forever free and independent. The Regulators were in the main plain men with few advantages; but were, nevertheless: endowed with a large share of patriotism and a good fund of common sense. They had rights and knew it, and were willing to stake all in their defense. They were peaceably inclined but desired it in the enjoyment of all and every right. And it is worth while to note here that many of these men were the worthy descendants of the Puritan fathers who had, because of persecution in the old country on account of their religious views left all, and coming to this country, seeking privileges which were denied them there. Men of such rugged character were not likely to be trifled with beyond reasonable endurance.

The Regulation movements instead of being a lawless aggregation seeking to overthrow the State government as was claimed was only the crystallization of honest patriotic sentiment seeking by concert of action to secure to themselves and people at large their just rights against the usurpation of official tyranny and corruption which so sorely oppressed them. Many of these officials were foreigners who were political favorites of the Crown and had come over to achieve a fortune, and, being corrupt at hearts they persistently oppressed the people to that end. Mr. Caruthers in his Life of Caldwell says in regard to the causes which led up to the organization of the Regulators and the battle of Alamance that "The people were defrauded by the clerks of the courts, by the recorders of deeds, by entry-takers, by surveyors and by lawyers: every man demanding twice or three times his legal fee." It is no wonder that the people sought a reformation in the management of public-affairs. The sheriff were sometimes very insulting as well as exacting. Caruthers, in Revolutionary Incidents first series, gives an illustration.

When the sheriff was going over the country distraining and selling the property of every man who did not instantly pay the amount of tax demanded accompanied too by his deputies and perhaps some others, well armed and attending him as a life-guard he came to the house of a poor man who was not at home; but as if determined not to be wholly disappointed in his object, and not finding anything else, or not enough of anything else to satisfy his demands, he took off his wife's dress which she had on at the time and which she had made with her own hands, sold it under the hammer for her husband's tax; and then; giving her a box or slap with his hand., told her to go and make her another.

Just such acts as this with many others equally outrageous; caused the people to organize. The same author says:

"It does not appear on the pages of history that the people of North Carolina were disposed to rebel, without a cause, against the authority of those who were properly authorized to administer the laws, or that they ever refused to pay whatever taxes might be necessary for the support of the government; but they were at all times ready, when they had the powers to resist oppression or flagrant encroachments on their rights."

But it is unnecessary to further recount the outrages inflicted upon a suffering people and we have scarcely begun to enumerate their deeds of wrong-doing for enough has already been given to show that the people had cause for every step they took, and no one will be inclined to say them nay. Amongst the Regulators were found many of the best men of North Carolinamen against whom nothing could be said to their dishonor. The whole movement was nothing more than an honest, clean-cut movement to secure the rights of citizenship.

WERE BAPTISTS IN THE MOVEMENT?

Probably this question would have been above debate but for what was said by Elder Morgan Edwards, a Baptist minister, who came to this country few years before the Revolution. Mr. Edwards was a Tory and sad it is to say it for he was the only Baptist so far as known (he was foreign born) that attained that distinction. It seems strange indeed that being a baptist his sympathies could be with King George. It has been said that most of our Baptist brethren in England at that time were in hearty sympathy with our people in their efforts to secure civil and religious liberty a principle ever dear to Baptists wherever found. But, notwithstanding Mr. Edward's Tory proclivities we must stop long enough to say that he did more than any other man in his day in traveling, gathering and recording so much of our earliest Baptist history rescuing it from oblivion. His untiring zeal and indefatigable efforts did much to enrich American Baptist literature for this his name will be held in last remembrance. But as Mr. Edwards saw it the Regulation movement was a crime--a sin against the British crown, especially so for baptists whose contention ever was that the powers that be are ordained of God, forgetting it seems, that these powers were intended of God to protect the people in their civil and religious life. But feeling as he did, he did all in his power to exonerate his brethren of the Baptist faith from the stigma which he supposed would attach to their name because of any possible connection with the movement.

In referring to the four thousand Regulators who were against Governor Tryon and his tyrannical State government he says there were found only seven baptists possibly there were no more who were of special note. It known everywhere that Captain Benjamin Merrill was an officer of much prominence in this movement, Mr. Morgan tells us again, in support of his contention that the Sandy Creek Association passed a resolution in October 1769 which follows: "If any of our members shall take up arms against the legal authority or aid and abet them that do so, he shall be excommunicated. No doubt such resolution was passed for Baptists have always been great sticklers for the "powers that be." And it may also be true that in this case they had not considered for a moment that the "powers that be" might so far transcend their right to exist, that in God's providence the people might set a government aside and in its stead set up one which would protect and bless the people and glorify God the Author of all "powers." Thus it is seen that after a fierce conflict Colonial government gave way to some thing far better, and who doubts that God's will was not accomplished in it all. Where was there anything inconsistent in Baptists taking an active part, I along with others in trying to establish a government that would guarantee just and equal rights to all? This was the condition of things in North Carolina when Mr. Edwards was trying to disconnect them with the movement, when in fact it was their glory that they were in it.

It would not have been like Baptists to have stood by in morbid indifference while their hard earnings were being filched from them by dishonest officials and while they were also paying taxes to support a religious hierarchy of which they had not the slightest respect for the doctrines held forth, nor for the ministers who were living in luxury, and sometimes in debauchery too. The Presbyterians because of their prominent standing at the time, we enabled to take a leading part in trying to right matters so that the people might

enjoy their inalienable rights for which we give them due credit for all they did and that was much but this does not sustain Mr. Edwards in his contention that the Baptists were not at heart equally interested and did, under the circumstances all in their power that looked to a redress of their grievances, out contention is that the Baptists were as generally interested as many others, perhaps more.

IS THERE PROOF THAT THEY WERE?

Let us note that the Regulators were strong where the Baptists were most numerous, The section surrounding Sandy Creek church was composed almost wholly of Baptists save in a few neighborhoods, Stearns and the preachers immediately under his influence had gone in all directions and established churches. It was in this section of the State that the Regulators seemed to have their strongest forces. It was in this section of the State that the battle of Alamance was fought. The Jersey Settlement was, as it seems composed almost exclusively of Baptists. It was from this point that Captain Benjamin Merrill (tradition says he was a Baptist deacon, though this is by no means certain), marched on his way toward Alamance with three hundred men, the battle having been fought before he could arrive. None of these Baptists except Captain Merrill? No one can for a moment entertain such a thought. Of the Forks of the Yadkin it is said: "Colonel Bryan could, on the spur of the occasion, collect about eight hundred men in the Forks of the Yadkin and march them off to the British at Anson court-house." (Note by M.G. McC---I believe these were Tories and hurts his argument) This was another Baptist stronghold. It was in this section that Boon's Ford Baptist church had a existence at that time and the mother of this church was in the same section, not many miles away. These things would seem to indicate that there were many Baptists among the Regulators. But there is another bit of history that offers strong, presumptive evidence that there were many Baptists engaged in this movement. Mr. Edwards tells us that after the Regulator's had failed at Alamance that 1500 families left this portion of the State. They became discouraged and felt that it was best to go where they would not be so oppressed. Just how many of the families were Baptists will perhaps never be known but when we remember that Sandy Creek church was reduced from 606 to 14 souls, it gives us some idea of the "real situation at the time." A little previous to this time Daniel Marshall left Abbotts Creek church and went to South Carolinas After that we have no further account of the church organized in 1758. There is strong probability that this church emigrated after the battle of Alamance with the hundreds of others that went west.

Speaking of Little River Church Mr. Edwards says: "It began about 1760 and in three years increased from eight souls to 500, but is now (1771-7) reduced low by reason of the removal of families to other parts; chiefly occasioned by oppressions which seem to them remediless since the battle Alamance." If this state of things is true in regard to these few church that we chance to know about, is it not a true index to all or most of the Baptist churches at that time? What a terrible drain upon the Baptist of North Carolina, just at the time when they seemed to be so prosperous and aggressive. They seemed to be carrying everything before them. It can only be imagined what our State would have been today but for this exodus one hundred and thirty-five years ago. At that time they were going forward by leap and bounds. For the same time there has been nothing like it since. There is no cause for wonder that the mountains of Western North Carolina and East Tennessee are full of Baptists. Many of these are the descendants of those who left this central part of our State more than a century ago where they could be free from the molestation of royal officials. Just think of the hosts of Baptists pouring into these mountain coves and vales where they have in large measure been shut out from the outside worlds and consequently clinging tenaciously to Baptist doctrine as taught them by their ancestors from generation to generation. They have been little influenced by the many isms of the present time because of their isolation from the outside world. As Captain Benjamin Merrill lived on the territory now covered by the Liberty Association, and as he bore such a conspicuous part in connection with the Regulation, it seems but just to insert a statement concerning his life and work in this connection.

Captain Benjamin Merrill--His Ancestry, Home, Family Descendants, Execution, Christian character and Patriotism.

The people of North Carolina will ever feel a keen interest in the life and tragic end of Capt. Benjamin Merrill. This interest is heightened when they call to remembrance the dark, stormy days and years which preceded the Revolutionary War and his espousal of the cause of liberty. The people were sorely oppressed by the minions of British power. And when thus wronged, patriotic blood leaped with such pulsations to resent every abuse of such power. They had been wronged and insulted; they had borne and endured, until "forbearance ceased to be a Virtue." Again and again they sought redress of their grievances--peaceably if they could, by military power if they must. Those were brave men who knew nothing of military life and but little of the great principles involved, save as they lived in their hearts and heaved in their bosoms. The struggles and trials which led up to the war of the Revolution are fraught with thrilling interest. In these times that tried men's souls is found the history of Benjamin Merrill.

HIS ANCESTRY [*The author knew little of Capt. Merrell's background, the current reader is referred to [The Merrell Family](#) on this site.--WLM]*

HIS HOME

His plantation, on which was his home, was some four miles south of Lexington, NC and about two miles east from Jersey Church. The writer recently visited the spot where once stood the residence of Captain Merrill. The venerable oaks standing there could they but speak might tell us much of valuable history in the eventful years, in the long ago, now buried forever in the wreck of time. It is said that our hero was a gunsmith, and that the strong branch running at the foot of the hill near where his residence stood afforded the power necessary to operate the simple machinery used in boring out the barrels. In the evening he would arrange a barrel for boring and start his crude machinery and leave it running all night.

FAMILY DESCENDANTS

His wife's maiden name could not be ascertained. As to the number of children there are two statements: Gov. Tryon spoke of his "wife and eight children but Captain Merrill said, "widow and ten children." Of the names of his children, of what became of them or their descendants we know nothing, save one son, who was blessed with a family of five children. Their names and date of birth are given below: Benjamin Smith Merrill, born September 10., 1774; Bettie Merrill, born May 2., 1776; Azariah Merrill, born May 26, 1779; Jemima Merrill born October 6, 1782; Sallie Merrill, born July 15, 1784.

All the Merrill's in this section of the State descended from Azariah, a grandson of Captain Merrill. He was the father of Deacon Ebenezer Merrill late of Jersey church and Benjam Merrill, late of Fork church Davie County. Elder George L. Merrill is a great-grandson of Captain Merrill. Tradition and history prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the subject of this sketch had a brother whose name was Azariah. It is handed down in the family that Azariah would imbibe too freely of strong drink, and when in this condition would exclaim, "My father was hung in defence of the truth, and I am willing to die for it."

Just before his execution, which took place at or near Hillsboro, NC, on the 19th day of June, 1771, he made a request. Here it is:

"In a few moments I shall leave a widow and ten children. I entreat that no reflection may be cast on them on my account, and, if possible, shall deem it a bounty, should you gentlemen petition the Governor and Council that some part of my estate may be spared to the widow and fatherless."

Here follows what Governor Tryon said:

"Benjamin Merrill a Captain of the militia, left it in charge of the officers to solicit me to grant his plantation and estate to his wife and eight children, Wme. Tryon."

[No record is left to inform us as to what was done in regard to the request.](#) We would naturally suppose that it was thrown aside and never more thought of but Mr. A. J. Owen, a member of Jersey church., whose mind was sound and memory strong, told the author several years ago, that the grant was actually made as requested to the widow and children, and that the document given by Governor Tryon was handed down, with other old papers belonging to the Merrill family and finally lodged in the hands of Wilson Merrill, brother-in-law of Mr. Owen. In 1855 Mr. Owen got possession of the rare document and held it till 1872, when he went West, at which time it slipped from him. And though the paper was an hundred years old yet the writing was just as legible as when first given. It was written on coarse heavy paper and folded like a deed--it was in fact their deed their deed then. Mr. Owen committed to memory its contents. On the back of the folded instrument was inscribed:

"To JEMIMAH MERRILL AND HER CHILDREN." The contents were: I, Wm. Tryon, Governor and Captain-General for the Province of North Carolina; To Jemima Merrill and her Children: You are commanded to hold and possess the land and tenements, goods and chattels of the late Benjamin Meriill, hung for high treason till his Majesty's pleasure shall be known and all his tax collectors and receiver shall take due notice thereof. Done at Hillsboro---June, 1771. "Wm. Tryon"

After his execution the widow remained on the old homestead. The late Miss Susie Turner, a very worthy and aged lady, told the author that she recalled well, when a young girl of hearing her aunt Mary Workman tell of calling to visit the widow while on her way to meeting at Jersey church. Her aunt told her that the widow was blind. Whether, the blindness was caused by so natural defect or from excessive grief at the sad and untimely death of husband was not known. She was never herself after the death of her husband she never recovered from the shock. She was almost crazed at the cold, cruel fate which befell her in thus being bereft. She suffered great mental distress and spent much of her time in walking to pass of the melancholia which clung to her only to darken her days of grief and bitterness. Her mind was scarcely ever free from her affliction while awake.

No doubt exists as to his patriotism. He was true to his country. And was also a religious man. Tradition says that he was a member and deacon of the Jersey Baptist church. As to his character Caruthers, in his life of Caldwell, says:

"He was regarded as a pious man; and was much esteemed wherever he was known. He was within an easy day's march of the place of meeting (Battle of Alamance) with three hundred men under his command, when he heard of the defeat; an if he had got there in time the result would have been different. His men immediately dispersed, but he was taken prisoner, and his life was the forfeit. In this trying situation he gave his friends satisfactory evidence that he was prepared to die; for he not only professed his faith in Christ his hope of heaven and willingness to go, but sung a song very devoutly just before he swung off, and died with the resignation and composure of a Christian. One of his enemies was heard to say "If all went to the gallows with Captain Merrill's character, hanging would be an honorable death."

But a part of his speech upon the gallows has been hard to reconcile with what we believe to be true patriotism; and it has been a source of sincerest regret to thousands who love his memory. He condemned his course and explained his connection with the Regulators in a compromising way. He seemed to apologize for the course he pursued, but let's not judge him harshly. We are too apt to judge him from our own standpoint, with all the light we have. Our country's freedom was then in a germinal state. What the outcome was to be was uncertain, The future held no shining light to beckon oppressed people on to freedom. No one had gone before to blaze the way to freedom's heights. The people had been taught to "obey the powers that be." This teaching was fully brought out while considering the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. A member

of the committee arose and addressed the chairman as follows: "If you resolve on Independence how shall ye be absolved from the obligation of the oath we took to be true to King George the Third about four years ago, after the Regulation battle, when we were sworn, whole Militia companies together?" A halt was called; discussion ensued; at last their consciences were eased when some one suggested that the oath was binding only while the King protected us, our rights and liberties as they existed at the time it was taken.

At the time of which we write it looked very much like all their efforts had been in vain and our mind reverts to another day--the time when our Divine Lord was crucified. The disciples were scattered and discouraged. It looked to them like the efforts of the Master to establish his kingdom had failed. This thought is emphasized in the conversation which took place between Jesus and the two on the way to Emmaus. How, dolefully they discussed the situation! "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." Were they disloyal? No. They loved their master but their eyes were holden. The bright day was just ushering in but they could not see it. Was not this true of Benjamin Merrill? Could he have been permitted to look into the future a few years he would never have said what he did. Let us pass by what seems to have been a mistake and throw over it the mantle of charity and do him honor as a Christian and patriotic hero.

15 Jan 2001: Correspondent [Jim Daniel](#) of the current Jersey Settlement near Lexington, NC points out that to the contrary, Tryon's request is contained in a letter from Gov. Tryon to Lord Hillsborough (Colonial Records of NC Vol VIII P 650):

"Benjamin Merrill a Captain of the militia, at the hour of his execution, left it in charge of the officers to solicit me to petition His Majesty to grant his plantation and estate to his wife and eight children. He died under a thorough conviction of his crime and the justice of his sentence, and addressed himself to the spectators to take warning by his suffering. His Majesty's indulgence to this request would, I am persuaded, be dutifully and affectionately received by his unhappy widow and children."

King George III's acquiescence is in a letter from Hillsborough to Gov. Josiah Martin (Ibid. Vol IX PP 65-66):

"In the last letter I received from Mr. Tryon relative to the affairs in North Carolina and which is dated from New York, he expressed a wish that the plantation and estate of Benjamin Merrill, a Captain of militia, and who was one of the six rebels executed on the 19th of June, may be granted to his wife and the eight children he left behind him, and I have it in command from the King to signify to you His Majesty's pleasure that you do accordingly take the proper measures that whatever property, belonging to that unhappy person be forfeited to the Crown by his conviction, should be regranted to his widow and children."

In efforts to portray those opposing the Regulators as "bad guys", the King's grant to Merrill's family is often conveniently left out. Merrill, as a commissioned Captain of militia, had taken an oath of loyalty to the colony and the King, which he violated by taking up arms in opposition of the North Carolina government. The court of Oyer and Terminer (not a court martial as Fitch claims) was made up of fellow North Carolinians who found Merrill guilty of treason Merrill seems to have acknowledged his guilt and the correctness of the sentence in his "final speech", although there are those who cast doubts on its authenticity. A confusing period in our history when no one wore a "white hat".