“This Land of Perpetual Strife and Contention”
Factionalism in North Carolinian Politics from 1708 to 1788

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1. Introduction

A frustrated Anglican minister complained in 1711, shortly after the establishment of North Carolina as a separate colony, that it was inhabited by “a very factious mutinous and rebellious people… at all times… ready to oppose either Church or state.”¹ By 1743, Governor Gabriel Johnston, faced with internal conflict, was insisting that “something must be done, otherwise his Majesty cannot keep up the face of a government here.”² Another Anglican missionary wrote in 1774, “I am heartily weary of living in this Land of perpetual Strife and Contention.”³ These are just three of hundreds of similar complaints about the colony, from the Anglican ministers and British governors cited above to Dissenting preachers and Continental colonels during the Revolution, from European visitors to the inhabitants of neighboring colonies. Clearly, there was a lasting perception of North Carolina as a distinct place, separate from its colonial neighbors and identifiable by its perpetually embattled state.

For a modern reader, this may seem an observation hardly worth making. As one of the original thirteen colonies from which the United States were formed, North Carolina has been a recognized political entity for centuries. What’s more, many North Carolinians over the years have devoted their time to describing the characteristics which make their state unique from its neighbors. Whether they support it or argue against it, all attempts to address North Carolinian identity seem to deal with the popular perception of the area as backward and politically contentious. It seems, in fact, that the concept of a “long stereotype”, which Hubert Orlowski developed for Poland, can be applied to the history of North Carolina: there is a continuous understanding of the region as one which is resistant to government and social order.⁴ In light of that fact, the 18th-century comments cited above seem to fit neatly into one continuous narrative about North Carolina.

³ Quoted in Ekirch, “*Poor Carolina*”, 199.
However, the situation is more complicated than this perspective allows. North Carolina’s borders were not always as neatly defined as they are now, nor did its inhabitants ever exist in a world without change over time. This paper will examine in greater detail the factionalism of early North Carolina, in the hopes of showing the complexity which is hidden behind the simple, traditional narrative.

The temporal limits of this study are set by two events which helped to define not only the character of North Carolina, but its physical boundaries as well. The first is the secession of the colony as a distinct political entity, separate from the more wealthy, developed and hierarchical society of what became South Carolina. This division, the result of internal conflict in North Carolina’s already notoriously contentious political landscape, was an ad hoc adaptation to circumstances long before being formally acknowledged by British government. This paper takes 1708, the start date of the conflict and the breakdown in communication with what would be South Carolina, as the beginning of North Carolina as a distinct political entity, and therefore as a logical starting point for analysis. The end point is provided by the end of another conflict, the failure of the State of Franklin, comprised of North Carolina’s vaguely defined westernmost territories, to secede in 1788. The movement was suppressed by North Carolinian troops from more settled counties to the east. Only eighty years earlier, North Carolina came into existence through a secession made possible by weak government, vaguely defined boundaries, and strong factionalism. 1788 marks the last time that the boundaries of North Carolina were undefined, and it also represents the first time more blatantly hierarchical authority found success throughout the state. It is therefore a logical endpoint for a study of factionalism in early North Carolina.

The geographical scope of this paper will be limited to events which occurred within the generally acknowledged borders of North Carolina at the time, which roughly correspond to those of today. The sole significant exception is the westernmost areas described above as the State of Franklin, which were later incorporated into the formation of the new state of Tennessee. North Carolina was also, of course, a participant in a transatlantic world. The inhabitants traded and communicated with friends, business partners and governmental authorities from Virginia to the Caribbean to Europe, and they were not above drawing them into their internal disputes when necessary. However, in comparison to other colonists, many North Carolinians were quite isolated, and much of their factionalism played out on a strictly
local level. Therefore, since the main focus of this paper is on the interactions of North Carolinians among themselves, their connections to the wider world will be mentioned only when they become relevant to their internal conflicts.

In some ways, early North Carolina’s contemporary reputation as backward and anarchistic still seems to influence its study by modern historians. Regional studies of the colonial South tend to focus on the two distinct societies of the Chesapeake, i.e. Maryland and Virginia, or the Lowcountry, found largely in South Carolina and Georgia. About North Carolina, situated between them and belonging to neither, much less has been written. The colony may be considered in segments, as a series of individual settlements representing poorer, less distinct versions of the dominant cultures to the north and south, but as a single entity North Carolina seems to exist in a blind spot. An excellent example of this can be found in Philip D. Morgan’s immense study of slave life and culture in the South, *Slave Counterpoint*, in which the distinct patterns of the Chesapeake and Lowcountry are identified. In comparison to the data the book presents from Virginia and South Carolina, its neighbors to the north and south, examples from North Carolina are few, but when they are cited, they are used to support both patterns. The colony’s slaveholding, like the overall culture it supports, is considered as a blurry zone of overlap. When it comes to the study of early North Carolina history and culture, it seems that the greatest identifying factor may still be the lack of distinct and unifying characteristics. This further justifies a tight focus on the colony as a political entity as opposed to a part of a larger cultural or economic region.

Though largely overlooked in regional analysis, more focused studies of North Carolina’s particular colonial history are periodically undertaken. There appears to be a broad and long-standing academic consensus that contemporary commentators were by no means deceived in their perception of North Carolina as a socially fragmented and politically disorganized place. Indeed, from its (rather ad hoc) formation between 1708 and 1710 to the 1788 defeat of the secessionist State of Franklin, not even the physical boundaries of North Carolina were clearly defined. Geographical disadvantages and poor land administration further complicated any European attempts at political organization or infrastructure development. Settlers often came with expectations of economic advancement, but found themselves frustrated by a limited supply of legal tender and uncertain land titles. Furthermore, the colony was settled comparatively late and at considerable speed, more than
doubling in population between 1750 and 1770 alone.\(^5\) North Carolina attracted a diverse mix of Europeans, who mingled and clashed with mistrustful Native American tribes and a comparatively small but growing number of African-descended slaves. North Carolina was indeed a place of “strife and contention” as its constantly changing and growing population struggled for dominance.

Most of the historical literature on the early colony, therefore, focuses on a distinct group, categorized by one or two factors such as their ethnicity, economic status, religious adherence or political ideology. Just how many variables coexisted in North Carolina’s population can be seen by the wide diversity of focus in the literature, from a description of the pirate Blackbeard’s North Carolinian sympathizers\(^6\), to an analysis of bilingual German-English Moravian settlements\(^7\), to a highly specialized focus on the comparatively wealthy planter class of the Lower Cape Fear region\(^8\), to a discussion of the tactics of the obscure Meherrin tribe of Native Americans\(^9\). Although the interactions of these groups with others are discussed, the focus remains a small, easily identifiable group, and all of their interactions are seen through the perspective of that focus.

Other authors attempt to consider North Carolina as a whole. In keeping with the “long stereotype”, their efforts are predominantly focused on identifying and explaining its propensity to breed dissent. Each of these analyses focus on a single identifying factor around which groups could form and tensions could build, using this factor to explain the development of strong factionalism within the colony. Depending on the ideological leanings of the author, this long stereotype can be interpreted positively or negatively. In *A Very Mutinous People: The Struggle for North Carolina, 1660-1713*, Noeleen McIlvenna considers the anarchistic tendency of the colony’s early politics to have been a direct result of the ideological leanings of the first European settlers themselves, mostly discontents from

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more established neighbor colonies. She also points out the development of regional rivalries between northern and southern, eastern and western settlements that would become a regular feature of political life in North Carolina. For this author, the rebellious character of the inhabitants described by contemporary observers is a sign of resistance to an inequitable and violently supported social hierarchy, part of a continuum of thought leading back to the English civil war. Focusing on the fifty years directly following McIlvenna’s analysis, A. Roger Ekirch claims in “Poor Carolina”: Politics and Society in Colonial North Carolina, 1729-1776 that the economic stressors with which the colony struggled were the primary source of conflict. Economic interests often pitted planters against merchants, and although the colony was far less socially stratified than its neighbors, where wealth accumulated tensions usually emerged. Meanwhile, Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina by Marjoleine Kars and Farming Dissenters: The Regulator Movement in Piedmont North Carolina by Carole Watterson Troxler each acknowledge economic factors, but credit religious fault lines within the population for the greatest armed conflict in North Carolina’s pre-Revolutionary history. The colony was home to a wide variety of religious beliefs, but was especially attractive to minority groups such as the Quakers and the Moravians, who went on to exert a strong presence in local life. Most of the works dealing with North Carolina as a whole do not devote much time to racial tension, perhaps seeing it as a given. However, they do acknowledge that North Carolinians were also split by ethnic differences between European groups, either because of a language barrier (in the case of German-speaking communities) or because of imported European animosities, such as those between the Scots and English. It seems that there are ample divisions to consider in North Carolina’s early history, and nearly every one has been cited as the cause of its intense factionalism.

In contrast to the dire picture painted by the complaints of contemporary observers, though, North Carolina never existed in a state of anarchy. Certainly, as the existing historical work on the colony suggests, there was little loyalty to an overarching political entity within the colony, and little unity between inhabitants. However, as Jack P. Greene argued in “The American Revolution”\(^\text{10}\), this was a common characteristic in British colonies,

which often began as loosely organized peripheries in which authority had to be negotiated, and then organized themselves into new centers of British power. In this sense, North Carolina was no different from other colonies. Many authors have clearly shown how groups in the colony formed and worked together because they shared common characteristics or goals, each challenging the others for dominance. Categories of difference which caused tension have been isolated and analyzed. Yet none of the factions that formed were static, none of the boundaries between groups completely hardened. The strands isolated by various authors were in fact braided together, creating a number of loyalties that could conflict or converge in any given situation. The diversity of the area meant that in order to advance a common interest, members of different factions needed to be willing to form alliances. In fact, though the existing literature focuses on the fault lines underlying the colony’s major conflicts, each of these events also provides examples of North Carolinians with different backgrounds or interests working together. Discontents and formal governmental authority alike proved themselves capable of uniting varied interests behind them. In North Carolina, political power could be indeed be acquired and wielded, but only through negotiation.

In the existing historical literature on early North Carolina, its propensity to breed conflict is often the focus. Often a single group is isolated for closer examination; sometimes a particular source of division is identified to explain the political and social factionalism of the colony. This paper, however, will focus on the entangled interaction of factions and their motives. Drawing on the existing analyses of North Carolina’s various groups and the many conflicting motives of individuals within the state, it seeks to re-integrate them to gain a better understanding of how they functioned together as a whole. Rather than examine why North Carolinians were in conflict, this paper argues that diverse members of society were able to find common ground and work together on both sides of these conflicts. A hierarchical, authoritarian approach to leadership generally failed to find support in North Carolina, but negotiated authority, gained through skillful navigation of the region’s factionalism, could bring success.

It would take many more pages than those foreseen for a work of this scope to describe each of the segments of North Carolinian society over this eighty-year span. And yet, without some knowledge of the existing potential for conflict, no reasonable discussion of the collaboration and clash of factions can be undertaken. Therefore, this paper will begin
by describing only the four most significant fault lines running through the society at the time, those differing characteristics most likely to bond people together or tear them apart. The first factor was regional. North Carolina’s distinctive geography separated its inhabitants and encouraged differing ways of life to a greater degree than in most colonies. The second of these was ethnicity, a term which references not only the racial divides between Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans, but also those between Europeans of different linguistic and geographical backgrounds, and even the fine distinctions between those descended from varying parts of the British Isles. North Carolina was home to a wide variety of inhabitants, and the potential for mistrust or even for violence between them was quite high. The third major area of tension was religion. To some extent, this overlapped with ethnicity, however there was also a wide range of variation within members of an ethnic group, and as the inhabitants came into contact with one another, conversions were also made. Each religion had, of course, its own ideas about how life should be led, and these ideas were in turn open to individual interpretation, opening up immense potential for conflict. The fourth and final fault line in North Carolinian society was economic. While no one group was able to establish themselves as a political elite for any significant length of time, North Carolina certainly had comparatively wealthy and poor citizens, and the perceived disparity between them, added to the stressors of rapid, unsupported growth and general economic uncertainty, could easily lead to conflict. In the work that follows, these four factors will be described in more detail as they relate to the subject at hand.

After establishing the factors which could lead to conflict within the colony, the paper will move on to a consideration of several major clashes and the extent to which these factors either did in fact cause conflict or were overcome by various factions. Once again, since North Carolina was notorious for its perpetual strife, only the most striking incidents in the colony’s early history can be discussed in a paper of this scope. Furthermore, in order to focus on North Carolina and its “long stereotype”, only those events which were exclusive to the colony will be discussed. The American Revolution, as a continent-wide conflict including far more more complex interactions between colonies as well as the British Empire, simply cannot be considered in this paper. Limiting the number of events under consideration also allows for more intensive discussion of the behavior of the factions on both sides of the conflict. The first “event” is relatively loosely defined as the period of
continuous political and regional tension around the time of North Carolina’s formation. It begins with Cary’s Rebellion in 1708 and does not entirely end until the fall of Governor Burrington from grace some ten years later. It is significant not only because it led to the formation of the colony as an independent entity, but because the pattern of behavior displayed by factions in the conflict is one that would be repeated again and again in later clashes. Therefore, it set a precedent which can be traced in later cases. The second event under consideration is the Regulator movement, a series of clashes which took place in the 1760’s in the North Carolina backcountry. These were significant not only because they were the most violent armed conflicts between Europeans in this period of North Carolina’s history, but also because they were unusual enough to excite comment from observers outside the colony. These clashes also mark the spread of the European settlers in North Carolina from the coast to the inner portion of the region, and therefore show change in how the factions behave over time. The third major conflict which will be discussed is that which closes the time period, the formation and failure of the State of Franklin. Again, this event is significant in that it is the last of its kind, but it is also interesting because it displays how the nature of authority in North Carolina changed over time. Despite having many of the same characteristics as the initial secession which created North Carolina, this secession failed because of changes that had taken place in the intervening years. Because the three events not only span the period but also follow the pattern of European expansion westward, covering the entire geographical area, they allow for a more thorough investigation of factionalism in North Carolina.

Though rarely “mutinous and rebellious”, the observation that North Carolina’s inhabitants were “a very factious… people” was certainly accurate. From its formation in 1708 to the stabilization of its borders in 1788, conditions in North Carolina encouraged the development of factions in local politics. These have been well-studied by the existing literature, but the fact remains that North Carolinians did not live in a state of anarchy. The diversity of the area meant that in order to achieve their own goals, various smaller groups had to work together to find common ground. The fault lines underlying this society did not exist in isolation; they were entangled, and the inhabitants of North Carolina were capable of reaching across them as well as dividing along them. It was in fact possible to successfully
wield authority in North Carolina, but only for those who were willing to recognize and negotiate with its factions.
2. Influences on Factionalism in Early North Carolina Society

A. Regional

In many ways, the contentious character of early North Carolinian public life can be traced directly back to the land itself. From its earliest days, its somewhat unusual geography set it apart from the colonies around it, attracting European and African discontents and sheltering Native American tribes while dissuading those who had already found success in neighboring areas from attempting to expand over its borders. These conditions made travel and communication difficult, causing a disconnected patchwork of settlements who shared few interests in common. In addition, the man-made structure of the colony did more to encourage confusion than not. All of North Carolina’s boundaries not marked by the Atlantic coastline were under constant discussion between 1708 and 1788. Settlers on these borders might shift their loyalties to or from North Carolina as it suited them. Under these conditions, it is perhaps no surprise that North Carolinians often preferred to focus their attention tightly on the interests of their own region.

The eastern coastline of North Carolina is shielded by a long chain of islands and shifting sandbars known as the Outer Banks. This natural feature makes all maritime navigation treacherous.\(^\text{11}\) In a time period when the Atlantic Ocean fostered bustling trade between several continents, settling in North Carolina would have put a fledgling colonist at a significant disadvantage. In addition, the northern portion of the east coast was dominated by an immense area known as the Great Dismal Swamp, which could support neither crops nor roads and blocked overland travel to the north. Thus rendered unattractive, North Carolina remained largely unsettled by Europeans even as neighboring colonies developed.\(^\text{12}\) These isolated and precarious conditions made the colony most attractive for economic or religious discontents, while the Great Dismal Swamp became known as a haven for Virginian fugitives, both runaway...

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slaves and indentured servants. Life in these earliest settlements, known as the Albemarle region, lacked the same level of prosperity as the neighboring colonies, and the people were said to behave in strikingly egalitarian ways, much to the dismay of Virginians, who saw them as a destabilizing social force. As time passed, however, Albemarle society did become less mobile and more hierarchical.

Soon, however, a second, separate region of settlement began to form in North Carolina, and with it a first divide between two factions. Well-off South Carolinian colonists began to move northwards into North Carolina’s Cape Fear region, exploiting the few natural deep water harbors in existence. Here the settlers attempted, with varying success, to apply South Carolinian slaveholding methods to their new land, which led them into a quite different economic pattern than their Albemarle neighbors. As they adapted to the conditions of their new settlements, their way of life began to diverge from that of their neighbors in South Carolina. Yet their economic interests and political goals remained quite distinct from those of their neighbors in the northern Albemarle settlements. Cape Fear society quickly developed an elite, but its goals could often only be achieved at the expense of Albemarle society. This led to significant conflict as these two regions struggled for political ascendancy. Though Cape Fear grew in dominance over time, the Albemarle region managed to cling to a disproportionate amount of influence through the period between 1708-1788, and the rivalry between the regions never fully ceased.

The growth of these two regions, however, was soon eclipsed by the massive population boom in North Carolina’s backcountry. The population of the colony doubled within just twenty years, from 1750 to 1770 alone, as many new arrivals, most of them hoping for economic success, settled in the western part of the state. Since North Carolina had only one major port town, Wilmington, and goods from the city often carried a markup added to represent the risk of shipping to the town, there was very little incentive for western settlers to maintain close contact with their eastern neighbors. Rather than trading with their

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15 As described in Wood, *This Remote Part of the World.*

own North Carolinian coastal ports, the majority of backcountry trade eventually ran to Charles Town in South Carolina.\textsuperscript{17} With few interests in common with the newcomers, who were rapidly outnumbering them, both Albemarle and Cape Fear struggled to maintain the lion’s share of the political power in the colony. The tension between west and east in North Carolina increased throughout this period, remaining unresolved as the decades passed.\textsuperscript{18}

Soon, North Carolinians began to push westward over the Appalachian mountains as well, in direct defiance of a British treaty promise to the Cherokee that they would not settle the area. Since they were officially illegal, these settlements could depend on no help from the colony that had spawned them, and separated by a mountain range from their eastern neighbors, the Overmountain Men began to cultivate trade and political ties to the west and south instead. When settlement became legal at the close of the Revolutionary War, the westernmost regions grew quickly in power, and the existing dynamic of east-west tension in North Carolina spread to include an even more western perspective, which was correspondingly further alienated from the most established power bases in the east. Yet another region began to compete for power in the new state.\textsuperscript{19}

In addition to the tension between these four major regions, there was yet another way in which regionalism fragmented North Carolina. Since North Carolina was in conflict with both Virginia and South Carolina about the precise location of its borders, many settlers near these boundaries clashed over which colony, in fact, should command their loyalties. North Carolina often lacked the ability to collect taxes, making it a popular choice, but rather than be a part of the embattled Granville District, where land ownership was notoriously uncertain, one might choose to be Virginian. Meanwhile, a reservation of the Catawba Indians was also in dispute, which, although officially proclaimed a part of South Carolina, was seen as land which might later become free for European settlement and was therefore contested as a valuable later resource.\textsuperscript{20} Settlers on the borders might shift their loyalty to


\textsuperscript{18} Ekirch, “Poor Carolina”.

\textsuperscript{19} As described in: Mark T. Banker. \textit{Appalachians All: East Tennesseans and the Elusive History of an American Region.} (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2010).

and from North Carolina as it suited their own interests, and they were hardly passive about it. On occasion, surveyors were followed and threatened when settlers suspected they might be drawing unfavorable boundary lines.\textsuperscript{21} The uncertain nature of loyalty on the borders did not support societal cohesion, making the periphery of each established region a contested area in itself.

The prevailing conditions in North Carolina, both geographic and man-made, discouraged colony-wide cohesion. Those within a given region found that they had political and economic interests in common, but connections between regions were often difficult to cultivate. Instead, as each new area was settled, it began to struggle for dominance with the others. Furthermore, since the colony’s borders were in constant dispute, those living near the borders might shift their loyalty away from North Carolina entirely as it suited them, a fact hardly calculated to increase trust and cohesion among neighbors. These regional disputes helped make North Carolinian politics intractably contentious.

B. Ethnic

In addition to the divides created by regionalism, early North Carolina experienced tension caused by the many and varied ethnicities of its inhabitants. There are two major ways in which ethnic groups were divided. First, increasingly solid racial lines made it ever more difficult for blacks, whites and Native Americans to find common ground. Second, members of the same race might still vary widely in terms of culture and even language, lessening the likelihood that they could work together with ease. These ethnic tensions helped to make the political and social climate in North Carolina contentious.

Between 1708 and 1788, North Carolina was a society with large groups of inhabitants born on three different continents: native North Americans, Europeans, and Africans. By the end of the period, Europeans had emphatically established dominance over the area, but this was the result of a long process of both violent and diplomatic clashes with a determinedly resistant Native American population. Africans were introduced to North Carolina as slaves, and the question for them was not how to hold power, but how to escape its grip. The modern conception of race did not yet exist, but it was beginning to be

\textsuperscript{21} Ekirch, \textit{“Poor Carolina”}, 176-177.
developed during the period, as the interests of these three groups diverged ever more sharply and laws began to codify their separation.

Since European settlement began relatively late, the native inhabitants of North Carolina still dominated the landscape in 1708. The eastern North Carolinian tribes, perhaps having learned caution from the example of their neighbors in Virginia and South Carolina, were wary of the growing Albemarle region, and began seeking to contain European expansion early on. When formal agreements failed, they turned to violence so extensive that it threatened all of European North Carolina. In 1711, angered by continual encroachment on their lands and independence, the Tuscarora tribe ritually tortured and killed John Lawson, a well-known figure of Albemarle society who had recently published a travel journal advertising the delights of North Carolina for European settlers. This incident set off the most violent conflict between natives and Europeans in all of North America in the period. The four-year Tuscarora War, which decimated and nearly eliminated all white settlement in the colony, ending only when South Carolina’s governor sent militia troops north on a campaign to force the Tuscarora to sign a peace treaty in 1715. Demoralized by defeat, by 1722 the majority of the Tuscarora had moved north to New England to join their linguistic relatives as members of the Iroquois Confederacy. Their legacy remained, however, in the extremely tense and suspicious relationships between Europeans and Native Americans in North Carolina. Both races were quick to retaliate with violence when they felt threatened, particularly when it came to land use and ownership. Disagreements between neighbors quickly became unofficial minor wars, and as Europeans pushed west, this pattern of violent conflict moved with them. Meanwhile, marginalized tribes did persist in the east, living on some of North America’s first reservations, and despite their weakened state, nearby Europeans continued to perceive them as a threat. The deep-seated and mutual distrust between these two races meant that the potential for conflict was ever present.

Meanwhile, the proportion of blacks in relation to whites in North Carolina was low during the period, a direct result of the relatively slow adoption of slavery in the colony. Most of the successive waves of European settlers were drawn to the colony by its reputation

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as a place full of opportunity for lower-class farmers. They often lacked the financial means
to invest in the purchase of slaves, and they also settled in areas lacking in the kind of
infrastructure needed to support large-scale cultivation of cash crops, such as would demand
slave labor. In addition, the colony’s isolated nature made it difficult for those who did wish
to purchase slaves to acquire them. Cape Fear slaveowners complained that few slave traders
were willing to stop in their modest port of Wilmington, and those that did offloaded old or
otherwise undesirable slaves at their ports, knowing that demand far outstripped supply in the
area. Therefore, those blacks that did live in the colony were mostly concentrated in the
wealthy Cape Fear region, the only part of the colony where they represented a numerical
majority. As a result, racial tension between blacks and whites in North Carolina as a whole
did not have the intensity of neighboring South Carolina. The Cape Fear region, however,
was marked by growing fears of black reprisals as the institution of slavery grew.
Lawmakers from this region led the push to codify laws separating the races, so that
conditions in North Carolina gradually harshened for blacks over time. Although this
remained a largely regional issue during the period, where blacks and whites did coexist it
was often with deep suspicion and mistrust.

For a short while at the beginning of the period, blacks and Native Americans
coexisted in eastern North Carolina. As members of minority groups, they sometimes had
interests in common, and worked together against European domination. For instance, during
the Tuscarora War, the tribe boasted an impressive fort, described by the South Carolinian
military commander Colonel John Barnwell as impressive, built according to the
specifications of a runaway slave named Harry who had learned the technique during
European captivity. He was most likely killed in the aftermath of Barnwell’s victory. As
time went on and European settlement (re-)established itself in North Carolina, the
opportunities for contact between Native Americans and blacks were reduced. Most blacks
were slaves, concentrated in the east, while Native Americans were driven ever farther to the
west by European encroachment. Therefore, collaboration between these two minority
groups was extremely limited.

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Though major fault lines were drawn through North Carolinian society based on race, there were more minor divisions within each race as well, based on cultural or linguistic differences. The pull of racial loyalty could be strong enough to overcome these differences, but it could also lead different groups of the same race to collaborate with their supposed racial enemies against one another. This added dimension to ethnic conflict kept the inhabitants of North Carolina guessing, reducing their trust in all but the most limited definition of their own ethnicity.

Most of North Carolina’s native tribes belonged to one of two major language families, the Iroquoian or the Siouan. In between them were smaller groups of Algonquian Indians. These groups differed widely from one another and did not speak mutually intelligible languages or necessarily share the same customs. Where two tribes from different language families neighbored each other, they were generally ancestral enemies. In these cases, each tribe attempted to take advantage of European resources to assist them in their own wars, often promising support in European conflicts as repayment. For instance, the Iroquoian Cherokee and Siouan Catawba in western North Carolina found their own battles entangled with British and French conflicts during the French and Indian War, the North American portion of the European Seven Years’ War. This entanglement meant that both Europeans and Native Americans had a second level of loyalty to consider when dealing with each other. Their cooperation tended to be tenuous, and when it did fall apart, both sides felt betrayed, creating further potential for conflict in the region.

Early black inhabitants of North Carolina also did not necessarily trust each other. Slaves who came directly from Africa could come from a wide variety of cultures, including some who were traditional enemies. Tribal loyalties persisted in British North America, as shown by the fact that early runaway slave advertisements generally listed the slave’s tribe of origin and mentioned any other local members they knew in the region, on the assumption that they would go first to these people for assistance. As time went on and more slaves were

26Fischer, Suspect Relations, 30.

born in the region, however, old tribal affiliations lost importance. During the period between 1708-1788, black identity became more cohesive over time.28

European North Carolinians, when they felt threatened by those of another race, would generally hold together in a fairly cohesive fashion as well. But when that threat seemed less imminent, long-standing conflicts between themselves would rise back to the forefront of their interactions. Most inhabitants of the colony were British, but even within British identity there was a sharp and bitter cultural division between those of English, of Scottish, or of Scotch-Irish descent. While these fault lines were mostly based along religious lines, they also included political tensions and differences in culture. English people often partook in a cultural chauvinism which privileged their own beliefs and way of living over that of their neighbors in the British Isles. The Irish were considered particularly savage.29 However, North Carolina’s early ethnically English settlement was soon overwhelmed by the later backcountry immigrants, who, when they were British, tended to be Scotch-Irish. Drawn first to Pennsylvania, they later fanned out westward and southward through the Appalachians before arriving in the backcountry.30 Meanwhile, Highland Scots settled in the eastern part of the colony in two formally organized waves, first in 1740 and 1771, encouraged by North Carolina’s government and driven by ambitious landowners in Scotland who raised rents in order to better participate in the British political world as a whole. Unlike the Scotch-Irish, they did not disperse, but remained clustered together in what was known as the “Argyll Colony”. Some of these settlers, as is evidenced by their search for a Presbyterian minster fluent in Scottish Gaelic, could speak little English,31 and were certainly distinct from the Scotch-Irish settlers to the west in both their culture and their patterns of settlement. All of these British groups maintained their ethnic identities, and it was far from natural for them to work together. In addition, North Carolina had a large proportion of German settlers. A major settlement from the Palatine was established very


29 Fischer, Suspect Relations, 28.

30 Watson, Society in Colonial North Carolina, 5-6.

The inhabitants of early North Carolina belonged not only to three major races but also to a wide variety of subdivisions within these races. These made loyalties unstable and unpredictable, encouraging each smaller ethnic group to form a unique faction. These factions might unite against each other, but their alliances were tenuous and prone to collapse. Under these conditions, it was difficult to establish any stability in North Carolina’s political and social landscape.

C. Religious

Another factor which tended to create disunity in North Carolina was the variety of religious beliefs espoused by the inhabitants. Neither Native Americans nor African-descended slaves were generally Christians, and early European settlers made very few attempts to convert them. In their interactions, therefore, Europeans and non-Europeans were working from different systems of thought about moral behavior and the nature of the world, which increased the potential for conflict. However, even within European Christianity, there was great variation in the worldview of different sects. North Carolina boasted a diverse number of religious groups, which could lead to similar difficulties in understanding and cooperation between Europeans. In *Crime and Society in North Carolina*, Spindel points out that assault was the most frequently prosecuted crime in North Carolina in the 18th century, and that the proportion of assaults rose over time, a fact she speculates was caused by the increasing religious diversity of the region.34

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Although their often cavalier attitude to state religion led some observers to declare them atheists, essentially all European inhabitants of North Carolina between 1708 and 1788 were Christians. Furthermore, they were practically all Protestant. The range of faiths displayed in the colony was nevertheless quite wide.\textsuperscript{35} As a British colony, North Carolina’s official religion was Anglican Christianity, but the church was only officially established in 1701, and was never strongly supported by the population.\textsuperscript{36} A liberal constitution drew many settlers who were uninterested in the state religion. The Anglican church’s hierarchical structure would tend to interest only those people who were similarly supportive of the existing hierarchy in society at large. Anglicans were often wealthy and ethnically English, and they were most concentrated along the eastern coast. As these institutions were also representative of state power, non-Anglicans were required to support them in addition to voluntarily maintaining their own churches. This led to resentment of both the state and the state-supported church, and the payment of tithes became a major bone of contention in the colony. Often Anglican churches struggled to establish and maintain themselves. Churches were closed for lack of funding and fell into disrepair during the period, and exasperated Anglican missionaries returned home, complaining about the lack of support from the population. This fact can be seen as a indirect measure of the government’s weakness, as it was unable to enforce tithe laws.\textsuperscript{37} In the absence of strict government control, a wide variety of Dissenters, or non-Anglican Protestants, made the colony their home.

One religious group which gained early power in the colony were the Quakers. Some of the first settlers were Quakers, giving them time to establish themselves as a highly influential minority. By 1700, Quakers made up nearly half of the population.\textsuperscript{38} Their much more egalitarian beliefs represented a direct threat to the power of the Anglican church and the government it represented. North Carolina’s administrators attempted to eliminate this threat by requiring that all public servants swear an oath, something a Quaker would refuse to do. This caused fierce dissension, and was the impetus for the conflict which created North Carolina as a separate colony. The swearing of oaths as a requirement for membership in a

\textsuperscript{35} Watson, \textit{Society in Colonial North Carolina}, 83.


\textsuperscript{37} Barth, “‘The Sinke of America’”, 24.

group remained a topic of debate throughout the period. Though a good Quaker was not technically supposed to involve themselves too much in local politics for fear of being distracted from spiritual concerns, many Quakers remained highly involved in local government, clashing with the more hierarchically-minded members of other sects. Quakers were also officially pacifist, which complicated the question of their loyalty in violent conflicts, for instance against Native Americans. This could lead to tension between this religious group and their neighbors.39

The Presbyterian church, as the official Church of Scotland, shared many of the hierarchical tendencies of Anglicanism. However, Presbyterianism had had to struggle against Anglican pressure to maintain its official Scottish status in the past. The two institutions, each with aspirations to state support, could be seen as rivals. This religion was especially popular among the Scotch-Irish settlers of the backcountry, and as they grew in wealth and power, they began to challenge Anglican English elites in the east. Presbyterians also clashed with their less hierarchically-minded neighbors in the backcountry, however, leading to a possible conflict of interests.

Another religious group which enjoyed popularity in early North Carolina was the Baptists. This sect was part of a larger religious fervor sweeping through the British colonies, and like the Quakers, they did not have much church hierarchy, nor were they supportive of state-supported churches. Baptists, however, did not share the Quaker commitment to nonviolence and simplicity. In the backcountry, where no Anglican churches managed to gain a footing, Baptist preachers found many eager listeners. Once again, the divide between hierarchical and non-hierarchical church forms could spill over into political life, influencing the way in which Baptists combined with other factions to serve their own interests.40

A final religious group which was influential and potentially divisive in North Carolina was the Moravians. The members of this faith arrived in 1752 to settle a large tract of land they bought for themselves in the backcountry. Predominantly Germans, their community was a structured, hierarchical place which sought to avoid significant contact

39 Barth, “‘The Sinke of America’”, 22-25.

with the surrounding English-speaking settlements so as to avoid spiritual contamination. As much as possible, they attempted to stay completely neutral in local politics. Moravians were part of a worldwide church with a distinct evangelical bent, and their primary focus was on maintaining these relationships through correspondence and travel between settlements. This meant, therefore, that the Moravian definition of “local” political entanglements to avoid meant not only North Carolinian, but also British politics in general. Moravians sought to conform to local laws and avoid giving offense, but their first loyalty was always to their own church, forming a distinct faction of their own. At the same time, the Moravians’ evangelical focus, combined with their significant economic success in the North Carolina backcountry, made their towns natural regional gathering points and trade centers. Their conflicting impulses toward involvement with and dissociation from others in the region created tension with other North Carolinians, both their neighbors and the ruling elites. Interaction between Moravians and other factions was always a delicate process of negotiation.\(^{41}\)

In contrast to the varied faiths of the Native American and African inhabitants of the colony, European North Carolinians were almost uniformly Protestant Christians. However, within this single faith there was a wide spectrum of variation. In addition to the purely doctrinal disputes these churches might pursue with each other, each also possessed a different organizational structure and related to state government in a different way. Churches competed for dominance in the spiritual world, and could also guide their members to different political choices in the secular world. This made religion a natural cause of factionalism.

D. Economic

Early North Carolina was also beset by significant economic stressors which aided the development of factions pursuing their own self-interest. Between 1708 and 1788, North Carolina experienced a European population boom caused largely by settlers arriving to pursue perceived economic opportunities. This meant that the colony was in a state of constant socio-economic upheaval as one wave of newcomers after another attempted to rise to the higher ranks of North Carolinian society. In addition to this general social climbing attitude, specific local conditions worsened competition, and two major lines of conflict

\(^{41}\) As described in: Sommer, *Serving Two Masters*. 
developed between groups pursuing opposing economic interests. Planters, both the large-scale administrators of estates and subsistence farmers, found themselves involved in clashes with non-planters, whether merchants, lawyers, or government officials. Meanwhile, early debates on slavery began to take shape, as those with slaves pursued a separate economic model than those without. These divides were often a major source of conflict in the colony.

In 1708, North Carolina was lightly settled by Europeans in comparison to the surrounding colonies of Virginia and South Carolina. As these areas became more developed and land availability decreased, North Carolina became an increasingly attractive option for those still seeking economic success in North America. By Governor Burrington’s estimate in 1732, the European population numbered around 30,000, while by the Revolution this number was close to 200,000, meaning that the population increased roughly six to sevenfold in just around forty years. Some settlers came directly from Europe, but most of the colony’s population boom between the years of 1708 to 1788 was drawn from other, more settled areas of British North America. North Carolina was known as a colony with extensive tracts of available land and little established wealth, infrastructure or government involvement. These conditions were unlikely to attract those who had already established themselves well in another colony, but seemed to offer a chance of self-improvement to those who had struggled elsewhere. Advertisements for the colony emphasized the simplicity of life in the colony, but also the ease with which a hard-working settler could amass some modest comforts. It was known as “the best poor man’s country”. Of course, those drawn to the colony by these advertisements hoped not to be poor for very long. Particularly in the backcountry, settlers were determined to improve their financial lot. Wave after wave of newcomers all bent on pursuing material advantage meant that public life in North Carolina was generally far too unsettled to support fixed social strata for very long. Elites would emerge for a time in various regions, but they all found it difficult to consolidate their influence in an atmosphere of constant change and fierce competition. Even in the older, more settled and most stratified eastern region of the Cape Fear, the leading men were first-

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42 Spindel, Crime and Society in North Carolina, 4.
44 Ekirch, “Poor Carolina”, 31.
generation immigrants through mid-century, and newcomers continued to pervade the highest echelons of society through the period. In the backcountry, society’s structure was even more changeable. This led to a lack of deference which many contemporary visitors observed, often with disgust.

North Carolina’s economic jostling was only intensified by conditions that made advancement difficult. The colony suffered from a chronic lack of specie, the gold and silver coins which made up “hard” currency. Before 1764, North Carolina, like other colonies, printed “fiat” money, paper colonial money, to ease this shortage. These were like loans the colonial government made itself, based on future expected revenues. They were supposed to be paid off within a set amount of time when these revenues were collected. Unlike hard currency, paper money fluctuated in value, and therefore matched unevenly with the value of goods in hard currency. The Currency Act, passed in 1751 and extended to the southern colonies in 1764, attempted to rectify this by banning the use of paper money to pay off debts to British subjects, requiring the bills to be redeemed in hard currency, and banning the further printing of paper money as legal tender. At the same time, taxes were raised, in part to pay off the bills. As money was being removed from circulation while the population of North Carolina swiftly grew, the effects of the cash scarcity were intensified. Furthermore, whenever possible the administration insisted upon receiving taxes only in cash, not in surplus agricultural goods, increasing the demand at the same time as they decreased the supply. Lawmakers tended to willfully misinterpret or even blatantly disobey the official regulations on the issue of legal tender - between 1764 and 1775, despite the Currency Act, North Carolina issued 80,000 pounds worth of illegal paper money - but specie remained in high demand in the colony. Settlers often faced frustration as the potential economic growth of their region was choked by these artificial shortages, and competition intensified between them.

In addition, land in North Carolina was both paradoxically available and far out of reach. The question of land ownership in North Carolina was notoriously vexed. Carole

45 Ekirch, “Poor Carolina”, 33-34.
46 Ready, The Tar Heel State, 54.
Watterson Troxler summarizes the situation with the statement, “Across most of the region in the mid-eighteenth century, it was hard, if not impossible, to know if a particular tract already belonged to someone, regardless of whether anyone appeared to be using it.”\textsuperscript{49} Initially, North Carolina, as a part of the larger colony of Carolina, was privately owned in the form of land grants from the English king to eight individual noble supporters, the Lords Proprietors. The Crown attempted to regain control in 1729 by buying out the individual shares, but one of the owners, John Carteret, 2nd Earl Granville, refused to sell. As a result, while some of North Carolina’s land could be acquired through purchase from the crown, essentially the entire northern half of the colony was still under Earl Granville’s private ownership. This area was named the Granville District. Granville, like the Crown, sold the land off in smaller shares to interested settlers, administering the area through a series of deputies.\textsuperscript{50} Land speculation was a regular feature of economic life in the colony. From its earliest days, the first European settlers hurried to acquire large tracts of relatively cheap land from either the Crown or Granville’s deputies, then re-sell them at higher prices and in smaller parcels to the next wave of settlers after them.\textsuperscript{51} Settlers from the original Albemarle region clashed with newcomers from South Carolina over land speculation in the east; several decades later, some of the descendants of these same settlers were selling off large parcels of land in the western backcountry; and eventually some of the more prominent backcountry citizens would in turn move over the mountains into the illegal settlements to the far west in order to speculate on land there. Deputies were often accused of corruption and carelessness, re-selling the same piece of land to several different people, falsifying deeds, losing records of ownership, charging exorbitant administrative fees, and issuing blank patents, guarantees of land with no fixed amount so that they could be retroactively altered to suit the purchaser’s needs. Some settlers simply dispensed with the entire complex process and began squatting on unused land, making later claims to ownership through the improvements they had made on it.\textsuperscript{52} Eventually, although much of North Carolina’s land was still not in direct European use, the ownership of a particular tract of land might look like a series of nesting dolls, with each

\textsuperscript{49} Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 3.

\textsuperscript{50} Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 1-3.

\textsuperscript{51} Kars, \textit{Breaking Loose Together}, 30.

\textsuperscript{52} As described in: Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}. 

purported owner challenging a larger overarching claim, until the chain reached all the way back to Britain. Land ownership was an important component of social prestige in British society. For settlers who came to “the best poor man’s country” expecting access to land, the complexity of land speculation was maddening. Again, an artificial shortage combined with a general atmosphere of social climbing to intensify competition between various interest groups.

Under these economic stressors, two major divides began to take shape in North Carolinian society. The first of these was between planters and non-planters. Planters, in the North Carolinian view, were all those who primarily made their living through agriculture, on whatever scale. Unlike in neighboring Virginia and South Carolina, North Carolina’s society was not dominated by an elite living off the profits of a few major crops. Rice and indigo, South Carolina’s leading exports at the time, did not grow well in North Carolina’s slightly cooler climate, while Virginia’s tobacco production could not be duplicated due to a lack of infrastructure to transport the crop and slaves to grow it. Modest production of these crops were achieved in the state, but they did not generally dictate the pattern of life in the region. The poorest of North Carolina’s farmers grew only enough to subsist upon, but others among them were able to produce and sell a surplus of the crops they needed to feed themselves, such as corn. Planters were influenced by the traditional British view of land ownership as well as the experience of their neighboring colonies, in which planters dominated their societies. Many settlers came to North Carolina focused on acquiring land in order to also gain status.

However, non-planters also came to North Carolina seeking profit. Establishments which operated both as taverns and stores were most common in the backcountry, where they sold such diverse goods as flour, nails and patent medicines in addition to alcoholic drinks. These stores were important ties between the local economy and the larger economy of the Atlantic world, providing imported goods, financial services and serving as collection points for local produce and deerskins. North Carolinians were eager to participate in the transatlantic trade, even if the goods they could acquire were comparatively meager and low-

54 Ekirch, “*Poor Carolina*”.
quality. Planters often bought on credit and then found themselves unable to repay these debts. Yet the merchants, too, had moved to the backcountry with the express purpose of improving their situation. Some were tied to firms with broader connections in the colonial world, while some were independent, yet none were interested in running at a loss. In order to make a profit, these businesses then needed to pass the costs of these uncollected debts along to other customers, which they did through raising their prices and buying local produce at lower rates.\(^{56}\) This was in addition to the markup merchants added due to the cost of transporting goods into the backcountry.\(^{57}\) Therefore planters and merchants could be at odds over both debts and prices. Stores were also key centers for social and political life, and particularly in the backcountry, where there were few public meeting places, this meant that the merchants who ran them were often quite well placed for involvement and influence in local affairs.\(^{58}\) This could increase planters’ resentment of them as well. In addition to merchants, other groups of non-planters could create friction while seeking their advantage. Whether governmental officials or private employees, those involved in the sale of land or the collection of taxes were consistently accused of corruption.\(^{59}\) The interests of planters and non-planters were not often aligned, leading to tension between the groups.

Another economic conflict of interests in North Carolina was that between slaveholders and non-slaveholders. Again in contrast to the surrounding colonies, North Carolina did not have a large population of slaves during this period. Access to the transatlantic slave trade was difficult due to the colony’s isolated position, and the cash crops that relied on slave labor were not a dominant feature of the economy. The same advertisements that proclaimed North Carolina was the “best poor man’s country” admitted frankly that there was little to entice a prosperous slaveowner to the colony. Nevertheless, members of wealthier elites did own slaves, and in some limited areas they did become a

\(^{56}\) Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 62-64.


major factor in economic production. The settlers of the Cape Fear region used slave labor to process pine trees and produce tar for British shipping on a scale which would otherwise have been unobtainable. Their region became so known for their production of naval stores that they gave the name “the Tar Heel State” to North Carolina. Like their South Carolina relatives, these North Carolinians measured their wealth in the number of slaves owned. Residents of the backcountry perceived the existence of a slave-based economy in the colony as a threat to their own way of life and accused eastern elites of manipulating the laws in order to help shore up their economic position at the expense of the west. It is no coincidence that backcountry North Carolinians, when they felt under threat, often complained of being made slaves themselves. They feared economic domination by the eastern elites, who had access to unfree labor on a greater scale. Meanwhile, as some members of the backcountry accumulated enough wealth to consider slaveholding themselves, their responses were mixed. As the Moravian communities of Wachovia prospered in the latter end of the period, they found themselves amassing human property while also, in a minority of cases, acknowledging their slaves as members of their own church.

The Moravians preferred to focus on handicrafts such as pottery and on trade, employing their slaves to work alongside themselves in ones and twos in these businesses and therefore sidestepping the discussion of large-scale slave labor, yet the tension between slaves as members of the community and possessions at the same time became increasingly difficult to reconcile. Nevertheless, the ideological divisions between those who held slaves and those who did not were not nearly as clear as they would become in the 19th century. Most of the conflict surrounding slavery

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62 Wood, *This Remote Part of the World*.


centered on economic interest, as two different approaches to profit-making struggled to outdo each other.

Economic factors increased the amount of factionalism in North Carolina in several ways. First, the waves of settlers coming to the colony in order to improve their circumstances created a society marked by social climbing and constant change, in which no elite group was able to establish itself permanently. Stress was added by the scarcity of specie and common land speculation in the colony, increasing the likelihood that colonists would struggle against each other for these advantages. Two major lines of conflict were particularly noticeable: the competition between planters and non-planters, and between slaveowners and non-slaveowners. However, smaller groups could easily form when colonists found that their economic interests aligned. The attempt to gain economic advantage could prove a strong motivator for the development of factions.
North Carolina owes its existence, as a colony and then as a state, to its history of factionalism. The much larger colony of “Carolina” was one of the earliest founded by the British in North America, but its southern region found much greater success than the settlements to the north. As a result, all political administration was concentrated in these southern settlements. Over time, conflicting interests between the early settlers of the region led to a series of political clashes. During this period of unrest, the society of the southern settlements, which was far more developed, remained fairly cohesive, but the northern settlements splintered even among themselves, resulting in full-blowned violent conflict. Governance appeared to have temporarily broken down completely. A stopgap measure was taken, dividing the area into North and South Carolina, in order to provide the northern settlements with their own administration in hopes of gaining more direct control over the troubled colony. The attempt was only partially successful, for although North Carolina’s administration remained problematic, South Carolina could now progress independently, without concerning themselves with the strife to their north. The division was made more permanent in 1712, though the Lords Proprietors continued to govern both colonies, and North Carolina was finally completely separated from its southern neighbor when it was converted from a proprietary to a royal colony in 1729.

At first glance, this would seem a powerful confirmation of the standard narrative about North Carolina’s strife-filled past. When a region is so incapable of rational social interaction that all government breaks down, to the extent that the area must be administratively isolated while the rest of the colony continues, then certainly it must be an anarchic area. However, this interpretation originates outside of the colony, from the standpoint of South Carolinians or, at an even further remove, from the proprietors of the colony in Britain. Most historians have accepted the “long stereotype”, building upon it to explore their own interests in the region. Only Noeleen McIlvenna has attempted to argue against it directly; however, her interpretation of the inhabitants as a coherent ideological

67 Ready, The Tar Heel State, 44.
68 Spindel, Crime and Society in North Carolina, 8.
bloc resisting the authoritarian and slaveholding Anglicans goes too far in the other direction. In truth, North Carolinian society at the time was not unified under a single ideology or attitude, but rather smaller groups which shared the same interests. It is furthermore true that these factions did not harden into established interest groups or even political parties, instead remaining fluid, as individuals joined them, left them, and then perhaps joined a rival group, all with little difficulty. It is this very fluidity, however, which points to an important characteristic of North Carolinian society missed by the “long stereotype”: the settlers in this supposedly anarchistic region were quite open to cooperation with people from a wide variety of backgrounds, who might have interests very different from their own. Their factions were formed as a means to an end, and all other considerations could be laid aside while they cooperated to achieve a short-term goal. These groups, although rarely formally structured, were quite capable of organized and directed action in pursuit of their interests. This is the beginning of a pattern of behavior which will be traced throughout the period of time between 1708 - 1788: a broad willingness for cooperation between diverse colonists with varied interests, but only on a short-term basis to achieve concrete goals. Attempts to create a permanent, hierarchical and authoritarian basis for government generally found little resonance in North Carolina; however, for those willing to offer specific benefits to interests in the region in return for their support, authority could be wielded with relative ease.

The initial incident which led to unrest in Carolina, and eventually to the division of the colony, was the conflict known as the Cary Rebellion. The roots of this incident can be found in the initial settlement of the area which would later become North Carolina. As was discussed in an earlier section, the Albemarle region was the first area in North Carolina to be consistently settled. As an isolated and economically unprofitable region dominated by natural features such as the Great Dismal Swamp and the Outer Banks, those most attracted to the area tended to be those who had not profited in other, more established settlements. Initial colonists were also drawn from runaway slaves and indentured servants from Virginia, who used the swamps as a hiding place to avoid recapture, as well as religious dissidents who were not always accepted in neighboring colonies, such as the Quakers. 69 This religious group, in particular, came to be influential in the administration of the Albemarle region. Quaker meetings were quickly established, and the sense of community they built made them

69 Barth, “‘The Sinke of America’”, 1-3.
more willing to work with one another and in each other’s interests. The number of public offices they held grew as the colony did.\textsuperscript{70} As such, the attitudes generally associated with Quakers became the colonial policies of the region. For instance, Albemarle Europeans tended to be careful in their dealings with the neighboring Native American tribes, generally preferring to engage in formal diplomatic negotiations and avoid territorial encroachment which had not previously been agreed upon.\textsuperscript{71} Since the Quakers, as a religious group, espoused an egalitarian philosophy, they also did little to change the relatively egalitarian nature of Albemarle society. While the social structure of other colonies began to stratify, in Albemarle there were few distinctions of rank or wealth.\textsuperscript{72} Therefore, the original society of Albemarle region differed from other southern colonies in its composition, structure and policies.

As long as the settlement in the Albemarle region was negligible, it was largely ignored by colonial administrators. When the region became more developed, however, it began to attract attention from other areas of the British Empire, both in the colonies as well as in Great Britain. While still a comparatively poor and unimportant place, Albemarle was now large enough to warrant administrative oversight and to attract colonists with slightly more economic means, who also preferred a more hierarchical society. These newer colonists, as well as the colonial administrators beyond the Albemarle region, were interested in making changes to the existing political landscape. As part of a larger British colonial world, these would-be planters shared the same interests as men in Virginia, South Carolina, and the West Indies in establishing the plantation system. This would provide structure and stratify their society with them at the top. It would help to integrate them into the larger British world and provide a united front against Native Americans and other non-Europeans. Leading citizens such as Thomas Pollock, who would become one of the most prominent representatives of Anglican interests in the area, and in 1712, North Carolina’s governor, were eager to see North Carolinian society follow the norms of their neighbors into a


\textsuperscript{71}McIlvenna, \textit{A Very Mutinous People}, 135.

\textsuperscript{72}Barth, “‘The Sinke of America’”, 19.
plantation society. Leading Anglicans in neighboring colonies such as Virginia, however, had two advantages: they were natives of the region, beginning their careers in an already established hierarchy, and they were able to use the power of a well-established Anglican church, in which they also held leadership positions, to strengthen their secular roles. North Carolinian elites did not have the benefit of an established place in the social order, but the Anglican church was, as the official state religion, a representative of state power and an organizing force the could use to structure North Carolina’s society in the form they desired. Men like Thomas Pollock, therefore, attempted to strengthen the Anglican church establishment and its influence in government against the influence of Quakers, whom they saw as a significant threat to their values.

Quakers, as a result of their religious convictions, refused to swear any oath. In previous decades, North Carolina’s government had been flexible on this point, allowing them to “affirm”, rather than swear, their loyalty to the British regent in order to participate in colonial politics. The new Anglican settlers worked to bar this affirmation as an appropriate substitute. As a result, Quakers were now prevented from participating in governmental leadership. With their positions vacated, there was a power vacuum which could be filled by the new colonists, who tended to be Anglicans. In addition, a new vestry law was being discussed during this time, which would authorize a tax on every North Carolina citizen to provide financial security for the Anglican church, which had previously depended on voluntary support. This would tend to further entrench this denomination while drawing off resources that might otherwise flow to other groups. The religious and social leanings of Anglicans in North Carolina therefore supported their personal political advancement, as well as the establishment of the more hierarchical society they preferred.

Naturally, this tightening of control did not meet with everyone’s approval. In addition to the now disadvantaged Quakers, the law also met with strong objections from other colonists who had no adherence to the Quaker religion. Their motivations were neither

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74 Devine, “Forging Alliances”, 327.


76 As described in McIlvenna, *A Very Mutinous People*. 
solely religious nor political, but something of a mixture of both. Some were more religiously tolerant Anglicans\textsuperscript{77}, but others were not. Rather, they belonged to other dissident Protestant sects, most of which had also experienced pressure from the Anglican church and from British government in the past. Some colonists even openly declared that they had no religion at all. While these colonists themselves would have no problem with taking an oath and therefore participating in government, they recognized that Anglican influence would be associated with greater governmental control, and with it, a more hierarchical structure to their society.\textsuperscript{78} Since most of these original colonists had been attracted to North Carolina because of its lack of just such a structure, they were not eager to see it replaced.

Furthermore, since the Anglican party was based in Albemarle, the oldest and more northerly section of the colony, the settlers in the relatively newer, more southern settlements of Bath County also resented this attempt at gaining more control over the colony, seeing it as a threat to their own interests. Therefore, a diverse group of colonists, motivated by religious, economic and regional reasons, shared a common short-term interest, the removal of the Anglican party.

As an Anglican and a Quaker faction developed in North Carolina, tension slowly built in the colony. Things finally came to head through the actions of Thomas Cary. Since 1689, the northern part of the colony of Carolina had had a deputy governor in order to better administrate the area. This deputy answered to the government in the southern part of the colony until 1712, when he began to answer to the Lords Proprietors directly.\textsuperscript{79} In 1705, Cary, a successful politician and native of the more hierarchical southern region of the Carolina colony, was appointed the deputy governor of the northern portion, which would soon become North Carolina.\textsuperscript{80} His strong support for the Anglican party angered disaffected residents, who independently sent a Quaker representative over the heads of the entire colonial government to the Lords Proprietors in England, to plead for Cary’s dismissal. Cary was ousted, but his temporary replacement, Albemarle native William Glover, proved to be an even more ardent supporter of the Anglican party. Cary, a pragmatist, then formed an


\textsuperscript{78} Barth, “‘The Sinke of America’”, 22, 25.

\textsuperscript{79} Fischer, \textit{Suspect Relations}, 21.

alliance with John Porter, a Quaker who had taken the oath in order to serve in government despite his religious beliefs. Together, they began to reach out to common settlers to form the Quaker party. In 1708, in a striking reversal, these dissidents then rejected the dismissal they had just gained from the Lords Proprietors, declared Glover’s appointment void, and instead recalled Cary as their governor. Glover’s supporters, the Anglican party, raised a local militia to counter this decision, and two rival governments began to challenge each other for legitimacy. The conflict between these two factions soon developed into violent clashes between residents.

The actions of the Quaker party during this conflict show just how willing North Carolinians were to form alliances with each other for short-term gains. The case of Thomas Cary and the Quaker party is the clearest example of this. This politician, neither a Quaker nor a native of the North Carolina region, and in fact so much opposed to the Quaker party that an envoy was sent all the way to England to plead for his removal, still managed to rally supporters to himself by suddenly joining his former opponents. This was a move of pure political calculation, but though it can hardly have been lost on the other members of the Quaker party, yet it was irrelevant to them in the face of a greater enemy. As the formerly appointed official, rather than an ad hoc replacement like Glover, he was useful in lending their party legitimacy, and therefore easily accepted into their faction. In addition, true Quakers, as pacifists, would be philosophically opposed to participating in the fighting itself. However, other members of the “Quaker party” lacked such qualms. It might seem that this unequal burden of risk would threaten the faction’s cohesiveness, but this does not seem to be the case. North Carolinians proved strikingly accepting of internal philosophical differences, provided everyone involved contributed in some way. Furthermore, the Quaker party also proved willing to enlist the local native tribe of the Tuscarora, whose goodwill they had earned through past policy, for help in attacks against their European enemies. Though the Tuscarora deliberated too long on the matter to actually provide assistance, the Quaker party certainly pressed for their support in no uncertain terms. Not only were dissidents willing to work together across religious and regional lines, they were willing to cross perhaps the greatest dividing line in the colony, that of race, to help further their aims. In the long term,

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many of those supporting the Quaker party would have found that their interests differed. As Christine Styrna Devine points out, even during the conflict, the alliance sometimes faltered: while more southerly members of the Quaker party pushed to create a new county and continue expansion to the south, northern members did not always support them in the legislature. When regional interests conflicted with religious ones, the faction was in danger of breaking apart again. This suggests a widely varied group of people who were quite willing to work together for a limited amount of time - but not for ideological reasons, as McIlvenna claims, so much as for their own personal gain.

In their cooperative effort, the Quaker party was soon successful. The primary leaders of the Anglican party quickly left for Virginia, and Thomas Cary regained power in the northern part of Carolina, albeit unrecognized by the southern portion of the colony or by Britain. As this government essentially existed with the sanction of no outside authority, it was administratively distinguished from the loyal southern portion of the colony. During this time, little to no taxes were collected, and colonists generally traded their produce rather than using hard currency. Without the support of the Vestry Act, Anglican churches remained very modest, and critical observers saw the population as lazy and careless, not taking full advantage of the colony’s resources. McIlvenna interprets this simply as the criticism of outsiders who did not share the values of the Quaker party. However, this rhetoric will return again, in the future conflicts which will be discussed later. It appears to be a key part of the “long stereotype”, deployed against less settled areas by more hierarchically organized ones. In this case, while supposed anarchy reigned to the north, the southern portion continued developing in the approved hierarchical manner - and so North and South Carolina were created, both in political practice and in the rhetorical imagination.

It is a measure of just how insignificant North Carolina was perceived to be that no real action was undertaken against this rebel government until three years later, in 1711. In that year, a separate governor, appointed by the Lords Proprietors for the new de facto colony of North Carolina, finally arrived in North Carolina. Edward Hyde was sent to return the region to order, and North Carolinians, again showing their willingness to cooperate, initially allowed him to assume the governorship. However, he also proved too eager to enforce

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83 Devine, “Forging Alliances”, 331.

84 McIlvenna, A Very Mutinous People, 131-134.
Anglican control. The Quaker party once again rallied around Thomas Cary, and conflict soon broke out once again85, this time on a greater scale than before. The violence did not restrict itself to neighborly skirmishes on land: a ship commanded by the Quaker party fired cannon into Thomas Pollock’s house, where Hyde and his supporters were meeting. The Anglicans, in a ship of their own, gave chase, attacked and captured the Quaker ship, but Cary’s supporters continued the struggle, fortifying on a small island off the coast.86 Once again, this faction, despite being created out of a number of diverse philosophical leanings, proved remarkably resistant to outside pressures.

With this action, the Quaker party began to drift dangerously close to the appearance, if not the intention, of breaking with British government entirely. Cary and his supporters continued a longstanding alliance between North Carolinians and merchant traders off the Albemarle coast. These traders provided goods not normally available to the isolated community, at prices reduced by evading the usual tariffs.87 It was one of these questionable merchants, Richard Roach, who had provided the Quaker party with the ammunition to arm their own ship.88 But the ties between North Carolinians and the shadier side of Atlantic trade ran deeper than that. The coast off the Albemarle settlement was notoriously frequented by pirates, and North Carolinians had often been accused of harboring these raiders. The famous pirate Blackbeard was known to traffic in stolen goods in the capital of North Carolina itself, the town of Bath.89 Just seven years later, in 1718, Blackbeard would receive a pardon from North Carolina’s governor, also his personal friend, in the same town in which Cary’s rebels based themselves.90 The Quaker party, based in an area known for its sympathies to pirates, was now using weapons acquired through questionable traders to attack colonial settlements and battle the legally appointed governor at sea. Of course, the Quaker party were not doing so for direct financial gain, but the question remained: would

85 Fischer, Suspect Relations, 52-53; McIlvenna, A Very Mutinous People, 139.
87 Butler, Pirates, Privateers and Rebel Raiders of the Carolina Coast, 39-40.
88 McIlvenna, A Very Mutinous People, 140-141.
90 Butler, Pirates, Privateers and Rebel Raiders of the Carolina Coast, 39; Ready, The Tar Heel State, 47.
more distant British authorities be interested in the fine distinctions of the conflict, or would they simply classify this behavior as treason?

Finally, Governor Spotswood of Virginia came to the conclusion, as quoted in the introduction, that North Carolina’s disorder threatened to destabilize his own colony. In addition to the dangerous precedent set by the Quaker party’s newly seafaring ways, Virginia had recently had to suppress a slave rebellion whose goal had been to escape to less structured North Carolina. The Virginia government feared that further discontents would attempt to seek protection in North Carolina after seeing the Quaker party’s demonstration of strength.91 This, in turn, fit into a larger set of concerns about threats to the stabilizing hierarchy throughout the British colonial world. Cary had apparently threatened Hyde with the fate of recent governors of Antigua and Nevis, who were killed after conflicts with the local population.92 The Cary Rebellion, therefore, was not just unrest in an insignificant hinterland, but a symptom of a larger danger which needed to be contained.

As a result of these fears, Spotswood sent a company of royal marines south to end the conflict. No one had approved the use of force against the European inhabitants of a colony not under his control, and from the volume of the letters he wrote justifying his actions, Spotswood clearly realized this was an unprecedented use of his authority as the representative of royal power. Nevertheless, he felt the threat North Carolina posed to Virginian society and to royal authority in general justified his actions. In the face of the British navy, Cary’s rebels fled.93 It appears clear that they, like Spotswood, perceived the act of sending the marines as the intervention of royal authority, and abandoned the fight rather than commit a clear-cut act of treason by fighting. Cary and his supporters were captured, Hyde assumed his position as governor in North Carolina, and to a large extent, the issues surrounding the conflict were decided in favor of the Anglican party.

Throughout the conflict known as Cary’s Rebellion, North Carolinians in the Quaker party exhibited the ability to work together despite a variety of backgrounds and interests, which speaks against the “long stereotype” of North Carolina’s innately disorganized and rebellious ways. Noeleen McIlvenna’s interpretation of the case, however, seems to go to the

91 McIlvenna, A Very Mutinous People, 141-142.
93 McIlvenna, A Very Mutinous People, 145-147.
opposite extreme in rejecting or reinterpreting the “long stereotype”. For McIlvenna, the inhabitants of North Carolina were engaging in a sophisticated rebellion against Anglican outsiders. Therefore, the “long stereotype” is simply a result of the misinterpretation and/or rejection of the beliefs of egalitarian North Carolina society by outsiders.\(^\text{94}\) However, the conflict was in fact one between members of the same colonial society, as can be seen by the fact that a militia, drawn from local inhabitants, was raised in 1708 to counter the Quaker party. The diversity of the inhabitants, the disorganized way in which they settled the colony, and their divided reaction to British attempts to consolidate power makes this reinterpretation of North Carolina as a unified society doubtful. Furthermore, the inhabitants appear to have been united not by their ideology, but by their political pragmatism. Quakers, Baptists, and Presbyterians were capable of unifying for short-term gain, even if they might become rivals at a later date. They also easily accepted Thomas Cary, a former opponent who was obviously not of their ideological leanings, as a leader when they felt it suited their purposes as well as his. They showed themselves receptive to help from the Tuscarora, who shared neither their political nor their religious leanings, and they were also willing to appeal directly to higher sources of authority in Britain against their more local colonial administrators, showing that they would draw assistance from wherever they could find it without too many ideological scruples. The faction was also able to cope with disagreement about how it should proceed, for instance in the varied attitudes to violent conflict espoused by its Quaker and non-Quakers members. The Quaker party was able to unite various interests effectively enough to drive out their rivals and replace them with their own government for several years, suggesting a fair degree of cooperative ability. However, the Quaker party did not represent all of North Carolina’s inhabitants, nor was it a truly stable and ideologically coherent group, but rather a temporary faction.

Furthermore, the fact that the conflict ended with the intervention of direct royal authority points to another significant point about North Carolinian feelings about a hierarchically structured society. North Carolinians certainly had no difficulty confronting local sources of authority, who served at several removes from royal power. In this, McIlvenna’s judgment of the inhabitants as resistant to too much governmental control is accurate. However, the Lords Proprietors owned the colony of North Carolina because the

\(^{94}\) As described in: McIlvenna, *A Very Mutinous People*. 
king had given them the land as a gift; colonists clearly did not see this as a royal endorsement of all of their decisions. It was possible, then, to revolt against local authority while still ultimately considering oneself to be a loyal subject. Those North Carolinians who joined the Quaker party were not in any way opposed to all authority. Instead, they were opposed to very specific, quite local authorities, and rather than remove them entirely, they intended to replace them with their own preferred candidate. Yet even then, they sought to place their actions within a legal framework. When Thomas Cary himself first earned their displeasure, they went beyond the colonial administration of North America and directly appealed to the Lords Proprietors. Although they were disregarding local authority, they simultaneously sought to justify it with an appeal to a higher source. Later, Cary became an attractive figure specifically because he had once been appointed the governor, lending legitimacy to their cause. North Carolinians were therefore not only willing to organize themselves into cooperative groups, they were willing to do so around a central figure of authority, one who should be as legitimate within the existing legal and political framework as possible. None of North Carolina’s various interest groups, however unified into a faction for a common goal, was prepared to challenge the ultimate authority of the crown. The egalitarianism of North Carolina’s early society had its limits. The evidence of Cary’s Rebellion points not to the “mutinous people” described in McIlvenna’s book as a society opposed to a hierarchy, but rather to a society fiercely struggling over who should be allowed a place near the top of the hierarchy as it was created. In any event, all factions agreed that the highest power, the crown, should remain unchallenged.

Nevertheless, McIlvenna’s resistance to the “long stereotype” is fundamentally correct in one respect: Cary’s Rebellion was certainly a destructive factionalist conflict which led to a temporary breakdown in official government, but it was not the product of an anarchistic society in which every minor interest group turned on the others. Rather, both the Anglican and the Quaker party were both well-organized groups of citizens pursuing clear political and religious aims. While the Anglican party was fairly homogenous, the Quaker party also shows evidence that early North Carolinians were ready and willing to organize into a larger factional group despite having different philosophical approaches and competing long-term goals - and that such a group could exhibit resiliency and coherence despite internal debate.
Cary’s Rebellion, as the factional conflict which first called North Carolina into existence, is also significant because it set the precedent for many further power struggles within the state. Later North Carolinian factions would also show great ease at forming coalitions between members of different religious denominations, a desire to legitimize their rebellion through appeals to higher authority, a willingness to rally around a single political leader, and an overall respect for the ultimate power of overarching political authorities, be they the crown or the U.S. government. North Carolinians lived in a society in which the hierarchy was fluid, and each interest group sought a way to place themselves near the top. However, they were quite willing to work together for their mutual benefit whenever necessary. These were ambitious political pragmatists, not anarchistic rebels.

The other major conflict which occurred in North Carolina’s earliest years sprung from very different concerns, yet it too established a precedent for the way further conflicts would develop in the state. The Tuscarora War, fought primarily between the powerful Tuscarora tribe and their allies against the European inhabitants of the region, exemplifies a Native American strategy of combining earnest diplomatic effort with equally serious violent aggression which various tribes pursued throughout North Carolina in the period between 1708 and 1788. It also shows the potential for both interracial conflict and collaboration between the three major ethnic groups of the area: European colonists, African-descended slaves, and native North Carolinian tribes. The Tuscarora War shows similarity with Cary’s Rebellion in the way that its opposing factions organized. At first glance, the Tuscarora War appears to have been fought between simple racial antagonists, but in reality, both sides of the conflict actively sought support from groups with other racial identities. Much in the same way that Cary’s Rebellion was fought by members of a “Quaker party” and an “Anglican party” who were not necessarily adherents to those faiths, both sides of the Tuscarora War were mixed groups, each fighting for their own reasons, but willing to unite to achieve short-term goals. In this way, the Tuscarora War, although obviously an example of violent conflict between inhabitants of the state whose interests were opposed, also exemplifies the North Carolinian ability to work with members of very different groups when their interests aligned.

The Tuscarora War followed closely on the heels of Cary’s Rebellion, beginning in 1711 shortly after the final surrender of the Quaker party and lasting four years before its
eventual resolution in the Europeans’ favor in 1715. The causes of the conflict are fairly straightforward. Tensions between Native Americans and Europeans had been increasing in the colony for some time. Negligible though the European population in North Carolina might be in comparison to other British colonies, it had begun to grow and expand to an extent that meant their inevitable encroachment on native land. The tribes in the easternmost part of the North Carolina were all minor, without a great deal of power or influence among their native neighbors. The fate of the Meherrin tribe is exemplary of their situation, as well as the larger Native American dilemma in the region.

The Meherrin lived on or near the border between Virginia and North Carolina. Though they originated from further north, within coastal Virginia, the growing settlements and the unrest they caused there drove them south, to an area in which the exact boundary between the two colonies was contested. Virginia claimed a lower boundary line which afforded it more land, while North Carolina insisted upon a higher one in which it gained an advantage.95 The Meherrin soon found that the unfavorable Virginian conditions were beginning to take hold in North Carolina as well. They established cordial diplomatic relations with European officials, but since North Carolina’s weak government was neither willing nor able to police the behavior of its settlers, illegal homesteads continually sprung up within land that was legally promised to the Meherrin. Nevertheless, the Meherrin persisted in attempting to call settlers to account through their own European-based legal channels. Europeans did not attempt to impose their legal system on the internal business of native tribes, but they did accept them into their own courts when they had disputes with Europeans.96 With the aid of an “Indian agent”, a governmental liaison, the Meherrin brought offending settlers to North Carolinian courts, suing them for trespassing as well as for injury when arguments between antagonistic neighbors turned into fistfights. They also adopted other European practices to secure their land, such as surveying its boundaries and acquiring written deeds.97

However, the authoritarian turn in North Carolinian society had also taken its effect in law, as the constraints on settlers were weakened and the Meherrin found themselves unable

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97 LeMaster, “In the ‘Scolding Houses’”, 221.
to win their lawsuits. The tribe therefore turned to a fairly refined diplomatic tactic. Aware that North Carolinian and Virginian Europeans were at odds with one another about the placement of the border, the Meherrin strategically aligned themselves with first one, then the other colony, playing the two off against each other in hopes of more favorable conditions for themselves. This gambit worked: the Virginians took their part against the North Carolinians, becoming protective of the Meherrin settlements against North Carolinian settlers as a way of reinforcing the area as a part of their own colonial territory.98

It was the North Carolinians’ claim to the dividing line, however, which was eventually accepted by British authorities as the legal one. By now, the North Carolinian attitude toward land ownership had changed. Rather than continually negotiate with the Meherrin for further use of the land, they claimed it all, designating a distinct smaller area where they promised the tribe could live without further interference. Yet soon they were encroaching even upon this very early example of an Indian reservation. Meherrins left North Carolina, joined other tribes, or simply intermarried with Europeans and Africans. Eventually, the tribe faded out of the records, essentially ceasing to exist.99

This struggle was repeated throughout North Carolina with various other minor eastern tribes. They generally attempted to defend their claims to the land through diplomatic means or formal, Europeanized legal action. When violent conflict occurred, it was generally between neighboring individuals in dispute, not as an organized tactic. Despite their efforts, these smaller tribes soon found themselves marginalized. It was clear that European proximity was essentially an automatic threat to native land use and ownership.

Furthermore, Carolinian settlers had made serious attempts to capture natives for use as slaves, or, more often, to buy defeated captives from victorious native tribes for these purposes. While North Carolinians, who remained poor and isolated on the coast, had not pursued this policy with any real intensity or success, a homegrown slave trade was flourishing in South Carolina at this time, reaching all the way west to the distant Cherokee in the Appalachian mountains. By 1708, there were 2,900 African, but also 1,400 Indian slaves in South Carolina, representing a significant percentage of the slave population.100

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between traditional enemy tribes in the region intensified as each side saw an opportunity to profit doubly from victory.\textsuperscript{101} The destabilization of the native political landscape, therefore, could be traced back to European influence through the slave trade as well as through competition over land. This also deepened the mistrust between Europeans and Native Americans in the region.

The upheaval which occurred in native societies had a ripple effect which influenced the surrounding tribes who still lived beyond intensive European contact as well. To the west of the smaller North Carolinian tribes, the larger and more powerful Tuscarora tribe had their territory. These members of the Iroquois language family had diplomatic ties reaching well beyond the colony, primarily running up the Appalachian mountain chain to the unified tribes of the Iroquois Confederacy, the Five Nations, in the North American northeast. The Tuscarora recognized the threat of European encroachment well before it began to affect them directly, and unlike their smaller neighbors, they were in a position to threaten Europeans with effective violent resistance as well as diplomatic opposition.\textsuperscript{102}

This does not mean, however, that they saw these two tactics as entirely different strategies. Rather than turn to violence when their diplomatic options were exhausted, it seems that the Tuscarora used both violence and diplomacy at once in their attempts to hold off European encroachment. While maintaining a correspondence with the European settlers in which they aired their grievances, they also attempted to use smaller, more easterly tribes with whom they had influence to carry out a small-scale proxy war against some European settlements. Even when these skirmishes escalated into a full-scale conflict, the Tuscarora continued to tell the Europeans that they hoped to reach a reconciliation soon.\textsuperscript{103} Despite its violent nature, the Tuscarora War appears to have been seen by the natives not as an attempt to drive out all Europeans, but a move to emphasize the strength of their resistance and the degree to which their complaints should be taken seriously. Violence was not necessarily intended as a breakdown of diplomatic relations, but rather as a particularly emphatic diplomatic tactic. This can be seen in the highly symbolic beginning of the war.


\textsuperscript{103} Feeley, “Before long to be good friends”, 140-141.
In 1711, the Tuscarora captured two noted prisoners, John Lawson and Christoph Graffenried. Lawson was a naturalist who had traveled and written extensively about the colony, including its native settlements, in which he had previously stayed, and whose culture he had made attempts to describe for European audiences. Lawson not only advocated for their fair treatment,\textsuperscript{104} he also promoted interracial marriages as a way of integrating both cultures, under the assumption that European influence would both literally and metaphorically whiten natives.\textsuperscript{105} However, in his recent book, \textit{A New Voyage to Carolina}, published in 1709, Lawson had highly recommended North Carolina as an ideal location for new European settlement. He had also been active in the creation of Bath, North Carolina’s first incorporated town, in 1705, both drawing up the plans of the town and buying up the best lots of land for himself.\textsuperscript{106} Therefore, Lawson was well-known to the native population of North Carolina, and by explicitly encouraging further European encroachment, he had placed himself in direct opposition to their interests. He was also closely connected with the second captive, Baron Christoph de Graffenried, and had assisted him in his own efforts in North Carolina.\textsuperscript{107} Graffenried was the founder and leader of a Swiss group of settlers which had recently purchased ten thousand acres from the Lords Proprietors.\textsuperscript{108} They had established their new town, New Bern, closer to the Tuscarora than any previously formally established settlement. It was actually already the site of a town belonging to a neighboring tribe, the Neusioc, and though the Europeans did negotiate with the Neusioc to acquire the land, for the Tuscarora its existence was simply too threatening to tolerate.\textsuperscript{109} An entire community was suddenly imported to a rudimentary urban center replacing a native settlement, which could be interpreted as more of a threat than the gradual infiltration of lone colonists that had occurred up to this time. Graffenried, being the man who had negotiated the land purchase and led the settlement, would naturally be a focus for Tuscarora frustration.

\textsuperscript{104} Latham and Samford, “Naturalist, Explorer and Town Father”, 251, 261.


\textsuperscript{106} Ewen, “John Lawson’s Bath”, 266.

\textsuperscript{107} Latham and Samford, “Naturalist, Explorer and Town Father”, 253.

\textsuperscript{108} McIlvenna, \textit{A Very Mutinous People}, 132.

\textsuperscript{109} Fischer, \textit{Suspect Relations}, 83.
Rumors had begun to spread that Lawson and Graffenried intended to expand onto further land, and they were in fact captured on a surveying expedition. Some historians claim that Graffenried was actually mistaken for the new Governor Hyde, and that the Tuscarora believed that Hyde, as the leader of the Anglican party, would deal more harshly with them than their former allies in the Quaker party. In any case, Lawson and Graffenried were clearly targeted as a deliberate political statement.

Once captured, the Tuscarora initially only held them a few days while the tribe explained their grievances. Graffenried was impressed by their logic. Both were threatened, but Graffenried, who was submissive and conciliatory, was released and allowed to return to New Bern, possibly because he managed to convince the Tuscarora that he was not actually Governor Hyde. At any rate, the Tuscarora appear to have come to terms with him as the representative of his community, in effect a kind of minor local chief. In return for supplies, which may have been interpreted as tribute, and for the loyalty of the Swiss/German settlement there, the Tuscarora agreed to tolerate New Bern and not to offer it any violence. Lawson, however, did not show the same deference. Apparently he argued with the natives, destroying their trust in him and his promises, and was then killed in a ritualistic manner. The kidnapping of the two men and the death of Lawson were not random acts of violence. They were specifically targeted for their role in the Tuscarora grievances, as men who might be responsive to a particularly forceful session of diplomacy. When Lawson proved unwilling to engage, he was killed in a symbolically significant way, marking him an enemy. For Europeans, this could be read as a declaration of war. But Graffenried, who appeared receptive to diplomacy, was released unharmed. The Tuscarora did not seem to see their actions as a complete and definitive break with their European neighbors - just with those who were uncooperative.

After John Lawson’s death, the relationship between the Tuscarora and European North Carolinian settlers deteriorated rapidly into a small-scale war. Initially, the Tuscarora

112 Ready, The Tar Heel State, 35.
113 McIlvenna, A Very Mutinous People, 149.
114 Feeley, “‘Before long to be good friends’”, 145-146; Carson, “Histories of the ‘Tuscarora War’”, 194.
and their smaller allied tribes had a distinct advantage, pursuing an aggressive strategy of brief raids against European settlements with little opposition. Historians such as Stephen Feeley and James Taylor Carson contend that the Tuscarora meant these attacks as part of a war of containment, not extermination, but that they were more successful even than they had planned. European government, never particularly strong in North Carolina, was still especially weakened in the aftermath of the Cary Rebellion, with now-official Governor Hyde having only governed for roughly two months at that point. The initial attacks coincided with a severe drought and an epidemic of yellow fever in the colony, further weakening the colonial response. Many colonists on the western fringes of settlement were driven eastward to seek shelter, but these more easterly settlements were then threatened in turn. The capital city of Bath was attacked, as was the new settlement at New Bern, and the North Carolinian militia proved completely ineffectual. Whether or not they intended to drive out Europeans entirely, by 1712, the Tuscarora appeared to endanger the entire British colonial project in North Carolina. The Europeans were taking them seriously now.

In extremity, the European government of North Carolina hardly had much choice but to ally themselves once again with whoever would serve their purposes. Pleas for help were sent to the neighboring colonies of Virginia and South Carolina, despite the ongoing rivalries between them. Virginia, after much debate, took no action, but South Carolina’s legislature, closer to the conflict and still theoretically politically connected to North Carolina, voted to send a relief force north. This support had little to do with any loyalty to North Carolina itself, but rather stemmed from the fear that if native violence was left unchecked, it would begin to spill over into their own colony. The Europeans did not trust everything to their own strength, however. They also recruited warriors from native tribes who were traditional enemies of the Tuscarora, primarily the Yamasee, their southern

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115 Latham and Samford, “Naturalist, Explorer and Town Father”, 262.
117 Ewen, “John Lawson’s Bath”, 266.
118 Ready, The Tar Heel State, 35.
120 Feeley, “Before long to be good friends”, 146.
neighbors, as well as the more distant Cherokee.\textsuperscript{121} Colonists used the promise of slave-
taking opportunities as incentive for participation\textsuperscript{122}, profiting the Yamasee while also serving
the European demand for slaves. The “British” side of the Tuscarora War, therefore, was not
entirely British at all, but rather a multi-ethnic force serving together for many and varied
motives.

The same is true of the “Tuscarora” side of the conflict. The Tuscarora were a loose
collection of towns not ruled by a single authority, and those communities further to the north
largely stayed clear of the fighting, instead attempting, like their linguistic relatives the
Meherrin, to appeal to Virginia for assistance. As a more stratified, structured society,
Virginia had consolidated power over the natives in the colony and brought them into a fully
dependent position, hoping in this way to civilize them. They attempted to do the same to the
Tuscarora; however the tribe was uninterested in surrendering their autonomy, and
negotiations with Virginia failed.\textsuperscript{123} The Tuscarora also, like other tribes outside of the
bounds of European domination, harbored runaway slaves.\textsuperscript{124} African-American slaves who
shared their dislike of European domination joined or assisted the Tuscarora war effort.
These associations were strengthened through the fact that most African slaves were male,
and most native slaves were female, leading to many cross-cultural unions. The matrilineal
nature of Native American society in the region eased integration between the two groups.\textsuperscript{125}
Collaboration could be to their mutual benefit, since the Tuscarora tribe were armed and
organized in a way slaves were not, while the slaves, who had often lived in far closer contact
with European ways, could pass this knowledge on to their allies. Notably, the Tuscaroras
built and defended a reportedly formidable European-style fort, Fort Neoheroka. Apparently
an escaped slave named Harry, who had allied himself to the tribe\textsuperscript{126}, had formerly lived in a
British colony in the Caribbean. There he had been exposed to this European military design,
and the North Carolinian version was built according to his memories. The conflict between

World”, 223-224.


\textsuperscript{123} Feeley, “‘Before long to be good friends’”, 148-150.

\textsuperscript{124} Morgan, \textit{Slave Counterpoint}, 483.

\textsuperscript{125} Perdue, \textit{Cherokee Women}, 68.

\textsuperscript{126} McIlvenna, \textit{A Very Mutinous People}, 150; Carson, “Histories of the ‘Tuscarora War’”, 200.
the “Tuscarora” and the “British colonials” was far more complicated than these simple terms imply.

When the South Carolinian forces under Colonel John Barnwell moved north, they found great initial success. Yet their momentum waned as their own alliances began to falter. The first village they attacked consisted largely of women and children, the young men being away, and so the Yamasee were easily able to take captives. Satisfied with their profit from the expedition, they returned to their own territory, leaving the Europeans to fight on alone. The North Carolinians also largely failed to rally to the South Carolina militia, even as they found success. When Barnwell reached the capital of Bath, he found that the people there offered them no food or ammunition, and they were forced to live off the land. Eventually some North Carolinians did turn up to fight, in response to a fine Hyde threatened to impose on those who did not.127 Yet Quakers, as pacifists, again refused to participate in any armed conflict.128 Barnwell’s journals are filled with his frustration with the North Carolinians he encountered: the militia who ran away, the politicians who seemed more focused on their interpersonal rivalries than the conflict at hand, the victory celebration which turned into an entire day’s worth of undignified drunken boxing matches.129 As the conflict wore on into 1712 and a second wave of South Carolinians moved north, they too struggled to find provisions and support among the people of North Carolina, while its assembly also proved reluctant to vote measures into effect to support the war. Though Quakers were by now blocked from the legislature, politicians continued to blame their influence for this lackluster level of North Carolinian support.130

In keeping with the “long stereotype”, observers like Barnwell portrayed North Carolina as an uncivilized region filled with people incapable of cooperation. In his view, the colonists appear simply incapable of maintaining order, even when it would be to their own great benefit. McIlvenna resists this interpretation. Instead, she theorizes that the former attempted alliance between the Quaker party and the Tuscarora still held, so that the lack of North Carolinian support was ideologically based. This makes the Tuscarora War yet another

127 McIlvenna, A Very Mutinous People, 150-151.
128 Barth, “‘The Sinke of America’”, 24.
129 Devine, “Forging Alliances”, 322.
form of resistance against a hierarchical, plantation-based society. However, she admits that this cannot be proven, and as was previously discussed, the Quaker party was but a single element of North Carolinian European society, not the whole. The Swiss settlement at New Bern, for instance, remained neutral because of Graffenried’s separate peace, not because of Quaker sympathies. Other historians see the Tuscarora War as the conflict which consolidated Anglican power in the colony. Wood agrees that members of the former Anglican party did claim that the former Cary party were instigating the Tuscarora to attack, which would support McIlvenna’s assertion. At the same time, however, he points out that at the same time that even Anglicans like Thomas Pollock, by then the new governor and a prominent enemy of the Quakers, admitted he had received their support during the war.

Furthermore, Christine Styrna Devine points out that the reluctance of some former Quaker party members in northern Albemarle County to support the defensive efforts of southern Bath County, which was disproportionately affected by Tuscarora attacks, divided the old faction on regional lines. The more active, defensive Anglican party gained supporters in Bath, giving them final dominance over the colony’s government. This points again to the fluid nature of North Carolinian factions. Certainly, the Tuscarora War followed so closely on the heels of the Cary Rebellion that some lingering resentments from these older alliances are to be expected. Nevertheless, as a whole, the colonial response in North Carolina does not seem to neatly correspond with the factional divisions of Quaker and Anglican parties. Rather, the Tuscarora War re-shuffled the deck, as individuals found new alliances to suit their own changing interests. This shows once again that North Carolinians’ factional alliances were focused more on short-term, concrete goals than long-term ideological or societal allegiances.

In keeping with this approach, North Carolina’s greatest contribution to the Tuscarora War did not come in the form of material assistance, but rather in the forging of a new alliance for mutual gain. Contact with the Tuscarora had never entirely broken down during the conflict, as the Tuscarora continued to pursue diplomatic avenues simultaneously. While the more southerly branches of the tribe were the most committed to fight, a more northern


133 Devine, “Forging Alliances”, 331-332.
branch, who were more involved in trade with the Virginia colony and therefore had more to lose from conflict, was far more willing to compromise. Their chief, Tom Blount, was promised full control of the Tuscarora, backed by European support, if he assisted the colonial efforts to win the war, and he promptly led his supporters against his own tribe in order to reap the rewards promised. He was given at least nominal autonomy and treated as a serious diplomatic partner, which gave North Carolina a negotiating advantage against Virginia at a time when the two colonies were still rivals for the Tuscarora loyalty, and with it, better control of their mutual border. This turn of events shows that both Tuscarora and Europeans were less united than they might at first have appeared. It also shows once again that in North Carolina, not even racial animosity took precedence over self-interest in determining the sides of a conflict. Even after years of violence, European North Carolinians were willing to look to a member of an enemy tribe for assistance, while natives also showed themselves willing to work against each other in return for European support within their own conflicts.

Tom Blount and his supporters, both native and European, were victorious. The Tuscarora War ended with Blount taking control of the tribe and ruling in a distinctly Europeanized fashion. However, this ran counter to the traditional consensus-based leadership of the tribe, and he was not recognized as an authority by many Tuscarora. So many left the state to join the Iroquois-speaking Five Nations in the northeast that the tribe was eventually adopted into the confederacy. Blount himself, while his power was formally increased, found himself in a dependent position, as he needed European support to maintain his leadership. European encroachment also continued: the surviving Tuscarora were moved to a reservation in 1717, and their numbers, like the rest of the eastern tribes, continued to dwindle. By 1790, the total number of eastern North Carolinian natives were

134 Perdue and Oakley, Native Carolinians, 32-33.
135 Feeley, “Before long to be good friends”, 152.
136 LeMaster, “In the ‘Scolding Houses’”, 204-205.
138 LeMaster, “In the ‘Scolding Houses’”, 205.
down to approximately 400 in a total state population of around 400,000. Therefore, not only were the Tuscarora unsuccessful in defending their original territory from European encroachment, they eventually disappeared entirely from North Carolina, sharing the fate of many other smaller tribes, such as the Meherrin, before them. What was a complete defeat from the native perspective was a surprisingly emphatic success for the Europeans, who found much less resistance as they continued to move westward.

The status of African slaves also shifted after the Tuscarora War. North Carolina’s first slave code was passed in 1715, suggesting that as plantation society took hold in the east it brought with it increasingly racialized thinking and an attendant fear of slaves’ capability to work together. This would be congruent with related societies in Virginia and South Carolina, where the division between the races intensified over the course of the 18th century and white plantation owners could be deeply paranoid about the ability of their slaves to rebel. In this context, the potentially dangerous cooperation of native tribes and African slaves during the Tuscarora War did not go unnoticed. In these early days of the colony, there had been opportunity for non-European groups to mingle, but after the war, Europeans took greater care in the future to foster disunity between them. This task became easier over time, as the natives were driven westward while slaves remained generally concentrated in the eastern part of the colony. The majority of conflict in North Carolina at this time was not strictly racially based. Alliances were formed based on which groups might have mutual short-term interests at the time. If it suited their purposes, Europeans were willing to work with natives, who were willing in turn to work with slaves of African descent. However, sharper racial divisions were already beginning to take shape as the potential for interracial cooperation diminished over time.

The period between 1708 and 1715 was a tumultuous one for the residents of North Carolina. Conflicts between Europeans as well as with and between other inhabitants show that various groups of North Carolinians were willing to work together to accomplish mutual short-term gains. The Cary Rebellion provides an example in which Europeans of different

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140 Morgan, Slave Counterpoint, 260, 386, 477.

religious faiths successfully cooperated together in a political conflict, even when those faiths impacted the way in which they were able to support the faction, as with the pacifist Quakers. The fact that Thomas Cary was able to so easily switch sides in the conflict also shows the degree to which North Carolinian factional alliances were fluid. Colonists did in fact rebel against some sources of authority, but always while appealing to a higher authority to justify their actions. This was not an area in which anarchy was the norm. The Tuscarora War broadens this picture of short-term factional cooperation beyond the European inhabitants of the colony. While the violence in this period might be assumed to take place between two opposing groups, the British colonists and the Tuscarora, the actual composition of both sides was more complex. Europeans found a variety of ways to deal with the Tuscarora, ranging from violence through pacifist neutrality to deal-making with enemy tribes as well as with rival branches of the Tuscarora themselves. The overarching loyalty of the colonists to each other, as British subjects or as Europeans, was a fairly weak one: no Europeans practiced active aggression against each other in support of the Tuscarora, but neither did they necessarily feel compelled to actively defend each other when it did not serve their purposes. The native inhabitants of North Carolina seem to have had a similar openness to cooperation with varied groups, as did African-born slaves, when they were able to do so. As violent and confused as North Carolina’s first seven years may seem, these two successive crises show that a multi-ethnic population was, in general, quite willing to cooperate with each other across both religious and racial lines, and even with former enemies in the same conflict. The sheer complexity of the factions that were active during this period is a result of the fluid nature of these arrangements. North Carolina’s factionalism might have seemed like anarchy to observers, but it actually sprung from an ability to quickly form diverse cooperative groups. The “long stereotype” is inaccurate - however, Noeleen McIlvenna’s interpretation of the Cary Rebellion and Tuscarora War as ideologically coherent struggles against hierarchical plantation society also remains unconvincing. North Carolina’s factions were never that strongly unified; they were the result of continual negotiations, and held together not because of pure ideological beliefs, but through pragmatic self-interest.
4. Orderly Factionalism Extends to the West: The Regulator Movement

Once the initial tumult of North Carolina’s foundation settled down, the colony enjoyed a few decades of comparative calm. The usual conflicts between neighbors, both European and Native American, continued, but there were no large-scale, colony-wide conflicts until the Regulator Movement, which began in 1766 and ended in the Battle of Alamance in 1771. Many historians have described the clash in terms of a dichotomy between east and west, elite slaveowners and subsistence farmers, Anglicans and Dissenters, or even a proto-Revolutionary conflict between what would later become the Americans and the British crown. Just as before, the developments within the colony were watched with interest by their colonial neighbors, who interpreted them within a broader political context, either confirming or denying the long stereotype. Historians’ interpretations have largely done the same. In truth, however, the conflict was neither an uncoordinated expression of an anarchistic, uncivilized area nor an ideologically coherent precursor to the Revolution. As with the earlier Cary Rebellion, this clash was between factions made up of various disparate groups pursuing common short-term interests, held together more by rhetorical persuasion and cooperation than the bare exercise of authority. However, in addition to the political and religious motives of the Cary Rebellion, the Regulation had far stronger regional and economic dimensions. These factors, as major components of the conflict, are worth closer examination.

North Carolina’s European population, which remained extremely small and limited in geographic reach during the 16th and 17th centuries, suddenly exploded during the 18th century. As Governor Gabriel Johnston explained in 1750, “inhabitants flock in here daily… they commonly seat themselves towards the west and have got near the mountains…”\(^{142}\) The colony was advertised as an ideal place for settlers without many resources, becoming the successor to Pennsylvania as “the best poor man’s country”. For Andrew C. Denson, this was the key attraction of North Carolina.\(^{143}\) Lured by these reports, the population of North Carolina’s backcountry grew from a few hundred in the 1740’s to 39,000 Europeans by 1769.


This pace was also accelerating as time went on: as previously mentioned in the first chapter, the overall population of European North Carolina, which was around 65,000 in 1750, had nearly tripled by 1770, reaching 175,000.\footnote{Kars, \textit{Breaking Loose Together}, 16.}

The easternmost settlers were numerically overwhelmed, yet they also had resources and political connections which the newcomers did not. While many older settlers themselves began as poor discontents, as was described at the end of the Cary Rebellion, proponents of the Anglican establishment gained ascendancy, bringing with them plantation agriculture and a more hierarchical society. They did not, however, manage to create the kinds of powerful political families which dominated neighboring colonies such as Virginia. Instead, they had had to continually compete amongst themselves as new, smaller regional factions, for instance in the Cape Fear area, rose among them.\footnote{Devine, “Forging Alliances”, 334-337.} In comparison to their neighbors in the plantation system, North Carolina’s fledgling elites remained marginalized and relatively poor.\footnote{Wood, “Thomas Pollock and the Making of an Albemarle Plantation World”, 227-228.} As they sought advancement in their interactions with the larger colonial world, they could themselves still be seen as frustratingly uncivilized rebels. One European observer described the colony in 1765 as “…the azilum of the Convicts that have served their time in virginia or maryland. when at liberty they all (or great part)Come to this part where they are not Known and settle here. it is a fine Country for poor people but not for the rich.”\footnote{Watson, ed. \textit{Society in Early North Carolina: A Documentary History}, 88.} This description is outdated - it seems to describe the eastern settlers of 50 years before better than the backcountry - but it shows how well-established the “long stereotype” about North Carolina already was, and how it was applied to North Carolina as a whole. The eastern regions attempted to contend against this “long stereotype” by preserving and strengthening a status quo which not only allowed them to conform more closely to the examples of their neighbors, but also favored their own interests over the poorer but equally ambitious backcountry.

Meanwhile, in the backcountry, settlers tended to be Protestant Dissenters, mostly Presbyterians, Baptists, or Quakers. Marjoleine Kars argues that it was this religious element which made the backcountry of North Carolina, where they were subjected to less
government-supported Anglican oversight, especially attractive. Another religious motive for the move might have been a conscious rejection of an increasingly commercialized world.\textsuperscript{148} However, this can hardly have been the case with the majority of backcountry settlers. They were often social climbers, looking for opportunities to prosper in North Carolina specifically in order to participate more fully in a commercial world. Ekirch supports this analysis, explaining that backcountry settlers in particular were sometimes singled out for their superior industry and ambition over the slaveholding eastern North Carolinians.\textsuperscript{149} In any case, these settlers were not particularly invested in an already stratified society with a foundation in the Anglican church. In a sense, the pattern of conflict established before the Cary Rebellion was recreated.

The pattern of settlement for these newcomers was also significant. The earliest settlers of the 16th and 17th centuries generally came from over the borders of coastal Virginia and South Carolina, and remained in the eastern regions relatively close to their place of origin. Newer settlers more often came from Pennsylvania, the former “best poor man’s country”, and traveled down the Great Wagon Road, an Indian trail cutting through the backcountry from Philadelphia to Georgia, to reach North Carolina.\textsuperscript{150} Entering the backcountry directly from the west, they often had no familial or business ties binding them either to the surrounding colonies or the more settled eastern part of the state. As discussed previously in the first chapter, the east-west connections in North Carolina were poor, with no major navigable rivers. While this distance meant that there were no long-standing animosities to overcome between the two regions, there was also no guarantee that they would share the same assumptions about how life in the colony would take shape.

Despite so much new land being absorbed so quickly into the colony, North Carolina suffered from a paradoxical land shortage. Even with its sudden population growth, the issue was never that there were too many people for the available land, but rather that the many available acres were tied up in impossibly complex questions of ownership. As described in the first chapter, decades of land speculation and complicated land grants meant that the title of any given plot of land was often connected to ever larger overarching claims, the validity

\textsuperscript{148} Kars, \textit{Breaking Loose Together}, 23.

\textsuperscript{149} Ekirch, \textit{“Poor Carolina”}, 31.

\textsuperscript{150} Ekirch, \textit{“Poor Carolina”}, 9; Kars, \textit{Breaking Loose Together}, 16.
of any one of which might be questionable. Much of the area where the Regulator Movement developed belonged to the Granville District, a large expanse of North Carolina still privately owned by a descendant of one of the original Lords Proprietors, which was particularly notorious for its ineffective and corrupt administration. Granville did not hold nor did he ever attempt to exercise any governmental authority in the district, seeing the area simply as source of revenue in land rent payments. In 1749 Granville, who remained in England, appointed as his primary deputy Francis Corbin, a man who kept most of the rents he collected for himself, and even neglected to keep records of the land claims which had been made. He in turn also appointed a number of deputies, who followed similar practices, selling the same piece of land to multiple claimants or double-charging tenants to increase their profits. Those North Carolinians who could control the disposition of land could use this power as a tool to raise their place in society, using the profits to gain public office, perhaps as a county clerk or magistrate, from which position they could further consolidate their power. Then, in 1763, Granville died, and family disputes in Britain over his will closed his land office. Newcomers continued to settle on, improve, and trade land between themselves, waiting for Granville’s business to resume, but as years passed and nothing changed, suspicion grew that if the land office were reopened, settlers would find themselves cheated by rising local elites once more.

Meanwhile, in other areas of the backcountry, newcomers unknowingly settled on vast areas of land already owned by absentee land speculators such as Henry McCulloh, who personally owned 1.2 million acres of the backcountry, an area roughly equivalent to the modern state of Delaware. As settlements took root, speculators like McCulloh took action to collect the quitrents owed to them. Because settlers had developed the land, these speculators were then able to charge a higher price, essentially demanding that farmers buy back their own improvements. Once more, in order to help consolidate their position, major landowners worked closely with local government officials. As a result, disputes over land ownership were common and increasing in intensity in the years before the Regulation. Some settlers challenged the claims of absentee landlords by claiming squatters’ rights, attempting to

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151 Troxler, Farming Dissenters, 2-6.
152 Ekirch, “Poor Carolina”, 128.
153 Troxler, Farming Dissenters, 81.
exploit the uncertain colonial boundaries to place themselves under another governmental authority than that which had authorized the landlord, or simply through violently resisting payment. In some places, McCulloh’s claims overlapped with Granville’s, which further confused the issue of land ownership and rent payment. Since many of the new settlers came to North Carolina specifically for the prospect of land ownership and a concurrent rise in social status, this state of affairs was a major source of tension in the backcountry.

The financial tensions described in the first chapter also reached their height during this period. The lack of specie made it difficult for farmers to sell their crops for cash with which to pay their debts, and this situation was worsened by a bad winter followed by a summer drought in 1765-1766. Farmers failed to pay debts incurred to merchants, who in turn passed their losses along to other customers, increasing the tension between the two groups. The Currency Act of 1764 worsened the scarcity of cash in the region by reducing paper money, and taxes were also raised as a result. In 1765 there were around 70,000 pounds in circulation in a colony of over 100,000 people, and by 1768 this had been reduced to 60,000 pounds. As a result, even prosperous backcountry settlers might struggle to find enough available money to pay off all that they owed. However, it was these more prosperous inhabitants who were likely to prosper when their neighbors fell behind in their debts. Merchants and higher local elites, such as government officials, tended to have the resources to gain access to cash, however scarce, and they were able to use these to buy up the resources their neighbors forfeited through bankruptcy, including their hotly contested land.

Following the economic argument of some historians, these conditions would have sharpened competition and discontent in the backcountry noticeably. An older analysis by James P. Whittenburg actually traces the roots of the Regulation to tensions between these

155 Ekirch, “*Poor Carolina*”, 137.
157 Ekirch, “*Poor Carolina*”, 10.
non-planting professions and western farmers in a modified version of a class conflict.\textsuperscript{160} This seems doubtful, however. As this chapter will show, Regulators did eventually come to use the term “poor Carolina” to refer to themselves, however this was a later development, and their complaints focused more on governmental corruption in particular than resentment against any non-planting professions. Other historians seem not to have followed Whittenburg’s analysis. Nevertheless, economic concerns, though they did not have any particular class-conscious element, did clearly drive the Regulators’ frustration. Even Kars’s recent analysis, despite her argument that some backcountry settlers were drawn to the region in rejection of a commercialized society, concedes that farmers in the region were not in search of complete autonomy, but attracted to resources which would provide them a “competency”, a measure of security, while they participated in an economic life which tied them into the larger colonial and Atlantic world.\textsuperscript{161} When this proved hard to obtain, settlers were likely to seek alternative solutions. Economic stress was one of a number of factors which brought people together to form the Regulator faction.

Corruption in local government was another common complaint. At the time, the county court embodied administrative, civil and criminal powers, often becoming the single most significant and immediate source of authority in colonists’ lives.\textsuperscript{162} All of the public servants in the county court system could gain advantages through their positions. The administrative system allowed justices of the peace to essentially control their own appointments. With vast discretionary powers, connections to already established elites, and insider knowledge of the county's business, they were able to maintain status easily. Since the same men who administrated the county government often became their county’s representatives in the legislature, “courthouse rings” developed, in which a small number of people wielded power that was both local and tied into the colonial system based in the east.\textsuperscript{163} But even the lower-level officials, such as the clerk of court, had a great deal of practical power which could be used for personal gain. His responsibilities centered around


\textsuperscript{161} Kars, \textit{Breaking Loose Together}, 21, 60.

\textsuperscript{162} Watson, “‘A Great Number of Pore People Is a Relying on His Conduct & Politeness’”, 139.

\textsuperscript{163} Kars, \textit{Breaking Loose Together}, 69; Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 12.
the documents which others brought to court or which the court produced: it was his job to verify and copy these proofs of legal decisions, land ownership, etc. Clerks often came from modest circumstances, but were ambitious, eager to use the power the office entailed to gain in social rank. With little oversight and a great deal of discretionary power, clerks thus had incentive to charge or raise administrative fees for their services which were not foreseen by law, leading to frustration among those who came to court. Furthermore, clerks also needed to prove that they were Anglicans before taking office\textsuperscript{164}, eliminating the many dissenters in the backcountry from access to the first rung on the ladder of governmental power. Sheriffs also enjoyed a wide variety of responsibilities and powers. They could draw local ire through distraining, or confiscating settlers’ property, when they were unable to pay taxes.\textsuperscript{165} This was common in the financially troubled time and was often judged to be an unfair practice.\textsuperscript{166} Sheriffs also oversaw elections and certified those who were able to vote. Since land titles were notoriously troubled, proving ownership of the required fifty acres needed to vote could be difficult\textsuperscript{167}, and settlers might be dependent on a sheriff’s judgment. In this way, the “courthouse ring” could ensure that elections never threatened, but always strengthened their local power.

Almost all historians agree that corruption was rampant in the backcountry, but they differ in their judgment of how governmental corruption influenced the development of the Regulation. Kars believes that Regulators needed to overcome a traditional deference for elites, strengthened by the non-anonymous, confrontational nature of elections and the tradition of courting voters’ favor with free drinks. For her, the impetus which allowed them to overcome this deference was the influence of the less authoritarian religious thinking espoused by Dissenters and intensified during the religious revivalism of the Great Awakening.\textsuperscript{168} Watson and Ekirch, on the other hand, both contend that the backcountry was too recently settled to have an elite which could command any particular respect, so that public office was exploited without the benefit of deference. Ekirch believes that the fluid

\textsuperscript{164} Watson, “‘A Great Number of Pore People Is a Relying on His Conduct & Politeness’”, 133-134, 134-140, 149.

\textsuperscript{165} Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 11.

\textsuperscript{166} Ekirch, “\textit{Poor Carolina}”, 169.

\textsuperscript{167} Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 13.

\textsuperscript{168} Kars, \textit{Breaking Loose Together}, 70, 81.
nature of society made public offices particularly susceptible to exploitation, while Watson in particular cites economic/social competition as the central factor leading to the development of the Regulation, citing Jack P. Greene’s view that late colonial America was primarily focused on achieving personal independence, which the Regulators found blocked by county courts.¹⁶⁹ When the Regulator movement is seen in the larger context of the North Carolinian “long stereotype”, it would seem that Ekirch and Watson are more likely to be correct about North Carolina’s lack of deference. After all, the colony was often specifically criticized for this quality, and the Cary Rebellion and Tuscarora War show that elites in the colony could not trust to their place in the hierarchy to give them authority. However, whether they had to overcome a tendency toward deference or not, the Regulators certainly did make vocal complaints about the inaccessible and corrupt nature of government and politics in the backcountry.

The contributing factors to the Regulator movement, therefore, were many and varied. Like the Cary Rebellion, religious and political motives were involved, but unlike this earlier conflict, regional and economic tensions had taken on far greater significance as well. The importance of these various factors shifted over the course of the conflict, as the factions themselves reacted dynamically to each other. An individual might have overlapping loyalties, with his religious leanings, for instance, pulling him in one direction while his economic interests led in another. The leaders of both sides of the conflict had to be willing to continually work through persuasion and rhetoric to hold their supporters together. Both factions showed a considerable amount of skill in this task, forming small disparate groups together to cooperate in the pursuit of short-term goals.

While a rebellious leader is more or less forced to achieve power through persuasion, one final notable difference between the Cary Rebellion and the Regulator movement is that royal authority in the colony had now adapted to use this tactic within North Carolina as well. In the early 18th century, the power of the British crown was weak and distant, primarily as a result of its being mediated through the inefficient and absentee Lords Proprietors. By the start of the Regulation, however, North Carolina had spent two decades as a royal colony, with Governor Tryon, as the official representative of British power, personally present in the

¹⁶⁹ Ekirch, “Poor Carolina”, 169; Watson, “‘A Great Number of Pore People Is a Relying on His Conduct & Politeness’”, 153.
colony’s capital. North Carolina was still very much a peripheral part of the British world, but now the response to unrest was much more immediate, and also far more tactically skilled. While the Cary Rebellion could only be resolved through the external intervention of Virginia and a group of royal marines, the Regulation, even at its most extreme, remained an internal colonial matter. Like most colonial governors, Tryon technically had recourse to British troops to subdue colonial unrest, but never attempted to call upon that resource, as they were stationed far away and could only worsen the public mood in the area. Instead, through skillful persuasion and tactical alliances with varied groups, Tryon was able to do what former ill-fated North Carolinian governors could not: marshal colonial citizens themselves to decisively support his cause.

While the final conflict pitted the Regulators against Tryon, though, it is crucial to note that neither he nor his royal authority were their initial target. Spurred by the tensions cited above, backcountry settlers initially blamed their dissatisfaction on their local governmental leaders. Seeing this as a purely western matter, these discontented settlers then addressed petitions to the higher ranks of government in the east, complaining of corruption, confused land titles, and a lack of available specie. At this point, they appear to have fully expected the eastern government of North Carolina to rectify the situation. As leader Herman Husband said, “Well, gentlemen, it is not our form or mode of government, nor yet the body of our laws, that we are quarreling with, but with the malpractice of the officers of our county courts, and the abuses we suffer…” Ekirch asserts that Regulators held no inherent grudge against wealthier planters, contesting them only when their own needs went unmet. However, his explanation that they were apathetic, preferring a modest isolated existence, seems suspect. As Ekirch himself goes on to acknowledge, many newcomers came with high ambitions, and first-generation immigrants to the colony could indeed find great success. He limits this assertion to new elites in the east, but this directly contradicts

171 Kars, Breaking Loose Together, 149.
173 Ekirch, “Poor Carolina”, 32-33, 35, 46.
contemporary observations he himself cites, described earlier in the chapter, in which it is westerners who are portrayed as industrious, in comparison to lazy easterners. What is more likely is not that one portion of the state was truly more apathetic or ambitious than the other, but that this is a case of North Carolina’s “long stereotype” being unevenly applied, as one region is blamed for the negative perception of the entire colony. Ekirch has simply adopted the “long stereotype” into his analysis. However, in truth, no part of North Carolina was populated by uncivilized, unambitious settlers.

The western petitioners did not resent colonial elites initially, but this was not because they were uninvolved in the world around them. In fact, they hoped to join the elite, and they blamed the disorder in their own region on their distance from these eastern power centers. As a result, their petitions included the request for more, not less government. Troxler points out that the Regulators’ grievances resulted from disorder - unclear land claims, uneven administration, etc. - and that they, in contrast, stressed their orderliness and willingness to use existing governmental forms to air their grievances. For instance, they asked that the problem of the high fees charged by clerks be resolved by removing their discretionary power to charge for their services, instead paying them an annual salary determined by the government. They also attempted to work directly within colonial government, supporting their own candidates against western elites in elections to the legislature, and when they were successful in these elections, instructing their representatives to make reforms. Western discontents were clearly thinking in terms of governmental solutions. This weakens Watson and Greene’s argument that the source of the Regulation was a desire for personal independence. If anything, the Regulators’ initial petitions were for closer governmental scrutiny and more royal control over the colony, not less. This also makes it clear, once again, that the anarchistic stereotype of North Carolina’s more recent settlements was faulty: these were people whose complaint was with the specific form of the social order, not with order in general.

Some of the Regulators’ concerns were shared by citizens in the east. The problem of the scarcity of specie and the frustration with the Currency Act, discussed in the first chapter,

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174 Troxler, Farming Dissenters, 21.
175 Watson, “‘A Great Number of Pore People Is a Relying on His Conduct & Politeness’”, 155.
reached throughout North Carolina and beyond. Highly ranked eastern politicians could not collect their debts if there was no cash for them to be paid, so the legislature continually tested the limits of the law, passing a law to print more paper money in complete disregard of the Currency Act. When this was immediately vetoed by Tryon, they worked to find other legal loopholes through which they could print some sort of paper money. They also voted to repeal some of the taxes which had been levied to enable them to retire what legal paper tender they did have in circulation, and though Tryon also vetoed these, it appears that sheriffs heeded the legislature’s message and simply stopped collecting taxes.177 Though Governor Tryon, as the official representative of British authority, was forced to block these measures, he, too, recognized the problem and was eager to find solutions. The governor wrote to England to plead North Carolina’s case and occasionally ignored his superiors’ instructions on the Currency Act in favor of supporting paper money.178 All of North Carolina was agreed on the specie problem.

Eastern elites, centered around the wealthy Cape Fear region, had also strongly protested the Stamp Act179, and were continuing to show their frustration with British government through protests and petitions of their own. Despite this overall discontent with British control, as a result of Tryon’s willingness to serve their interests, eastern politicians remained the backbone of his faction. In fact, even after the ambitious governor was transferred on to the governorship of New York, North Carolina’s colonial leaders were still writing him, over the head of their new governor, to ask him to intercede personally for them in Britain.180 Though eastern elites certainly believed in simple deference to authority when it came to those who were of lower rank than themselves, in their own dealings with superiors they continued to follow the usual North Carolinian pattern of aligning themselves with those who served their own interests. They were not chafing against British control per se, but clearly felt themselves justified in seeking out those specific authorities who would support their goals.

177 Kars, Breaking Loose Together, 163-165.
In other instances, the eastern establishment had little motivation to address western complaints. It might seem that a more stratified, authoritarian society would welcome the chance to increase governmental influence in the west, but in practice this was not the case. Although they were increasingly becoming a smaller percentage of the population, the eastern settlements were disproportionately overrepresented in government. For instance, by 1766, five eastern counties put together were smaller and contained less free inhabitants than Orange County, the center of the Regulation, alone. Yet these counties sent twenty-five representatives to the legislature, while Orange County had only two.\textsuperscript{181} If the west were more strongly involved in government, this would only weaken their own eastern influence. In practice, it served the eastern portion of the colony well to have an “uncivilized” west.

For similar reasons, politicians in North Carolina’s legislature were generally disinterested in looking too closely into accusations of governmental corruption. For most historians, this is because many of these elites were themselves involved in dubious practices. Watson points out that members of the legislature were often magistrates and clerks themselves, and therefore hardly likely to concede that there might be corruption in their offices.\textsuperscript{182} Kars notes that in the more stratified east, those who had reached the upper boundaries of society certainly did tend to work and socialize together while attempting to block the rise of new rivals. Embezzlement and other kinds of financial misconduct for personal profit were not limited to the backcountry.\textsuperscript{183} Reports of more modest western elites doing essentially the same thing were therefore not likely to be addressed, lest these accusations hit too close to home. Ekirch concurs that misuse of the public institutions for gain was so prevalent in North Carolina politics that even when eastern politicians did not feel directly threatened by Regulator complaints, they also did not see it as a concern which really needed to be addressed.\textsuperscript{184} Only Spindel is skeptical of the backcountry narrative of corruption. She concedes that complaints of corruption were many, but claims there are not a corresponding number of prosecutions for corrupt officials, which she cites as a lack of

\textsuperscript{181} Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 13.

\textsuperscript{182} Watson, “‘A Great Number of Pore People Is a Relying on His Conduct & Politeness’”, 134.

\textsuperscript{183} Kars, \textit{Breaking Loose Together}, 150.

\textsuperscript{184}Ekirch, \textit{“Poor Carolina”}, 198-199.
evidence of corruption. However, as previously stated, local western “courthouse rings” were tied into the eastern government as well, and it seems highly unlikely that these groups would prosecute themselves for corruption. A lack of prosecutions should not be seen as evidence that corruption did not exist. Clearly, as most historians have recognized, backcountry settlers felt that governmental corruption was a major issue. The realization that this corruption reached beyond the backcountry to the east as well fueled the further emergence of the Regulator faction.

Since the higher authorities to which they had appealed did not respond with the level of attention the protestors had expected, the Regulators’ distrust of North Carolina’s government broadened from local western administrators to include eastern politicians. Initial complaints had not drawn any particular distinctions between east and west on economic lines, but now the Regulators began to single out the comparative wealth of the east for criticism. The claim was now made that easterners did not care about how “poor Carolina” was cheated, because easterners themselves were profiting off the same corruption. Governor Tryon, who had recently been awarded fifteen thousand pounds from the legislature to build a governor’s residence, came under particular personal criticism. Not only Tryon’s home, this building would serve as the center of colonial administration in North Carolina. As the colony’s center of gravity shifted west, the town of Hillsborough in Orange County became a likely site for government, yet the elite-dominated legislature voted to place the building in older, far more easterly New Bern. Backcountry settlers resented paying for a building they would have little opportunity to access, and “Tryon’s palace” and the tax required to build it were cited as evidence of excessive pride and greed.

Eastern elites, meanwhile, remained unsympathetic. Social climbers in the east were well aware that while they may have reached a high position in North Carolina, they were still looked down upon by neighboring colonies. In their view, the backcountry settlers furthered a negative impression of their colony and hindered the further refinement (and stratification) of their society. In fighting the “long stereotype” as it applied to themselves,

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they pushed it toward the west. Easterners themselves protested British laws which were unfavorable to them, such as the Stamp Act, were willing to protest themselves, but they did not interpret the backcountry protest as analogous to their own\textsuperscript{189}, instead characterizing it as a riot. They did not feel compelled to meet western demands, instead seeing this episode as proof of the uncivilized nature of the backcountry. The east was not without its own factions, but faced with the competing interests of the backcountry, they drew together for their mutual benefit\textsuperscript{190}. This further widened the growing gap between these developing regional factions.

Eventually, Governor Tryon did respond to the increasing unrest in the backcountry. In 1768, he traveled to the most dissatisfied counties in order to speak to the leaders of the growing Regulation\textsuperscript{191}. Despite his nominal authority, the governor was aware that he had to negotiate with the various interest groups in the colony in order to ensure support. Tryon’s trip to the backcountry was a slow one, as he stopped in many counties along the way, essentially campaigning for his faction. He not only needed to win over the people, but also the forces of authority he technically had at his command. Theoretically governors named the officers in the local militias, drawn from among the citizens, but in reality the legislature named higher officers, while lower officers were in turn named by their local commanders. This meant that local militias were quite independent, and had a habit of simply walking away from conflicts they did not support\textsuperscript{192}. If Tryon expected to call upon their support, whether for purposes of intimidation or more violent suppression, he would have to earn it.

Like other positions of importance within a county, a militia officership could be used as a tool for social climbing. Officers had a higher social rank and could in turn nominate lower officers, increasing their influence\textsuperscript{193}. The ambitious leading men of the eastern county militias were easily won over by references to uncivilized, anarchistic westerners who would hold back the colony’s progress. Further to the west, in areas where the Regulation was particularly entrenched, his tactic backfired, as the militia reacted with suspicion to what they considered aggressive posturing, and instead chose to support the Regulation. However,

\begin{itemize}
  \item[\textsuperscript{189}] Kars, \textit{Breaking Loose Together}, 134.
  \item[\textsuperscript{190}] Ekirch, “\textit{Poor Carolina}”, 152.
  \item[\textsuperscript{191}] Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 67.
  \item[\textsuperscript{193}] Lee, \textit{Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina}, 130-131.
\end{itemize}
Tryon learned quickly, and began skillfully tailoring his rhetoric to show that it was his faction which would support local interests. He minimized the nature of his authority by emphasizing that he was seeking volunteers - yet at the same time underscored his power with impressive military demonstrations and the traditional “treat”, paying for alcohol for the men. In counties on the edges of the conflict, a carefully calculated blend of intimidation and ingratiitation, neither too authoritarian nor too humble, served him fairly well.

Meanwhile, the Regulators were also using rhetoric to gather supporters to their faction. Rather than simply appeal to the authorities with whom they were attempting to negotiate, the Regulators now began producing regular publications, in which they justified their actions to the general public. Denson and Ekirch have noted that the Regulators used Whig or “Country thought” arguments, portraying themselves as the virtuous people of the country fighting against corruption in the “court party”. On the other hand, Denson also points out that since they came to North Carolina seeking individual advantages, their identification of themselves as “industrious farmers” seems to suggest individualistic, commercially based motives. Rather than choose between the “Country” and their own profit, they argued that they were working for the good of both. While portraying themselves as ideal citizens, there was clearly also a healthy portion of self-interest in their arguments. By arguing that one could uphold public order and still pursue personal gain, they could maximize their attractiveness to both idealists and profit seekers. In addition to these publications, they also advertised meetings in which they suggested the citizens of the backcountry could publicly discuss these issues. Over time, these meetings evolved into rudimentary political gatherings, in which the Regulators voted to affirm resolutions and take action in a united way. The minutes of these meetings, too, were published and distributed in the area. Once again, these could be used to prove to skeptics that the Regulators were orderly, law-abiding citizens with rational concerns. They serve a similar purpose for researchers: the extensive records of their organized proceedings make it clear that these were

194 Kars, Breaking Loose Together, 153-154, 156.
195 As seen in: Powell, The Regulators in North Carolina.
197 As seen in: Powell, The Regulators in North Carolina.
discontents who made a conscious effort to change aspects of their government without completely rejecting it or any of its general forms.

Rather than relying solely on political arguments, both sides also turned to religious groups as possible allies. Denson recognizes the fluidity of religion across denominational lines in the backcountry, which could lead either to conflict or to composite practices and beliefs. Kars builds upon this argument to claim that backcountry settlers were more attracted to the anti-authoritarian, Great Awakening-influenced message of individual preachers than they were to a single denomination. Denson feels that their previous experience crossing denominational lines made backcountry settlers more likely to work together politically. Nevertheless, Governor Tryon did make a deliberate and fairly successful attempt to split the factional divide during the Regulation along denominational lines.

Anglicans, who tended to be supporters of the social status quo, were a weak denomination in North Carolina overall. When Governor Dobbs, Tryon’s predecessor, died in 1765 in the well-established coastal town of Wilmington, no representative of the state religion could even be found to officiate at the funeral of the highest governmental official in the colony. As Tryon reported, he “to my surprize found… for want of a Clergy, the Funeral Service was performed by a Majestrate of Peace”. In the backcountry, no single denomination was able to hold sway over the population, but the Anglicans were particularly poorly represented. By 1770, despite the number of English settlers, there were only three Anglican ministers in the backcountry. Yet Tryon seemed quite hopeful for the prospects of the denomination in the future, writing in 1765 that “when a sufficient Number of Clergy as exemplary in their Lives, as orthodox in their Doctrine, can persuade themselves to come into This Country, I doubt not but the larger Number of every Sect would come over to the

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Established Religion." Entitled to government support as the state religion, and with Tryon’s particular backing, committed Anglicans were natural allies for the governor.

A less likely source of support were the Presbyterians. They were a well-represented denomination in the backcountry, exercised significant political influence, and they also used a hierarchical church structure more like the Anglicans than the Quakers or the Baptists. However, Presbyterians, like other denominations, were disadvantaged by Anglican supremacy. The Presbyterian church had been established in Scotland in direct opposition to the Anglican church. Ministers like the Rev. Alexander Craighead, who had been censured in both Pennsylvania and Virginia for speaking out against the power of the crown as long as it did not grant dissidents equal religious rights, were hardly likely to see Governor Tryon as an automatic ally. Presbyterian congregations attempted to counteract the power of the Anglican church by refusing to be married by Anglican ministers, arguing against the vestry tax, and other practices. In this way, they attempted to gain ascendancy in a way that they could never have done in Britain. Nevertheless, the Presbyterian church suffered from the same lack of formal ministers in the backcountry, numbering only six by 1770. In addition, there were a number of rudimentary Scotch-Irish elites in the backcountry who were members of the Presbyterian church. They were not particularly interested in changing a political system which supported them, but did resent the power of the Anglican church. The governor therefore offered to advocate for Presbyterian goals, for instance an exemption from vestry taxes, which went to the Anglican church, the establishment of a Presbyterian college, and legislation authorizing Presbyterian ministers (and no other Dissenting ministers) to perform marriages. These benefits could not only more firmly establish their congregation but give them a serious advantage over their backcountry competitors. By aligning his faction with their interests, Tryon gained Presbyterian support. Both Anglican and Presbyterian ministers appeared with Tryon and preached to the militias or their own

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followers on his behalf. Their sermons focused heavily on the need for deference to authority and associated political rebellion with rebellion against the God-given order. For their support, well-connected Presbyterians were well-rewarded. However, the denomination was not entirely unified: some less affluent Presbyterians did sympathize with the Regulators and act on their behalf. The tangled history of Presbyterian participation shows the fluidity of factional alliances during the Regulation. Religious affiliation might sway an individual’s allegiance; however it had to compete with possibly contradictory political or economic factors.

While Tryon claimed the Anglicans and Presbyterians, the Regulator movement tended to draw Quakers and Baptists. While Quakers had already been present in the colony since the days of the Cary Rebellion, even more of them migrated south from Pennsylvania to the backcountry. The Regulation in fact began in 1766 with a group of disaffected Quakers, the Sandy Creek Association, who urged their neighbors to protest against government corruption in the area. Although the Quaker church officially encouraged its members to remove themselves from worldly affairs and maintain a pacifistic stance, Quakers did have a strong history of questioning authority in both religious and political matters, which might make them supporters of a protest movement. Baptist churches, with a similar ethos and few highly-ranked members, were also natural allies. Baptists were numerous in the backcountry, did not suffer from the same dearth of ministers as other congregations did, and because of their association with disorder and the lower classes, were especially distasteful to the Anglican elite. Yet they were also chief competitors for dominance in the backcountry with the Presbyterians, and antipathy between them was reported. Tryon’s support for the Presbyterians would weaken the Baptists. This further increased the likelihood that the two groups would find themselves on opposite sides of the factional conflict. An example of the Baptist-Quaker alliance can be found in the Sandy

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209 As seen in: Powell, *The Regulators in North Carolina*.


Creek Association itself, which developed into a mixed-faith group seeking the election of Herman Husband, a Quaker who had helped to establish a Baptist church in the region, to the legislature. While never formally leading the Regulation, the Sandy Creek Association had many high-profile members and in some ways set the tone for the movement. This is a prime example of a diverse North Carolinian faction coming together to pursue mutual interests.

To draw supporters, the Regulators justified their behavior in religious terms. In their publications, they argued that god-given authority was authority that was justly used. Since North Carolina’s officials were unjust, their authority could no longer be sanctioned by God. Pious men had a duty to remove ungodly leaders before they destroyed society. Therefore, by protesting, these “industrious farmers” were attacking the character of their opponents and showing themselves to be men of moral integrity. These arguments found support in the backcountry. Some also believed that Tryon specifically targeted Baptist and Quaker churches as anti-establishment strongholds. Denson doubts this was consciously done, but concedes that Tryon did certainly favor the Presbyterians, which would put the others at a disadvantage. An astute politician like Tryon must have known that by singling out the Presbyterians, he was indirectly weakening the Baptists and Quakers which made up the core of the Regulator faction.

Another possible weak point in the Regulator faction was in the different attitudes toward violence espoused by different religions. The original Sandy Creek Association, both Baptist and Quaker, shared a pacifist attitude; however, as their cause grew, they were joined by nonpacifists. Yet this dichotomy of approaches seemed to be resolved fairly well. Some churches, both Baptist and Quaker, saw many members disaffiliate themselves in order to take a more active role in the Regulation, without disavowing the central tenets of the faith. Where members remained officially detached and/or pacifistic, they often continued to materially support and shelter their former co-religionists. Repentance was all that was

usually needed to be reinstated as a member of the church.\textsuperscript{219} This behavior seems to have been very similar to the behavior of Quakers during the Cary Rebellion. Once again, there was a marked lack of tension between active participants in the Regulator movement and their pacifistic supporters, who ran less of a risk of reprisals. The Regulator movement, like Tryon and his supporters, showed a willingness to accommodate people of different faiths, who joined for varied motives, in order to gain the largest number of allies.

One final religious group was a factor in the backcountry, but they were unlikely to be swayed by the rhetoric used by either faction. The Moravians were a group of Protestants originally from the German-speaking regions of Europe. Their official center was in Herrnhut in eastern Saxony; however, as a result of their evangelistic attitude, the church had dispersed widely throughout areas of European settlement. Within the British colonies, Moravians could be found in the Caribbean and Pennsylvania as well as North Carolina. The Moravian church was highly organized and structured, and members maintained fairly close ties with the central authority through newsletters which would be distributed and read out loud to congregations around the world.\textsuperscript{220} For the Moravians, no other ethnic or political loyalty was as important as that to their religious community. Their denomination had also come under strong criticism in other regions, which meant that the worldwide church was becoming increasingly careful not to offend the locals. The North Carolina settlement itself was partially established because it was in a more isolated region, where they could avoid scrutiny.\textsuperscript{221} Founded only in 1752, it was not a very established community, and other North Carolinians still viewed them with skepticism at the time of the Regulation. Many of the concerns of the Regulation were not shared by the Moravians, whose land was owned in common by the church\textsuperscript{222}, and who had focused on establishing unique self-sufficient industries, such as pottery firing, rather than competing with either planters or large-scale farming dissenters.\textsuperscript{151}

\textsuperscript{219} Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 151.


\textsuperscript{221} Sommer, \textit{Serving Two Masters}, 34.

\textsuperscript{222} Kars, \textit{Breaking Loose Together}, 10, 89.
traders in the region. Nevertheless, the Moravians understood that they needed to participate in the political life of the places where they lived if they wanted to be able to maintain their communities there. In North Carolina they established two towns which became significant commercial centers, Bethabara and Salem. Bethabara attracted visitors from sixty miles away; Salem was even more significant. Moravian towns had the difficult task of combining all the Moravian goals in one community: they needed to be safe places of withdrawal for their inhabitants, but also to incubate active Christians to go back out into the world, as well as leaving a good impression on their neighbors. Thus, even though they were politically isolationist, they were, by design, socially visible. Moravian towns also operated stores and taverns in a time period in which these places were often political and social gathering places. Both factions were therefore particularly interested in ensuring that the Moravians either supported them, or at least were truly neutral, and both factions viewed them with suspicion.

As a result, the Moravians faced a similar challenge to one which would befall them ten years later during the Revolution: they had to balance their need to maintain a positive relationship with the British authorities, lest they damage the good standing of the worldwide church with Britain, with their need to maintain goodwill with their neighbors, lest they be personally harmed. The religious community sent messages to both sides assuring them that they would stay neutral in the conflict. In return, neither the North Carolina government nor the Regulators demanded that the Moravians actively assist them in any way. They were able to prevent either faction from seeking shelter in their towns, and neither faction demanded any major commitment of resources from them, although they did provide material assistance to Governor Tryon’s faction after he had decisively resolved the conflict in his favor. While the Moravians’ relationships with other North Carolinians were tense

224 Sommer, *Serving Two Masters,* 79.
227 Rohrer, *Hope’s Promise,* 106.
228 As seen in: Powell, *The Regulators in North Carolina.*
throughout the period of the Regulation, they managed to maintain their neutral stance. This suggests that not only could North Carolinians form alliances with those who shared their interests, they could even tolerate those who did not, provided that they remained neutral and were not actively working against their faction.

Governor Tryon’s first trip to the backcountry was resolved without bloodshed. His stance was not a particularly conciliatory one, as he made clear on his travels through the colony, collecting militia support for a possible violent suppression of the Regulation. Nevertheless, he did not attempt to force a confrontation. The Regulators were deeply skeptical of Tryon’s trustworthiness; however, they too preferred to avoid violence. The Regulation did not yet appear to encourage interpersonal conflict: prosecutions for the crime of assault were lower in the backcountry than in other North Carolina regions at the time.229

It is clear, however, that neither faction considered the conflict truly resolved. Both Governor Tryon and the Regulators continued to shore up their positions once they had returned home. For Tryon, this meant continuing his alliances with eastern elites. The supportive legislature strengthened his retaliatory powers with the passage of a Riot Act, which authorized the execution of unruly groups of more than ten people, as well as the use of force to disperse them.230 This would allow him to deal with the Regulators more harshly in the future. For the Regulators, this was yet another attempt to restrict their rights, adding fuel to their fire in turn.231 The Regulators also continued to maintain their own factional ties. In addition to their more formal writings, their views were dispersed in a more informal manner in the backcountry through folk songs. One, for instance, mocked a government official and Regulator enemy with these words: “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.”232 These songs were a clear indication of the mood in the backcountry and an expression of continuing support for the Regulator faction, despite the ease in tensions. In addition, the Regulators did accomplish their goal of more direct

229 Spindel, Crime and Society, 68.


231 Ekirch, “Poor Carolina”, 195.

participation in colonial government. After successful campaigning in the backcountry, Herman Husband and other Regulators were elected in 1769 to the legislature. These new representatives of government were sent east with detailed instructions for changes to the law from the constituents in their counties, following closely along the lines of Regulator concerns.\textsuperscript{233} Both factions continued to quietly maintain their alliances, yet as can clearly be seen, North Carolinians were not quick to violence. Years after the rise of the Regulators, both sides were still attempting to manipulate laws, not weapons, to achieve their aims.

Once again, Regulators were frustrated by what they perceived as a lack of concern and respect on the part of eastern elites. Their major political representative, Husband, found himself stymied by his unsympathetic colleagues in the legislature. The petitions of his constituents were never read aloud, but instead the legality of his own election was investigated in an attempt to remove him from office. The passage of the Riot Act proved a further goad to the Regulators, who clearly saw it as a threat directed against themselves. As frustration among the backcountry petitioners grew, the tone of protest escalated toward group violence.\textsuperscript{234}

For Carole Watterson Troxler, this is a sign of the movement’s decline into uncontrolled violence and eventual defeat. Yet there is no reason to see their behavior at this time as a sign of their unravelling factional unity. Troxler herself admits that at that point in time in British history, violence of this kind was a fairly normal stage of public protest.\textsuperscript{235} In addition, like others in other colonies, eastern elites themselves had also reacted with violent threats to the Stamp Act in 1765.\textsuperscript{236} It seems clear that all of North Carolina’s population, regardless of social status, understood violent protest as a valid way of pursuing the interests of their own faction, and that they were not alone in doing so in the colonial world. This was not a sign of uncivilized people in any region of the state, but a fairly standard response at the time.

It is through this lens that the increasingly violent protests in the backcountry should be viewed. In one notable instance, in September 1770, the Regulators attacked several of

\textsuperscript{233} Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 78.

\textsuperscript{234} Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 78, 83-84.

\textsuperscript{235} Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 9.

\textsuperscript{236} Spindel, “Law and Disorder”, 7-8.
their opponents in Orange County, including the very prominent Edmund Fanning. They occupied the county capitol of Hillsborough, chased Fanning out of the court, and forced the justice, Judge Henderson, to conduct the court session as usual, but without paying the usual fees. They then proceeded to vandalize and partially destroy the courthouse, before seeking Fanning out once again, chasing him out of town and then destroying his house. The protestors broke out store windows and destroyed the bell of the Anglican church, recently donated by Fanning, but otherwise left the town unharmed. These acts may well have been terrifying to their targets, but they were not unusual. In fact, they bore similarities to the protests carried out by eastern “Sons of Liberty” in 1765 in protest of the Stamp Act, when they dragged a judge out of bed and made him promise to continue court business without stamps, as well surrounding the governor’s house itself. The Regulators did appear to be behaving according to accepted forms which other North Carolinians had used before them.

Both factions were now aware of the heightened risk of violence, not just the structured, relatively harmless assaults found in violent protest but true armed conflicts which could lead to significant loss of life. At the same time, both Governor Tryon and the Regulators continued to protest that they would like to avoid such violence. Tryon needed the support of public opinion to win the contest, and this informed his actions. He issued public declarations of his desire for peace - but also his responsibility for keeping order against a group he characterized as unruly and unreasonable. His proclamations attempted to strengthen the commitment of those he had already won over, while dissuading backcountry residents who were still undecided to keep their distance from the Regulation. Meanwhile, the Regulators continued to send missives to Tryon, explaining their position and offering a limited form of deference. Once again, these were offered in the form of open letters, so that other North Carolinians could judge the civility of their response. The Regulators were also attempting to strengthen the loyalties they already had as well as win over the uncertain. They too claimed that violence would only occur if they were forced into it, in their case because they needed to defend themselves against oppressive tactics from a government


240 As seen in: Powell, *The Regulators in North Carolina*. 
which had lost its just authority. Until the end, Regulators attempted to organize militarily while still presenting themselves as legitimate protestors.\textsuperscript{241} This focus on rhetoric shows how factionalism in North Carolina worked: because factions were fluid and based on mutual interests, it was important to maintain loyalties through constant campaigning. This might seem self-explanatory for protestors, but Governor Tryon also knew the value of persuasion in maintaining his authority.

The Regulators, as a possible violent resistance force, were not necessarily insignificant. Since all white male citizens of North Carolina were required to participate in regular militia musters, they also had some limited quasi-military experience, at least in a drill setting. Many of the militia units in the most troubled counties of the Regulation had rejected Governor Tryon’s recruiting\textsuperscript{242}, meaning that these structures could also have been used to help organize any violent resistance. But the Regulator camp’s diversity included a number of religious groups who espoused pacifism alongside many who were quite willing to involve themselves with violence. Perhaps as a result of this ambivalence, combined with the less authoritarian approach espoused by Quaker and Baptist churches, the Regulators did not organize behind formal, hierarchical leadership, nor did they do anything to compel members of the Regulation to participate in all of their actions. The lack of a single authority to set the tone of the movement meant that even as Tryon came closer with his militia units, there may have been confusion in the ranks of the Regulators as to whether they were gathering for intimidation, discussion, or battle.\textsuperscript{243} Some of the Regulators, apparently not believing the conflict would break out into true violence, were unarmed.\textsuperscript{244} As it became clear that violence was in fact imminent, some protestors abandoned the potential battlefield and returned to their homes, former leader Herman Husband among them.\textsuperscript{245} Yet in the preserved correspondence of Regulator supporters, there is no evidence of resentment against Husband and the others who left for this action.\textsuperscript{246} From a political or military standpoint, this

\textsuperscript{241} Lee, \textit{Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina}, 83.

\textsuperscript{242} Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 97.

\textsuperscript{243} Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 103-104.

\textsuperscript{244} Lee, \textit{Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina}, 92.

\textsuperscript{245} Kars, \textit{Breaking Loose Together}, 194.

\textsuperscript{246} As seen in: Powell, \textit{The Regulators in North Carolina}. 
behavior would be unacceptable, however the moral and religious dimension may have predominated in the minds of the Regulators, leading to greater tolerance of a variety of responses, depending on the individual’s conscience. Tryon and his supporters, meanwhile, seemed to have approached the conflict from a more traditional military/political viewpoint. The force he led was also composed of the local militia he had earlier drawn upon, no more professional soldiers than the Regulators, but they followed a classic hierarchical command structure, and were supported by formal governmental officers in charge of such matters as provisioning.\textsuperscript{247} This difference in the structure of the two sides would give Tryon and his supporters the advantage. Ironically, the ease with which a diverse number of inhabitants came together to form the Regulator faction may have weakened their final resistance.

The Regulation’s end came in the Battle of Alamance, fought on May 19th, 1771. As might be expected, the factions differed in their explanations of the final precipitating event before the battle. There was to be a prisoner exchange, but one of Tryon’s captives, Regulator Robert Thompson, was shot before the exchange was accomplished. Tryon’s supporters claimed that the Regulators fired on a white flag of truce; the Regulators that Tryon’s troops initially refused to fire, but were finally bullied into it by the governor. In any event, the conflict spilled over into outright violence. The Regulators, less organized and less military in nature, soon fell into guerrilla-style fighting, could not maintain any gains they achieved during the battle, and were soon defeated.\textsuperscript{248} In the end, Governor Tryon’s ability to marshal support for his government, using political, religious and regional appeals to draw in various members of his faction while splitting support for the Regulators, led to his success.

The Regulator movement was widely reported and commented up on in the other British North American colonies. These interpretations have continued to blend into the historical analyses of the modern day. The North Carolinian Sons of Liberty, often drawn from the eastern elites, attempted to downplay any possible connection between the Regulation and their own protest movement.\textsuperscript{249} Local colonial elites in South Carolina and Virginia shared these critical views. Decades before, during the Cary Rebellion, Governor Spotswood of Virginia had justified his intervention by claiming that unrest in North Carolina

\textsuperscript{247} Kars, Breaking Loose Together, 198.

\textsuperscript{248} Kars, Breaking Loose Together, 194; Lee, Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina, 85, 87.

\textsuperscript{249} Kars, Breaking Loose Together, 208-209.
was potentially dangerous and destabilizing for his own colony. During the Regulation, the specific complaints of protestors were not necessarily a concern - the tangled issues of land ownership in the Granville District, for instance, were far too localized of a problem to spread wider discontent - but the threat of their increasingly egalitarian rhetoric taking hold among non-elites in Virginia and South Carolina’s more stratified societies was clearly a concern. Therefore, newspapers in these colonies minimized the political significance of the Regulation while emphasizing the supposedly riotous nature of settlers in the backcountry.  

The “long stereotype” of North Carolina as an anarchistic place continued. Certain historians maintain this interpretation into the present: Ekirch’s characterization of North Carolinian politics during the period is that of an overwhelmingly anarchistic place outside the mainstream of colonial politics, marked by an unsettled population more interested in following their own self-interest than in working together.

In more distant places, the Regulation was overwhelmingly sympathetically reported. The Sons of Liberty in other colonies drew parallels between the Regulation and their own concerns. They attempted to connect the Regulation to discontent with British rule in the larger Atlantic world. Already, ten years before the American Revolution, the Regulation was being represented as an unfairly matched clash between oppressed American settlers and uncaring British officials, rhetoric which would continue to be applied to criticisms of British government in many cases in the ensuing decade. This interpretation of the Regulation sacrificed accuracy to make its rhetorical point. It lost sight of the fact that, although Governor Tryon was the embodiment of British rule in the country, both factions were actually made up of North Carolina natives. In historical scholarship, variations on this interpretation can be found to this day. For instance, Alan D. Watson argues that the Regulation was a symptom of royal government’s failure in the colony, leading to the Revolution. Noeleen McIlvenna draws a parallel between this clash and the Cary Rebellion, arguing that the Regulators were a resurgence of the same egalitarian values and rejection of a hierarchical society which characterized the earlier conflict. For her, too, this

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250 As described in: Powell, The Regulators in North Carolina.
252 Kars, Breaking Loose Together, 208.
253 Watson, “‘A Great Number of Pore People Is a Relying on His Conduct & Politeness’”, 162.
rebellion would become the precursor to the Revolution.\textsuperscript{254} Marjoleine Kars also draws this familiar conclusion, arguing that Great Awakening religious individualism combined with Whig political thought to fuel the Regulation in much the same way it was driving larger protests of the Stamp Act at around the same time.\textsuperscript{255} These arguments are all questionable since, as has already been shown, it was North Carolina’s eastern Stamp Act protestors who in turn attempted to suppress Regulator protests. What finally speaks against the Regulation as a revolutionary precursor, however, as well as that in the decades after the Regulation, the eastern elites became North Carolina’s first Patriots - while former Regulators, far from aligning themselves with the Whigs, tended to remain Loyalist.\textsuperscript{256} Nevertheless, this is a rare example of contemporary observers resisting the long stereotype of anarchistic, uncultured North Carolina, instead portraying them sympathetically as citizens much like themselves. In scholarship, it appears that many assume the same traits which made North Carolinians rebellious made them revolutionaries. In this one instance, the “long stereotype” is turned towards a positive interpretation. It remains, however, a myth.

In the years between 1766 and 1771, North Carolina’s Regulator movement showed that some of the same issues which had driven the Cary Rebellion were still current. Both conflicts had their roots in intertwined political and religious tensions. At the same time, a larger and more complex colony meant a larger and more complex conflict: the Regulation included an intensified regional component, as well as economic concerns which stretched beyond the colony into the realm of imperial decision-making. The factions in the conflict can be loosely defined as, on the one side, a hierarchical society aligned with royal authority and the Anglican church, interested in preserving eastern ascendancy, and on the other, a society with looser social structures and less deference for authority, influenced by Dissenter religious values and working to advance the interests of the western backcountry. However, as has already been shown, neither faction can be so neatly reduced to a monolithic group. Each group was an amalgam of smaller interest groups who might not necessarily have been assumed to have the same goals. In order to ensure cohesion, the leaders of each faction had to seek common ground and use rhetoric to continually shore up their positions. In contrast

\textsuperscript{254} McIlvenna, \textit{A Very Mutinous People}, 162-163.

\textsuperscript{255} Kars, \textit{Breaking Loose Together}, 112, 124.

\textsuperscript{256} Kars, \textit{Breaking Loose Together}, 213; Troxler, \textit{Farming Dissenters}, 122.
to the “long stereotype” about North Carolina’s anarchistic, unorganized society, the Regulation showed once again that citizens did in fact pursue their own interests - but were quite willing to organize themselves, seek consensus, and draw on legitimization from authority in order to achieve their goals. However, counter-interpretations which see the Regulation as a forerunner for the American Revolution, perpetuated from colonial commentary down to the arguments of historians such as Watson and McIlvenna, are also inaccurate. As in the Cary Rebellion, the true source of the conflict was not the rebellion of citizens against British authority or a hierarchical society, but rather a contest over proximity to British authority and advantageous placement within that hierarchy.
5. Factionalism Fails to Divide North Carolina: The State of Franklin

The third major conflict under discussion is North Carolina settlers’ failed attempt to form the independent state of Franklin. Though it began developing during the middle of the 18th century, the final attempt at forming the state took place from 1784 to 1788. The potential state was found in what was, at the time, westernmost North Carolina, on the western side of the Appalachian mountains, in what is now eastern Tennessee. As a result, the failed State of Franklin is a part of the history of both North Carolina and the neighboring state of the Tennessee. Although it rose and fell before the state of Tennessee was created from North Carolina’s western lands, Franklin has traditionally been seen as the first step toward a Tennessee state identity, rather than as a part of North Carolinian history. Despite this fact, the conflict surrounding the State of Franklin shares many similarities with the other conflicts which have already been discussed. Like the Cary Rebellion and the Regulator movement, the controversy around the State of Franklin had its roots in the clash between a more central authority attempting to shore up its fledgling elite status, and a section of a population in the hinterland opposed to that authority. While the Cary Rebellion involved intervention from the more developed neighboring colonies, and the Regulator movement pitted a now more settled eastern half of North Carolina against the backcountry western half, the State of Franklin now pushed this conflict further to the west. North Carolina’s transappalachian residents were now the representatives of the less settled hinterland, while the rest of the former colony, now a state, had become more settled and stratified. Other elements of former conflicts were also present in the Franklin clash. The issue of land settlement and land speculation which contributed to the Regulator’s grievances was also a factor in Franklin. In addition, the tension between Native Americans and European settlers as a result of the intensified competition brought on by settlement, which had broken out in violence during the Tuscarora War, also became a factor during the clash over the possible State of Franklin. In this way, the controversy over the State of Franklin is clearly a continuation of issues which had followed North Carolina throughout this first era of its history. While the Cary Rebellion marked the first time domestic conflict reshaped the political borders (through the creation of North Carolina itself), the Franklin conflict marked the last time factionalism would make North Carolina’s borders uncertain. The failure of the
State of Franklin therefore marks the end of the first period of North Carolina’s history, the period in which the “long stereotype” of its intractable, backwards population was formed. However, one aspect of the Franklin controversy sets it apart from these earlier conflicts. This is simply that while the earlier conflicts were part of North Carolina’s colonial history, the failed State of Franklin rose and fell during North Carolina’s first years as a new American state. The earlier dichotomy between royal colonial norms and local resistance, which historians such as Noeleen McIlvenna have made the basis of their analysis, falls away. Nevertheless, many of the standard issues which caused earlier conflicts continued to be relevant. This shows, as Jeremy Adelman has argued, that there is more continuity between empires and their revolutionary offshoots than is usually acknowledged, and that under a new understanding of sovereignty, many old patterns in North America continued as they had before.257 It is therefore unnecessary to embark on a detailed description of the changes made to North Carolina when it transitioned from a colony to a state: the conditions and social patterns described in previous chapters continued without much change into this period.

The land which would make up the State of Franklin was settled at roughly the same time as the rest of western North Carolina. For most of North Carolina’s early history, its western border was not well-defined. The 1713 Treaty of Utrecht with France did not specify a boundary line between British and French settlements, so that both countries competed for land, attempting to shore up their claims with maps showing the settlements they had already established and the native tribes with whom they were allied. However, during North Carolina’s early history this larger imperial competition had little practical relevance: the colony was too isolated to come into contact with any rival European claims. With the Treaty of Paris in 1763, France ceded all lands west of the Mississippi River to Britain. This confirmed the claims of the popular John Mitchell map from 1755, in which the east-west boundaries of the southeastern colonies were simply extended straight out to the Mississippi River as well.258 As settlers began traveling down the Appalachians to the North Carolina


backcountry, it would seem that both sides of the mountain range were clear for European settlement.

It is unsurprising that the “long stereotype” of an undeveloped, highly individualistic society spread west as North Carolina’s borders did. If eastern inhabitants were still being criticized for their “disgusting equality” in 1775 (by British observer Janet Schaw)\(^{259}\), how much more contrast must there have been between “civilized” society and the transappalachian settlements? In fact, as Mark T. Banker points out, the stereotype of an isolated and independent Appalachia persisted quite a long time among historians of the region. However, much like the backcountry before them, the transappalachian settlements were quickly organized into communities with active political and religious lives. The mountain range across which they had settled did provide practical challenges to travel, but the region was by no means cut off from the rest of the continent.\(^{260}\)

The connection between westward expansion and land speculation which had been established since the beginnings of the colony continued in these new transappalachian settlements. Backcountry men who had been prominent on both sides of the Regulation began buying up Appalachian land, hoping to profit in the further west in the same way that earlier speculators had been able to profit in their own counties. The complex nature in which Regulator allegiances were interwoven with land speculation enterprises in the pursuit of personal gain can be seen in a few examples. For instance, Thomas Polk of Mecklenburg County, initially an early leader touting Regulator grievances, later shifted his allegiance to Tryon’s anti-Regulator campaign, then participated in land speculation across the Appalachians, helping to establish his family to such a degree that his grandnephew, James K. Polk, became the eleventh President of the United States.\(^{261}\) Regulator James Robertson, meanwhile, fled the violence which followed the movement and established the transappalachian settlement of Sycamore Shoals, while another group of Regulators settled along the Nolichucky River.\(^{262}\) Meanwhile, Samuel Benton, a target of the Regulation’s criticism, was succeeded by his son and heir Jesse Benton, who partnered with other former


\(^{260}\) Banker, *Appalachians All*, 31-32.


\(^{262}\) Barksdale, *The Lost State of Franklin*, 20.
Tryon supporters in transappalachian land speculation. No matter their former political leanings, the prospect of open land to the west proved tempting for all those who could take advantage of the opportunity. By the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1776, these settlements were by no means as developed as even their backcountry neighbors, but they did represent a significant, identifiable European presence in the region. However, there was one major difference between these settlements and the rest of North Carolina: they were illegal.

What was not pictured on European maps were the native inhabitants who already lived in the region. The Cherokee tribe controlled the area around the Appalachians, and as with the Tuscarora before them, tension between natives and the British was frequent. The Cherokee tribe primarily understood the world through their kinship system, which was matrilineally organized. People without kin may have been seen as sub-human, and only the children of Cherokee mothers were considered Aun-Yun Wiya, the Real People. Therefore, in order to interact with other tribes or with Europeans, they assigned them a symbolic place in their kinship system. Tellingly, they often referred to the English as “brothers”, a relationship which did not indicate unity, but rivalry, and to the king or governor as “father”, a respectful form of address, but one that in a matrilineal system completely lacked European patriarchal associations with authority. Matrilineality should not be confused with matriarchy - women were not chiefs - but they were the key decision-makers in the lives of their children. Fathers in the Cherokee imagination were kindly providers who did not attempt to interfere with their children’s independence - it was the maternal uncle who would have been in charge of discipline. Similarly, while elder brothers in England inherited at the expense of their younger brothers, in the Cherokee understanding of the relationship they were under an obligation to share their wealth with their siblings. These forms of address show that the Cherokee were not being subservient, but attempting to navigate European conflicts in their own way and to their own advantage, as the Meherrin had before them.

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265 Fischer, Suspect Relations, 33-34.

However, in one respect the relationship of the Cherokee to the Europeans was different than that of the native tribes in the east had been. While the Tuscarora and others had sheltered runaway African slaves, the Cherokee formally agreed to recapture them and deliver them back to the Europeans. The old alliance between non-Europeans in the east did not continue into the west.

The Cherokee were also the major buffer between French and British settlement in the region, making them valuable allies in any conflict between the two European powers, and in the 1750’s the British became increasingly anxious to preserve Cherokee goodwill. In addition to making them material gifts, they attempted to discredit the French by telling them that French settlement would destroy their hunting grounds. Nevertheless, the French were more successful at recruiting native allies than the British, as natives realized that they were more focused on trade, while the British cared more for their land. The British relationship with the Cherokee deteriorated dramatically during the Seven Years’ War, leading to violent attacks and counterattacks on both sides, but afterwards, diplomatic relationships were again resumed. This time, to better native relationships, the British banned settlement on the western side of the Appalachians in 1763, even if it was legally purchased from Cherokees. All private purchases of native land were also banned - only Britain could deal with the Cherokee, as one nation to another. From then on, any transappalachian settlements were not officially British, as they were illegal.

Nevertheless, some settlers thought the available land and potential economic gains worth the risk of stepping nominally outside of British sovereignty. The Cherokee were concerned about these illegal settlements, but they tolerated them for the access to trade they would bring. Settlers “leased” the land from the natives. From the Cherokee perspective, these were informal, extralegal agreements without British authority which allowed the Cherokee to receive monetary compensation for damage to their hunting grounds. The

268 Perdue, Cherokee Women, 88-89.
269 Perdue and Oakley, Native Carolinians, 38.
270 Perdue, Cherokee Women, 96-97.
271 Barksdale, The Lost State of Franklin, 31; Perdue and Oakley, Native Carolinians, 38.
272 Cumfer, Separate Peoples, One Land, 41-42.
settlers, cast in the role of equals/rivals/“brothers” in the Cherokee kinship system, deliberately misled the tribe about their true intentions. The settlers actually felt that they would one day be able to legitimize their claims and make them permanent. Leading men like John Sevier were well aware that the land belonged to the Cherokee, but felt that they voided their claim by not cultivating the land to its highest European-defined potential, instead leaving it open for hunting. The wealthiest land speculators, of course, obtained the largest amounts of land and therefore the most potential profit, but as they constructed frameworks to legitimize their purchases, these would also allow for smaller purchases by more modest farmers. By the same token, if these rudimentary new elites moved to protect their purchases against challenges from British government or the Cherokee, they were also, by extension, protecting the interests of their smaller farmer neighbors. Transappalachian settlers sought to establish legal systems very much like those in the official colonies they had left behind, recognizing the power of a court system to help protect property ownership and, in the case of those who could control these public offices, to establish their own personal influence. For the time being, the interests of all transappalachian settlers were united. Although they were operating outside of the British legal system, this attempt to mirror its patterns and document their purchases shows that the settlement of this region was not disorganized, nor was it an attempt to break free of the British colonial world in which they lived. More likely, the settlers correctly judged that the 1763 ban on settlement was one of political expediency, that the long-term British desire was to continue expanding west, and that as the founders of western communities, they would best be able to control and profit from important resources such as land. Development and integration into the larger British world served the interests of all transappalachian settlers, not isolation or a rejection of the social structures from which they had come. Despite being temporarily outside of the law, these settlements did not conform to the “long stereotype” any more than any others in North Carolina did.

As with other tribes before them, the pressure of European settlement eventually put a stop to the Cherokees’ diplomatic balancing act. Stressors had already been accumulating for

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273 Cumfer, Separate Peoples, One Land, 28, 44.
274 Barksdale, The Lost State of Franklin, 31, 41.
years before the Seven Years’ War. Smallpox halved the tribe’s numbers by 1738\(^{275}\), and they continued to struggle with epidemics while they navigated diplomatic relationships between the European powers and their traditional enemies, the Creeks.\(^{276}\) By the time the natives adjusted to the diseases carried by Europeans and Africans, their numbers had been seriously reduced, and they were a much smaller percentage of the overall population.\(^{277}\) By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Cherokee had also become dependent on European trade, which, as a traditionally male activity, weakened the traditional matriarchal structure of society and turned the focus of some from communal life towards individual competition. Contact with Europeans also brought on problems with alcoholism.\(^{278}\) Because they were an loose association of towns, rather than a single unified organization, the Cherokee were also subject to internal rivalries which weakened their response.\(^{279}\)

Victory in the Seven Years’ War tipped the balance of power permanently in favor of the British, so that the Cherokee lost their ability to play one set of Europeans against the other. Despite the new ban on settlement, the pressure placed on them by North Carolinian settlement particularly increased during this period. During the Revolutionary War, they attacked transappalachian settlements in their capacity as British allies, but also to defend their own territory\(^{280}\) as well as to avenge the deaths of tribal members, without which they could not go on to the afterlife.\(^{281}\) Settlers distrusted the Cherokees because they did not fight in the expected European way, and retaliated by also using violence beyond the usual limits held to be acceptable in European war. According to Wayne E. Lee, European-Cherokee violence in North Carolina may have been rooted in land encroachments, but at the individual level it was primarily motivated by revenge on both sides.\(^{282}\) These clashes made the region one of the bloodiest of the war. A sub-group of the most antagonistic Cherokees, led by

\(^{275}\) Perdue and Oakley, *Native Carolinians*, 27.


\(^{278}\) Perdue, *Cherokee Women*, 63, 76.

\(^{279}\) Rozema, *Cherokee Voices*, 15-16.


\(^{281}\) Perdue, *Cherokee Women*, 52.

\(^{282}\) Lee, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina*, 127-129.
Dragging Canoe, became particularly involved in attacks and counterattacks with the settlers. As the Revolution went on, they were joined by refugees of all origins: other Cherokees, their traditional enemies the Creeks, British-loyal Tories, and runaway black slaves. The group became known as the Chickamaugans. 283 Like the Tuscarora before them, the Chickamaugans became the center of anti-settler resistance for a range of other inhabitants. Yet also like the earlier Tuscarora conflict, not all of the tribe was decided upon violence: a portion of the Cherokee living in the so-called Upper Towns continued to seek peace throughout the period, albeit unsuccessfully. 284 This arrangement mirrors that of the Tuscarora before the Tuscarora War, in which a more belligerent group of natives formed a multiracial faction to resist European encroachment while others maintained an interest in diplomatic connections. As before, multiracial factions were quite capable of forming in North Carolina to pursue a common goal.

Transappalachian settlers, on the other hand, found that the revolutionary government of North Carolina best served their aims. In 1776, the Watauga Association, a group of transappalachian settlers functioning as an ad-hoc government, petitioned for and were accepted into the official territory of revolutionary North Carolina. 285 With this annexation, they legitimized their settlements and brought themselves under the protection and control of the new U.S. government. Many individual settlers decided to actively participate in the Revolution as well. There would seem to be two reasons which motivated them: first, they were aware that the British government attempted to place limits on their settlements, and they may have believed that a new continental government would be more supportive of their expansionist aims. A secondary, but no less emotional motivation, was given through the British alliance with the Cherokee. In the recent past, both Britain and France had used native allies against enemy European populations. However, up until that point, regardless of the internal divisions of the colony or the challenges it had made against royal authority, native allies had never been used by the British government to quell the protests of North Carolinians. The possibility of the British government turning to its native allies to attack other Europeans was proof for some of the corruption of the British government. For North

283 Banker, Appalachians All, 26, 62.
284 Cumfer, Separate Peoples, One Land, 29.
Carolinians who might otherwise have been uncertain of their allegiance, this was a deep betrayal. Since the transappalachian settlements were those most deeply threatened by a powerful Cherokee enemy, their outrage was particularly vehement. While the Cherokee attacked their illegal settlements, they retaliated by invading and destroying more than fifty Cherokee towns, further breaking the power of the tribe. The violence of the “Cherokee War” exceeds anything which happened between Europeans in North Carolina at the same time, showing North Carolinians’ harsher attitude toward native opponents. In addition, the force, although predominantly North Carolinian, also included Virginian and South Carolinian contingents, which indicates a willingness to cooperate with erstwhile colonial rivals against a common enemy. This, again, parallels the cooperation of some North Carolinians with the South Carolina militia during the Tuscarora War, demonstrating the ability of settlers to work with anyone who could serve their purposes.

Many regions of North Carolina were less than enthusiastic participants in the Revolution. British commander Lord Cornwallis entered North Carolina with high hopes of Loyalist support, only to find the people passively friendly at best, unwilling to risk their lives or property in the British cause. The Patriot forces experienced the same frustrations. North Carolinians, especially in the backcountry, seemed to be waiting to see which army could claim a definite victory before supporting a side. But transappalachian participation in the European aspect of the Revolutionary War was often as avid as their clashes with the Cherokee. In their own region, the local militia participated, as did other Patriot militias in North Carolina, in “Tory scouring”, going to individual homes to force the disaffected to take a loyalty oath, searching for weapons, and generally attempting to enforce Patriot loyalty. In western Appalachia, two companies of soldiers were dedicated to patrol the region and

286 Lee, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina*, 142-143.


capture Loyalists for trial, and those whom the ordinary militiamen happened upon could also simply be executed without trial.\textsuperscript{292}

In addition to this informal policing of their territory, transappalachian settlers proved far more willing to participate in formal military conflicts than other North Carolinians. North Carolina contributed far less Continental soldiers per capita than any other state - just 7,800, compared with the 97,000 Massachusetts, with a similar population size, contributed. Its militia enrollment, too, was one of the smallest, and both British and Patriot Army leaders were disappointed when they called on militia support. In the initial conflicts at Cross Creek and Moore’s Creek Bridge in 1776, supposed loyalists melted away when they realized they were outnumbered, while at Camden over the border in South Carolina in 1780, North Carolinian Patriot militia units deserted the field.\textsuperscript{293} Meanwhile, across the Appalachians, settlers organized their own independent roaming military unit, called the Overmountain men.\textsuperscript{294} These men proudly self-identified as experienced Cherokee fighters, consciously fostering a public opinion of them as particularly tough, independent men with superior combat experience in guerrilla-style warfare.\textsuperscript{295} This transappalachian militia first participated in South Carolinian campaigns in 1780 despite many recent British victories and the continued threat of Cherokee attack, showing their genuine commitment to the U.S. cause. The prime example of their participation is during the Battle of King’s Mountain, near the North and South Carolinian border. Roughly fifteen hundred militiamen were mustered and sent east over the mountains and down into the backcountry for a battle entirely composed of North Americans on both sides\textsuperscript{296}, where the transappalachian guerrilla-style tactics were credited with being a major factor in the overwhelming Patriot victory.\textsuperscript{297}

Kevin Barksdale argues that these Revolutionary experiences gave transappalachian settlers a sense of belonging to a distinct region, separate from the rest of North Carolina. This regional identity is, for him, one of the factors leading to factional cohesion among

\textsuperscript{292} Barksdale, \textit{The Lost State of Franklin}, 45-46.

\textsuperscript{293} Ready, \textit{The Tar Heel State}, 111-112, 120, 123.

\textsuperscript{294} As described in: John Buchanan. \textit{The Road to Guilford Courthouse: The American Revolution in the Carolinas}. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1997).


\textsuperscript{296} Buchanan, \textit{The Road to Guilford Courthouse}, 229.

\textsuperscript{297} Ready, \textit{The Tar Heel State}, 126-127.
Franklinites. In the rise and fall of the State of Franklin, he traces the dissolution of that regional sense of self in the more self-interested concerns of individual elites. This analysis, in turn, is a reaction against the traditional “state pride” tradition of Tennessee, which has historically held up Franklinite settlers as patriots struggling against North Carolinian oppression.\textsuperscript{298} In other words, the traditional Tennessean interpretation is an inversion of the North Carolinian “long stereotype”, much like that seen in the “Regulators as Revolutionaries” arguments described last chapter, which takes the contentious, rebellious characteristics normally ascribed to the inhabitants and turns them into an ideologically coherent resistance to injustice. Barksdale’s new analysis, on the other hand, essentially reiterates the “long stereotype”, describing how North Carolinians/Franklinites, despite the unifying experiences of the Revolution, are unable to maintain order because of their anarchistic, individualistic attitudes. As in the cases described before, the truth is most likely somewhere in the middle: Franklinites were neither completely disinterested in nor devoted to public order. They were interested in using governmental frameworks to lend their causes legitimacy and further their own interests. If transappalachian settlers did in fact form some separate regional identity during the Revolution, it was only one of many factors which could draw their loyalties in various directions. They were never a unified whole, but rather continued to form factions to pursue short-term goals, much as North Carolinians had for the last 80 years.

For the Cherokee, the end of the Revolution only intensified the pressure. The British ceded Cherokee lands to the victorious Americans in 1783’s Treaty of Paris - without even notifying their native allies of this decision. The Cherokee found themselves once again faced with a unified European antagonist, and tribal opinion splintered over the best course of action. While the Chickamaugans under Dragging Canoe attacked North Carolinian settlements with renewed violence, another group, under Attakullakulla, attempted to pursue a policy of accommodation.\textsuperscript{299} These Cherokee did sign treaties with the United States during this time period, beginning with the Treaty of Hopewell in 1785. In this treaty, the Cherokee placed themselves under the protection of the United States, in return for which

\textsuperscript{298} As described in: Barksdale, \textit{The Lost State of Franklin.}

\textsuperscript{299} Banker, \textit{Appalachians All}, 26-27.
land boundaries were fixed, with U.S. government promises that they would be respected.\(^3\) Female Cherokee diplomats claimed all the men involved as their sons - a relationship which, unlike that of father to son, was central and influential - and insisted upon peace. With their assistance, the U.S. government was persuaded to accept the boundaries of 1777, voiding later North Carolinian claims. Unsurprisingly, this met with strong dissent from the North Carolinian representative.\(^4\) As before, however, European agreements on land boundaries with natives were unreliable: only a few months later, the Treaty of Coyatee was forced through instead, which demanded that the Cherokee surrender even more of their lands.\(^5\) The Cherokee continued to insist on a relationship of reciprocity: it was the duty of the Americans to have compassion for them, since they had once assisted against the French, and to be just, since they were receiving land.\(^6\) During these treaty talks, North Carolinians were specifically cited as people who did not follow the rules of this reciprocal relationship. Chief Corn Tassel complained, “They, the people of North Carolina, have taken our lands for no consideration, and are now making their fortunes out of them.” The Cherokee rightly perceived that their greatest threat came from those who had a personal interest in their lands, and allied with the U.S. government based on its perceived ability to deter them, like the British government before.\(^7\)

As a result of the situation with the Cherokee, the interests of the new United States government and the transappalachian settlers were at odds. Although both North Carolina and U.S. governmental leaders were highly interested in the less settled land to the west, they preferred to seek an accord with willing Cherokee leaders and attempt to Europeanize them, which they could not do if the Cherokee were constantly suspicious of their motives. Therefore, they too, like the British authorities before them, insisted that settlers in western Appalachian cease pushing forward into native territory, establishing a new boundary line to replace the British one in 1783.\(^8\) Settlers often did not agree with this decision. Not only

\(^3\) Rozema, Cherokee Voices, 73.
\(^4\) Cumfer, Separate Peoples, One Land, 38.
\(^5\) Rozema, Cherokee Voices, 74.
\(^6\) Cumfer, Separate Peoples, One Land, 34.
\(^7\) Rozema, Cherokee Voices, 78, 81-82.
\(^8\) Barksdale, The Lost State of Franklin, 99.
were they invested in their land speculations, they now had resentment towards the Cherokee which had built up throughout their violent exchanges. They saw the Cherokee as as dangerous savages, and some actively advocated for their extermination. Even those less genocidally inclined felt that the tribe, since they had allied with the British, should now be treated as a conquered nation and should lose their right to their land.\textsuperscript{306} Instead, the official U.S./N.C. response could be seen as quite a poor reward for the enthusiastic transappalachian participation in the Revolution.

This was not the only way in which transappalachian settlers felt poorly served by North Carolina’s government. As previously mentioned, these settlers were by no means isolationists, but were interested in developing the region in order to profit from its economic opportunities. For this purpose, transappalachian settlers sought, but did not receive, funds from North Carolina’s government to build up the region’s infrastructure. Those connections which they did make, through easier valley paths, tended to run toward the north and the west - away from North Carolina. This increased their sense of estrangement from the state government. Since developing the region and further connecting it with the outside world served all settlers well, regardless of their comparative wealth, transappalachian society could be largely unified on this issue, while they grew more impatient with North Carolina’s more eastern government.\textsuperscript{307} In other words, the perception of a common interest made it likely that, as it often had before, a faction of North Carolinians would form to pursue it.

Transappalachian settlers were not the only North Carolinians who felt ambivalent about the new state’s government, however. The split between the Federalists, who preferred stronger and more powerful governmental structures, and the Antifederalists who did not, was a developing conflict nationwide. North Carolina was overwhelmingly Antifederalist, so much so that it refused to ratify the Federalist-influenced United States Constitution, one of only two states (with tiny Rhode Island, also known for its “rogues”) to do so.\textsuperscript{308} In comparison to the rest of the new states, North Carolina still remained fairly antiauthoritarian. The major differences between transappalachian settlers and the rest of North Carolina were not based in philosophical attitudes, but in their diverging practical priorities. As during the

\textsuperscript{306} Cumfer, \textit{Separate Peoples, One Land}, 46.

\textsuperscript{307} Barksdale, \textit{The Lost State of Franklin}, 18, 27-28.

\textsuperscript{308} Ready, \textit{The Tar Heel State}, 146-150.
Regulator conflict, a more established eastern society was contending with the “long stereotype” themselves, while simultaneously beginning to struggle with their own hinterland. Meanwhile, in the west, geography naturally diverted transappalachian attention away from North Carolina, and their much greater proximity to native tribes gave the issue an intensity it did not have elsewhere in North Carolina. With different interests emerging, so too did two factions begin to form.

The final point around which the Franklin movement coalesced was the Cession Act of 1784. North Carolina surrendered the territory west of the Appalachians which it had annexed in 1776 to the fledgling U.S. government; however, the Cession Act was repealed just months later, and the transappalachian settlements fell back into North Carolinian hands. This period of political ambiguity divided the inhabitants of the transappalachian settlements. While some wished to remain with North Carolina, others argued that they should ignore the repeal of the Cession Act and press for the creation of their region as a distinct U.S. state. Those who supported secession had generally supported the Cession Act, yet now seized upon the incident to lend their cause legitimacy, arguing that North Carolina had shown its indifference to them, and the region should resist reincorporation into that state. The voices for secession won out, and in 1785 Franklin elected its first government. These officials commanded significant wealth and land within the state, and were now able to consolidate this influence with political power. Secession was most popular among those who had the most to gain from state independence, who would benefit from less limitations on their land speculation, the ability to concentrate local tax revenues on local infrastructure, and a chance to consolidate their own local power. However, as previously noted, the issues wealthier Franklinites supported would have benefited smaller farmers too, so that there was incentive for all ranks of society to join the faction.

At the same time, Franklin was naturally not without its opponents, within and beyond the proposed state borders. In transappalachian communities, opponents of Franklin focused on the disruption and escalation of violence they brought to the region - along with attendant restrictions of growth. North Carolina’s Governor Martin obviously did not accept Franklin’s claims of independence, instead releasing a public defense of the actions of North Carolina’s government and warning that Franklin might set a precedent which led to

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separatist movements destroying the fresh new U.S. government. Separatism, in his view, might destroy the social order. This opinion was shared by Virginian officials, who worried, as they had been doing since the Cary Rebellion, about the destabilizing effect of North Carolinian settlers on their borders. Virginia had a history of attempting to both conciliate the Cherokee and reign in North Carolinian policies in order to protect their own land claims to the north in Kentucky. Not only did the transappalachian settlements stir up conflict with the Cherokees which could draw the Virginians in, they could also stimulate western Virginians to a similar disregard of their government’s decisions. As had been the case since the beginning of North Carolina’s existence, ambitious social upstarts were seen to threaten the social structure in more established societies, both to the east and in neighboring Virginia.

Yet the most important Franklinites had no interest in radically reforming their society. This became clear when they decided upon a state constitution which was essentially a copy of the existing one in North Carolina, continuing the status quo but allowing the Franklin elite to take firmer control of the top of the societal hierarchy. Another striking example of how little change the Franklin secession truly brought about can be seen in the cordial relationship between John Sevier, Franklin’s governor, and Richard Caswell, who replaced Martin as North Carolina’s new governor. Caswell had a history of land speculation in the region himself, and even engaged in further land speculations with Sevier while the two governed political entities in opposition. Though Franklin was geographically somewhat isolated from the rest of North Carolina as a whole, clearly there were elements of society in both regions which still felt an affinity for each other. The leading members of the movement did not want to change the system so much as they wanted to raise their position within it.

However, Caswell did not intend to allow Franklin to secede. North Carolina maintained a parallel governmental system, including county courts and elections, alongside that which Franklin had taken over. This led to great local uncertainty over the legality of any procedures, including marriages, and to fierce clashes over land ownership in competing courts. Neighborhoods tended to rally around the leanings of their local leaders, so that

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311 Cumfer, *Separate Peoples, One Land*, 47.
312 Barksdale, *The Lost State of Franklin*, 64-70.
opposition areas, centered around John Tipton, became increasingly disaffected from Franklin, while those in Sevier’s sphere of influence remained committed to the secession. As Tryon had before, this policy split loyalties in the troubled region without resorting to outright violence. Once a settler had done business in a North Carolina court, it became very much in their interest to uphold that court’s legitimacy, lest its decisions be overturned. The North Carolina legislature built upon these effects by offering an amnesty to Franklinites if they would give up their plan of secession, as well as promising to free them from their tax obligations for the years 1784 and 1785, since they had not been under North Carolina’s full jurisdiction at that time. However, they firmly refused to entertain any thought of finally recognizing Franklin’s succession. The disaffected therefore had incentives to join with North Carolina again, while committed Franklinites were discouraged by firm opposition. Understanding the fluid self-interest upon which which North Carolinian factions were based, Caswell managed to undermine the Franklin movement without acting directly against it.

While they established their own government, the Franklinites continued to compete aggressively against the Cherokee for their land. The same legal ambiguity that allowed Franklin to declare its independence allowed them to have de facto independence in their Cherokee policy. This meant that there were now two separate Indian policies supported by two separate and competing western North Carolinian governments. Since North Carolina was still officially in possession of this land, the weak confederated national government had no power to enforce the policy they desired. On the Cherokee side, two separate policies were also being pursued: as Upper Town Cherokee attempted to pursue peace, the Lower Town or Chickamaugan Cherokee hardened in their violent resistance to North Carolinian encroachment, while also pursuing their own enrichment through raids and connections to other political powers, such as the Virginian government. This extremely complex configuration of factions on both sides of the North Carolinian/Cherokee divide meant that any attempts at peace would be short-lived. As in the Tuscarora War, each side of the supposed native/European conflict was actually a multiracial alliance pursuing related goals.

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313 Barksdale, The Lost State of Franklin, 72-76.
314 Barksdale, The Lost State of Franklin, 80.
315 Cumfer, Separate Peoples, One Land, 48-49, 53-54.
Once again, all North Carolinians proved capable of crossing even racial lines to form short-term factions.

In the meantime, the would-be state of Franklin began to falter. Leaders had sought recognition from prominent Revolutionary leaders in order to shore up its claims, but they generally considered Franklin a dangerously destabilizing movement which threatened the fledgling U.S. The men who had rebelled during the Revolution now wanted to consolidate their own powerful positions in the hierarchy, and spontaneous secessions among ambitious new settlements were not likely to be looked upon with favor. Franklin also continued to experiment with various Indian policies in order to shore up their position. In another striking example of factional fluidity, they now turned from attempting to drive the Cherokee out to trying to forcibly settle them nearer and compel them to live in the European way, both to “civilize” them and possibly to make them constituents of their own state, increasing their numbers in order to strengthen their attempt at congressional recognition. Even the bitterness of the Revolution could apparently fade in comparison with the prospect of more allies for their faction. Cherokee chiefs resisted these attempts at “civilization”, however. Instead, violence intensified in 1788, when hostile Cherokees killed the wife and family members of settler John Kirk. The Franklinites retaliated by killing the important Cherokee chief Corn Tassel, who had participated in the federal treaties of Hopewell and Coyatee, as well as some of his family under a flag of truce, further damaging their reputation among the broader North Carolina and U.S. government. With public opinion turning against them, competing governments providing the same functions, and the threat of war with the natives if the policies of the Franklinites continued, the benefits which Franklin might have offered its faction no longer seemed attainable.

In the final stages of Franklin’s dissolution, the would-be state’s leaders showed once more that North Carolinian factions were willing to seek both allies and legitimation wherever they might find them, regardless of conflicting affiliations. At the time, Spain and the U.S. were negotiating over control of the Mississippi River. Since this was an important

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316 Barksdale, *The Lost State of Franklin*, 81-82.


318 Rozema, *Cherokee Voices*, 74.

route for trade, Spanish representatives, encouraged by Franklinites, came to believe that a Spanish-supported trade route from Franklin to the Mississippi would draw these transappalachian settlements into the Spanish sphere of influence. Franklin made secret contacts with Spain to explore this possibility. In the end, Franklin’s dissolution came before the details of any firm alliance with Spain could be established. However, the episode shows that, just as North Carolinians during the Cary Rebellion had been willing to recall a former Anglican enemy to legitimize their party and reach across racial lines to attract native allies, factionalism still showed itself to be remarkably flexible, disregarding long-held political and religious affiliations.

Tensions between the two factions came to a head in a clash on the farm of John Tipton, leader of the North Carolina loyalists, in 1788. Franklin’s supporters lost this conflict and fled, and the movement for statehood faded away. The rationale behind remaining with North Carolina and the U.S. government was underscored by the decrease in tension with the Cherokee that resulted. Later that year, when the U.S. Congress once more ordered illegal settlers off Cherokee lands, the tribe saw it as a promise of just treatment to come, and warrior bands dispersed. Franklin had proven itself unable to serve the interests of its faction, and therefore its faction, always fluid and self-interested, simply dispersed.

A rebellion created the colony/state of North Carolina out of the larger entity of Carolina, and another rebellion nearly created Franklin out of North Carolina. Much like the conflicts which were discussed in earlier chapters, the factions formed during Franklin’s attempt at statehood showed a great deal of fluidity and flexibility in their dealings. Franklinites proved willing to consider diplomatic relationships with Spain despite many points of difference, and beyond the would-be state’s borders, sympathizers could be found even in Governor Caswell of North Carolina. Once again, the way the factions sought legitimacy proves the “long stereotype” of a highly contentious, anti-authoritarian North Carolina false: Franklinites sought federal recognition, North Carolina used the decision-making power of their legislature to take action, and both Franklin and North Carolina established parallel governments. North Carolinian society still had little inherent deference

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322 Cumfer, *Separate Peoples, One Land*, 55.
for authority, yet the idea of simply becoming isolationist anarchists was never a popular one. In addition, this conflict shows how North Carolina’s “rebelliousness” had slowly moved west as settlements developed further and a hierarchical society became more established: while the easternmost North Carolinian settlements had been perceived as a threat to Virginia’s social order during the Cary Rebellion, 70 years later that same Virginian fear had moved all the way to western side of the Appalachians. The myth remained, but the specific trouble spot traveled west. In all these ways, Franklin is like the other factionalist conflicts presented: an example of an adaptable population attempting to work together for mutual gain, as much as possible within a legitimate governmental framework.

Yet in the end, Franklin’s secession was not the beginning of a new state in the way that the Cary Rebellion was. Franklin might have been on the borders of the U.S., but both federal and North Carolinian authorities were fairly swift to address the attempted statehood movement. As during the Tuscarora conflict, native attacks threatened European settlement, but this time the European governments beyond the conflict supported the natives, while the rebel group fought them, further weakening their position. Much like Tryon during the Regulator movement, Caswell was able to find support within the troubled region itself, but unlike Tryon, he did not ultimately need to call upon military support and suppress the movement himself. Instead, Franklin’s inability to find legitimacy was its downfall. Unsupported by state, federal, or even Spanish authority, Franklin was unable to establish itself as a viable political entity, and its supporters drifted back to North Carolina’s more firmly established government. In a final blow to the “long stereotype” of an ungovernable North Carolina, Franklin failed because its citizens preferred a more reliable government.
6. Conclusion

A glance at the literature cited in this paper reveals a trend: historical accounts of early North Carolina are often titled with a contemporary’s descriptive quote about the colony. For instance, Jonathan Edward Barth’s “‘The Sinke of America’: Society in the Albemarle Borderlands of North Carolina 1663-1729”, Noeleen McIlvenna’s “A Very Mutinous People”: The Struggle for North Carolina, 1660-1713, Bradford J. Wood’s “This Remote Part of the World”: Regional Formation in Lower Cape Fear, 1725-1775, A. Roger Ekirch’s “Poor Carolina”: Politics and Society in Colonial North Carolina, 1729-1776 all follow this pattern, and what is more, none of them draw upon the same source for their quotations. Clearly, there was a popular contemporary perception of the region as “poor”, “mutinous”, “remote” - at worst, even a “sinke” draining away the worst of the colonials. The very fact that historians choose these titles for their works shows the persistence of this “long stereotype” of North Carolina as a backwards, ungovernable place consisting of individualists who could not be organized. Now, this paper, the title of which begins with a quote from 1774 branding the colony “this land of perpetual strife and contention,”323 joins that trend. Unlike the previously cited works, however, this paper seeks to directly confront and refute the “long stereotype”. While it is true that long-term political stability and social deference were rare in North Carolina, this does not mean that the area was an anarchistic place. Early North Carolinians were ambitious, politically engaged members of their community who were quite willing to form temporary factions to achieve mutual short-term goals. Their factional struggles were not against the concept of order or authority, but rather to determine who would be able to wield them to their benefit.

North Carolina owes its very existence to a pair of factionalist conflicts, the first two discussed in this paper: the Cary Rebellion and the Tuscarora War. Formerly the northern half of the larger colony of Carolina, the breakdown in communication caused by this clash led to the separation of the rebellious segment of the colony as a separate administrative unit. At first glance, this would seem a powerful confirmation of the “long stereotype” of North Carolina as a place so difficult to govern it had to be isolated from more manageable regions. In reality, however, these conflicts are an excellent example of the way in which North

323 Quoted in Ekirch, “Poor Carolina”, 199.
Carolinians were in fact able to work together for their common self-interest. The first of these two clashes began in 1708, as those in North Carolina who supported the firmer establishment of the Anglican church as the state religion came into conflict with those Dissenter colonists who resented Anglican influence. This rivalry was not just a religious one, however, but also a political one: laws such as the Vestry Act and the requirement of an oath to take public office were designed to disenfranchise Dissenters, particularly the politically influential Quakers, while simultaneously strengthening Anglican power in the state. Two factions, the Quaker Party and the Anglican party, formed out of this entanglement of religious and political interests. Each side supported their own opposing governor and used appeals to higher authorities to substantiate their claims, showing that not just the Anglicans as the representatives of state power, but also the Quakers were interested in using authority for their own ends. The disagreement was not about whether or not there should be a government, nor about the form or ideals of that government, but simply about who should be able to dominate it. In addition, both of these factions were more diverse than their names imply. The Quaker party in particular included many colonists of varied faith and showed a high level of tolerance for a variety of approaches to protest within their movement. They were also willing to seek help from unusual places, including dubious coastal smugglers/pirates and even across racial lines to the Tuscarora tribe. What truly characterizes North Carolinian behavior at the time is not their uncooperative approach to authority, but rather their willingness to band together with just about anyone in the pursuit of harnessing authority for themselves.

The Tuscarora War, following hard on the heels of the Cary Rebellion, expands that general statement about European North Carolinian behavior to include that of other races in the colony at the time. At its simplest, the conflict can be described as the violent retaliation of the Tuscarora tribe against European encroachment and their subsequent defeat. But once again, the supposed European and native factions were more complex than they might at first seem. Neither the Tuscarora nor the Europeans were unified, as some colonists preserved their neutrality while some Tuscarora made deals with the colonists. In addition, both factions were actually multiracial: Europeans used Yamasee and Cherokee allies to combat the Tuscarora, while the tribe benefited from the expertise of runaway slaves to build a European-style fort. Despite the hostilities, both sides continued to seek diplomatic solutions,
and it was eventually an agreement which split the Tuscarora loyalties enough to bring their resistance to an end. The Tuscarora War shows that not only Europeans, but also other North Carolinians were quite capable of working together, forming even unconventional alliances to pursue their short-term interests. In addition, the fact that diplomatic contact never broke down suggests not a society which descended quickly into violent chaos, but rather one which was continually seeking orderly solutions that served their purposes well.

The second major conflict which was examined in this paper, the Regulator movement, was also carried out by a diverse and self-consciously orderly group seeking their own advantage. Since this conflict took place in the decade before the American Revolution, interpretations from both contemporaries and modern historians have attempted to connect this movement with the later war, but closer consideration of the movement shows that there is no clear pattern between Regulator participation and Revolutionary participation. The Regulation was largely the result of dissatisfaction with backcountry land speculation and governmental corruption, and no Regulators questioned British government as a whole - in fact, it was their eastern opponents who were more likely to be Sons of Liberty. The Regulation, instead, was an internal North Carolinian issue, which showed many of the same characteristics as the Cary Rebellion: a willingness to work with a variety of diverse groups with varying motives within the same faction, as well as attempts from both factions to legitimize their positions with appeals to higher authority. Despite contemporary portrayals of the Regulators as uncivilized rioters by their opponents, the group was able to draw members from a variety of religious groups and hold their faction together over a number of years, despite having no clear authoritarian structure. The volume and nature of their publications show that they were quite interested in rhetorically justifying their actions as orderly, and their attempts to enter the North Carolina legislature themselves show their commitment to government. The other faction, composed of Governor Tryon and his supporters, naturally showed the same interest in maintaining order, though they invested their rhetorical efforts in defending the status quo. But even this faction, while presumably more authoritarian, knew better than to rely on social deference or sheer displays of power to maintain their strength. Tryon showed skill in courting and keeping his allies close by appealing to their own interests, even when those might conflict with his in the long-term. For example, despite his own interest in more firmly establishing the Anglican religion, he
offered benefits to the Presbyterians in return for their support in the backcountry. Therefore it is clear that both sides of the Regulator movement were citizens who were willing to work together, despite their differences, in order to achieve short-term goals. The Regulators, as they explicitly said themselves, had no quarrel with government, but rather with who was in control of that government.

Government, and not the lack of, was also the central point of conflict in the final example of factionalism studied in this paper, the attempt to establish the State of Franklin. Once again, observers saw Franklinites as uncivilized and potentially societally destabilizing. However, the evidence actually suggests that the leaders of this movement were far more invested in maintaining the status quo, but simply raising their own position in society. Their reasoning for secession from North Carolina was simple self-interest, as it would allow them to continue their land speculations unimpeded and pursue greater economic development in their region. Their secessionist movement was always focused on legitimacy, arguing its case through legal reasoning rather than sheer violent rebellion, as well as seeking federal recognition. This was not an attempt to break away from all government, but simply to establish their own, very similar, version of North Carolinian government, one which they could more effectively control. Franklinites were so similar to their more easterly North Carolinian counterparts that the two competing governors, Sevier and Caswell, actually maintained cordial correspondence and continued land speculations together while ostensibly leading opposing factions. This shows that this conflict was, once again, far from a clash between civilization and anarchy. As during the Tuscarora War, the conflict around the State of Franklin included violent clashes with the nearest native tribe, in this case the Cherokee. Once again, North Carolinians showed an interest in crossing even the ever-hardening racial lines to pursue their own interests: the anti-Franklin government of North Carolina, despite their own interest in western land, attempted to hold back transappalachian settlement to avoid Cherokee retaliation. By the same token, the Cherokee, like the Tuscarora, were divided as to their response to the Europeans. Yet the true proof of just how far North Carolinians were willing to go in their search for allies can be seen in the Franklinites' attempt to establish diplomatic contact with Spain. The fact that ethnically British Protestants were open to working with Spanish Catholics shows their eagerness to form factions out of all those willing. In addition, this episode shows that even as the state lost hope of U.S.
recognition, they continued the search for legitimation in seeking another larger patron
nation. Franklinites, even at their most rebellious while reaching beyond the confines of U.S.
authority, were not interested in discarding all authority. Neither faction could be neatly
divided into an orderly or a disorderly group: both were diverse in their motives and
sometimes, their ethnic makeup. What held the faction of the Franklinites together was their
mutual self-interest, and what split them apart was simply the fact that they did not succeed in
achieving their goals. Their inability to establish an alternative reliable government led to
their downfall, not their resistance to existing government per se.

From 1708 to 1788, from the supporters of the Cary Rebellion to the Franklinites, the
early history of North Carolina was indeed fraught with factionalism and political unrest.
However, this was not a symptom of the inhabitants’ inability or unwillingness to form an
orderly, hierarchical society, but rather a result of their many conflicts over who, exactly,
should be at the top of that social order. North Carolinians of many types proved quite
willing to cooperate to achieve their own goals; however, they did so while formed into
factions, and not as a part of an established, static society. The question of who could wield
authority in North Carolina was never one which could be simply resolved through deference
or shows of force. Instead, North Carolina’s factions worked to establish their legitimacy
through political or religious rhetoric combined with appeals to higher authorities. These are
not the actions of isolated, apathetic rustics or aggressive, individualistic anarchists, but of
groups of orderly, ambitious social climbers. The “long stereotype” of North Carolina as a
place in which government simply could not take hold is simply untrue.

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