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The first settlers in Guilford County were the German, Scotch-Irish, and English immigrants who came to the Piedmont of North Carolina in search of economic and religious freedom. These people represented the Lutheran, German Reformed, Quaker, Presbyterian, Baptist, and, at a later date, the Methodist denominations. The purpose of this paper is to examine the actions of the people in relation to their religious beliefs during the early period of settlement.

The period of time in study ranges from the arrival of the first German settlers in the early 1740's to the climax of the Great Revival in North Carolina in 1805. During the intervening years, there were many problems which these people had to solve. Shortly after their arrival they were faced with economic and religious problems which culminated in the Regulator War. Soon after that conflict, there followed the American Revolutionary War, with its local and national problems. How the people and their religious denominations were affected by this struggle is examined in this thesis. It is also the intent of this paper to answer some similar questions: How did the people, in accordance with their religious beliefs, choose which side to support during the struggle? Why did some remain loyal while others supported the Whigs? What personal factors

motivated their choice? How influential were their ministers in deciding the matter?

Following the Revolution, there was a decline in religion. Most of the people were apathetic about religious matters, and there was much vice and spiritual neglect on the part of society. However, it was not long until religion once again thrived during a period which was called the Great Revival. It commenced in 1801 and reached its climax in North Carolina in 1805. The people of Guilford County played an important role during this revival, with results which can be seen in today's society. How the people and their religious denominations were affected by this surge of emotional religion is also explored.

In short, in this bicentennial year of the erection of Guilford County, it is only fitting to learn as much as possible about the early settlers and their religious beliefs, the problems they faced, and their reactions to those troubled times.

THE FORMATIVE PERIOD OF RELIGION IN
GUILFORD COUNTY

by

Gary J. Tucker

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Approved by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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INTRODUCTION

In examining the different religious groups that came to Guilford County during the early period of settlement, a question arose as to what motivated them to leave familiar surroundings to migrate to a region that was considered the frontier. In an attempt to answer this question, it was necessary to determine their national origin and background along with their differences and similarities.

In most cases these settlers were immigrants newly arrived from Germany, Northern Ireland, or England and after travelling a great distance to America were yet to be satisfied with their new home. They found in the American colonies a large number of people who were born on this continent and no longer felt strong ties with Europe. By 1750 the new immigrants could no longer be compared with the first people who left Europe for a new land. When these newcomers arrived, they found a way of life firmly established.

The older immigrants were often reluctant to grant privileges which they had sought when they first came to America. At this early date there were feelings of being oppressed by a majority. In Pennsylvania this oppression took the form of an economic squeeze on the German and Scotch-Irish, more correctly Ulster Scots, immigrants. Land was no longer sold cheaply for fear the later groups would

gain political control in that colony. The only solution was for these people to remove to the frontier regions in search of freedom and economic security.

The German and Scotch-Irish people were good neighbors in Pennsylvania and were destined to become good neighbors once again in the Piedmont of North Carolina. They settled in the central and western counties only to find, after a number of years, that they had not secured the economic freedom they desired. Added to this, the Established or Anglican Church became concerned about the growing number of religious sects which had settled in the backcountry. One Anglican missionary wrote that the dissenting sects were fortifying themselves on the frontier in order to strangle or cut off the Church of England, which was established in the coastal plain. "If they could not oppress they would cramp the process of the Liturgy and Church established-- and accordingly did erect Meetinghouses as foresaid."¹

The immigrants were not without their own differences. They migrated to the frontier for freedom, yet brought the seeds of dissension with them which had grown out of the Great Awakening. They also found life hard, which necessitated a change in values from the old ways. The aforesaid Anglican missionary characterized some of the backwoodsmen:

¹George Washington Paschal, History of the North Carolina Baptists (Raleigh: The General Board of the N. C. Baptist State Convention, 1930), I, 331.

The manners of the North Carolinians in general are vile and corrupt--and how can it be otherwise? The people are composed of the Outcasts of all the other colonies who take refuge there. The Civil Police is hardly yet established. Polygamy is very common--celibacy much more--bastardy, no disrepute--concubinage general.²

Not discounting the hardships of everyday life for these settlers, there were also critical times when they found it necessary to unite in a common cause--even resorting to violence. This they had to justify in accordance with their religious beliefs, which often resulted in a struggle of conscience. The history of the early religious groups in Guilford County is a minute study of the tense drama that was unfolding on a national scale. It is noteworthy to learn how these people effected change and how they were, in turn, affected.

²Ernest Trice Thompson, Inspiration From the Past to Serve the Future, the Orange Presbytery, bicentennial address at the Hawfields Presbyterian Church, October 22, 1970, p. 8.

CHAPTER I

SETTLEMENT AND GROWTH IN GUILFORD COUNTY

A Background for Settlement

No one knows when the first settlers arrived in Guilford County, but the first substantial body of immigrants was undoubtedly made up of Germans who entered the area in the early 1740's.¹ These Germans were the forerunners of a vast migration southward which flowed into the Piedmont region of North Carolina until the outbreak of the hostilities during the American Revolutionary War. Most of the immigrants were from Pennsylvania and consisted of different foreign stocks. As early as 1752, the Moravian Bishop Augustus Spangenberg wrote that many people were moving into North Carolina in order to secure cheap land. In 1755 Governor Arthur Dobbs noted that as many as 10,000 immigrants had landed in Philadelphia and that many were forced to move southward because of difficulty in securing land in that colony.²

Some of the settlers planned well for their long journey, while others trusted in Providence and determination.

¹Jacob L. Morgan, et al., eds., History of the Lutheran Church in North Carolina (n. p.: United Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North Carolina, 1953), p. 204.

²Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, North Carolina: The History of a Southern State (Chapel Hill: University of N. C. Press, 1953), p. 77.

Depending on the amount of baggage, the trek took anywhere from a week on horseback to a month by wagon.³ The Germans, the Scotch-Irish, and the English passed through the Valley of Virginia by way of "The Great Philadelphia Wagon Road." They then turned southward to Roanoke, eastward to the "Staunton Gap of the Blue Ridge,"⁴ southward across the Dan River into North Carolina to the "Trading Path" in present Guilford and Alamance counties: a journey of more than 500 miles in most cases. Many of the early migrants stopped in the Valley of Virginia because of the available cheap land; but, after solving their economic problems, they were forced to move on because of the encroaching dominance of the Established Church.

This migration coincided with the Great Awakening, a new religious revival which originated in New England in 1739 and during the following decades swept the frontier. A thirst for practical religion grew out of this movement and gave rise to religious militancy, characterized by a close personal relationship with God and the truth of one's emotions. This Great Awakening in religion not only succeeded in reinforcing the spirit but it was also the cause of dissension in most of the denominations.⁵

³Morgan, ed., History of the Lutheran Church, p. 15.

⁴Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina, p. 77.

⁵Otis K. Rice, The Allegheny Frontier: West Virginia Beginnings, 1730-1830 (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1970), p. 267.

Depending upon the motivating factors, the migrants moved in great swells and small waves. Economic and religious factors always played an important role as "modus operandi," but fear of the French and Indians on the frontier was also an important force. The French and Indian War and the danger of violence in "The Valley" were motivation enough for the settlers to move southward.⁶ After hearing about General Edward Braddock's defeat at the hands of the French and Indians, Hugh McAden, a Presbyterian minister, recorded in his journal the effect of the news on the Virginia frontier in 1775:

Here it was I received the most melancholy news then of the entire defeat of our army by the French at Ohio, the General killed, numbers of the inferior officers, and the whole artillery taken. This, together with the frequent account of fresh murders being daily committed upon the frontiers, struck terror to every heart. A cold shuddering possessed every breast, and paleness covered almost every face. In short, the whole inhabitants were put into an universal confusion. Scarcely any man durst sleep in his own house--but all met in companies with their wives and children, and set about building little fortifications, to defend themselves from such barbarians and inhuman enemies, whom they concluded would be let loose upon them at pleasure.⁷

The migration into the Piedmont region continued during the war and was accelerated near the end of hostilities in 1763. In order to care for the needs of this

⁶It might be added that the desire to avoid paying taxes to the Anglican Church was also a good reason to move.

⁷William Henry Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical (New York: Robert Carter, 1846), p. 163.

burgeoning population, the North Carolina General Assembly erected five counties: Johnston and Granville in 1746, Anson in 1750, Orange in 1752, and Rowan in 1753. For the years 1752 and 1753, the sheriff of Orange County reported 1,113 tithables. This figure lends credence to an estimate of approximately 4,000 when the county was formed in 1752.⁸ For the most part, these people were "Irish Protestants and Germans." The counties in which they had formerly settled were important in the erection of Guilford: Rowan County was set up from Anson; Orange was once a part of Granville. From Rowan and Orange, Guilford was erected in 1771.⁹

The Piedmont rapidly grew in population for a number of reasons, one of which was the fact that the Church of England was not established in the western counties of North Carolina. In 1741 there were seventeen parishes in the colony, none in Guilford County. The people in this area were not under the direct influence of the Established Church, and they were allotted certain rights and privileges of Englishmen. As early as 1711, the dissenters had been granted the same rights as those enjoyed by the "Protestant" sects in England. They were subject to the religious laws prevailing in that country, and were allowed to hold office by taking the qualifying oath.

⁸Hugh Lefler and Paul Wager, eds., Orange County, 1752-1952 (Chapel Hill: The Orange Printshop, 1953), p. 15.

⁹Sallie W. Stockard, The History of Guilford County, North Carolina (Knoxville, Tenn.: Gant-Ogden Co., Printers and Book Binders, 1902), p. 20.

For North Carolinians, this legislation was practically a grant of religious and political liberty.¹⁰ As compared with Virginia, there was little direct persecution in this province. According to Stephen B. Weeks, the persecution was indirect: "Men were not put into jail, but they were harassed and subjected to injury and loss in other ways."¹¹ Therefore, except in holding office, dissenters suffered little in this province,¹² and where there was conflict on the frontier the people chose what was expedient.

The German Reformed and Lutheran

The German immigrants settled in eastern Guilford. They migrated over the wagon route from the counties of Berks, Lancaster, and Schuylkill in Pennsylvania, and a few from Maryland. Some of these Germans were Lutheran and others were of the Reformed Church. In the beginning they had no minister and they worshipped in log buildings. Their fellow countrymen, the Moravians, who had settled in a neighboring county, were much better off because of careful planning. The two former groups usually worshipped together

¹⁰Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, "The Genesis of the Protestant Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina, 1801-1823," The N. C. Historical Review, XXVIII (October, 1951), 430.

¹¹Stephen Beauregard Weeks, Church and State in North Carolina, Johns Hopkins University Studies, Eleventh Series, V-VI (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1893), pp. 48-49.

¹²Lefler and Wager, eds., Orange County, p. 15.

in union churches, which also served as schoolhouses, and on the Sabbath one of the elders or the schoolmaster would read a sermon to the congregation in their native tongue.¹³ From the very beginning the Lutheran and the Reformed lived together in the German settlements and shared their churches on alternate Sundays. Many of the members intermarried and passing from one communion to the other was frequent. These two religious groups made little of the doctrinal differences between their respective religions during the early period. The German Reformed, often called the German Presbyterian Church, dissented from Luther's doctrine on the Lord's Supper. Instead, they were followers of Zwingli and Calvin and used the Presbyterian form of church government. Their doctrinal symbol was the Catechism of Heidelberg. During the settlement period of these German immigrants on the frontier, one contemporary wrote explaining their reason for union: "Since we are both united in the principal doctrines of Christianity, we find no difference between us except in name."¹⁴ However, this peace and harmony was to last for only a short period of time.

It is difficult to say which group arrived first in this section. There were squatters in the area and in some

¹³W. L. Saunders, ed., Colonial Records of North Carolina (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1886-90), VIII, 735.

¹⁴A Board of Editors Under the Classis of North Carolina, Historic Sketch of the Reformed Church in North Carolina (Philadelphia: Publication Board of the Reformed Church in the U. S., 1908), pp. 116-117.

cases the Reformed and Lutheran travelled together. Nevertheless, many of the Reformed members appear prominent in early deeds. Ludwig Clapp, of Ludwig, was granted a tract of 640 acres on the Alamance recorded in 1752, and Adam Trolinger received a grant on the west side of the Haw River. Pioneer Germans in this area were Christian Faust, Jacob Allbright, Peter Sharp, Phillip Snottherly, and David Ephland¹⁵ who belonged to the Reformed church.¹⁶

In 1752 Bishop Spangenberg wrote that "in this year alone more than four hundred families have come with horse and wagon and cattle." He went on to tell of the Germans in this group: "I am told that a different type of settler is now coming in,--sturdy Germans,--of that we will know more of later."¹⁷ The immigrant Germans were hardy and were characterized by their devotion to an orderly way of life, which was apparent by the appearance of their farms. Because of the language barrier, these settlers stayed to themselves and were not forceful in political life. For many years the German people spoke their native tongue in conversation and religious services which prevented them from participating in the main stream of society.

¹⁵Lefler and Wager, eds., History of Orange, p. 15.

¹⁶Classis, Reformed Church, pp. 117-138.

¹⁷Adelaide L. Fries, ed., Records of the Moravians in North Carolina (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Co., 1922), I, 41.

During the early years, there was a desperate need for regular ministers. The laymen could do much in the way of organization, but they could not administer the sacraments. For these services they were dependent upon the travelling pastors.¹⁸ Eli Caruthers, the biographer of David Caldwell, recounted that "they had but a few preachers, and some of them were not calculated to enlighten the people or to elevate their character."¹⁹

One of these travelling ministers wrote of the domestic side of his life:

We wear all sorts of dark colors, gray, brown, blue. Since we always ride horseback on our travels the more delicate colors would not serve our purpose. Nevertheless while administering the Lord's Supper or on other festival occasions it is customary to be dressed in black, if one has the clothes. A good raincoat if it is rainproof, is better than an overcoat, and is necessary on our frequent travels. Good linen is scarce here and very expensive, consequently it would be good if our incoming brothers supplied themselves with it before they start. They can have shirts made here cheaper than in Germany, and it would be better to bring their material uncut, but of medium grade, and not much fancy stuff, for here we must pay more attention to wearing qualities than to finery. Boots are used while riding, heavier ones in the winter, and lighter ones in the summer; and while walking in the forest one is protected against bites of snakes, of which the poisonous varieties, however, are rather scarce. . . . This one thing above all I wish and request, that no one come in here who was already married in Germany. It would have to be miraculous if he were not to meet with a thousand sad experiences.

¹⁸Morgan, History of the Lutherans, p. 20.

¹⁹E. W. Caruthers, A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Reverend David Caldwell, D. D. (Greensboro: Swaim and Sherwood, 1842), p. 90.

An American wife is in our circumstances infinitely better adapted.²⁰

Within the boundaries of present Guilford County, four churches were erected out of the German settlement. These churches had a common beginning: they all evolved from log buildings, and of the four, three were union churches. Friedens Church, which was also known as "Stah-maker's" Church, was founded in 1744 and is credited with being the first church in Guilford County and still in active service.²¹ It was a union church, with joint ownership of land. This church, as with the others, suffered for want of regular ministers. The Reverend George Soelle, who was ordained a Lutheran minister in Denmark, immigrated to America at an early date and from the Moravian settlements made numerous visits to the Friedens community.²² In 1771 the Reverend Samuel Suther, a Reformed minister and an "advanced patriot,"²³ served both Lutheran and Reformed at the above church. The Reverend Adolph Nussmann came to America in 1773 and was the first Lutheran minister to serve the Guilford

²⁰William K. Boyd and Charles A. Krummel, eds., "German Tracts Concerning the Lutheran Church in North Carolina During the Eighteenth Century," The N. C. Historical Review, VII (January, 1930), 125-126.

²¹Ethel Stevens Arnett, Greensboro, N. C.: The County Seat of Guilford (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), p. 116.

²²Morgan, ed., History of the Lutheran Church, p. 206.

²³Saunders, ed., Colonial Records, VIII, 735.

area in an official capacity.²⁴ This minister was followed throughout the years by J. G. Arends, C. E. Bernhardt, and Phillip Henkel, who took over the ministry at the turn of the century and served the Friedens congregation until 1805. The last three were Lutheran and as with the former ministers they served Friedens as well as other congregations in the area.

Friedens Church soon outgrew the unhewn logs of its first building and a second one was built on the same site in 1772. It was a frame structure, 45 x 60 feet in dimensions, two stories high, and had a high pulpit.²⁵ Because of the migration of the German people from Pennsylvania, Friedens had a steady growth. Some of the people who settled in this area and, no doubt, members of the congregation were the Allbrights, Clapps, Fausts, Holts, Sharps, Laws, Graves, Summers, Cobbs, Cobles, Swings, Corteners, Ingolds, Browners, Keims, Staleys, Mays, Amicks, Smiths, Stacks, Neases, Ingles, Leinbergers, Straders, Wyricks, Anthoneys, Schaeffers, Foglemans, Sthars, Brauns, Reitzells,²⁶ and many others.

The second church in respect of age was Stoners Church which was Reformed. It was located on a point of land formed by the confluence of the Alamance and Stinking

²⁴Morgan, ed., History of the Lutheran Church, p. 206

²⁵Ibid., pp. 204-205.

²⁶Saunders, ed., Colonial Records, VIII, 734.

Quarter streams. Stoners was possibly organized soon after 1758 by the Reverend Weyberg who was preceded by a man named Leinbach, "a foreign German." This church suffered for want of regular ministerial services and it was inconveniently located, which explains its future decadence. The founders of Stoners Church were the Allbrights, Fausts, Basons, Ephlands, Gerhards, Loys, Longs, Shaddies, Steiners, Neases, Trollingers, Sharps, and others. In its formative period Jacob Allbright, Peter Sharp, and John Faust were the Elders; Phillip Snoterly and David Ephland were the Deacons.²⁷

It is not definitely known when Lows Church was organized. In the Minutes of the Synod it is listed as 1771 but there is reason to believe that it was at an earlier date. There is a possibility that this congregation was visited by the Reverend Soelle in 1769.²⁸ Lows was a union church which was soon torn by factional differences. When the Reverend Samuel Suther began preaching to the Reformed congregation in 1771, there were mixed sentiments (see p. 45), which had grown out of the Regulator War. At this date, when conditions reached an impasse, the Reverend Suther, along with the Allbrights, Goertners, Clapps, Fausts, Schaeffers, Ingolds, Schwenks (Swings), and Leinbergers²⁹

²⁷Ibid., p. 737.

²⁸Morgan, ed., History of the Lutheran Church, p. 236.

²⁹Saunders, ed., Colonial Records, VIII, 735.

withdrew from Lows and moved to a schoolhouse. From that time Lows Church was strictly Lutheran and was served by the same Lutheran ministers who directed worship at Friedens. It was slow in rebuilding the congregation for the second building was not erected until 1841.³⁰

After the Revolutionary War the Reformed faction moved from the schoolhouse, which was a log house, and built a more comfortable place of worship. For many years it was known as Clapps Church and during that time Ludwig Clapp and Christian Faust were Elders, and Ingold and Leinberger were Deacons. After three years Samuel Suther was succeeded by the Reverend Bithan, from Lincoln County, who served for a short time before his death. Clapps Church was without a minister for the next twelve years, except for the visits of the Reverend Andrew Loretz, also of Lincoln, who ministered four times a year to the church.³¹ In February, 1801, the Reverend Henry Diffenbach became the regular minister at Clapps until March, 1807. As early as 1813 the congregation decided to build a new church because of the growing congregation. In 1814, at the suggestion of a Mr. Riley, it was agreed to build one of brick. However, due to a defect in the foundation, the wall gave way and it was never completed.

³⁰Morgan, ed., History of the Lutheran Church, p. 236.

³¹Saunders, ed., Colonial Records, VIII, 735.

In 1841 the walls were torn down and rebuilt. From that time it became known as the Brick Church.³²

The Quakers

The Quakers settled in Guilford County about 1750. Their first place of worship was logs placed on the ground in the shape of a triangle.³³ In 1751 a meeting for worship was granted to New Garden by the Cane Creek Monthly Meeting, and in 1752 Richard Williams and his wife Prudence Beals gave the site for the meeting house to be erected. By 1753 the New Garden settlement had grown enough in importance to warrant a visit by Catherine Peyton and Mary Peisley, who were "travelling in ministry" visiting the new settlements. Miss Peyton recorded in her journal:

We found a sincere-hearted remnant in this meeting, unto whom the Lord united us; but there was also a dead, formal, professing spirit, under which the living were sorely oppressed; as well as under flashy wordy ministry.³⁴

Nonetheless, the New Garden settlement grew rapidly and a Monthly Meeting was set up in 1754. The forerunners of this Quaker migration first came from Pennsylvania by way of Maryland, later joined by others from Hopewell and Fairfax, Virginia. From 1754 to 1770 eighty-six certificates

³²Classis, Reformed Church, pp. 130-131.

³³Arnett, History of Greensboro, p. 117.

³⁴Dorothy Lloyd Gilbert, "First Friends at New Garden in North Carolina," reprinted from the Bulletin of Friends Historical Association (n.p.: Autumn, 1945).

of membership were brought to New Garden representing twenty-four families. Of these eighty-six certificates, forty-five came from Pennsylvania, thirty-five from Virginia, one from Maryland, and four from northeastern North Carolina. Many of the family names in the Guilford area can be traced to this early period. An impartial list of these Quakers includes the Cox, Beeson, Pidgen, Dicks, Ozburn, Jones, Elliot, Kendall, Reynolds, Mendenhall, and Worth families from Pennsylvania; from Virginia came the Hoggatt, Stanley, Johnson, Stringman, Talton, Brittain, Beals, Langley, Hiatt, Kersey, and Ballinger families; from Maryland came the families of Johnson and Brown.³⁵

A genealogical investigation of some of the Quakers not only led to many prominent families but also to the White House. In 1765 John and Mary Payne came to New Garden from the Cedar Creek Monthly Meeting in Virginia. A record of the birth of their daughter reads: "Dolley their daughter was born ye 20 of ye 5 mo. 1768."³⁶ In later years Dolley Payne married James Madison who later became the President of the United States. The Mendenhall and Milhous family names are conspicuous throughout the monthly meeting records of the Quaker settlements in Guilford County. These families,

³⁵Stephen B. Weeks, Southern Quakers and Slavery, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1896), p. 106.

³⁶Dorothy Lloyd Gilbert, Guilford: A Quaker College (Greensboro, North Carolina: Jos. J. Stone and Company, 1937), pp. 303-304.

from the past to the present, have been prominent in North Carolina and national history. In a letter from the White House addressed to William Mendenhall of California, a presidential aide traced Richard Milhous Nixon's family background:

Although the President has not traced his family's background, various pieces of information provided by friends and other family members indicated that one of the President's mother's great-great grandmothers was named Jemima Mendenhall. The daughter of one Joshua Mendenhall and his wife, Lydia, Jemima Mendenhall was born on December 9, 1757. On June 30, 1779 she married Thomas Vickers and she died on December 5, 1851. Her daughter, Martha Vickers, born March 27, 1786, married William Milhous on June 10, 1807.³⁷

The second wave of migration which consisted of Quakers from Nantucket Island extended from the year 1771 to 1775. Libini Coffin was the first man from Nantucket to arrive at New Garden and was soon followed by a number of families holding forty-three certificates of removal. Elijah Coffin gave one reason for the island emigration: "The Island of Nantucket being small, and its soil not very productive, a large number of people could not be supported thereupon. . . ." ³⁸ Added to this was the decline of the whale industry and the threat of troubles with England. One Friend explained that ". . . the Quakers felt it prudent to remove to the

³⁷Letter from the White House, Washington, D. C., April 7, 1969, sent to Wm. F. Mendenhall, in Quaker Room at Guilford College Library.

³⁸Weeks, Southern Quakers, pp. 103-107.

South."³⁹ In 1775 there were eight certificates received from Nantucket and only one in 1776. By the beginning of the war, the movement had nearly stopped. Even though the years following the Revolutionary War were of relative calm, the southward migration was never again to reach the proportions seen earlier. From 1783 to 1800 there were only thirteen certificates received at New Garden. This gain of families, mostly from Pennsylvania, was counterbalanced by a loss of five who returned home.⁴⁰ The last significant migration to New Garden was during the early 1800's from the eastern North Carolina Meeting of Perquimans. The leaders of this migration were Henry, Jacob, and Joseph Lamb who had arrived much earlier.

Another group of migrants came to Guilford County sometime after the Revolution. They were called the "Nicholites," and as a religious sect they were indirectly related to the Quakers. The leader of this group was Joseph Nichols who originated this sect in Caroline County, Maryland.⁴¹ The Nicholites settled on Deep River and were similar to the Quakers in belief. They were very simple in their dress and wore no dye in their habits.⁴² Job Scott reported

³⁹Francis C. Anscombe, I Have Called You Friends: The Story of Quakerism in North Carolina (Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1959), p. 81.

⁴⁰Weeks, Southern Quakers, p. 108. ⁴¹Ibid., p. 109.

⁴²John H. Wheeler, Historical Sketches Of North Carolina (New York: Fredrick H. Hitchcock, Publisher, 1925), p. 170.

that he met with some of these people in 1798 at Deep River meetinghouse:

I had a lively evidence that some among them were humbly endeavoring to serve the Lord; but at the same time I saw clearly that many of them related too much in their outside plainness; and valuing themselves upon that, and stopped short of more living acquaintance with the wellspring of eternal life.⁴³

Joshua Evans visited the Nicholites in 1797 and found that they had nine queries which were similar to those of the Quakers. The last was:

Are Friends careful to bear a steady testimony against slavery and oppression in all its different branches, endeavoring in every thing to do to others as we in like case would have others do unto us?⁴⁴

This was one of the last reports of the Nicholites and, probably by 1800, they were absorbed by the larger body of orthodox Quakers.

The New Garden Settlement was to become the focal point of Quakerism in North Carolina and in the South. In 1787 this settlement was granted a Quarterly Meeting and the first Yearly Meeting was held in 1791. The New Garden Monthly Meeting was also responsible for establishing other meetings in the area. A preparative meeting was established at Centre in 1757, which became a monthly meeting in 1773. At first the families met in a private house until a small meetinghouse was built, followed soon by a larger one. Centre enjoyed a rapid growth because of the migration from the North until the outbreak of the Revolution. However,

⁴³Weeks, Southern Quakers, p. 110.

⁴⁴Ibid.

after that point, as with the other North Carolina meetings, there was a decline in families which was compounded by the "great migration" to the Middle West toward the end of the eighteenth century.⁴⁵

Another first-day meeting established by the New Garden Monthly Meeting during this formative period was at Deep River in 1758, which became a monthly meeting in 1778. Some of the Friends in these two Quaker settlements were the Beal, Beeson, Brown, Charmness, Dennis, Mills, Beard, and Milhous families.

Quakerism was not only religious in nature but also social. The Friends believed in nonviolence and a plainness of life as exhibited by the records they left behind. They were cautioned against costly attire, "new fashions," "striped and flowered stuffs in making or selling or wearing of them." They were extolled for "vain and vivacious Proceedings as Frollicking[,] Fiddling, and Dancing." Early in the settlement period in North Carolina the Quakers warned their brethren against excess in smoking and to use tobacco with "great moderation as a medison [sic] and not as a delightsom companion." There were other warnings registered in the minutes ranging from the evils of chewing tobacco and taking snuff to sleeping in meeting.⁴⁶

⁴⁵William H. Hinshaw, Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1936), I, 734.

⁴⁶Weeks, Southern Quakers, p. 128.

The monthly meeting was a vital force in the Quaker community, where minutes were kept from the very beginning. The records of these meetings usually consisted of births and deaths, marriage certificates, and minutes concerning all proceedings and problems before the session. An example of one of these problems was the question of slavery. Before the other denominations, the Quakers recognized human bondage as a social evil and worked for manumission of the slaves. In the early 1800's, Charles Osborn, the first man in America to proclaim the doctrine of immediate and unconditional emancipation, organized manumission societies in Guilford County. A Quaker and a North Carolinian by birth, he possessed the dedication and zeal needed in the face of overwhelming odds.⁴⁷

The marriage ceremony was another important function of the monthly meeting. The procedure for marriage involved two appearances of the couple before the men's and the women's meetings. Reports of the committees were to "clear" the couple from other "marriage entanglements."⁴⁸ When this was verified, the couple was to "take each other" in the presence of the congregation. An example of this simple ceremony was recorded for posterity:

Friends, you are my witness that in the presence of you I take this my friend Elizabeth Nixon to be my wife,

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 236.

⁴⁸Hinshaw, Encyclopedia, I, x.

promising to be a loving and true husband to her, and to live in the good order of truth so long as it shall please the Lord that we shall live together or until death.⁴⁹

There was always friction among the Friends for marrying outside the order, as attested by their records. Throughout this early period, it was variously referred to as "marriage by priest," "outgoing in marriage," "marriage contrary to good order," and "marriage out of meeting." This was the cause of more complaints and disownments than any other single factor; unless the offending person publicly expressed sorrow for his misconduct and produced a signed paper condemning the act, he was usually disowned.⁵⁰ One example was Nathan Beard, the grandfather of the famous historian Charles Beard, who was read out of the Deep River Monthly Meeting in Guilford County for marrying a Methodist.⁵¹

The Quakers were the first to support organized Christian worship in Piedmont North Carolina, but in this section, as in others, because of their "peculiar tenets," they converted few to their way of living. Nevertheless, those who joined the Quakers not only were influential by their exemplary lives but also became outspoken critics of what they considered evils in society.

⁴⁹Weeks, Southern Quakers, p. 126.

⁵⁰Hinshaw, Encyclopedia, I, ix-x.

⁵¹Richard Hofstadter, The Progressive Historians (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 167. See also Hinshaw, Encyclopedia, I, 798.

The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians

Because the inhabitants of Pennsylvania were fearful that the Scotch-Irish and the German people were becoming too numerous in that colony, the aristocracy of that province made it difficult for them to secure cheap land. For that reason the Nottingham Company of Pennsylvania purchased a large tract of land on the Buffalo and Reedy Fork Creeks. The first land deeds of the Scotch-Irish were registered as early as 1753. There is a possibility that they were settled in the Buffalo settlements a year before.⁵² The company secured thirty-three sections of 640 acres per section, comprising 21,120 acres in all.⁵³

The Scotch-Irish and the Germans were good neighbors in Pennsylvania and it was not long until they were neighbors once again in North Carolina. One group of Scotch-Irish came from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and another came by way of Charleston, South Carolina, meeting in Central Guilford between the Germans and the Quakers.⁵⁴

The Buffalo settlement congregation was probably organized in 1756, according to church historians

⁵²Samuel M. Rankin, History of the Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Her People (Greensboro: Jos. J. Stone & Co., 1934), p. 19.

⁵³Robert Hamilton Stone, "Presbyterians in Guilford" (mimeographed paper presented to Guilford County Bicentennial Commission, Sept. 1, 1970), p. 1.

⁵⁴Stockard, History of Guilford, p. 14.

J. C. Alexander and D. I. Craig. Eli Caruthers set the date at about 1758. However, the church was not organized in 1755 when the Reverend Hugh McAden came as a missionary from Pennsylvania and held a meeting at the home of Adam Mitchell.⁵⁵ In the light of the above evidence, since the people were meeting as early as 1755, the organizational date of 1756 seems logical. The first church in the settlement was built of logs, the second a frame building, and in 1827 a third was built of brick. The brick building is still in use today.⁵⁶

The Presbyterians who migrated to the Piedmont were of two groups: the "Old Side," nonevangelical, and "the New Light" or "New Side," evangelical. Their differences were derived from the Great Awakening and the Reverend George Whitefield. He was an Englishman who toured America seven times from 1736 to 1770, spreading emotional religion among the people. The "Old Side" rejected this emotionalism in their worship, being conservative in action and belief. The people of the Buffalo settlement were of that persuasion often referred to as "blue-stocking" Presbyterians. On August 31, 1775, Hugh McAden recorded the following note in his journal after visiting the people of Buffalo:

Wednesday, set out upon my journey, and came to the Buffalo settlement, about thirty-five miles; lodged at

⁵⁵Foote, Sketches, p. 167.

⁵⁶Arnett, Greensboro, p. 124.

William Mebane's until Sabbath day; then rode to Adam Michels, where I preached; the people seemed solemn and very attentive, but no appearance of the life of religion. Returned in the evening, about a mile, to Robert Rankin's, where I was kindly received and well entertained till Tuesday; then returned to the former place, and preached; no stir appeared, but some tears.⁵⁷

Before the Scotch-Irish left Pennsylvania, they asked a young friend to join them upon the completion of his studies for the ministry. The man was David Caldwell, and he accepted the call from his fellow Presbyterians. In 1764 he came to the Buffalo settlement as a licentiate to visit these people. The records of the Synod of New York and New Jersey written on May 23, 1764, state:

Several supplications from North Carolina were presented, earnestly praying for supplies, which were read and urged with several verbal relations representing the state of the country. . . Mr. David Caldwell, a candidate, of New Brunswick, is appointed to go as soon as possible, but not to defer it longer than next fall, and supply under the direction of the Hanover Presbytery.⁵⁸

Buffalo Church offered Caldwell one hundred dollars a year. Fortunately for him, another church was organized in 1764 by the Reverend Henry Pattillo who soon departed and it was offered to the care of the former. This was the Alamance Presbyterian Church. Caldwell accepted the charge of these two churches from which he could expect a salary of two hundred dollars a year.⁵⁹ To supplement his income, he purchased a small farm and began a classical school at

⁵⁷ Foote, Sketches, p. 167.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 232-233.

⁵⁹ Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 25.

his house which became known in later years as the "Log College." This school became famous in the South and from a list of prominent students five later became governors of states.

It was not to be an easy affair being minister to these separate congregations. Besides the inconvenience of distance, Buffalo Church was of the "Old Side" and Alamance the "New Side." Caruthers wrote of Caldwell's adept handling of the situation:

He [Caldwell] did not profess to belong to any party, but to both; for as both had manifestly some things that were right and others that were wrong, he made it his business, as it was his duty, to approve the one and to condemn the other.⁶⁰

On July 5, 1765, Caldwell was ordained to the full work of the ministry. At Trenton, New Jersey, he was dismissed to join the Presbytery of Hanover, which was the first step in accepting his new charge. The novice was nearly forty years old when he began his journey to join his friends in Guilford County. It was the beginning of a ministry that would enrich the people of this area for more than fifty years. Although the Reverend Caldwell had served his people since 1765, his formal acceptance into the Presbytery of Hanover did not take place until October 11, 1767. He was to remain in this presbytery for only three years, for the people of North Carolina, and the South, felt the need for an organization closer to home.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 26.

At a meeting held at Buffalo Church in March, 1770, a petition was prepared asking for a new presbytery. The Synod granted the petition in May. The Orange Presbytery was constituted and designated to meet in the Hawfields Church to set this religious organization in motion. Seven ministers, David Caldwell included, presided at the services.⁶¹ Furthermore, with the growing needs of the people, the Synod of the Carolinas was formed in 1788. At the first session Caldwell was chosen moderator. One of the first overtures read:

Overtures,--Whether persons who practise dancing, revelling, horse-racing, and card-playing, are to be admitted to sealing ordinances? Synod, taking into consideration these and other things of a similar tendency, Resolved, that they are wrong. . . .⁶²

The overtures were to be read before all the congregations. Another overture of more importance was read before the Presbytery of Orange in 1800. It requested that action be initiated in the province in petitioning the legislature for the emancipation of the slaves. In reply the Presbytery was in agreement as to the attainment of the goal, but laid it aside since matters had not yet matured for carrying it forward, "especially in the South."⁶³

On the frontier there was always a need for someone who had a knowledge of medicine. Although Caldwell was

⁶¹Foote, Sketches, pp. 236-237. ⁶²Ibid., p. 283.

⁶³Thompson, Orange Presbytery, p. 11.

not educated for this field, he acquired a number of medical books and began teaching himself the arts of this craft. Throughout the years he found it necessary to correspond with his old college friend and well-known physician Benjamin Rush of Philadelphia for medical advice. It was not long before the Reverend Caldwell became known as Dr. Caldwell to the residents of Guilford and surrounding vicinity. For reasons both spiritual and physical Caldwell faithfully visited the homes of these people until, infirm with age, it was necessary to carry the doctor to his horse.

In her History of Guilford County, Sallie Stockard states that in influence and numbers the Quakers and Presbyterians were more influential in Guilford County than the other sects. The Quaker influence was inherent in their type of religious organization. The influence of the Presbyterians in this county can not only be accredited to their belief in education and concern for society in general but also to Dr. David Caldwell as a cohesive force who held his people together. In times of trouble, his counseling and advice were always to be relied upon. Caldwell lived to be nearly one hundred years old and served his people for better than half a century. The importance of this one man in Guilford County may never be properly estimated.

The Baptists

When Governor Arthur Dobbs arrived in North Carolina in 1754, there was no minister for the Church of England

established west of Edgecombe County. When he died in 1765, there was yet none to be established.⁶⁴ This fact left a religious vacuum for those settlers who did not adhere to the belief of the German, Scotch-Irish, or Quaker religions. This situation was soon rectified and it was not long until a contemporary named Woodmason would write that:

The most zealous among the sects to propagate their notions and form establishments, are the Anabaptists. . . By their address and assiduity, have wormed the Presbyterians out of all these their strongholds and drove them away. So that the Baptists are now the most numerous and formidable body of people which the Church [i.e. the Anglican Church] hast to encounter with. . .⁶⁴

Although this account was somewhat exaggerated when it was written in 1765, there was an element of truth in it as the Baptists were "reaping great rewards." That there was interdenominational rivalry there can be no doubt. The same contemporary went on to write that "a presbyterian would sooner marry ten of his children to members of the Church of England than one to a Baptist."⁶⁶ Woodmason then intimated that the Established Church would calmly wait while these two denominations destroyed one another.

For a history of the Baptists, this denomination is much indebted to the religious historian Morgan Edwards. During the years 1771 and 1772 this man journeyed through

⁶⁴Paschal, History of the Baptists, I, 265.

⁶⁵Thompson, Orange Presbytery, p. 3.

⁶⁶Paschal, History of the Baptists, I, 331.

Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas seeking materials for a history of these people. Because of the lack of church records through loss or unintentional neglect, the information collected by this man provides important clues to the past.

The Baptist denomination suffered the same intra-denominational dissension as did the other religious sects. In North Carolina these divisions took shape in three main factions: the General, Particular, and Separate Baptists. The General Baptists freely baptized anyone who had the desire to undergo this religious exercise whether they had a religious experience or not. The main objective was to save as many souls as possible, and baptism was the sure road to heaven. The consequence of this act was that many people were baptized before they were actually converted. During the years 1750 to 1760, there was a gradual religious transformation from the former to the Particular, except for some who joined the Freewill Baptists. The Particular was somewhat reactionary because of the past eagerness of the General to baptize anyone willing. There was a change from the liberal Arminian doctrine to the conservative Calvinistic view. Within the same period there was a rise of the Separate Baptists who believed in the evangelical doctrines of the Great Awakening.⁶⁷ It was this group that was influential in the Piedmont and Guilford County.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 204-205.

The origin of the Separate Baptists in this area dates back to the arrival of Shubal Stearns in company with fifteen other people. They travelled from New England to Virginia, and then to Sandy Creek, North Carolina, which was then in Guilford County and now in Randolph. When Stearns arrived in 1755, there were only twenty to thirty thousand people in the central and western counties.⁶⁸

The Separates were also known as the "Newlights" and in some respects followed the tenets of Whitefield. However, they followed certain rites that were peculiarly their own. According to Edwards, they had ruling elders, "eldresses," and "deaconesses." The Separate Baptists also followed the nine Christian rites: "baptism; Lord's-supper; love-feast; laying-on-of-hands; washing-feet; anointing-of-the-sick; right-hand of fellowship; kiss of charity; devoting children."⁶⁹ Under the leadership of Shubal Stearns, this group experienced phenomenal growth. It began with sixteen people and in a short period grew to 606 members, spreading its branches to Deep River and Abbotts Creek Churches in adjoining counties. Arms, or branches of the mother church, were very important in spreading the doctrine of the separates. The Haw River Church, which was constituted in 1764, was influential in this county. The minister was

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 253.

⁶⁹George W. Paschal, ed., "Morgan Edwards' Materials Towards a History of the Baptists in the Province of N. C.," The N. C. Historical Review, VII (July, 1930), 384.

Elnathan Davis and the arms of this church encompassed a wide area. It had six branches, one of which was a meeting-house located at "Caraway-creek in Guilford County under the direction of John Robbins and George Williams."⁷⁰ The oldest record of this church is dated April, 1794: "Church took into consideration the transgression and circumstance of Ann Fields and unites in her excommunication and declaration to be made next meeting at Caraway." The last record of this church read: "March, 1809. Caraway meeting held every three months."⁷¹ Although it is difficult to find the locations of these early churches which have since become nonexistent, it is probable that Caraway meetinghouse was located in the southwestern section of present-day Randolph County.

Another area of importance is Buffalow, or Buffalo Creek Baptist Church. The first mention of this church was found in the records of Abbotts Creek Church and is dated December 1785: "The church has agreed in calling Bros. Murphy and Davis to look into the abilities of Buffalow for constitution."⁷² The last mention of this church in Guilford County was also in 1809. Like Caraway Creek, it soon dropped out of notice and little is known of its history.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 389.

⁷¹Henry Sheets, A History of the Liberty Baptist Association (Raleigh, N. C.: Presses of Edwards and Broughton Printing Co., 1907), p. 129.

⁷²Ibid., p. 130.

The Haw River Church was located near the town of Bynum. It is logical to assume that the Reverend Davis, as did Stearns at Sandy Creek, worked without a fixed salary. The early ministers usually received presents to the amount of twenty to thirty pounds per year. In all of the early Separate churches, the nine Christian rites were performed along with communion which was "administered here every Lord's-day except they failed to get wine."⁷³

The popularity of Shubal Stearns spread rapidly. Morgan Edwards drew a distinct picture of him:

Mr. Stearns was but a little man, but a man of good natural parts and sound judgement. Of learning he had but a small share, yet was pretty well acquainted with books. His voice was musical and strong, which he managed in such a manner as one while, to make soft impressions on the heart, and fetch tears from the eyes in a mechanical way; and, anon, to shake the very nerves and throw into tumults and perturbations.⁷⁴

Edwards also wrote of the first encounter of the Reverends Elnathan Davis and Shubal Stearns:

He [Davis] is no schollar [sic] yet very successful. His conversion came to pass in this manner--He had heard that one John Steward was to be baptized, such a day, by Mr. Stearns; now this Steward, being a very big man, and Shubal Stearns of very small statue, he contended there would be some diversion if not drowning: therefore he gathered about 8 or 10 of his companions in wickedness and went to the spot. Shubal Stearns came and began to preach; Elnathan went to hear him while his companions stood at a distance. He was no sooner among the crowd but he perceived some of the people tremble as if in a fit of the ague: he felt and examined them in order to find out if it was not a dissemulation: meanwhile one

⁷³Paschal, "Morgan Edwards," VII, 384.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 386.

man, leaned on his shoulder, weeping bitterly; Elnathan, perceiving he had wet his new white coat, pushed him off, and ran to his companions who were sitting on a log, at a distance; when he came one said, "Well, Elnathan, what do you think now of these damned people?" He replied "There is a trembling and crying spirit among them: but whether it be the spirit of God or the devil I don't know; if it be the devil, the devil go with them; for I will never more venture my self among them."⁷⁵

Elnathan Davis must have thought it was the spirit of God, because it was not long after that incident that he was heard preaching the gospel.

Having constituted several churches in the Piedmont, Stearns conceived the idea of an association in which "to impart stability, regularity, and uniformity to the whole."⁷⁶ He visited the other churches and explained his idea of the association. On June 2, 1758, these churches sent delegates to Sandy Creek, North Carolina, and from which came into existence the Sandy Creek Association.⁷⁷ During the colonial period, this was the third Baptist association formed on the continent.

In the early period of religion on the frontier, not many of the churches or arms survived the hardships of that day. One which did was a branch of the Abbotts Creek Church located at High Point. Missionary work in this area of

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 390-391.

⁷⁶Robert B. Semple, A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia (Richmond, Virginia: Published by the author, John Lynch, Printer, 1810), p. 6.

⁷⁷Paschal, History of the Baptists, I, 394-395.

Guilford County was probably begun about 1800 and continued until June, 1825, when the arm asked for dismissal from the mother church in order to constitute a regular Baptist Church. The first pastor was Ashley Swaim.⁷⁸

In sum, the Baptists found it difficult to make proselytes in Guilford County for a number of reasons. First, the German people continued to use a variety of German called "Pennsylvania Dutch" until well after the year 1800. Shubal Stearns and the other Separate evangelists spoke only English; thus, there remained a communication barrier between the two. Second, in the central portion of Guilford County the Scotch-Irish settled and displayed all the conservatism associated with the Church of Scotland. Only where these settlements were without ministers for long periods of time was it likely to find converts. Because of the presence of Dr. David Caldwell, this area was nearly impregnable to the other sects. Third, the Quakers who were established in the western part of the county were so firm in the tenets of their faith that little was done to convert them to the Baptist denomination.⁷⁹

The Baptists did not have a source of immigration to draw upon and in order to propagate their religion they mainly endeavored in an area where Englishmen were without

⁷⁸Sheets, Liberty Baptists, p. 119.

⁷⁹Paschal, History of the Baptists, I, 264.

the services of the Established Church. Due to the untimely death of Stearns and the weakness inherent in their early decentralized form of organization, they were not able to organize a solid front until the first Baptist convention of 1814.

The first Baptist convention in the state of New York was held at the residence of the Rev. Amos A. Phelps, in the town of Newburgh, on the 10th of August, 1814. It was attended by about thirty churches, and was the first of the kind ever held in this state.

The people of the state were then in the midst of a struggle with Great Britain, and the Convention was held in the midst of a struggle with the British. The Convention was held in the town of Newburgh, in the residence of the Rev. Amos A. Phelps, on the 10th of August, 1814. It was attended by about thirty churches, and was the first of the kind ever held in this state.

At the death of Dr. Amos A. Phelps, the Convention was held in the town of Newburgh, in the residence of the Rev. Amos A. Phelps, on the 10th of August, 1814.

Another, 1814, 1814, 1814.

CHAPTER II
CONFLICT: REGULATION AND REVOLUTION

Regulation

The frontiersmen came to Guilford County in search of personal freedom, but it was not long after their arrival that certain incidents occurred that forced them to choose sides in a struggle that eventually led to violence.

The people of the backcountry became dissatisfied under Governor Arthur Dobbs's administration and some set out to regulate their differences which terminated in the Regulator War or the War of the Regulation. Because of the French and Indian War, the province was in debt and the paper money that was issued had greatly depreciated. There was also difficulty caused by the local county officials who charged high fees for their services. This included the sheriffs, judges, justices of the peace, and the land agents, who were all important in the everyday life of the people. Eli Caruthers wrote that the citizens "were defrauded by the clerks of the several courts, by the recorders of deeds, by entry takers, by surveyors, and by lawyers, every man demanding twice or three times his legal fees."¹

At the death of Dobbs, William Tryon became royal governor in 1764. Added to the discontent of the people,

¹Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 107.

Tryon angered those of the western counties because of the lavish way he spent their tax money in building an imposing governor's palace in New Bern. The history of Orange and Rowan counties, from which Guilford was erected, is replete with malice toward Governor Tryon and an Orange County official named Edmund Fanning--"the most hated man in Orange."²

Multiple office holding was also a grievance of the people. It was prevalent and helped to foster the hated "courthouse ring." Fanning, the recognized leader, was assemblyman from Orange County, register of deeds, judge of the court, colonel of the militia, and lawyer. He was considered the "great" friend of Tryon and was rewarded for his loyalty by the gifts of most of these offices. This act of rewarding friends was frequently practiced and nearly all of the colonial officials served at the pleasure of the governor, either directly or indirectly. The only officials chosen by the people were the county and borough members elected to the assembly.

During the "Regulator Period,"³ 1765 to 1771, the people of the western counties organized active resistance against the aforesaid conditions. One of the leaders of the Regulator movement was Herman Husbands, who made these observations on the origins of the resistance:

²Lefler and Wager, eds., Orange County, p. 27.

³Ibid., p. 26.

In Orange County the first Disturbance is generally ascribed to have arisen; but Granville and Halifax Counties were deeply engaged in the same Quarrel many Years before Orange.⁴

The people stated their case in a number of advertisements issued to the public. From this beginning, the year 1768 was the turning point which marked the formal organization of the Regulators.⁵ In the Regulator Advertisement Number Four, the "rebels" listed the conditions they hoped to regulate. One of the five demands was:

1. That we will pay no taxes until we are satisfied they are agreeable to Law and Applied to the purposes therein mentioned unless we cannot help and are forced.⁶

Governor Tryon promised the people that the situation would be rectified and asked them to petition the legislature for a "redress of grievances." Although this was done, conditions remained as they had been in the past. The people became frustrated over the inaction of the government and harassed Edmund Fanning and other county officials. Soon there was mob action and outright attacks on the courts in the western counties. The most dramatic incident occurred on September 24 and 25, 1770, when the Regulators took over the Hillsborough court and tried their own cases culminating in what was termed the "Hillsborough riots." Fanning was

⁴William K. Boyd, Some Eighteenth Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Company, 1927), p. 254.

⁵Lefler and Wager, eds., Orange County, p. 26.

⁶Ibid., p. 31.

also chased in the street and beaten by the mob.⁷ After this incident, peace in the western counties was not a likely prospect.

Thus, in 1770 the province was in a state of shock. Dr. Caldwell deplored the situation, but was in sympathy with the Regulators. He counseled for peace, but a large portion of his congregations took an active part in the conflict of 1771.⁸ One member of his church was James Hunter, who was a leader of the movement and who withdrew from the congregation because he thought "the Dr. was not sufficiently zealous in the cause."⁹ From the beginning, there had been dissension among the people as to how far they should carry their case.

Early in the movement religion was brought into the picture. Before the "Hillsborough riots" of 1770, there had been reports in 1768 that some Regulators were planning to free some members of the movement jailed at Hillsborough. Governor Tryon, upon finding it difficult to raise the militia in Orange, "try'd all over the Province. . . . It was said, he represented us as a Faction of Quakers and Baptists, who aimed to overset the Church of England, and c." The accusation against the Quakers was no doubt brought on by the fact that Herman Husbands had once been a practicing Quaker at the Cane Creek Meeting in present Alamance County.

⁷Ibid., p. 36.

⁸ Foote, Sketches, p. 237.

⁹ Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 163.

He was a member until 1766, when he was disowned¹⁰ along with six other members for attending a "disorderly meeting."¹¹ However, this was not representative of the Quakers in general, for, except for a number of individual cases, they did not take an active part in the movement. Only three men were disowned at the New Garden Meeting for membership and a fourth repented and condemned his action for aiding "with a gun."¹² However the majority of the Quakers stood by their conviction of nonviolence.

In the outset, Governor Tryon was the champion of the Church of England. At times he attempted to mollify the Presbyterians, but showed much animosity toward the Baptists. Even under Governor Dobbs's administration the Baptists were becoming so numerous in the province that he referred to them as "strollers" and supposed that some of them led immoral lives.¹³ During Tryon's administration, he referred to them as "enemies to society and a scandal to common sense."¹⁴ In the province of North Carolina, there was very little toleration for the Baptists as a religious sect.

¹⁰Dorothy Gilbert Thorne, "North Carolina Friends and the Revolution," The N. C. Historical Review, XXXVIII (July, 1961), 326.

¹¹Weeks, Southern Quakers, p. 182. ¹²Ibid., p. 183.

¹³Paschal, History of the Baptists, I, 334.

¹⁴Weeks, Church and State, p. 44.

By the Marriage Act of 1741, the performance of the marriage ceremony was confined to the clergy of the Church of England, except, for want of such, to magistrates. There was not recognition of the right of dissenters in this law, but the Quakers, Presbyterians, and Baptists went on marrying in their own fashion. Then in 1766 the assembly recognized the marriages that had been performed by the Presbyterians and, in addition, it was made lawful for any Presbyterian minister "regularly called to any congregation" to perform the marriage ceremony. The marriages were to be licensed, and the minister of the Church of England in that particular parish was to receive the marriage fee. The Baptists were not recognized, and Tryon felt that he had actually given the Presbyterians very little. He explained that it could not "be of any real prejudice to the Established Church, especially as the marriage fee is reserved to the ministers [Anglican] of the parish."

The Presbyterians also disliked this act because it made no provision for those missionaries who were not laboring in regular congregations. A petition from Rowan and Orange was delivered to Governor Tryon by Herman Husbands, which stated the right of "dissenting ministers" (Presbyterians) to perform the marriage ceremony without restrictions. It was

a privilege they were debarred of in no other part of his Majesty's dominions; and we humbly conceive a privilege they stand entitled to by the Act of

Toleration, and, in fine, a privilege granted even to the very Catholics and Protestants in France.

The Presbyterians were granted in December, 1770, an act with a suspending clause which gave them the right to perform the ceremony by publication of banns, without "the payment of fees to the incumbent of the parish." This act was passed to win their support during the stormy years of the Regulator period. The suspending clause was later to make it null and void. A member of the Anglican Church wrote:

The bill was pushed by the dissenting interest, and [because of] the dangerous situation of the province from such a formidable number of malcontents [Regulators], the governor acted with the greatest prudence in passing the bill with a suspending clause. . . . Should this act receive royal assent it would be a fatal stroke to the Church of England, but as the insurrection is entirely quelled, I flatter myself with hopes that the act will meet with a repulse.¹⁵

The act was suspended, and it was not until 1776 and the break with England that the clergy received the legal right to perform the marriage ceremony. In consequence, added to the grievances of the Regulators was an element of religious persecution.

The Baptist denomination was thinly spread across what is today Guilford County with large numbers located in Chatham and other counties to the south and west of Guilford. Nevertheless, members of this denomination were influential and active in the Regulator movement. Like the other denominations, the Baptists abhorred the approaching prospect of

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 43-45.

bloodshed. The Sandy Creek Association issued a proclamation in October, 1769, that "If any of our members shall take up arms against the Legal authority or aid and abbet them that do so he shall be excommunicated and c."¹⁶ Inasmuch as nearly all the people were sympathizers of the Regulator movement, it is probable that this statement was interpreted as referring to the taking up of arms¹⁷ rather than restricting membership.

On the other hand, the Haw River Baptist Church did interpret the resolution of the association in a stricter sense. At a meeting in November, 1769, they passed a resolution "that if any of their members should join the Regulators and take up arms against the lawful authority he should be excommunicated."¹⁸ This resolution was not truly reflective of the feeling of the people because it was issued in retaliation to a group of Regulators who tried to force a member of the congregation to join the movement. In any case, it was not effective because most of the people were already active members.

The German settlers, by and large, also joined the populace in favor of Regulation. The Reverend G. W. Welker stated in his history of The Early German Reformed Settlers in North Carolina that

¹⁶Paschal, ed., "Materials," p. 396.

¹⁷Paschal, History of the Baptists, I, 365.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 365-366.

In the war of Regulation they [Germans] were in full sympathy with those who resisted the oppression, and the Germans of Orange and Guilford were in that disastrous fight on the Alamance.¹⁹

In the period leading up to the Battle of Alamance in May, 1771, Governor Tryon denounced the "seditious mob" at Hillsborough and called for necessary laws to meet such violence. In compliance, the assembly in January, 1771, passed the Johnston Riot Act, which stated that participants in riots could be tried in any county and any person resisting arrest was to be outlawed. It also gave the governor the authority to suppress the Regulators by force. Reaction to this law was swift, and the Regulators quickly armed for defiant resistance to it.

Seeing that events had reached an impasse, Governor Tryon called up the militia to suppress the rebellion. In consequence, 1452 militiamen responded. Of that number, 1068 were from the East, and the remainder from Orange, Rowan, and other western counties. The governor marched from New Bern and encamped a few miles from Hillsborough on the Great Alamance Creek. On May 16, 1771, Tryon encountered a force of about 2,000 Regulators. Caruthers wrote that Dr. Caldwell tried to effect a truce between Tryon and the Regulators, but the governor refused to talk with them "as long as they were in arms against the government."²⁰ The

¹⁹Saunders, ed., Colonial Records, VIII, 730.

²⁰Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 152.

"rebels" were given one hour in which to surrender, at the end of which the battle commenced. James Hunter, a former member of Caldwell's congregation, was requested by the Regulators to take command. He replied, "We are all freemen; and every one must command himself."²¹ The battle raged for the next two hours before the Regulators retreated in defeat.

Governor Tryon lost nine men, with sixty-one wounded; the Regulators also lost nine, and an undetermined number wounded. Elated, Tryon wrote to the Earl of Hillsborough:

I have the happiness to inform Your Lordship, that it has pleased God to bless His Majesty's arms in this province with a signal victory over the Regulators.²²

Morgan Edwards wrote of this "signal victory" that besides lodging in the trees an incredible number of balls which the hunters have since picked out, and therewith have killed more deer and turkies than they killed of their antagonists.²³

Immediately following the battle, Tryon marched in force across the countryside offering clemency to all who would lay down their arms and take an oath of allegiance to the crown. Within six weeks, 6,409 people had taken the oath and sworn "never to bear arms against the King. . ."²⁴

²¹Ibid., p. 163.

²²Marshall DeLancey Haywood, Governor William Tryon, and His Administration in the Province of North Carolina, 1765-1771 (Raleigh, E. M. Uzzell, Printer, 1903), p. 125.

²³Paschal, ed., "Materials," p. 369.

²⁴Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 155.

This later proved to be a problem for those who swore allegiance to the English monarch.

While administering this oath throughout Guilford and the other western counties, Tryon levied heavily upon the inhabitants to feed his cumbersome army. Eli Caruthers wrote of "levying contributions of beef and flour," and after the governor's return from his western tour he confiscated sixty head of cattle from a plantation four miles southeast of Greensboro.²⁵ He also requisitioned six wagon loads of "flower" from the Quakers at Cane Creek. This was the Meeting that had disowned Herman Husbands, and, in an instance of difficulty in obtaining the flour, three additional loads were taken from Dixon's mill which was owned by Simon Dixon, the brother-in-law of Husbands.²⁶

The prisoners were taken to Hillsborough, where a special court of oyer and terminer was held. Twelve Regulators were convicted of treason. Of these, six were hanged and the others, except for Husbands, were eventually pardoned by the King at the request of Governor Josiah Martin. Dr. Caldwell was present at the trial and interceded on the behalf of the defendants. Although none of them belonged to his congregations, he was personally acquainted with a large number. Nevertheless, his pleas for mercy were unheeded, and the unfortunate six were hanged.²⁷

²⁵Ibid., p. 160. ²⁶Thorne, "Friends," p. 326.

²⁷Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 162.

Following the Battle of Alamance, the people generally submitted in the paying of taxes, but there remained a defiant spirit. Only a few months before the battle, the assembly erected Guilford County and the new Parish of Unity for that area. At the same time it created three other counties: Wake, Chatham, and Surry. Past tradition was that each parish was to be named for a patron saint; however, in an attempt to placate the dissenting sects of Guilford, the name Unity was used.²⁸ The act became effective April 1, 1771, and in explaining its legislation Governor Tryon wrote to Lord Hillsborough:

The acts for erecting four new counties seemed a measure highly necessary from the too great extent of the counties they were taken out of. The erecting of Guilford County out of Rowan and Orange counties was, in the distracted state of this county, a truly political division, as it separated the main body of the insurgents from Orange and left them in Guilford.²⁹

Upon leaving North Carolina for his new governorship in New York, Tryon felt that he had strengthened the Anglican Church in the backcountry. The people of Guilford County were obligated under the new parish to elect twelve vestrymen and two church wardens whose duty it was to levy taxes, build churches, and employ ministers for the Established Church.³⁰ The Presbyterians had succeeded in Rowan County in electing their own people to these offices, thereby

²⁸Arnett, Greensboro, p. 4. ²⁹Ibid., p. 17.

³⁰Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 173.

weakening the control of the church. In that county, the Reverend Theodorus Drage of St. Lukes Parish wrote to the secretary of the "Honorable Society" that the most distinguishable group were the "Irish Dissenters," who, even though outnumbered, held sway in his parish because they held deeds to their land and only freeholders could vote for church officials.³¹

The Reverend Drage was dedicated to his work and in a span of a year baptized 802 people. He could have had the dissenters prosecuted for not serving in their official capacity once they were elected, but he refused for fear of representing "me as litigious, and it might submit me to a peculiar insult."³² Drage sincerely tried to keep the peace, but because of the eventual withholding of his salary he was forced to abandon St. Lukes Parish to move to South Carolina.

In Guilford County similar tactics were used in hopes that the Anglican Church would be rendered helpless in that parish. But after seeing the results of the dissenters in Rowan County, the assembly passed a law which prohibited the Presbyterians from serving on the vestries in Guilford and Wake counties.³³ In a petition of "sundry Freeholders and Inhabitants" of Guilford County, the Presbyterians complained that they were "distinguished with disadvantages

³¹Saunders, ed., Colonial Records, VIII, 502.

³²Ibid., p. 505.

³³Ibid., IX, 622.

from the rest of their body in this Province."³⁴ The Earl of Dartmouth wrote a letter to Governor Josiah Martin that

it [is] unreasonable and unjust that the Presbyterians in the Counties of Guilford and Wake, should be subjected to greater Restrictions than those in the other Counties.³⁵

After receiving the letter, Governor Martin instructed the assembly to put that denomination "upon one uniform footing throughout the Province, agreeable to the Laws of England."³⁶ In an attempt to resolve the situation, on January 25, 1773, the assembly passed "an act to dissolve the vestry of Unity Parish in Guilford County," which had been illegally elected. Caruthers³ noted in his biography of David Caldwell that to his knowledge the people of Guilford County never had a settled minister of the Established Church, a church built to that denomination, or paid taxes to that church.³⁷

The Presbyterians were the most vociferous in their demand to worship and marry without restrictions from the Established Church. The Quakers, bound by their moral code, submitted in paying fees to the "hireling priests"; the Baptists, especially since the Battle of Alamance, were weakened in numerical strength and unable to protest effectively. Perhaps due to their individualistic type of

³⁴Ibid., p. 467.

³⁵Ibid., p. 680.

³⁶Ibid., p. 467.

³⁷Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 174.

organization they were not able to withstand the turbulent years of the Regulation period. Also, by 1770 there was dissension within the Sandy Creek Association because of the dominance of Shubal Stearns, which weakened the association.³⁸ Added to this, Stearns died shortly thereafter leaving a vacuum in leadership.

At least on one occasion the Presbyterians tried to give the Baptists moral support in the backcountry. The Reverend Drage mentioned in a letter that the Presbyterians had encouraged

The separate Baptists who were in a declining way since my arrival, and really not under the act of Toleration in the manner they act, That they are as legal congregations as the Church of England, and have nothing to pay towards the support of the church.³⁹

The "declining way" of the Separate Baptists which Reverend Drage wrote of took form in a vast migration westward. Since the Battle of Alamance their numbers dwindled from 606 to 14 in the Sandy Creek churches. Upon his arrival after the famous battle, Morgan Edwards was told that as many as 1500 families had migrated and that many more were only waiting to dispose of their property.⁴⁰

The people of Guilford and of the western counties were temporarily silenced following the Regulator defeat

³⁸M. A. Huggins, A History of the North Carolina Baptists, 1727-1932 (Raleigh: The General Board of the Baptist State Convention of N. C., 1967), p. 67.

³⁹Saunders, ed., Colonial Records, VIII, 502.

⁴⁰Paschal, ed., "Materials," p. 385.

by Governor Tryon and the "courthouse ring," but they were not demoralized. They continued to fight for their rights whenever they could and held hope that Governor Martin would soon rectify the situation. Their trouble was not to be in vain, for in the near future they were to find themselves in a bargaining position with the government. Relations between England and the colonies continually worsened, and in the perplexing state of things, the ex-Regulators had to choose which side they would support: the English or the American patriots.

Revolution

Those leaders, such as Edmund Fanning, who had led the militia against the Regulators at the Battle of Alamance, were the men characterized as members of the so-called "courthouse ring." This "ring" removed the government from the people and created an undemocratic form of local government. The county system of government in North Carolina was controlled by the slaveowners, the large landowners, and those who received special privileges⁴¹ from the governor. These were the men that the people of Guilford and the Piedmont region rebelled against during the Regulator War. However, as the Revolutionary War neared, the situation changed and many members of the "courthouse ring" tried to rally support for the colonial cause because of the

⁴¹Robert O. DeMond, The Loyalists in North Carolina During the Revolution (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1964), p. 8.

oppression of the English government over home rule. As conflict became imminent, the Regulators, the religious groups, and the different races had to decide which party they would support.

In the year 1772 Josiah Martin, the new governor, travelled through the western counties, Guilford included, trying to conciliate the prominent men among the Regulators. Where Tryon had been "haughty, choleric, and absolute," the new governor was considered by some of the people of the Piedmont as a "mightily clever, genteel man."⁴² After returning from his tour, he wrote to Lord Hillsborough that in case of trouble with the colonies the assistance of the people of the backcountry could be relied upon.

As early as October, 1771, Governor Martin recommended to Lord Hillsborough that the remaining six "rebels" be pardoned by the King.⁴³ There was no immediate response on the part of the crown, but the people of the western counties felt that it was a gesture of friendship. Then, after relations became strained between the mother country and the colonies, Lord Hillsborough sent a circular to Martin dated May 3, 1775:

. . . as soon as necessary Forms will admit his Majesty's clemency towards the Insurgents in 1770

⁴²Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 176.

⁴³Saunders, ed., Colonial Records, IX, 36.

will be extended in a Proclamation of general pardon to all except Harmon Husbands.⁴⁴

The diligent work of Governor Martin in winning support in the backcountry was not in vain. Several incidents in the Piedmont region and Guilford County early indicated that many of the people of that area would support the King in the event of a rebellion. Guilford County, known as the stronghold of the Regulators, declared its loyalty in a letter of assurance to "His Majesty King George the Third his crown and dignity." It by no means represented the county as a whole, but it was signed by John Fields and 116 men.⁴⁵ Furthermore, by 1775, not only Guilford, but Surry, Rowan, and Anson made the same assurances,⁴⁶ and Governor Martin was led to believe that elements in the counties of Dobbs, Cumberland, Orange, and Chatham would also remain loyal.⁴⁷

Throughout the Colonial Records of North Carolina are examples in the correspondence of the contemporaries illustrating a tendency toward loyalism in the western counties, where support for the Regulator cause had been strong. General Griffith Rutherford complained in a letter to the "North Carolina Council of Safety" about "The Current of Tories running strong in Guilford and

⁴⁴Ibid., IX, 1240-41.

⁴⁵DeMond, Loyalism, p. 50.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 57.

⁴⁷Saunders, ed., Colonial Records, X, 141-142, 146.

Anson."⁴⁸ In the "Proceedings of the Safety Committee at New Bern," held February 10, 1776, the committee stated:

This Committee having this day received by Express from the Counties of Orange and Johnston certain Intelligence that a Number of Men Inhabitants of the Counties Cumberland, Anson, Bladen and Guilford under the Command of a certain Fields and Hermans have began Hostilities against the Cause of [the] United States.⁴⁹

In the October, 1778 session of the Assembly of North Carolina, one of the many confiscation acts which were passed during the stormy years named:

. . . various non-resident owners and resident Tories who should be deprived of their lands. Included in the list were William Fields, John Fields, Jr., and Robert Turner, of Guilford County.⁵⁰

Although there was cause for alarm in Guilford and some of the other counties because of the "Current of Tories running strong," there was, nevertheless, much strong support for independence. It might have been stronger in the beginning if it had not been for the fact that so many of the inhabitants had taken the oath of allegiance to the King after the Regulator War. It was now difficult for some of the people to reconcile their conscience with the bearing of arms against the crown. The people of Dr. Caldwell's congregations were troubled, and they sought his advice on the matter. He counseled:

. . . the oath was not and could not be binding; for besides the fact that the oath was in a measure forced,

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 726-727. ⁴⁹Ibid., p. 444.

⁵⁰Fries, ed., Moravian Records, III, 1280-81.

having been taken by them as the only means of escaping the gallows, the British government had grossly and repeatedly violated our chartered rights since the oath was taken; and, as obligations and duties in such cases are always reciprocal, if those who held the reins of government and to whom the oath was taken, instead of protecting us in the enjoyment of our rights as British subjects, which they were bound to do, had so notoriously violated their engagements and had declared their purpose to persist in this violation, we were, of course, released from our obligation to obedience.⁵¹

As a result of his well-formulated logic, Dr. Caldwell reconciled his people with conscience and duty and became a marked man by the Tories and the British.

This was not the case with Jeremiah Fields of Guilford County. He remained loyal to the King throughout the conflict and continued after independence was won. He frequently explained his action in later years:

. . . having fought twice, once for his country and once for his King, and having been whipped both times, he would fight no more; but generally added that, if war were to arise again between England and America, though he would not fight at his age, he would be on the side of the King, because he had taken a solemn oath to be faithful to him while he lived; but he would tell all his sons to fight for their country.⁵²

The influence of the ministers during the Revolution over their congregations should not be underestimated. Dr. David Caldwell was an avid supporter of the American cause. Although he was a lover of peace, "he exhorted his hearers . . . to value their liberties above every thing else, and to stand up manfully in their defense." After troubles with

⁵¹Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, pp. 172-173.

⁵²Ibid., p. 177.

England became serious, he often preached about the existing difficulties from the pulpit. "Hardly a Sabbath passed in which he did not allude to the subject in some way or other."⁵³

Caldwell not only preached on the subject, but became an active participant in the struggle that followed. He was elected representative to the Provincial Congress from Guilford County, which met at Halifax on November 12, 1776. It was during this fifth and last session of the Provincial Congress that a Bill of Rights and a state Constitution were adopted for North Carolina.⁵⁴ Dr. Caldwell was also chosen by the people of Guilford to represent them in the Convention which adopted the Federal Constitution.⁵⁵

The Tories in Guilford County tried several times to capture Dr. Caldwell and on occasions he found it necessary to "hide-out" for his own safety. When General Lord Charles Cornwallis entered the county it was reported that he offered £200, British money, for his apprehension. For a number of weeks, the Doctor found it necessary to seek refuge "in the low grounds of North Buffalo; about two miles from his own house."⁵⁶

⁵³Ibid., p. 183.

⁵⁴Saunders, ed., Colonial Records, X, 913.

⁵⁵Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 246.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 210.

There were also occasions when his family was harassed by the British soldiers and the local Tories. A most unfortunate incident happened when some "redcoats" camped on his plantation. Out of defiance for the minister, who was termed "liberal and patriotic" in his preaching, the soldiers were ordered to burn Caldwell's papers and library, which they did, not even sparing the family Bible. There was a brick oven in the yard and the soldiers and servants carried armfuls of books and papers to the oven where they were burned in a blaze "as hot as Nebuchadnezzar's furnace." Although his library was destroyed, Caldwell remained free and his family unharmed.⁵⁷

However sad the incident, it was not without a lighter side. Eli Caruthers recounted that when the British first approached, several of the men who were protecting the women of the household fled for safety. One of the men, thinking the soldiers were only passing through, sought the security of a hollow log. To his misfortune, they encamped on the spot where the log was located and proceeded to stack brush upon it in preparation for a campfire. After the brush was ignited, it was not long until the unfortunate victim scrambled from inside the log and appeared amidst smoke and flame. The soldiers were astonished as he appeared "covered as he was with black rotten wood. . . . His appearance suggested the idea of a certain personage whose name they

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 223.

were in the habit of using . . . ," but after collecting their wits the fugitive was humorously abducted. He was detained overnight and given his freedom the next morning.⁵⁸

The German people were not without dissension during the American Revolution. They had left the Palatinate in Germany in search of religious freedom in other lands. In their search for freedom, they received aid from the English crown, especially in relocating in the American colonies. In the time of their trouble, it was the benevolent Queen Anne of England who offered them this aid.

While in North Carolina, the German people also received substantial aid from the Church of England. The Reverend Drage of St. Lukes Parish in Rowan County sought help from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel for the Lutherans in his parish. He wrote in 1771 to the secretary in England:

The Bearers hereof are two Germans, my Parishioners, who are commissioned by the Governor to collect in England and Germany, towards a sum which sixty Lutheran families propose to raise as a capital, with the Interest of which to maintain a Lutheran Clergyman and a schoolmaster and whom they are to bring from Germany. The union they desire to live in with the Church of England and the kind assistance they are at all times ready to give, and frequently those who understand English attend the service, I hope will recommend to the notice of the Honorable Society, and would be a means of cementing the Union which at present exists amongst all the Lutherans in these parts, who are a very considerable body of people.⁵⁹

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 219-220.

⁵⁹Saunders, ed., Colonial Records, VIII, 506-507.

With this letter of recommendation and a commission from Governor Tryon, Christopher Ringleman and Christopher Layerly proceeded in 1772 to London, where they represented about sixty Lutheran families of the Piedmont North Carolina. While in London, the King, members of his court, and the St. James Lutheran Chapel gave donations equivalent to more than eight hundred dollars.⁶⁰ It was from this successful journey that the Lutherans in Guilford County and surrounding area obtained the Reverend Adolph Nussmann as pastor and John Gottfried Arends as school teacher in 1773.

Added to the complicated matter of trying to decide which side they should support was the incident that took place after the Regulator War. Numerous Germans had taken an active part in the struggle on the side of the people and, as a consequence were forced to take the oath of allegiance levied by Governor Tryon. For this reason, it was difficult for some of these people to bear arms against the King. Nonetheless, a sizable number did support the American cause.

It is difficult to estimate how many of the German people remained loyal to the crown, but it appears that, as with all the people, the German Reformed and Lutheran congregations were divided in sentiment according to individual beliefs. The Reformed minister Reverend Samuel Suther, who

⁶⁰Morgan, ed., History of the Lutheran Church, pp. 20-21.

was known as an "advanced patriot" when he first arrived in Guilford County in 1771, also suffered from the abuses of the Loyalists. Because he was so outspoken in the cause of the colonies, Suther became a marked man for the hatred of the Loyalists. During the war a patrol of British soldiers led by some local Tories "devastated his farm, drove off his cattle and destroyed his property of all kinds." They also destroyed the property of his parishioners because he was their minister.⁶¹ George Cortner, an Elder at Clapps Church, where Reverend Suther was minister, was also obnoxious to the Loyalists. He was one of the representatives from Guilford County who served in the Provincial Congress held at Hillsborough August 20, 1775.⁶²

The misfortunes of war were not suffered alone by the Reformed members; the brethren of the Lutheran Church also suffered. During the war the Reverend Nussmann was pursued by Tories who threatened to take his life. "Aged and defenseless," he sought a refuge near his home, where he hid and escaped harm.⁶³

Two important battles were fought in North Carolina during the Revolutionary War. The first took place in

⁶¹Saunders, ed., Colonial Records, VIII, 740.

⁶²Ibid., X, 165.

⁶³G. D. Bernheim, History of the German Settlements and of the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Book Store, 1872), p. 272.

1776, when the Loyalists suffered defeat at Moore's Creek.⁶⁴ There was to have been a general rendezvous of loyal sympathizers at Cross Creek, where Governor Martin was to assist with several thousand British soldiers. His plan called for a North Carolina Army of 3,000 Highlanders, 3,000 Regulators, and 3,000 other Tories. In addition, the British forces were to be composed of seven regiments of British regulars under the command of Lord Charles Cornwallis; a fleet of fifty-four ships under Sir Peter Parker; and Sir Henry Clinton with 2,000 British soldiers from Boston. The grandiose scheme did not materialize, and about 1,500 Highlanders were defeated by 1,100 patriots at Moore's Creek.⁶⁵ Martin's plan resulted in a victory for the colonial forces. After the debacle (by not supplying the necessary reinforcements) the British would find it difficult to rally the full strength of the ex-Regulators and sympathizers to their banner in the western counties. The result was that men, such as James Hunter, switched their loyalty to the American cause.

The second battle, and of more consequence, was the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. In 1780 General Cornwallis entered North Carolina after having subdued both Georgia and South Carolina except for several bands of partisans. In March, 1781, he came to Guilford County where the famous

⁶⁴E. W. Caruthers, Revolutionary Incidents: and Sketches of Character Chiefly in the "Old North State" (Philadelphia: Hayes and Zell, 1854), p. 95.

⁶⁵Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina, pp. 198-201.

battle took place which was instrumental in the final defeat of the British forces at Yorktown six months later.

The Battle of Guilford Courthouse brought the Quakers uncomfortably close to the war. In North Carolina the Friends, by and large, remained faithful to their policy of nonviolence; nevertheless, there was the ever-present struggle over conscience and duty. On several occasions the Quakers of Guilford were fined for not complying with requisitions and demands for war needs. Also, another problem was that of taking the oath of allegiance to the new state government. Friends were allowed to affirm, but that was still too much for them to allow themselves during the time of war. Many of their actions were construed by both sides as in opposition to their respective cause. Concerning the oath, the New Garden Meeting dealt with its offenders on Christmas 1779. They recorded:

It being the united sense of our Yearly Meeting, (that in these times of outward wars, and commotions which prevail in our Land, and still to be determined by Military force), that we cannot consistently take our Solemn Affirmation of Fidelity to the present powers; but several amongst us through unwatchfulness have given way there unto; which hath been cause of deep sorrow to many minds; but through the favours of Divine goodness, those appear'd at our Monthly Meeting, and bore their Testimony against it, to the satisfaction of Friends: John Williams, Paul Macy, William Coffin, Reuben Bunker, Nathaniel Macy, Nathaniel Swain, Isaac Gardner, Joseph Swain, John Macy, Barzilla Gardner, Stephen Gardner.

At Deep River Meeting similar action was taken against offenders. On February 7, 1780, five Friends appeared

before the meeting: Daniel Bills, Seth Coffin, Richard and Sylvanus Gardner and William Stanton who were exonerated after they condemned their action. On January 1, 1781, Latham Folger, John Macy, Jr., and John Swelt also condemned their taking the affirmation.⁶⁶

The time of battle drew near and Generals Cornwallis and Greene faced each other in the woods and fields of Guilford Courthouse. Nathanael Greene had been a Quaker until the monthly meeting at East Greenwich, Connecticut, "put him from under the care of the meeting" for attending a military parade. While in the Guilford area, he addressed a letter to the New Garden Friends:

I know of no order of men more remarkable for the exercise of humanity and benevolence; and perhaps no instance ever had a higher claim upon you than the unfortunate wounded now in your neighborhood . . . I entertain other sentiments both of your principles and wishes. I respect you as a people, and shall always be ready to protect you from every violence and oppression which the confusion of the times afford.

General Greene then warned the Quakers that the British were deceiving them "by flattering you with conquest and exciting your apprehension respecting religious liberty." Then he added: "There is but one way to put a speedy end to the extremities of war, which is, for the people to be united."

It is fitting to record the reply of the New Garden Quakers, which gives insight into their situation brought on by war and their beliefs. They wrote:

⁶⁶Thorne, "Friends," pp. 332-333.

Friend Greene: We received thine, being dated third month, 26th day, 1781. Agreeable to thy request we shall do all that lies in our power, although this may inform that from our present situation we are ill able to assist as much as we would be glad to do, as the Americans have lain much upon us, and of late the British have plundered and entirely broken up many among us, which renders it hard, and there is at our meeting house in New Garden upward of one hundred now living, that have no means of provisions except what hospitality the neighborhood affords them, which we look upon as a hardship on us, if not an imposition; but notwithstanding all this we are determined, by the assistance of Providence, while we have anything among us, that the distressed both at the Courthouse and here shall have part of it with us. As we have as yet made no distinction as to party and their cause--as we have none to commit our cause to but God alone, but hold it the duty of true Christians, at all times to assist the distressed.

Guilford Courthouse, North Carolina, Third Month,
30, 1781.⁶⁷

The Quakers buried the dead after the battle, cared for the sick, and tended to the wounded on both sides. On July 28, 1781, at the New Garden Meeting, only William Edwards "appeared at the meeting and offered a paper condemning his conduct in appearing in a war-like manner." He was the only person to appear before the meeting for this offense in 1781.⁶⁸ On the other hand, Eli Caruthers later wrote that the Quakers were in sympathy with the American cause, although they tried to remain neutral. However, he believed, "if the British had remained much longer among them . . . they would have become Whigs to a man, at least in principle."⁶⁹

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 337-338.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 337.

⁶⁹Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 239.

In examining the reactions of the different religious and racial groups in Guilford County, one might surmise that most of the people chose their political affiliation in relation to their individual beliefs and needs. It was difficult for most of the people to join immediately in the struggle on the side of the colonies because the leaders of the Revolutionary movement in North Carolina had been the hated county officials during the Regulator War. Nevertheless, it appears that most of the ex-Regulators eventually joined the American cause. The records reveal that of 883 of the known Regulators, 239 were patriots, 34 remained loyal, and 560 with Revolutionary status unknown.⁷⁰

The Scotch-Irish under the staunch leadership of Dr. David Caldwell, were nearly to a man, favorable to the cause of independence. The Quakers, in the majority, abstained from the rigors of war, and, in turn, suffered many privations. The German people, who fell into two religious groups, suffered much dissension within their respective denominations. The Germans, as a whole, owed much to England for the asylum granted them in the American colonies. Perhaps because of the similarity between the German Reformed Church and the Presbyterian churches in the Guilford area, the former was more aggressive in the American cause than were the Lutherans. The Lutheran Church had

⁷⁰Lefler and Wager, eds., Orange County, p. 39.

received much aid in 1773. With the assistance of Reverend Drage of the Anglican Church in Rowan County, they obtained permanent ministers for the Piedmont region. As a result, many remained loyal to England during the war and, as a consequence, much of their property was later confiscated. In 1783 in Rowan County, the Inferior Court summoned 182 people to show cause why they should not have their estates confiscated. Out of this number, one fifth were German.⁷¹

The British always had hoped that the inhabitants of the backcountry would rise up in their defense when a sufficient number of British troops were there to defend them. This could have been the case in the beginning of the war; but, with the great lapse of time between the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge and the appearance of Cornwallis toward the end of the war, most of the people had been won over, or worn down, by the persistence of the patriots. After the Battle of Guilford Courthouse Cornwallis stated that the Loyalists were too timid. After his "Pyrrhic victory," he wrote that "many of the Inhabitants rode into camp, shook me by the hand, said they were glad to see us and that we had beat Greene and then rode home again."⁷²

In accordance with their decentralized, democratic form of church government, most of the Baptists aggressively

⁷¹DeMond, Loyalism, pp. 54-55. ⁷²Ibid., p. 137.

pursued the cause of independence. The Methodists, who evolved during the war years from the Church of England, tried to remain neutral because of their leader, John Wesley, who lived in England. He appealed in his "Calm Address" to the American Methodists to remain loyal to England.⁷³ However, by the end of the war, the Methodists made a break with the defunct Anglican Church and soundly voiced approval of the American cause.

⁷³Lefler and Newsome, North Carolina, p. 250.

CHAPTER III

THE DECLINE AND REVIVAL OF RELIGION

The Aftermath of War

After the American Revolution, there followed a period of low morals and vice on the part of society. All of the religious denominations suffered a decline in membership because of the hardships of war. Many of the men of the congregations and some of the ministers joined the army, and, on occasions, those remaining found it not safe to congregate for worship. After the bloodshed, there was a general feeling of relief and an attachment for the worldly instead of spiritual concern. Eli Caruthers thus wrote of this period:

War, under any circumstances, is a prolific source of immorality and vice; but when it is both foreign and domestic, as it was here, every kind of government, except that of martial law, is suspended, and all civil and ecclesiastical restraints are in a good degree removed; the worst passions of human nature are intensely and constantly excited; and the progress of vice soon gains an ascendancy over every thing good.¹

The ministers found it difficult to eradicate from their congregations the problems of "parties for dancing" and "horse-racing" and the use of spirituous liquors. The purpose of the Revolution was to obtain freedom of opinion and conscience; but in the process of winning these

¹Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 249.

freedoms, the barriers to "vice and transgression" were also broken down.²

Most of the sermons preached at this time dealt with the prevalence of "intemperance, licentiousness, theft, robbery and c."³ One of the most objectionable practices was the habit of drinking liquors at funerals. "Provisions" were usually set out before the door or carried around in baskets for the convenience of those in mourning. Often the solemnity of the occasion was lost in the excitement of the "spirits." In order to preserve some semblance of the dignity of the ceremony, someone was usually called upon to open "the scene of eating and drinking by asking a blessing on the refreshments prepared."⁴ Numerous gallons of whiskey were often consumed at these funerals, and the deceased was "laid away" in a manner suitable to his estate.

Methodism

Out of the ruins of the Established Church Methodism arose. Such men as Devereux Jarrat and Francis Asbury worked diligently during the Revolution to hold their society together. Their original intention was to reform the Anglican Church from within, under the auspices of John Wesley in England. A policy of neutrality was established

²Foote, Sketches, p. 371.

³Caruthers, Life of Caldwell, p. 251.

⁴Foote, Sketches, p. 371.

by Wesley in Britain, but his followers in America found it exceedingly difficult to remain aloof from the struggle. It was easy for the antagonists of Methodism to cry "traitor" during the war in order to stem the spread of its doctrines.

The Church of England failed to be flexible in the storm of the evangelistic spirit that swept the American colonies after the arrival of Whitefield. This church experienced the same dissent as the other denominations with its tendency to split into liberal and conservative factions. It was Methodism which evolved from the liberal faction in order to meet better the needs of the people, but their ability to do this was stifled by the war and their connection with the mother church. This closeness to the Established Church was lessened in 1779 when some ministers from North Carolina and Virginia chose a presbytery of three with the power to ordain themselves. In 1784 final action was taken to separate and to erect the Methodist Church in Baltimore, Maryland.

The striking feature of this church was its missionary zeal: "The bishops were the generals, the presiding elders the captains, the circuit riders the soldiers of the line." And, too, their Arminian doctrine was suitable for frontier conditions and was soon to make inroads into the Calvinistic denominations.⁵

⁵William K. Boyd, "Methodist Expansion in North Carolina After the Revolution," Historical Papers, Series XII (Durham, N. C.: Trinity College Historical Society, 1916), p. 40.

Francis Asbury, the "founder, organizer, and apostle of the Methodist Church" in America, inspired the circuit riders to go to the frontier and "save the sinners." The first Methodist ministers came into North Carolina in 1772. At first there was only the North Carolina Circuit, then, possibly in 1778, New Hope Circuit was created, which embraced the eastern half of Guilford County. In 1780 the Yadkin Circuit was organized, with its boundary line running through the western half of Guilford, west of Greensboro. Finally, concerning this period of time, Guilford Circuit was erected in 1783, with 314 recorded members of the Methodist Church.⁶

The philosophy of Methodism was suitable for frontier conditions and the period following the war: the circuit riders were sent⁷ to the people--they did not wait to be asked. Their philosophy was formulated in 1784 at the first conference of the newly organized church:

Now we cannot expect them to seek us. Therefore we should go and seek them Whenever the weather will permit, go out in God's name into the public places, and call all to repent and believe the gospel.⁸

⁶William L. Grissom, History of Methodism in North Carolina from 1772-1805 (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, 1905), pp. 84, 94-97.

⁷Boyd, "Methodist Expansion," p. 40.

⁸Guion Griffis Johnson, "Revival Movements in Antebellum North Carolina," The N. C. Historical Review, X (January, 1933), 24.

One of the first ministers to preach in the Guilford area was Andrew Yeargan, a former member of the Reformed Church who preached Methodism on the Yadkin Circuit. Those who developed the New Hope Circuit were James O'Kelly, Henry Willis, and O'Kelly's assistant Beverly Allen. The first appointments for the newly formed Guilford Circuit were Samuel Dudley and James Gibbins in 1783, followed by Thomas Humphreys for the years 1784-85, and John Smith and Stephen Johnson also in 1785. Others on the Guilford Circuit during the first decade were James O'Kelly, in 1786; John Baldwin, in 1786; and George McKinney, in 1789.⁹

The meager salary of sixty-four dollars a year held little promise for an easy life on the frontier. Bishop Asbury was always at the forefront of the circuit riders and suffered the same dangers and deprivations as the others. During a period of thirty years, he crossed the Allegheny Mountains fifty-eight times, preached 16,475 sermons, and travelled about 270,000 miles.¹⁰

Probably the worst danger that Francis Asbury and the other circuit riders faced was the common cold and its debilitating effects brought on by the hardships of circuit-life. Asbury often slept in the wilderness without the necessary food or clothing. He later wrote that "In the

⁹Grissom, History of Methodism, pp. 97, 194-215.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 85.

southern states I have waded swamps, and led my horse for miles, where I took colds that brought on diseases which are now preying on my system, and must soon terminate in death."¹¹ In 1784, on his sixth visit to North Carolina, he was plagued by one of the innumerable mishaps that occurred during his travels. The Bishop recorded in his journal:

Thursday, February 5. Rode to Guilford Quarterly Meeting; thence, twenty-five miles, to Short's; and thence to Madeira's: here my toe became so bad, I was obliged to halt. I applied poultices to take out the inflammation.¹²

Added to the rigors of travelling on the frontier, were the lowly conditions of some of the houses in which Asbury slept. In the Yadkin District, of which Guilford Circuit was a part, he recorded in his journal on one rainy night:

We crept for shelter into a little dirty house, where the filth might have been taken from the floor with a spade. We felt for want of a fire, but could get little wood to make it, and what we gathered was wet.¹³

On an earlier visit to Guilford County in 1783, he wrote:

Sunday, March 2. Came to Short's; and preached to a number of people, who appeared solemn, while I enforced

¹¹Ibid., p. 85.

¹²Grady L. E. Carroll, Francis Asbury in North Carolina: The N. C. Portions of the Journal of Francis Asbury (Volumes I and II of Clark Edition) (Nashville, Tennessee: The Parthenon Press, 1964), p. 61.

¹³Grissom, History of Methodism, p. 259.

"My Spirit shall not always strive with man." We rode on to L_____'s, lodged in a cabin; but the bed was clean.¹⁴

Most of the preaching was done in private homes or meetinghouses on the circuit. Some were later organized into churches, while others were lost in time. During the period immediately before the Great Revival in North Carolina, Bishop Asbury noted several of the meeting places on the Guilford Circuit. On Tuesday, October 1, 1799, he stopped at Smith's meetinghouse, where he preached on Hebrews 3: 12, 13. He continued his journal:

We dined at Martin's, and then came on to father Low's; we have ridden but eight miles this day. At Low's meetinghouse a large congregation attended: I spoke upon Isaiah xi, I. The heat was very painful. I suppose we congregate from three to six thousand souls weekly; thus, if no more, I can say that my traveling hath brought thousands to hear the gospel who, probably, would not otherwise have heard it.¹⁵

The Bishop then proceeded to Covey's in Guilford County, then down the "South Fork" of Haw River to attend a quarterly meeting at Bethel on "Belew's Creek," where he had a "gracious time."¹⁶ One of these meetings which eventually organized into a church was Hickory Grove Methodist Church at Greensboro in 1808.¹⁷

¹⁴Carroll, Asbury in North Carolina, p. 55.

¹⁵Grissom, History of Methodism, p. 213.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 214.

¹⁷Letter, Virginia Tedder to Gary Tucker, Dec. 15, 1970.

The strategy of the circuit minister was to convince the sinner of his precarious situation. He was always reminded of the impending dangers of hell and damnation. The ministers were told to "lift up thy voice like a trumpet."¹⁸ This method of preaching was not new, for it had arisen out of the Great Awakening. People in the Guilford area still remembered the "musical and strong" voice of Shubal Stearns. No sooner had he reached Sandy Creek than "the neighborhood was alarmed and the Spirit of God listed to blow as a mighty rushing wind."¹⁹

Many of the ministers were given the distinction of being called a "son of thunder" or a "son of consolation."

William Burke, who preached "with a voice of thunder," settled in Guilford County in 1787. After moving to High Ford on the Haw River "he entered into all the amusements of the day, and became very sinful"; but, upon hearing Isaac Lowe preach, "he never rested until he had obtained experimental religion." Another Methodist minister of distinction was Thomas Humphreys, who preached for a number of years on the Guilford circuit. The Reverend Humphreys was described as "a man of fine personal appearance, preached with earnestness and power . . . though by no means free from eccentricities." On one occasion he was approached

¹⁸Johnson, "Revival Movements," p. 24.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 22.

by a "good sister" who cautioned him: "Now, brother Humphreys, recollect you are to preach to town folks; it will not do to be too plain." He made no reply to the sister and began the Sunday sermon. After a while he cried, "if you don't repent, you'll all be damned!" He then quickly apologized with, "I beg your pardon; you are town folks." He continued with the sermon and in conclusion he added: "If you are town folks, if you don't repent and become converted, God will cast you into hell just as soon as he will a piney-woods sinner."²⁰

Other ministers who labored faithfully on the Guilford Circuit the following decade were Jonathan Bird and Enoch George, in 1792; Philip Sands, in 1794; Daniel Dean and William Wilkerson, in 1795; William Burke, in 1797; and Samuel Steward, in 1798.

The Great Revival

By the 1790's, the spirit of experimental religion was again blowing "as a mighty rushing wind." Since the 1740's and the beginning of the Great Awakening, the wind had never completely died down. The "New Light" Presbyterians led the way in 1742, followed by the Separate Baptists in 1755, and the Methodists in 1772. There had been, throughout the period, sporadic revivals such as the one under Stearns when he first arrived at Sandy Creek,

²⁰Grissom, History of Methodism, pp. 196-200

and later a revival held in Virginia during the years 1787-89.

Although it is difficult to give credit to a particular denomination or person for starting the Great Revival, because of extenuating circumstances, the immediate forerunner of this great surge in religion was the Presbyterian minister James McGready. McGready was born of Scotch-Irish parents in Pennsylvania in 1760. While a child, his family moved to Guilford County, where they became members of the Buffalo congregation under Dr. Caldwell. Influenced by this Presbyterian minister, McGready's uncle took him to Pennsylvania to study for the ministry.

In 1788 he completed his studies and started his journey to his home in Guilford. On his way he passed through Virginia, which was in the last throes of a revival. He was deeply moved by the conversion of so many people and, no doubt, determined to carry it southward. Soon after his return home, McGready attended a funeral and was asked to give a blessing so "that they might commence their drinking." He replied, "No, I will not be guilty of insulting God by asking a blessing upon what I know to be wrong."

A great sensation was produced, and McGready stood up for his defense, a champion not to be despised, large in form, some six feet high, of prominent features, grave in demeanor, solemn in speech, plain and neat in his style of dress, unaffected in his manners, with a powerful voice, and somewhat ungainly in his address, with the appearance of great weight and bodily strength.²¹

²¹ Foote, Sketches, p. 372.

From that time, James McGready preached along the Haw River and throughout the Guilford area. Often this "Son of Thunder" caused the congregation to tremble and cry. The revival began and David Caldwell, William Hodge, and William McGee joined in the ministry of "experimental religion." Although McGready spread the revival rapidly throughout the western counties, he was not without opposition. In 1796 at Stony Creek, his enemies "made a bonfire of the pulpit and left a warning written in blood." Not long after that episode the young evangelist moved to Kentucky, where he brought the revival to that state.²² News of the remarkable things he was accomplishing on that frontier drifted back to North Carolina, and the Presbyterian ministers were inspired to continue his work.

Mrs. David Caldwell and three other women had been praying for a year at Buffalo Church for a revival in religion; women in other churches soon started the same practice. In 1801 William Paisley, pastor of the Hawfields and Cross Roads churches in Orange County, also worked for a revival. On communion Sunday, David Caldwell and some other ministers assisted the Reverend Paisley in his effort to stir the people. On the following day as the final sermon was concluding the communion season, the pastor arose to dismiss the congregation. Because there had been no unusual manifestation of a

²²Johnson, "Revival Movements," p. 29.

religious nature, the Reverend Paisley was disappointed and could not speak.

All was still as the grave and every face looked solemn . . . , it was a solemn moment and pregnant with most glorious results. A man, by the name of Hodge, happened to be there who had seen something of the work in the west and he, rising slowly from his seat, said in a calm but earnest voice, "Stand still and see the salvation of God!"

In an instant, there were sobs, moans, and cries from the congregation.

. . . Many were struck down, or thrown into a state of helplessness if not of insensibility . . . Bating [sic] the miraculous attestations from Heaven, such as cloven tongues like fire and the power of speaking different languages, it was like the day of Pentecost and none was careless or indifferent.

The congregation spent the remainder of the day in worship until the people left at midnight, and the scene was repeated nightly.

In January, 1802, the Reverend David Caldwell appointed a union meeting of all denominations to meet at Bell's meetinghouse in Randolph County. It was from this meeting that the revival spread to the Methodists. James Sharp, a Methodist from Iredell County, "fixed up a four-horse wagon" and took his family to the meeting at Bell's. "And when they came back, they came with a new religion; and from that the fire began to spread. There was preaching or prayer meeting every night at some of the neighboring houses." There were also some Baptist ministers present at this meeting, but because of their doctrine of

close communion they did not enter as freely as the other two denominations into interdenominational camp-meetings.²³

Nevertheless, from this meeting the Great Revival spread east and west of the Orange Presbytery. It affected thousands of people and all the religious sects to a certain extent. At one meeting, the number of people was estimated from 8,000 to 10,000. They were divided into four groups, with a certain number of ministers officiating over each section. Of the ministers, there were "fourteen Presbyterians, three Methodists, two Baptists, one Episcopalian, one Dutch Calvinist, and two German Lutherans." Another contemporary recorded:

This day I returned home from a meeting near the Guilford and Rowan boundary. Five Baptist, four Methodist, and four Presbyterian ministers attended. The place of meeting was at a house of worship, supplied with a stated pastor of the Baptist Church.²⁴

In 1801 the Great Revival began in the Piedmont region of North Carolina, but it was not until 1802 that it really got under way. By 1805, it had generally reached its climax.²⁵ It was the Methodists who reaped a greater number of converts, probably due to their Arminian doctrine. The Presbyterians and the Baptists were divided because of their Calvinistic background over the value of the methods used in the revival. Many of them questioned the use of

²³Ibid., p. 29. ²⁴ Foote, Sketches, p. 390.

²⁵ Johnson, "Revival Movements," pp. 35-37.

camp-meetings and the emotionalism that followed: "falling or the jerks, dancing, barking, laughing, and singing."

It was the Methodist Church that saw the advantage of spreading the gospel rapidly by means of the camp-meeting. By 1810, this church outnumbered the other denominations throughout North Carolina.²⁶ But it is not likely that they did so in Guilford County, because of the predominance of the Scotch-Irish, German, and Quaker conservatism. For the Methodists, the camp-meeting served its purpose until interrupted by the Civil War.

Although all the denominations were affected by the Great Revival, its greatest appeal was to the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches. It was a liberalizing movement, that focused on the individual. Church doctrine was de-emphasized and for a while the different sects joined forces for the welfare of mankind. They looked beyond the narrow limits of the colonial schools, missions, poor relief, and other reforms.²⁷ The Quakers started the protest against slavery, and the Methodists soundly joined in by the 1800's. The Presbyterians were more than ever concerned about education, and the Baptists with the rights of the individual. Because of the Great Revival, man was more aware of the value of human dignity, and he sought better organizations to

²⁶Boyd, "Methodist Expansion," p. 46.

²⁷Johnson, "Revival Movements," p. 43.

help his fellow man: the Lutheran Synod was formed in 1803; the Presbyterian Synod, 1813; the first Baptist convention, 1814; and the Episcopalians organized the Diocese of North Carolina in 1817.²⁸ Even though the Civil War weakened these organizations, their original intent and spirit remained to the present.

Although there was "backsliding" among the newly won converts, there were also great numbers who remained Christians. The spirit of the Great Revival emanated from Guilford County under the ministry of the Reverends James McGready and David Caldwell. It first affected the surrounding area, lost momentum, then caught on in Kentucky, and again revived in North Carolina.

It is unlikely that anyone will ever sufficiently explain the emotionalism that occurred during the revival. One man who was lost for words over the strange emotionalism that had affected his family, resorted to a more worldly form of action: he applied a mustard plaster to his wife to cure her of Methodism.²⁹

By way of summary, it might be said that experimental religion led the way to a spirit of social reform which is difficult to explain.

²⁸Boyd, "Methodist Expansion," p. 51.

²⁹Ibid., p. 47.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, most of the people who came to the Guilford area during the early period of settlement were immigrants from Pennsylvania. They were Scotch-Irish, English and German in origin, representing the Presbyterian, Baptist, Quaker, German Reformed, and Lutheran denominations. Except for the Quaker religion, which was also social in nature, all of the other sects were affected by the Great Awakening. The effect of this religious influence was divisive and caused the people to separate into liberal and conservative factions, which were often called "new side" and "old side" congregations. Therefore, although the settlers brought dissension with them to the frontier, they also brought a new religious spirit which, in the end, would change their lives.

The immigrants journeyed from their homelands to America, where a large number of them settled in Pennsylvania. They came in search of economic and religious freedom, but finding it difficult to secure cheap land they were forced to move south. Some of the people attempted to settle in Maryland and Virginia, but they found the Established Church strong in these areas and again were forced to migrate. Finally, these religious dissenters moved to the Piedmont of North Carolina, where the land was cheap and the Anglican Church was not as strong as in the former colonies.

It was here and the area that is now Guilford County that these immigrants, religious dissenters, and adventurers came in search of security and freedom.

Even though the people had reason to believe that they could at last live in peace and harmony, it was to be short-lived; for it was here, once again, on the frontier, that the settlers were oppressed. The people of the Guilford area felt the oppression of local county officials, who charged exorbitant fees for their services. They were also restricted in their worship by the ever-growing Anglican Church, which had the support of such colonial officials as Governor William Tryon. As a result, the people of the Piedmont organized themselves into groups called Regulators, for the purpose of "regulating" their problems. It was a popular movement, for nearly all of the people of the backcountry supported the "rebels." Members of the Presbyterian, Baptist, and German denominations were present at the Battle of Alamance, which was fought in May, 1771. The battle was a disaster for the people and brought an end to the Regulator period. Nevertheless, one result of the conflict was the erection of Guilford County in 1771 to divide the Regulators.

Violence was brought to an end in that year, but it was not long until troubles with England brought threats of more danger. By 1776 the people of Guilford County had to choose which side they would support in the Revolution. This was a difficult choice because the leaders of the American

cause were the officials of the notorious county "courthouse ring"--the same officials the people had fought during the Regulator War. Also, to complicate matters, after the Battle of Alamance, Governor Tryon forced the inhabitants of the western counties to take an oath of allegiance to the king. Some found it difficult to break this solemn oath, while others disregarded it since it was forced. Added to this, there had been occasions when the Church and the government had assisted some of the dissenters in the backcountry: the Lutherans were assisted by Governor Tryon and officials of the Established Church in obtaining a permanent minister and school teacher for the Piedmont region. The Presbyterians had also received some special privileges which the other denominations had not. In all it was a difficult decision which only the individual could reconcile with his conscience. Perhaps, for the Quakers it was an easier decision because of their belief in nonviolence which caused the majority of them to abstain from the war. Nevertheless, although there was a significant amount of loyalism in Guilford County and the Piedmont area, most of the people eventually joined in the struggle for the cause of independence.

After the Revolution, there followed a period of loose morals and religious apathy on the part of society. The ministers, concerned about the situation, found it difficult to eradicate gambling, dancing, and drinking among their congregations. Most of the denominations lost in membership during the war, but at the time of the conflict and afterwards

there was a rising star on the horizon. The Methodist Church, which had evolved from the Anglican Church, was steadily growing in numbers and was influential on the frontier. However, the other denominations were soon to enjoy a revival in religion and a phenomenal growth in membership.

When the Reverend James McGready of the Presbyterian Church returned to his home in Guilford County, he brought the spirit of revival. On his journey, he passed through Virginia which had undergone a revival in religion, and he was influenced by what he had seen. After starting a similar revival in the Guilford County area, McGready travelled to Kentucky, where it soon caught on there. Word of his great success on that frontier returned to Guilford County and certain people endeavored to stir the dying embers of revival. Dr. David Caldwell, his wife, and the Reverend William Paisley, of the Hawfields Church, worked diligently to revive religion in their churches. They were successful and thousands of people were converted to Christianity.

This was the period of the Great Revival, which lasted from 1801 to 1805. Although its beginnings can be traced to the Great Awakening in religion and sporadic revivals on the frontier throughout the 1700's, its immediate forerunners in 1801 were the Reverend James McGready of Guilford County and the Presbyterians of that area.

During the Great Revival, many of the religious groups in Guilford County joined together in worship and forgot about their religious differences. There was less emphasis on church doctrine and more on the individual and his salvation. In a sense, there was an unconscious ecumenical movement manifest. The Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist churches were especially affected by the Great Revival, even though it was influential in all the denominations to a certain extent. The Revolution gave added impetus to a concern over the individual and this concern was reflected in the religious denominations. Out of this period came a desire to serve mankind better and to obtain and preserve human dignity. One way of reaching the individual was through better church organizations, which improved during the early 1800's. There was also a desire for better schools and missions and an overall attempt to improve society.

The Great Revival completed what the American Revolution had begun. There now existed a reform in religion with emphasis not only on the spiritual but also on the secular. How man existed in the "here" was as important as the "hereafter," which, in turn, paved the way to the reform movement in society commencing during the early 1800's, spurred by the Civil War, and continued to the present.

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