

# ALAMANCE DAY EDITION THE ALAMANCE GLEANER.

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## "Alamance Day"

WILL BE CELEBRATED IN

### Burlington, Thur., Aug. 17th

IN MEMORY OF

The REGULATORS who shed the first blood for American Independence in the Battle of the Alamance, May 16, 1771.

A HISTORY OF THE BATTLE—MONUMENT UNVEILED  
ON BATTLE GROUND MAY 29, 1880.

Grand Pageant and Reenactment of the Battle on August 17th by 2,000 persons properly costumed.

#### THE BATTLE OF THE ALAMANCE.

Written by James H. McNeilly, D. D., Nashville, Tenn., and published in the "Confederate Veteran" of October, 1921.

No State in the Union has a brighter record for patriotism, for genuine devotion to liberty, and for high courage in defense of her rights than has North Carolina, "The Old North State." Her boast is not vain. "First at Bethel, farthest at Gettysburg, last at Appomattox," and in the great World War she was not lacking. In the series of events that prepared the way for the Revolution and the independence of the colonies her citizens took leading part, as she did in the war that followed, fighting and suffering for a righteous cause. Among the preliminaries of the final revolt of the colonies was the battle of Alamance, fought for the same general principles that moved the other colonies to resist unjust taxation and to resist on the right to determine their own laws and government.

Yet in history scant justice is done to the character or the motives of the people who resisted unto blood the tyranny of an unjust, corrupt, and oppressive government. Their efforts are either ignored or misrepresented as an episode, a riot instigated by lawless and rebellious men. The Boston Massacre, really an insignificant riot, is glorified as an important preparation of public sentiment for the coming Revolution. This is part and parcel of the propaganda by which New England would claim the glory of having wrought everything distinctive and of value in American institutions.

Even the older North Carolina historians, natives of the State, seem to have been influenced by devotion to an established order, even when it was unjust and oppressive; and so they were often unfair in their criticisms of what was largely a popular movement.

I have for several years wished to see some vindication of that early revolt against the tyranny of autocratic government; and while I have heard of some carefully prepared articles that seek to discover and set forth the truth, I have not been able to see them.

In writing this article I am moved by two considerations: one, devotion to the principles, traditions, and achievements of my section; the other, devotion to the memory of my ancestors, who were active in that movement and were afterwards intense patriots in the Revolution, suffering heavy losses at the hands of the British and Tories. I have recently read the life of the Rev. Dr. David Caldwell, pastor of the Presbyterian Churches of Alamance and Buffalo, a prominent patriot, very obnoxious to the British for his efforts in behalf of liberty. He was a great preacher, a noted teacher, and an eminent physician. He lived to within a few months of a hundred years.

His biography was written by his successor in the pastorate, Rev. E. W. Carothers, and published in 1846.

This writer sought with painstaking care and impartial judgment to find and state the actual facts that culminated in the battle. He searched all the histories that had been written to that time, either local or general. He had in addition the personal statements given to him by men thoroughly trustworthy, who had been identified with the organization, and who had taken part in the battle. While he does not hesitate to condemn many of the lawless deeds of the Regulators, at the same time he sympathized with their sufferings, approved of their principles, and justified in a measure their activities, which were also approved by some of the best men in the province.

The organization was known as the Regulation and its members as Regulators. It was a revolt against the systematic injustice and oppression of the constituted authorities, who were upheld by the British authorities. The province originally consisted of all the territory south of the State of Virginia and included in the royal grant to that colony. These lands were set apart to certain leading men or corporations as proprietors, each of whom ruled his portion by appointing a governor to administer affairs in conjunction with councils; this was called proprietary government. After many years, great abuses having arisen and the people being thoroughly dissatisfied, the proprietors in 1742 surrendered their rights to govern, and it passed to the home government. A governor was appointed by the king to rule the whole territory. This was afterwards divided into North and South Carolina.

The proprietors sought settlers for their lands and offered certain privileges and advantages, which attracted various classes, first from Virginia, then from other American colonies, and from lands beyond the sea. There were adventurers who probably sought to escape the restraints of law, then there were others devoted to the prevailing order of government. The majority of the settlers were dissenters from the doctrine and order of the Church of England. These consisted of Quakers, Scotch Irish Presbyterians, French Huguenots, and German Lutherans who sought liberty to worship God according to their own convictions, free from State control, who formed a body of intelligent, conscientious, and liberty-loving patriots.

The troubles in the province were largely due to the efforts of the proprietors and the royal governors to force upon the people the Church of England as the State religion. To this end the territory was divided into parishes, in each of which vestrymen were to be chosen by the people. Taxes were laid for the building of churches and for the support of the clergy; dissenting ministers

were forbidden to exercise their ministry, marriages solemnized by them being declared void; they were subject to military duty and to various pains and penalties in case of disobedience. All offices of trust were in the hands of adherents of the State religion. As it was difficult to procure ministers of the Established Church, the colony was for a long time without the stated ordinances of religion except as occasionally exercised in secret. Taxes and fees were set by law, yet the officers of the law exacted exorbitant fees and collected taxes greatly beyond the legal requirement.

As an example, one Colonel Fanning, a lawyer, colonel of the militia and clerk of the superior court, is said to have exacted on one occasion fifteen dollars for a marriage license, and that he often exacted fees in like proportion. Once when he was tried for extortion and embezzlement of taxes and was convicted by a jury, he was fined one cent and costs, the costs, of course, being nominal, as he was clerk of the court. He was a prime favorite with the governors. As a consequence of this extortion and corruption the people felt that they could not resort to the courts for justice. Numbers who could not pay marriage fees stood before their neighbors and friends and assumed the marriage obligations, pledging themselves to live together faithfully as husband and wife. The protests and remonstrances of the people had little effect except to obtain some mitigation of ecclesiastical pains and penalties, but no relief from taxes and extortions. Finally the people determined to organize for resistance.

About the same time, by royal appointment, William Tryon became Governor. He had been trained to military life, was a devoted adherent of the Established Church, dictatorial in his temper, autocratic in the exercise of his authority, vain, and fond of show. This appointment was in 1764, and for several years the complaints of the people were met with fair promises, never fulfilled, or by proclamations denouncing them and threatening force.

It is one of the ironies of history that the bitterest persecutions and the fiercest wars have been in the name and for the sake of Christianity, the religion of love, and that the Church has been the most intolerant of religious liberty in thought or form. This country was originally settled by two distinct classes, Cavalier and Puritan, one seeking larger political liberty, the other seeking religious freedom. Yet both Cavalier in Virginia and Puritan in New England were equally intolerant of religious opinions or practices differing from their own established order.

When numbers went from Virginia into North Carolina to escape this oppression, they were denounced as "runaways, rogues, and rebels," and the province of North Carolina was called "Rogues Harbor," a reproach that

has been again and again blotted out in the blood of her sons and refuted by the splendid record of her statesmen and orators, "men of light and leading."

So when the new "Regulation" was organized it won the sympathy and confidence of numbers of the best men, who also engaged in the activities of the Regulators. It was no secret body; the members held their meetings openly and announced their plans and purposes to secure justice and enforce righteousness.

The time may come in the life of a community when the power of criminal classes or the corruption of officials makes it necessary for the people to take the law in their own hands. Such were the days of the Vigilance Committees in the West and of the Ku-Klux Klan in the South. Such a condition seems to have existed in certain portions of North Carolina in the time of the Regulators; their methods can be justified only when force is the only remedy.

There seem to have been three classes identified with the Regulators: 1. Men of prudence and foresight, who realized the strength and resources of the government, and who deprecated any resort to violence, advising resistance until the last extremity. 2. Men of impulsive temperaments, whose spirits were fired with such a sense of their wrongs and such devotion to liberty that they were for immediate war against their oppressors, and war to the knife. 3. There was a third class always to be found in such movements, adventurers who cared for no principle and were indifferent as to which side triumphed; they wished generally either to loot and profit by violence or to gratify a petty spirit of hatred against established order. Now, while there were outrages committed by the Regulators, it was generally under a burning sense of immediate wrong, but largely by this third class, who were ready to take advantage of any movement for themselves. These outrages were deplored and condemned by the body and the best element of the Regulators.

The conflict between imperious authority, forbidding the assembling of the people, and a people with a deep sense of wrong, moved by the spirit of liberty, continued from 1764 to 1771. It was largely confined to the portion of the province settled by dissenters. Their petitions for relief and redress were put off with promises or dismissed with contempt. It is true that there were good and honorable men upholding the government who yet realized the evils of which the Regulators complained, but who were restrained by subservience to authority or by a fear of the consequences of violence.

It was in 1770-71 that the conflict culminated in actual battle. In the fall of 1771, while conservative men, like Dr. Caldwell, were striving to effect a peaceful settlement, the Governor secured

the passage of a legislative enactment authorizing him to use military force against the insurgents for the collection of the unjust taxes and the exorbitant fees demanded by the officials of the administration. In the following spring the Governor called out the militia and started his campaign into the disaffected districts. He got together a force of 1,000 or 1,200 men, well armed and supported by artillery. On the other hand, the Regulators gathered probably a larger force to meet the militia, but so little did they expect actual fighting that a great many of them left their guns at home.

It seems as if their leader, Horace Husband, had intended only to make a show of force to impress and intimidate the Governor. When he saw that a fight was inevitable, he rode away and was seen no more in North Carolina. He was of Quaker blood and may have had conscientious scruples against war.

On the 14th of May, 1771, the Governor's forces camped on the banks of the Alamance; on the 15th the Regulators camped a little distance away, asking only a redress of their grievances as the way to peace. To this message an answer was returned on the 16th, an hour before the battle began, saying that the Governor had nothing to offer, but demanding absolute and unconditional submission.

Most of the men of Dr. Caldwell's congregation had gone with the Regulators, and they asked him to go with them to exercise his good offices for peace. He went to Governor Tryon and received a promise that the engagement should not be opened until he had time to try what could be done by negotiation. When the two forces had come within a very short distance of each other, the Governor sent a magistrate to read his proclamation, commanding the insurgents to disperse at once, else he would fire upon them. Then the fiercer spirits of the Regulators became furious, defying the Governor and demanding to be led instantly against their enemies. Dr. Caldwell is said to have ridden in front of the insurgent force, urging them to disperse and promising to try to secure justice by peaceable means.

It is doubtful which side fired the first shot, and the historians seem generally to have been the Governor's apologists. The signal for opening the engagement was to be three shots from the cannon, but the militia were loath to fire upon their neighbors and friends. It was then that Tryon, rising in his stirrups, called out: "Fire on them, or fire on me." The engagement then became general. It was short, but decisive. The Regulators fought with courage, but they were no match for trained and well-equipped troops. The losses as represented by both sides differ materially. The British report nine killed and seventy wounded and claim that the Regulators lost over twenty killed and a large number wounded; but the account given by the Regulators just reverses these figures. It was evidently a bloody battle. The results were that the Regulators returned to their homes, and the Governor's forces, marching through the disaffected territory, forced the people to take the oath that they would not again take up arms against the king. Several of the leaders, tried by drumhead court-martial, were executed with brutal haste.

In the next year Governor Tryon was transferred to New York, and his successor, Governor Martin, a just and kindly man, set himself to rectify the abuses that had brought on the war. His efforts were hampered and hindered by the partisans of the former government.

The influence of this battle of the Alamance is to be estimated by its results as affecting the principles and lives of its main actors in the subsequent great war of the colonies for independence, in which North Carolina took a prominent part. It has been said that this battle made more Tories than anything else, but there were two kinds of Tories. One kind, known as good Tories, felt that their oath bound them not to take up arms against the king; and while they took no part in the

war, they were kind to the patriots, often protecting and defending them. So in the War between the States many strong Union men were kind to the Confederates.

The other class of Tories were they who felt that the fight against the British government was hopeless and who sympathized with that government and so took sides against the patriots. Probably the meanest class of Tories were those who had nothing to lose and joined the Regulators only for loot and personal gain. These were the burners of homes, insulters of women, authors of outrages on helpless families.

The bone and sinew of the Regulators became devoted, self-sacrificing adherents of the cause of the colonies. All the members of Dr. Caldwell's congregations, with him at their head, sympathized with the Regulators and entered with ardent enthusiasm into the war for independence.

The effect of the battle of the Alamance on this last class was positive and distinct. Not to judge too harshly the Governor and his followers and condemning the outrages of the Regulators, there was involved in this contest the same principle for which the colonies contended in their revolt against the mother country.

Defeat, as is so often the case, confirmed them in their principles and strengthened their purpose to stand for civil and religious liberties as something worth dying for; their cause was consecrated by the blood that was shed for it. Then again this battle gave them confidence to defeat and overcome their enemies if adequately equipped. It also showed them the value of organization and discipline. So when the war became a reality in 1775-76 these men were the first to advocate separation from Great Britain, and in the Mecklenburg Declaration pledged themselves to the cause of independence.

From that day forward to the present time whenever men were needed to stand for righteousness, truth, and liberty the "Old North State" has always sent her quota to the front; while in the halls of Congress her leading men have been among the foremost defenders of the rights of the people against monopoly, graft, and oppression.

#### Program of Order and Time of Starting to Alamance Battle Field to Unveil Monument.

From the Alamance Gleaner of May 26, 1880.

At 6:30 o'clock on Saturday morning, His Excellency, Governor Jarvis, Judge Fowle, Hon. John Manning and other distinguished visitors will start for the Battlefield of Alamance. The Chief Marshal and as many Sub-marshals as possible, will be clothed in regalia, mounted on horseback, and ready to form the procession just west of the court house at half past six o'clock sharp. The Chief Marshal will select a standard bearer to carry the flag which the ladies will present to the monumental association that day. As the procession moves forward, of course, others may and will fall in at every X Road until we get within one-half mile of the monument. Here we will halt a few minutes and await the direction of the Chief. The Sub-marshals who live in other directions, and who do not go out with the Governor from Graham, will direct those who reach the battlefield from other points, to come out and meet the Governor, open ranks and fall in the line of march at such place as the marshals may designate. Then (at 10 o'clock sharp) headed by the band, and following the banner bearing the motto: "The Birthplace of American Liberty," we will march within a few steps of the monument, across the field,

"Where tyrants conquered, And heroes fell."

to the speaker's stand in the beautiful grove.

We trust that those who go in wagons will take as many chairs as possible. The people who live near the battlefield are as kind as they can be, but on such short notice, it will be impossible for them to provide seats for the thousands who will be there if the day be pleasant. There will be no "dead beats" at the table prepared by the committee on refreshments. Remember that they only charge twenty five cents for

dinner. Two tables each one hundred feet long will be close at hand. It is from this source, that we expect to obtain most of the money with which to pay for the monument. We want everybody to donate something to the table. A piece of bread, a cake, a chicken, a few pickles, anything will be thankfully received.

We not only ask for something to eat, but we request every lady, every little girl, to cull at least one flower to place at the foot of the monument, which marks the resting place of the first men who shed their blood for this their native land. No party lines or denominational distinctions in this labor of love. Come with your brightest smiles and choicest flowers, and "deck with garlands the gateway" through which those noble heroes "marched to glory." A few days over one hundred and nine years have passed away since the booming of Tryon's cannon went reverberating over the hills of Alamance, and the groans of the dying went out on the evening air. The "Wolf of North Carolina" neither allowed panegyrics to be pronounced nor funeral dirges to be sung.

On the coming 29th, you will hear their praises from the "silver tongued orators" of the Old North State, and look upon a granite shaft which will mark the Battlefield of Alamance until the "Muse of history writes finis with a pen of fire."

When we leave the monument after the celebration, we desire to say: This shows that North Carolina will never forget that her first martyred heroes died while fighting the advocates of despotic power. Today, we have had a grand success. Tonight, for the first time, the Regulators will sleep beneath a pyramid of roses.

J. L. SCOTT, Pres't.  
D. A. LONG, Sec.

The Monumental Committee have received the following letters from distinguished gentlemen who were invited to attend the celebration:

Greensboro, N. C.,  
May 18th, 1880.

J. L. Scott, Esq.,  
Dear Sir:—I herewith send my mite towards the monument which our fellow-citizens are erecting upon the Alamance battle ground. I have an inheritance in that ancient field,

(Continued on Eighth Page)

666 is a prescription for Colds, Fever and LaGrippe. It's the most speedy remedy we know.

#### PROFESSIONAL CARDS

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