

# Aftermath of the Battle of Alamance

[From the Boston Gazette of July, 1771, 849, 2, 1 & 2.]

## As you read...

### THE END OF THE REGULATION

Twelve Regulators were tried for their role in the Battle of Alamance. The trial began on June 15, 1771, and all twelve men were convicted of high treason. Governor Tryon pardoned six of them, and the remaining six were hanged on June 19.

The six hanged were Benjamin Merrill, captain of the Rowan County militia; Captain Messer; Robert Matear; James Pugh; and two others whose names are unrecorded. The men were buried together in a single grave.

Another outlawed Regulator, James Few, had been captured during the battle and sentenced to death without trial. Few was 25 years old and the father of newborn twins. He was hanged, and on June 13 Tryon's troops destroyed his parents' farm.

### DEAD OR ALIVE

Four Regulator leaders — Herman Husband, Rednap Howell, James Hunter, and William Butler — were outlawed, and any man bringing them in, dead or alive, was promised a reward in land and money. All four fled the colony and escaped capture. Husband escaped to western Pennsylvania, disguised as a preacher under the name Tuscape Death. He later served in Pennsylvania's Revolutionary assembly and took part in the Whiskey Rebellion of 1791.

### WIDE COVERAGE

This article appeared first in the *Virginia Gazette* on July 4 and was reprinted later by the *Boston Gazette*. In the eighteenth century, newspapers freely republished material from other publications, often editing or embellishing it, and much of the "reporting" was done by private individuals whose letters the newspapers reprinted anonymously.

The author of this article clearly opposed the Regulation. As news of the Battle of Alamance spread, though, residents of other colonies began to sympathize with the Regulators. In New England, some revolutionaries came to see them as brothers in a greater struggle against injustice and oppression.



Figure 1. A white marble slab in Hillsborough, North Carolina, marks the spot where six Regulators were hanged on June 19, 1771, after their defeat at the Battle of Alamance.

### **NEWBERN (NORTH CAROLINA) JUNE 7.**

Since our last, the Hon. Samuel Cornell, Esq., returned home from our Troops in Orange County, and brings a certain Account of the Regulators being entirely broken and dispersed, and that near 13 or 1400 of them have laid down their arms, taken the Oaths of Allegiance to his Majesty, and returned to their Habitations in Peace.

His Excellency the Governor, after the Battle, marched into the Plantations of Husband, Hunter, and several others of the outlawed Chiefs of the Regulators, and laid them waste; they having most of them escaped from the Battle, and are since fled. A reward of 1000 Acres of Land, and 100 Dollars, is offered by his Excellency for Husband, Hunter, Butler, and Rednap Howell, and several of the Regulators have been permitted to go in Quest of them, on leaving their Children Hostages.

The Lands of the outlawed Regulators are to be sold by the Sheriff of the County where they lie, agreeable to Act of Assembly; and many of them are of great Value, being perhaps the best Lands on this Continent, particularly Herman Husbands's, who had growing on his Plantation about 50 Acres of as fine Wheat as perhaps ever grew, with Clover Meadow equal to any in the Northern Colonies; but infatuated, unhappy Man, about 400 head of horses, which were turned in on it by our Troops, in a few days left it without a Spear of Corn, Grass, or Herbage growing, and without a House or Fence standing! A melancholy Consideration, but made necessary by the Laws of War.

Thus has his Excellency the Governor, at the Head of a handful of Troops, compared to the Numbers of the Regulators, thro' the immediate Hand of Divine Providence, broke this dangerous and daring Conspiracy, that every day increased, and threatened to overwhelm this once flourishing Province in one Scene of horrid Confusion and lawless Fury! For who but the Almighty Ruler of Heaven and Earth could guide the Balls from the Rifles of the Regulators to fly over the Heads of our Troops in the Day of Battle, as they did

by ten Thousands; which otherwise, as they were at least five Times the Number of our Troops<sup>I</sup>, must have cut them off by Hundreds, and left the Field a dismal Scene of Blood and Carnage.

---

## On the web

### More from LEARN NC

Visit us on the web at [www.learnnc.org](http://www.learnnc.org) to learn more about topics related to this article, including Battle of Alamance, North Carolina, Regulators, William Tryon, history, and newspapers.

## Notes

1. We know from other accounts that these numbers are exaggerated. The Regulators outnumbered Tryon's forces by only about two to one. There were no professional reporters in the eighteenth century, and no one to carefully check facts before publishing stories. Since the Regulators were not formally organized into an army, any numbers we have from the Battle of Alamance are only estimates, anyway.

The account seems to be exaggerated in other ways, as well. Based on this sentence, who do you think might have written this account of the battle and its aftermath? Why?

## Image credits

More information about these images and higher-resolution files are linked from the original web version of this document.

### Figure 1 (page 2)

Image from <http://www.flickr.com/photos/hillsborough/2612607231/>. This image is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>.