UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

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ENTITLED  The Early Settlement of Western North Carolina

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF  Master of Arts

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The Settlement of Western North Carolina.

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The Settlement of Western North Carolina, 1730-1765.

CHAPTER I.

The Growth of Settlement.

The distinctive feature of the settlement of Western North Carolina was the fact that the back country was settled not by people from the coast, but by immigrants from the colonies to the north and the south, a fact accounted for by the physiography of the colony. The country has three distinct physiographic features; the coastal plain, embracing about one-half the present state; the piedmont plateau with its vast prairies covered with pea vines and cane brakes; and the mountain territory in the west.

The coastal plain extends from the low marshy land on the east to the falls of the rivers, a line extending roughly north east and south west from Halifax County to the southeastern corner of Anson County. The elevation of this coastal plain increases very slowly, about one foot to the mile, while from the falls westward there is a very rapid increase in altitude. Across the piedmont region, in a line more or less parallel to the falls line, are ridges, low and rolling at first, but increasing in height and ruggedness as they approach the Blue Ridge Mountains, which extend approximately in the same direction, rising about two thousand feet above the level of the plateau. From the Blue Ridge on, the country becomes more and more mountainous, producing
the highest peaks of the Appalachian range.

The barriers which hindered the settlement of the piedmont region from the coast were the falls of the rivers and the long stretch of pine barrens which lay just below the falls line.¹ Throughout North Carolina history there remained these barriers between the old slave holding families of the east and the later Scotch-Irish and German settlers of the back country.²

Although the land of Carolina had been granted to the Lords Proprietors in 1663 and permanent settlements were already being made along the coast, yet as late as 1730, the Indian, the fur trader, and the cattle ranger were the only occupants of the territory west of the pine barrens. Soon after that date, however, the country began filling up so rapidly that by 1765 the settlers began to push back from the piedmont into the mountains and thence into Kentucky and Tennessee. The thirty-five years between these two dates, therefore, may be said to embrace the period of the settlement of the western part of the colony.

Except for a few far sighted men, and only one of these a Carolinian, the people of the coast settlements had taken no interest in the land to the west of them. Of these few Colonel William Byrd, head of the Virginia surveyors in the running of the boundary line in 1728, was the most enthusiastic. The rich well watered country, the extensive cane

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¹ Turner, The Old West, 211.
² Bessett, Regulators of North Carolina, 146.
brakes which would supply horses and cattle through the winter, the healthfulness of the climate, impressed him. The land, he reported, would support a great number of people who could live by cattle raising, agriculture, and wine making. Flax, cotton, and hemp would grow well, but the country would produce no olives, oranges, or lemons, an idea which seems to have been common in the east.¹

That the North Carolina surveyors were not impressed with the value of the country follows from the fact that when the work had progressed as far as the Dan River they refused to go farther, and returned home saying that they had already run the line one hundred seventy miles, fifty miles beyond any inhabitants, and "as far as would be needed for an age or two."²

In answer to their protest the Virginia surveyors claimed that if the line were run to the mountains the land could be taken up more readily, as would certainly be the case in the next five or ten years time.³

About three years after this, Governor Burrington of North Carolina consulted Colonel Byrd as to the value of the western land. Byrd again described the fertile soil and the healthful climate, but added that the distance from navigable rivers and from overland markets would make the value of the land increase slowly.⁴ Governor Burrington, however,

2. Ibid, 271.
bought eight thousand acres far back toward the mountains. This with the land on the Cape Fear, bought in 1731, made him an enthusiastic promoter of the back country. In 1733 he set out with Indian guides to mark out a road through the middle of the province in order to facilitate settlement and to make more easy the progress of those who must travel through the colony. After seven weeks spent in this work he wrote to the Board of Trade of his work in these parts, "till then unknown to the English inhabiting this Government," and predicted, "that this land will hereafter be full of people."¹

About this same time Colonel Byrd wrote to Mr. Ochs, an agent looking for land on which to locate a colony of Swiss, giving his reasons for believing that it would be well for the English government to have this land settled as fast as possible. His principal reason was that the French would soon get into the mountains from the west and would prove a constant menace to British settlements. For this reason he felt that the government ought to give foreign protestants every encouragement, free transportation, freedom from quit rents for a period of ten years, and naturalization.²

By 1740 scattered families were to be found in the west but no settlements had yet been made, and the council of the colony expressed some interest in the matter, especially as they felt the need of some sort of protection from the Indians to the west. They advised the governor that the taking

1. C. R. III, 488.
up of land be made easy, that each master or mistress be granted one hundred acres, with fifty acres for each member of the family and fifty for each servant or slave, that this land should be free from quit rents for two years, and that another grant might be taken up when a specified amount of the first was cleared.\(^1\) Whether this advice was acted upon then or not, the terms were those given by the Lords of Trade in their instructions to Governor Dobbs later.\(^2\)

Besides some little attention to the collection of quit rents and an occasional bill to set off a country or to establish a ferry, the colonial government paid no attention to the back country again for years, and those settlements were allowed to grow entirely independent of the ones in the east. Philadelphia and Charleston were much more familiar to the inhabitants than Edenton or New Berne.

From 1740 to 1745 two streams of immigrants began to come in, one from Western Pennsylvania and Virginia, the other from South Carolina.\(^3\) These streams, meeting in the upland region of North Carolina, scattered, seeking for the best land along the creeks and rivers and in the valleys among the mountains. From the North had come Scotch-Irish and Germans, from the South, Scotch, Scotch-Irish, Germans, Huguenots, and Swiss. By 1743, however, the country was still so thinly settled that the commission appointed to run Lord Granville's

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1. C. R. IV, 299.
2. Ibid, V, 1133.
line proceeded only to the southeast corner of Chatham County since their provisions had given out and there were no inhabitants, according to their report, west of the Saxaphaw to give them assistance. ¹

If immigration had been somewhat slow up to 1750, from that time on the country filled up rapidly. Governor Johnston wrote in 1751 to the Board of Trade, "Inhabitants flock in here daily, mostly from Pennsylvania and other parts of America..............and some directly from Europe, they commonly seat themselves toward the mountains." ² Granville's line had then been extended across the mountains and thousands of people had settled in that region in a few years. Mathew Rowan, the president of the council during an interval between governors, wrote to England that when he had been up in that country seven years before there were not three hundred fighting men, but that at the date of writing (1753) there were at least three thousand, mostly Scotch-Irish and Germans. ³ By 1754 the only vacant land to be had was back toward the mountains, and the wagons of the settlers were still on their way to North Carolina. ⁴

Some considerable interest seems to have been taken in this back country just at this time. The governor advised the council that because of the increasing danger from hostile

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1. C. R. IV, x.
2. Ibid. IV, 1073.
3. Ibid. V, 24
4. Ibid. V, xxii.
Indians more indulgence be granted those who settled there, and recommended that they be free from taxes for a period after their settlement. The council decided to erect a fort for the protection of the west. One thousand pounds was voted but it was not all used, since, as Governor Dobbs wrote to Pitt, the colony was extending westward so fast that it would soon be necessary to move the fort. Two companies were put in this frontier fort and the king was petitioned for arms for the protection of the people.

Along with this movement for protection from the Indians went another movement to change the seat of government from New Berne to a point one hundred miles up the Neuse River and just below the falls, that the people of the back country might find the capitol more easy of access. The king, however, seems to have been unwilling to permit the change.

Although Indian troubles had always menaced the people of the west, actual war did not break out until 1759 when attacks were made by the Creeks and Cherokees along the whole frontier. The Moravians were compelled to fortify their largest town and the surrounding people fled to it for safety. The country west of the Yadkin and the Catawba became almost deserted, but a force of soldiers arrived from the east, and by 1762 the terrible fear of the Indians seems to have passed.

1. C. R. V. 498.
2. Ibid. 560.
3. Ibid. V, 675.
4. Ibid. 342.
5. Ibid. 1071.
by, and new settlers began coming in. Governor Tryon wrote to the Board of Trade that during that autumn and winter a thousand wagons had passed through Salisbury, most of them remaining in the province.\(^1\)

The rapidity with which the back country of North Carolina filled up between 1740 and 1765 may be judged in part from the counties set off during that time. In 1743 the people of the western part of Edgecombe County petitioned that a new county be erected, the petitioners then being so far from the county seat. Granville county was accordingly erected.\(^2\) Similarly in 1748 the inhabitants on the Pee Dee River, some eight hundred, claimed that they were one hundred miles from the Bladen courthouse and asked for a separate county. Anson county was established and all the machinery of a new county put into order at once.\(^3\) Orange county\(^4\) was taken from Bladen in 1754, shutting that county out of the piedmont.\(^5\) Two years later Anson itself was divided and the northern part called Rowan.\(^6\) Again in 1762 Mecklenburg, so named from the queen of George III, was set off from the western part of the same county,\(^7\) while in 1768 Tryon was

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2. Ibid.; IV, 1171.
3. Ibid. 887.
4. Ibid. V, 66.
5. Ibid. V, 209.
6. Ibid. 59.
7. Ibid. 1225.
taken from Mecklenburg.\textsuperscript{1}

As the time of setting off the counties does not give us the precise time of the settlements neither do the dates of the land patents confirm the time of settlement. In most cases, probably, the land was taken up before the warrants for patents were issued.\textsuperscript{2} During the month of March 1751 about one hundred warrants were filed in Anson county alone.\textsuperscript{3}

The following lists of taxables (white males, and black males and females above 16) gives an estimate of the total population of the western counties for 1754 and 1765.

\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & White & Black & Total \\
\hline
1754 \textsuperscript{4} & Anson & 810 & 60 & 870 comp. \\
 & Cumberland & & & 850 comp. \\
 & Coranville & 779 & 426 & 1205 \\
 & Orange & 950 & 50 & 1000 \\
 & Rowan & 1116 & 54 & 1170 \textsuperscript{5} 5095 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

Total number of taxables in the colony, 24,952.

\textsuperscript{1} C. R. VIII, 10. \\
\textsuperscript{2} Foote, 79. \\
\textsuperscript{3} C. R. IV, 1237. ff. \\
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid, V. 320. \\
\textsuperscript{5} There is an error of 91 in the count as given 24,861.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anson</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>1323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granville</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>1675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>2825</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>3404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mecklenburg</td>
<td>1362</td>
<td></td>
<td>11437</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Except for Cumberland County, a small part of which lay below the falls, these counties were in the piedmont plateau, stretching on westward into the mountains. Two of the coastal plain counties, Halifax and Johnston, however, extended backward some distance into the piedmont. These counties had, in 1765, a population of 4070 taxables, of which perhaps half were people of the uplands, raising the total number of taxables in the west to 13,472, while the number of taxables in the whole colony in that year was 45,912. The west, therefore, in 1765 held somewhat less than one third of the total population of the country, a considerable increase over the one fifth it had held in 1754. Of this population the census for each year shows that one thirteenth of the people of the west were negroes.

1. C. R. VII 145

2. Bassett, S. & S. in No. Car. 25, includes these, with others, in the number of western counties. They lay, however, largely on the coastal plain. But the people of the pine barrens were scattered, working large areas with the help of slaves, so that the most thickly settled parts of the counties were those of the piedmont.
Except perhaps in the matter of slavery, the back country, during the whole period of its growth had developed in its own way, little influenced by the customs of the east. The settlement of this whole western land had taken place in less than thirty five years. During that time there were almost continual streams of immigrants from the north, from the south, and, much less largely, from the coast. In the region where, in 1730, there were only the scattered cabins of the first frontiersmen, by 1765 there were more than 50,000 people.¹

¹ This calculation includes the population of the six western counties with one half the population of Johnston and Halifax counties, the number of white taxables being multiplied by four, that of black, by two.
CHAPTER II.

Scotch-Irish and German Elements.

Of the elements entering into the early population of western North Carolina the Scotch-Irish and the German were by far the most important. Of these the Scotch, the Highland and the Irish, greatly outnumbered the Germans. Probably the three Scotch-Irish governors, Johnston, Rowan, and Dobbs, in some measure influenced the coming of these people to the state. Great numbers, however, of those who found their way into the state were simply the overflow from the already settled colonies to the north.

The failure of the Quaker state of Pennsylvania to protect its frontier people from the Indians, and the continued attacks of the Delawares and Shawanoes during the French and Indian Wars, caused many of the settlers to move farther south where as yet there were few Indian troubles. With the defeat of Braddock in 1755 the frontier of Pennsylvania was left entirely unprotected and the movement south continued. The news of the defeat terrified the inhabitants of western Virginia as well and sent many of its people into North Carolina. That colony, however, also had its massacres which stopped immigration for a time but, except between

1. C. R. V., XL.
1758 and 1762, there was comparative peace with the Indians. Land, too, was much more expensive in Pennsylvania and even in Virginia than in North Carolina, where the quit rent was four shillings an acre. Wealthy newcomers to western Pennsylvania might purchase land already cleared and so force those from whom they bought to move southward; others may, themselves, have had only the means to buy the cheaper land of the southern colony. Those immigrants arriving at South Carolina were urged into the northern province by its greater healthfulness of climate as well as by the knowledge of its Scotch-Irish governors. Whatever the reason, the western part of North Carolina was the field of settlement for thousands of people from Ulster and from the highlands of Scotland so that by 1753 in Cumberland County alone there were at least seven hundred highlanders fit for military service.

The settlements along the Cape Fear River, in the vicinity of the present town of Fayetteville, then called Campbelltown, were begun earlier than those farther to the north and west. Records of the Clark family show that Alexander Clark settled near the falls of the Cape Fear river in 1740 and that with him came a ship load of emigrants. These found other Scotch already settled in the vicinity.

1. Hanna S. I. II 35. Hanna has placed the number at 1000 but since the number of taxables for that year is only 850 his number is too large in spite of the fact that nearly all the inhabitants of the county were Highland Scotch.

In the years following the battle of Culloden great numbers of Scottish emigrants came to America, landing at Wilmington and going up the Cape Fear to Cumberland and Anson counties.\(^1\) By 1749 it was estimated that there were five hundred of the Gaelic people scattered through these counties.\(^2\) In 1757 when James Campbell, their first minister, for none had come with them from Scotland, settled among them, he held two services on Sunday, the first in Gaelic, the second in English for the benefit of the lowland Scotch and the few Dutch who had settled in the neighborhood. The practice of preaching in Gaelic did not die out until the middle of the next century.\(^3\)

While the Highland Scotch came into the colony from the South, the Scotch-Irish came largely from the provinces to the North. There were two roads over which the newcomers came into the colony from Virginia. The one, less often used, lay to the west toward the mountains and was the route over which Lee passed on his way into Pennsylvania.\(^4\) The other route followed the north-east and south-west direction so marked in the physiographic features of the country, going from Charlotte in the south, to Concord, from there to Salisbury, and then on through Lexington, Greensboro, and Hillsborough.\(^5\) This old stage route marked the settlements

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1. Foote, 80.
2. Ashe, 266.
3. Foote, 134.
4. C. R. IV, xxI.
5. Foote, 217.
of the Scotch-Irish in the back country. Its northern extreme near the Eno and Haw rivers was settled as early as 1738 or 1739, while at the southern end were those of the Ulster people who landed at Wilmington and who sought the upper country for their homes.

Although settlement did not progress rapidly for a few years after 1740, by 1745 the Scotch-Irish were so numerous that a supplication had already gone to the Synod of Pennsylvania that a minister might be sent them. No minister, however, was sent until 1751 when the Rev. John Thompson settled near Statesville, supplying until his death in 1753, six preaching places within twenty miles from his home.

From 1750 the country filled up rapidly until the frontier was so well settled that, when Hugh McAden visited the colony five years later, he was able to preach at fifty places, some few in the eastern counties but most of them in the upper country. The journey of McAden followed the customary route through the colony, from the Eno and Haw rivers south and west to the Yadkin and then into South Carolina. After a short stay in that colony he went back into Mecklenburg county and then east. He visited a few of the settlements near the coast and finally turned back again to...

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1. Foote, 217.
2. Ibid. 201. Hanna S. I. II, 38.
3. Ibid.
the Eno and the Haw. From his account of the journey McAden preached in eight meeting houses, the rest of the times in the homes of the people.\(^1\) At this time while there were many congregations in the west there were no organized churches. Although, therefore, we can get an idea of the location of the settlements from the names of the congregations we can have no idea of the number of people in the neighborhood. McAden himself gives no information, saying simply, "I preached to a large congregation chiefly Presbyterian," or, "to as large a congregation as any I have had."

In the same year that McAden made his journey the Synod of Pennsylvania responded to the repeated calls from the churchless people of the southern colony and sent three men to supply their congregations for three months each. That year, also, the Synod of New York sent two men to preach for six months each. When again in 1758 the combined synods sent missionaries, there were urgent calls for them to become settled pastors, one church offering eighty pounds a year for half time service.\(^2\) The largest group of congregations of which there is a record, however, brought with them their own minister. This group was formed by the congregations surrounding that of Rocky River in Mecklenburg, then Anson County. These were the assemblies served by the Rev. Alexander Craighead. In 1755 Craighead with his people had been located at the boundary of Virginia and Carolina. Frightened

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1. Foote, p. 165 thinks he may have done some open air preaching.
2. Ibid. 315.
by the news of Braddock's defeat the whole congregation fled to North Carolina and settled between the Catawba and the Yadkin. The people already settled in the district had some time before petitioned the Synod of New York for a pastor but had not received one. Rocky River now became the first organized church in the upper country of North Carolina, and was taken into the Presbytery of Hanover, Virginia. From this church branched out other churches which by 1765 were calling for pastors of their own. Until his death in 1766, however, Craighead was the sole minister between the two rivers.

Another of these Presbyterian ministers was Henry Patillo who served in Cumberland County for two years, going from there in 1765 to be the first settled minister along the Eno and Little Rivers in Granville and Orange Counties where the Scotch-Irish had come twenty-five years before. Guilford County had two churches, at Alamance and at Buffalo Creek, the first organized by Henry Patillo in 1764. Rev. David Caldwell became pastor of these churches and organized at his home the second classical school in Upper Carolina, that of Joseph Alexander being the first. From that time until the Revolution no other Presbyterian ministers came to the colony.

1. Tompkins, II, 75.
2. Foote, 185, ff.
3. Ibid. 217.
4. Ibid.
This large body of Scotch-Irish, large enough, at least, to settle quite densely for a frontier, the region from the Dan southwest across the Yadkin and the Catawba, has been estimated by Hanna to have had in 1775 more than one-third of the total population of the colony. In spite of the bias with which Hanna writes, his number, 65,000, is probably not much too large.¹ The Germans in the colony, on the other hand, according to the records in St. Luke's Church in Salisbury, 1771, numbered 3000 Protestant families or about 12000 people,² which number would, of course, be much larger four years later.

Of these Germans who settled in the colony of North Carolina previous to 1765, the Moravians were the first to come in considerable numbers. In 1752 Bishop Spargenburg left Bethlehem in Pennsylvania to survey land for his church in the Carolinas. The record he has left of his journey, in its enthusiasm and its careful attention to the details which would make the country through which he passed valuable for settlement, is much like the report of Colonel Byrd twenty years earlier. To him too, the distance from the coast was a great drawback, not however, insurmountable. The abundance of wood in much of the territory, the mill stones and the stones for building, the immense waterpower,

¹. Hanna, S. I., I 82-84.

². C. R. VIII, 630.

Faust, German Element in the United States, puts his estimate at 3000 in 1775 but feels that new researches would show the number to have been much larger.
even the best sites for houses where water for household purposes was nearby, all these things were set down in his record. He told, too, of the very scattered population of the country through which he passed, and of the hope that the Moravians might be a blessing to the Indians among whom they were to settle. All this was along the head waters of the Catawba. When he again reached the Yadkin he followed it to Muddy Creek, taking up seventy three thousand acres east of the river. It is significant that Spangenburg had to go so far west to find vacant lands in large amounts.

The deed which gave to Spangenburg and the Moravians this large area, one hundred thousand acres in all, was signed in 1753. The tract east of the Yadkin was named Wachovia after the Austrian possessions of Zinzendorf. In August of 1753 twelve unmarried men began the settlement of the tract. They brought with them horses, cattle, and household furniture. The next year seven more unmarried men came and Bethabara was built. In 1759 Bethany was established for the married people who wished to come to the colony. The two villages grew very slowly because of the continued hostility of the Indians. By 1765 Bethabara, the fortified town, had eighty eight inhabitants, for the most part tradesmen, while Bethany had seventy, nearly all farmers. The next year Salem was founded and occupied by ten persons coming from Germany. German families not Moravian in

faith settled near the three towns for the benefit of the schools and the religious services.¹ On the whole, the Moravians, although they held a great deal of land and although their customs and ideas are interesting, made little impression on the early history of the up country.² More important than the scattered Welsh and Huguenots and Swiss because they settled in communities, they did not become important until they later began mining and manufacture.

Of the other Germans who came to western North Carolina there were two religious denominations, the Lutheran and the German Reformed. These Germans, like the Scotch-Irish, moved down from Pennsylvania by single families or small groups, making it impossible to date their arrival exactly. That large numbers, however, came about 1750 is shown by the land patents, granted, probably, some years after the land was taken up.³ Since the object both of the Scotch-Irish and the German movements was good cheap land,⁴ and since the two groups had already been neighbors in Pennsylvania, it is probable that they came into North Carolina at the same time.⁵

2. A very interesting account of the history of the Moravians, with charts and maps, may be found in Clewell's Wachovia, New York, 1902.
That the Germans made no attempts to form large settlements seems evident from the fact that in spite of their much smaller numbers they scattered over an area as large as that of the Scotch-Irish, from Guilford in the north to Mecklenburg in the south.\(^1\) They were essentially a farming class and came as such, bringing with them their cattle, sheep and hogs, and soon possessing good farms.\(^2\) A scattered agricultural people as they were, and isolated by language as well, they took little part in the political activities of the western counties, preferring to lead at home unobtrusive, but thrifty and economical lives.

The districts in which the Germans were the most numerous, like the groups of Scotch-Irish settlements, can be determined by the locations of their few churches. At first the German Reformed and the Lutheran congregations always erected a union meeting house, used by each on alternate Sundays. Although each later built its own house of worship the union song book was used as late as 1825.\(^3\)

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1. Bernheim, 152. Bernheim thinks that the Germans came first. He reasons, however, only from the fact that the Germans held land to the east of the Scotch-Irish.

2. Bernheim, 152. Turner, 214. Mr. Turner gives the following survey of the German settlers: "Thus a zone of almost continuous German settlements had been established from the Mohawk to the Savannah in Georgia. They had found the best soils and they knew how to till them intensively and thriftily, as attested by their large well filled barns, good stock, and big canvas covered Conestoga wagons."

Just when the Lutheran and the Reformed churches were organized is a matter of question. Until 1773, when the Organ Church in Rowan County and the St. Johns Church in Mecklenburg County secured from the Council of Hanover the services of Adolph Nusmann as minister and Gottfried Arnêt as school teacher, there had been no settled minister among them.¹ Churches had been built and services held in them, however, before this.² The schoolmasters, Germans of course, read the services of the church, buried the dead, and even baptized the children when no visiting minister could be secured.³

The first recorded Lutheran or Reformed minister to the colony was Martin, a Swiss, who visited the Reformed churches of North Carolina in 1759. The first church, Laws, was a log building in the south east corner of Guilford County. Another church in the same district was organized about 1758, while a third was built about the same time near Liberty on the road leading to Fayetteville. These churches were, of course, union in character, the Reformed people not building for themselves until the Revolution.⁴ Farther west along Abbott's creek were two and later five churches, the two settled with the earliest settlement of the present David-

1. Faust, I, 229.
2. Bernheim thinks no churches were organized until 1770. Welker, however, cites several churches with their organizers.
4. Ibid.
son County. One of these was the Pilgrim Church about two miles from Lexington, the other Bethany Church twelve miles to the east.

Much of the present Rowan County was settled by the Germans and two churches were erected some time previous to 1768, while in Catawba County a church had been built about 1760. Martin had preached in the district in 1759, and Du Pert, sent by the Synod of Pennsylvania to organize churches in North Carolina, in 1764. In the same year a log church was built near the town of Lincolton and the organization of the church probably effected by the same Du Pert.¹

The migration of these Scotch-Irish and German families from Pennsylvania through the Shenandoah Valley and into North Carolina offers a splendid field for the imagination, paralleled only by the prairie-schooner days in the West. The autumn, for they would be apt to wait until the harvests were over, must have seen great numbers of families, grouped perhaps by neighborhoods, moving southward, driving before them their cattle, sheep, and hogs, and bringing their most valuable, or their most useful, possessions in their large canvas-covered wagons.

While the Germans settled along the Yadkin, leaving the Scotch to go farther to the west, they themselves slowly

¹ I have used the dates given by Welker in C. R. VIII. Appendix, for the fact that Col. Saunders inserts his account instead of that of Bernheim, seems to prove that he at least gives it credit.
moved westward, intermingling with the other race, yet each keeping for a long time its own characteristics. Slowly inter-marriage and the dropping of the German forms of names, with the dropping, too, of the German speech, brought these two races together, not, however, without leaving some trace of the individuality of each.
CHAPTER III.

The Life of the People.

Life in western North Carolina presented a decided contrast to life as the people of the east found it. About Edenton and New Berne and down along the lower Cape Fear the homes were comfortable and many were large and luxurious. The life was that of a cultivated and wealthy aristocracy of slave holding people. Society was refined and hospitable and men of letters were not uncommon. Take, for example, Dr. John Fergus with his velvet coat, cocked hat, and gold headed cane; a graduate of Edinburg and a thorough Latin and Greek scholar.¹ In the west there were some well educated people but these were few; educated, too, not in England or on the Continent, but in Philadelphia or at Princeton. The people had no specie and not much currency, they could buy nothing but sugar and salt and the few other things necessary to make life livable. The clearing of the land, the setting up of saw and grist mills, the building of their log cabin homes, and the rearing of large families occupied the attention of the pioneers.²

In 1765 the Attorney General Robert Jones wrote of the western country to Edward Fanning. Jones had been at the

1. Ashe, 378 ff.
   Taken from McRee's Life of Iredell, I, 31 ff.

2. Ibid. 380.
   From McRee, 194 ff.
western springs for his health and his attitude toward these people illustrates the attitude of all the east to the backwoodsman of the west. In his letter Jones said that he had returned home before his health was fully recovered, "because of the solitude of the place and the want of agreeable company." The climate, he wrote, was healthy and, although intensely cold in winter, was not subject to sudden changes, "the inhabitants are hospitable in their way, live in Plenty and Dirt, are stout, of great prowess and manual athletics, and in private conversation bold, impertinent and vain."¹

The people from the upland differed from those of the coast in that they were, as a mass, non-slave-holders. Those settlers coming from the South as far as Anson County and those coming from the coast into the northern counties brought slaves, but the Scotch-Irish and Germans owned very few so that the extreme west became later the center of anti-slavery sentiment.² In 1765 was recorded the first sale of a negro in Mecklenburg County.³

The statistics given in the first chapter, however, show some interesting facts concerning the negro population of the west, a country usually thought of as free territory.

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1. C. R. VII, 100.


3. Thompkins, Mecklenburg County, I, 84.
While the west was not primarily a slave holding district; Brunswick in the east, for instance had two slaves to every white person;¹ yet there was a large number of slaves in that section, a number which grew steadily, although the proportion remained about the same, the negroes numbering about one-thirteenth of the whole population both in 1754 and in 1765. The largest numbers of slaves were grouped in the counties just west of the falls line, while in Rowan and Mecklenburg the number was low, although, except for Rowan in 1754, the numbers were not reported. The settlers of these two counties, however, came almost entirely from the comparatively non-slave-holding districts in the north, or, through them, from Scotland, Ireland, and Germany. These men were pioneers and had little use for slaves, so that in 1754 Rowan County held only 108 negroes out of a population of 4464. As the counties became more settled, however, and as the need of labor became greater,² the system began to grow, the farmers purchasing their slaves from Charleston. But as late as 1774 eight was the largest number of slaves owned by one man in Mecklenburg County.³ In that same year Rowan County protested against the slave trade as tending to keep desirable immigrants out of the county.⁴

¹. C. R. VII, 539.
². C. R. V. 315.
³. Tompkins, Mecklenburg County, I, 85.
⁴. Ibid. I, 86.
The system of slavery was brought into the north-east counties of Granville and Orange by those settlers who came from the coast and from Virginia. As the country became more settled, custom made slavery common, until by 1765 one-third of the population of Granville County were negroes, the number in Orange County, however, being only one tenth of the whole. The south-eastern counties, too, had a large number of slaves. The position of the counties brought them into contact with the slave holding people of the coast and of South Carolina. In these counties, also, there were wealthy planters who owned large numbers of slaves. Again, these people were in more direct contact with Europe and the West Indies and were, therefore, more accustomed to the idea of slavery. All these things brought about the growth of the system in Cumberland and Anson counties, although here too, the county to the west held the smaller proportion of negroes.

In the nature of the case, negro labor would have been less profitable in the west than the east even had slaves not been expensive, for the people of the western region were almost entirely small farmers. Spangenburg wrote of four hundred such who came into the state in 1752 and settled toward the western mountains, "very worthy people who will no doubt be of great advantage to the state." Again he said of these people that they raised nothing but corn and hogs, while their horses and cattle survived the winter as best they could


2. C. R. IV, 1312.
without protection and were, therefore, very small and poor.  

The settlers, however, soon had large well built barns for their stock; horses, cattle, sheep, and hogs; and their farms were as prosperous as those of well settled communities.  

Stock raising advanced as markets were secured. The English salt which the people were compelled to buy was too mild to preserve pork and beef, and memorials were sent to the Board of Trade petitioning that the inhabitants of the back country be allowed to buy salt from Spain for had they the proper salt a great trade in pork and beef might be carried on with the West Indies.  

Nothing was done with this memorial, however, and the settlers were compelled to drive their cattle and hogs to Charleston or to Philadelphia. Later Virginia bought all the cattle brought there from North Carolina. In spite of the distemper which, about the middle of the century, destroyed great numbers of the cattle of the three southern colonies, cattle raising was always of first importance in the western region. 

Indian corn and all kinds of grain were raised in quantities to supply the needs of the people and even to sell at Charleston, two hundred miles away, while butter and cheese were also sold in the southern market.  

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1. C. R. V, 2.  
4. Turner, 203.
No cloth was brought into the back country but all was made by the settlers. Wool was mixed with cotton for weaving. Besides the cotton, raised only in small quantities, much flax was raised, so much that one of the governors urged that North Carolina be allowed to sell flax freely to Ireland. Indigo, too, was cultivated, and some exported. By 1755 the settlers were supplying themselves with linen. Wheels and looms were common but no cloth was made to sell. Those who did not own looms sent their yarn to neighbors for weaving. 1

A work just begun in 1755 and carried on rather slowly at first, was the opening of the iron and copper mines. 2 The upper planters planned to erect forges and work the mines, while as early as 1765 the Moravians were making tools and utensils of copper and iron. 3

In this pioneer life there was no want of the actual necessities of life, but its luxuries were entirely lacking. The settlers of the western valleys were not, however, without their amusements in spite of the hard work which their pioneer life demanded. Weddings, house raisings, dancing, and horse racing called the people together. A preaching service, lasting as it did, all day, was a social as well as a religious function, for when the people met one another only at intervals of weeks the simple enjoyment of each other's society was

1. C. R. V, 316.
2. Ibid.
The religious life of these people has been discussed in part in the previous chapter. Presbyterians were first in number, while the German churches, Moravian, Lutheran, and Reformed came next. But in many parts of the region the Baptists had gained a large following, and among the central counties the Quakers were to be found in considerable numbers.

The settlement of western North Carolina had followed close upon the Great Awakening under Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield. Intense religious excitement had stirred the whole people from Maine to Georgia when the calm, conservative Old Side fought the emotional, revivalistic New Side. McDade when he visited the settlements on the Eno and Haw found them already divided, but in company with one of the settlers he visited the people of both sides. It was probably this new revival and missionary spirit, too, which made the Synods of Pennsylvania and New York send men to the south and which gave them the men willing to go. It was this, too, in part at least, which made it so hard for the Church of England to establish itself in the west.

In the whole province there were only six Church of England ministers, and at this time none at all in the West. A letter from Morton, a Church of England clergyman, to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel shows why the Established Church was not more active in the West. Morton had

For some understanding of the social diversions of these people see Kercheval's description of the life of the settlers in the back country of northern Virginia.
been appointed in 1766 to work in Mecklenburg County. After reaching Carolina he wrote that he had learned that the inhabitants of the county were the most rigid dissenters of the Solemn League and Covenant kind, and that they would actively oppose any Church of England minister. He had gone, therefore, to Northhampton, a coast county, where he hoped to do good work. 1 With his letter went one from Governor Tryon verifying the arguments of the minister that the Church of England had little power and less respect among these backwoods people. 2 Theodorus Drage had some bitter experiences to tell of when, as an Established Church minister, he attempted to work in Salisbury in 1771. 3 The freeholders of the parish were Irish and refused to elect a vestry, which refusal made his work very difficult. The dissenters countenanced any kind of preachers, being glad to keep the people in a turmoil. The people, also, refused to pay toward his salary, and defied the law by which the marriage fee should go to him. Tryon's letter to Drage is interesting in showing the middle position he wished to take, mollifying to Drage while not offending the Presbyterians whose support he wished to enjoy in his administration. 4

2. Ibid. 260.
3. Ibid. VIII, 502, ff.
4. Ibid. VIII, 217, ff.
Like the Moravians, the Quakers kept a careful record of their activities from the beginning. They came to North Carolina from the northern colonies at the time of the coming of the Scotch-Irish and Germans, and for the same reason, settling to the north and west about Guilford County. ¹ Like the other groups of immigrants they began to enter the colony about 1740, going then to Bladen and Cumberland counties where meeting houses were erected as early as 1746. A few years later other Quakers established themselves at Cane Creek in Alamance County. By 1754 sixty-eight certificates had been presented to this meeting, for the most part of young men without families.²

The New Garden Monthly meeting, organized in 1751, was the center of the Quaker work, growing, largely through the efforts of Catherine Peyton and Mary Peisley, into the most important meeting in North Carolina.³ Before 1770 eighty-six friends came into this meeting from other colonies.⁴ The meetings were first held in private houses but later in a small meeting house still standing.⁵ The Quakers made themselves an influence in the region, the Western Quarterly meeting being the first to discuss the question of slavery.⁶

¹. Weeks, Southern Quakers and Slavery, 71.
². Ibid. 102.
³. Ibid. 105.
⁴. Jones, Quakers, 295.
⁵. Weeks, Southern Quakers and Slavery, 109.
A larger influence than that of the Quakers was that of the Baptists, who first became strong in the western part of the colony in 1755. Many of the new churches formed in the colonies by the revival enthusiasts became Baptist, the individualistic spirit of that church appealing strongly to these people. The tremendous growth of the denomination in the south was due primarily to the difference between its methods of organization and those of the already established congregations. The Presbyterians and the Lutherans, with their ideas of a highly educated ministry, could not supply that country with ministers to hold the people together. The Baptist preachers, on the other hand, were often entirely uneducated, but their powerful appeal to the feelings won the support of the pioneers. For this reason the Appalachian region is filled largely with a Baptist, not a Presbyterian or a Lutheran people.

The history of the Western Baptists belongs to the history of the Sandy Creek Association. The founder of this association was Shubach Stearns, a brilliant, forceful preacher who had begun to work in New England and from there had gone to Virginia. From Virginia his restless nature carried him to North Carolina where some of his friends wrote him that they had travelled forty miles to hear one sermon. Stearns took up his residence at Sandy Creek in Guilford County in 1755. With him came eight families. A meeting house was built at once and Stearns was chosen pastor. These Baptists brought

with them the emotional methods belonging to the Whitefield group among whom Stearns had been in New England. The church had a wonderful growth and then as surprising a decline. Beginning with sixteen members, it rose in a few years to six hundred six and then, owing to civil commotions which, Stearns says, scattered the people, fell again to fourteen. During the time of its growth, however, new churches had been established all through the region until by the time of the Revolution, from the Sandy Creek church there had sprung forty two other churches in that and the neighboring colonies.¹

Men desired to enter the ministry, studied a little so that they might read their Bibles, and were ordained. These men went into the surrounding states while Stearns stayed alone at Sandy Creek and regulated his group of churches. At Little River another large church was formed in 1760, having, three years later, a membership of five hundred. Like the other, this membership was scattered again. This very scattering, however, spread Baptist ideas in Kentucky and Tennessee.

The Sandy Creek Association was organized in 1758 to take care of the churches formed. to these meetings came Baptists from Virginia and both Carolinas and even from Georgia. At the second meeting of the Association John Gano from the older settlements was a visitor. Disapproving as he did of the New Light tone and gestures, he was not well received except by Stearns himself. He was asked to preach, however, and in spite of his quiet tone and gestures, preached

so effectively, "that the young and illiterate preachers felt that they could never preach again after hearing him." The incident illustrates both the ignorance of many of the ministers and the great depth of their sincerity.¹

Religion and education went together in North Carolina. The instructions to Governor Burrington that no schoolmaster might teach in the colony without a license from the Bishop of London was a dead letter in the back country during its earlier years,² although attempts were made after 1766 to enforce it.³ The Presbyterians, Germans, and Quakers established schools from the first. The Presbyterian settlements had schools before they had regular pastors. These schools were taught in the homes⁴ and were probably very elementary as the work of clearing land, at which the children could help, left little time for learning. With the coming of a regular pastor, however, a classical school was always organized,⁵ for the purpose, primarily, of training young men for the ministry.

The Germans built school houses before they built churches, using them for both purposes. Since all the teaching was done in German, the schools aided in keeping these Germans

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¹. Benedict, 50. Woodmason in his rabid and exaggerated account of No. Car. in 1766, says that the Baptists were the strongest sect in No. Car. and that there was great hatred between them and the Presbyterians. The account of the Baptists in No. Car. as given by Benedict is printed in Vol. VII, C. R. and seems to be the best authority for the subject.
². C. R. III, 111.
⁴. Thompkins, 70 ff.
⁵. Foote, 513.

Patillo, Craighead, and Caldwell held classical schools.
distinct from their neighbors. 1 The Quaker meeting house served as a school, and with them, too, the pastor or leader was teacher as well. 2 Education, on the whole, had progressed farther than might be expected from so new a country.

That there was some foundation for the idea that the people of western North Carolina were unruly and over-assertive of what they believed to be their rights, is true, but that they were an essentially lawless and wicked mob is not true. The distance lying between the back country and the coast had a double effect on the government of the western part of the province. It made the back country people restless under government by people whom they did not know and with whom they had nothing in common, and, more important, it made the officers, eastern men, careless of duty and unafraid to extort from the people as much as they could. 3 Constant trouble, too, over quit rents and patents, and squatter rights to their land made the people resentful.

One of the most important sources of this land trouble was the 1,200,000 acres granted to Henry McCullah and his associates in 1767. A part of this land was located along the upper Cape Fear near South Carolina and the rest farther north in Lord Granville's territory. Six thousand German protestants were to be settled on this land which would be free from rent until 1756, when land not settled according to agreement would

1. C.R. VIII, 730.
3. C. R. VII, 89.

Husband's address to the inhabitants of Granville County.
revert to the crown. Because of Indian troubles the time was extended to 1762. It is difficult to tell how many were settled on the land, although in 1736 a body of Swiss and Irish were placed on the Northeast River, and later a group of Scotch were settled on the Welsh tract in New Hanover County.

The great tract belonging to McCulloch and his associates was, however, taken up without patents by Scotch-Irish and German immigrants after 1750. At the same time there was trouble over the Cherokee boundary line and over that with South Carolina. When, therefore, in 1760 surveyors representing North Carolina, South Carolina, and McCulloch were in the disputed territory, the one hundred fifty families in the district defied the provinces and McCulloch and declared that until the matter was settled they would pay no quit rents. The McCulloch land in Lord Granville's territory also created friction because of the carelessness with which the agents of the proprietor made their grants. The trouble continued until the Revolution, when the McCulloch associates, as Tories, forfeited their land.

The grievances which culminated in the War of the Regulation had been gathering for years. A representation in the legislature of not one fourth that of the eastern counties made these grievances almost impossible of redress. Disproportionate taxes; an absolute lack of currency in the western counties, without the right to pay taxes and fees in produce;

1. C. R. IV, 685 ff. Rowan, an opponent of McCulloch, puts the number very low and asserts that even these were forced off the land by ill usage.

exhorbitant fees charged by clerks and lawyers; and unlawful fees taken when the defendant was unable to resist were the grievances cited by Anson County. Other counties sent in like lists and like petitions for redress among which the right of dissenting ministers to preform marriage ceremonies was demanded. That the people still respected the law, however, seems evident from the closing paragraph of Husband's letter, in 1765, "Secondly, let us do nothing against the known established laws of our land that we appear not as a faction endeavoring to subvert the laws, and overturn the system of government. But let us take care to appear what we really are, free subjects by birth, endeavoring to recover our lost native rights, and to bring them down to the standard of law."

The western settlers had acted with the eastern in opposing the Stamp Act, but a common cause against the king could not blind them to their more immediate troubles. They never objected to lawful taxes but they did object to exhorbitant fees demanded by clerks and lawyers and registers of patents. Governor Tryon wrote to the Earl of Hillsborough that the people of Orange County had some cause for their action and that the government had made attempts to alter the matters of complaint. The government, however, went no further

1. C. R. VIII, 75 ff.
2. Ibid. 80 f.
4. Ibid. VII, 834.
than the making of a law by which excessive fees were illegal, or the sending of a board of inquiry into the counties. Nothing was done which remedied matters and the climax came in an appeal to force in 1768, an appeal which ended in failure at the battle of Alamance in 1771.

The story of the settlement of the western country is the story of pioneers, of a people who came into a new territory not for religious freedom, but for cheaper, better land. The lives of these people were the lives of all pioneers; far away from markets, either for buying or selling and therefore dependent upon themselves for all the necessities of life, they became economically independent. This economical independence showed itself, also, in their social, religious, and political life. Like all pioneer people they made their gatherings for work, house raisings, log rollings, and harvestings, social occasions and created enjoyment for themselves in the midst of their hard pioneer lives.

Although the country was not settled from a religious motive, the people were religious, and were accustomed to travel long distances to the preaching services. The Great Awakening had a large influence on the westward settlers. The two movements went hand in hand and missionaries and settled pastors followed the settlers into the colony. With religious services went a certain amount of education, the quality of which grew until the founding of classical schools and colleges.

Though in theory the western counties were politically the equals of the eastern, in fact they were ruled from the
coast, with nothing to say on their own part. Eastern judges, eastern clerks, and eastern tax collectors oppressed at will and there was no redress. The struggle between the people of the coastal plain and those of the piedmont and the mountains, began thus early, was not ended until long after the colony had become a state.
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