

Topic Page: [Regulator Movement](#)

Summary Article: **Regulator movement**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

designation for two groups, one in South Carolina, the other in North Carolina, that tried to effect governmental changes in the 1760s. In South Carolina, the Regulator movement was an organized effort by backcountry settlers to restore law and order and establish institutions of local government. Plagued by roving bands of outlaws and angered by the assembly's failure to provide the western counties with courts and petty officers, the leading planters, supported by small farmers, created (1767) an association to regulate backcountry affairs. They brought criminals to justice and set up courts to resolve legal disputes. The assembly and the governor, recognizing the legitimacy of the grievances, did not attempt to crush the movement. By 1768, order was restored, and the Circuit Court Act of 1769, providing six court districts for the backcountry, led the Regulators to disband. The movement in W North Carolina, with different causes, arose at the same time. Led by small farmers protesting the corruption and extortionate practices of sheriffs and court officials, the Regulators, strongest in Orange, Granville, Halifax, and Anson counties, at first petitioned (1764–65) the assembly to recall its officers. When this failed, they formed (1768) an association pledged to pay only legal taxes and fees and to abide by the will of the majority. They won control of the provincial assembly in 1769, but with Gov. William Tryon, the provincial council, and the courts against them they were unable to secure relief. At first orderly, the Regulators resorted to acts of violence (especially at Hillsboro) after Edmund Fanning, a particularly despised official, was allowed to go unpunished. Those actions alienated large property holders and the clergy from the movement. On May 16, 1771, Tryon's militia completely routed a large body of Regulators in the battle of Alamance Creek. Seven of the leaders were executed, and the movement collapsed. One group of Regulators moved west to Tennessee, where they helped form the Watauga Association, but most of them submitted. Tensions remained, however, between the western farmers and the tidewater aristocracy.

See Brown, R. M. , *The South Carolina Regulators* (1963).

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Regulator movement. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/regulator_movement



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