

## Primary Source: The Regulators Organize <sup>[1]</sup>

*By 1766, the colonial government's actions had greatly upset farmers in Orange County.*

*The farmers were unhappy with dishonest judges and lack of representation in local affairs. They were also angry with abuses of power by Edmund Fanning. Fanning was a local Orange County official and land speculator. Prior efforts of the farmers to create organized resistance had failed. In 1768, a group called the Regulators formed officially. They organized because they didn't agree with a decision the colonial Assembly made.*

*The Assembly agreed to build a "palace" for Governor Tryon. This palace would cost 15,000 pounds, or colonial money. The Assembly had already given the Governor 5,000 pounds to start construction in 1766. He was going to receive another 10,000 pounds to complete the project. Money during that time had a different value than now, so we don't know how much that would be in dollars. But 15,000 pounds was a large amount of money back then. It was especially expensive from the perspective of backcountry farmers. The palace costs would be paid by increasing the "poll" tax. "Poll" meant "head." Each male adult had to pay those poll taxes to the county, no matter how rich or poor he was.*

*The Assembly approved the amount in January 1768. This news likely reached Orange County and nearby areas soon after. The unhappy farmers then formed an Association in the spring of 1768. They called themselves the Regulators. Many of them were Quakers from the area west of the Haw River. The Quakers saw this protest as part of their moral and religious duty. The Regulators wanted members to join. They asked people to sign a statement of support for the cause. The reformers most likely advertised in newspapers to gain new members. Word traveled over time and the Regulators grew in number. They gained new members from a wider area, from even as far west as Mecklenburg County.*

*Below is one of the earliest advertisements the Regulators put in newspapers. It asked people to "subscribe to," or join, the organization of Regulators. Subscribers agreed to not pay taxes and fees that they considered unlawful. They also petitioned, or wrote a formal request to, government representatives. This request asked officials to change laws the Regulators considered unfair. There were several subscription advertisements published by the Regulators at the time.*

*Where do records of these subscription advertisements come from? Newspapers or other print documents containing the subscriptions likely no longer exist. Our remaining records and documents are held in the [Colonial and State Records of North Carolina](#) <sup>[2]</sup>. The texts of these original documents have been transcribed, or written down. These transcriptions are included in the published volumes of the State's records.*

---

We the under written subscribers do voluntarily agree to form ourselves into an Association to assemble ourselves for conferences for [regulating](#) publick [Grievances](#) <sup>[3]</sup> & abuses of Power in the following particulars with others of like nature that may occur

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.
2. That we will pay no Officer any more fees than the Law allows [unless we are obliged to it and then to shew a dislike to it & bear open testimony against it.](#)
3. That we will attend our Meetings of Conference as often as we conveniently can or is necessary [in order to consult our representatives on the amendment of such Laws as may be found grievous or unnecessary](#) and to choose more suitable men than we have heretofore done for [Burgesses](#) and [Vestry men](#) and to Petition His Excellency our Governor the [Honble](#) the Council and the Worshipful House of representatives His Majesty in Parliament &c. for [redress](#) <sup>[4]</sup> of such Grievances as in the course of this undertaking may occur and to inform one another [& to learn, know and enjoy all the Priviledges & Liberties that are allowed us and were settled on us by our worthy Ancestors the founders of the present Constitution in order to preserve it in its ancient Foundation that it may stand firm & unshaken.](#)
4. That we will contribute to Collections for [defraying](#) <sup>[5]</sup> [necessary expences](#) attending the work according to our abilities.
5. That in Cases of differences in Judgment we will submit to the Majority of our Body.

To all which We do solemnly swear or being a Quaker or otherwise scrupulous in Conscience of the common Oath do solemnly affirm that We will stand true and faithful to this cause until We bring them to a true regulation according to the true intent & meaning of it in the judgment of the Majority.

### User Tags:

[civil disobedience](#) <sup>[6]</sup>

[colonial](#) <sup>[7]</sup>

[history](#) <sup>[8]</sup>

[North Carolina](#) <sup>[9]</sup>

[North Carolina History](#) <sup>[10]</sup>

[Page](#) <sup>[11]</sup>

[politics](#) [12]

[Regulators](#) [13]

[Students](#) [14]

[Teachers](#) [15]

[Creative Commons BY-NC-SA](#) [16]

**From:**

[ANCHOR: A North Carolina History Online Resource](#) [17]

**Copyright Date:**

2009

**People:**

- [Fanning, Edmund](#) [18]
- [Tryon, William](#) [19]

**Places:**

[Backcountry](#) [20]

---

[Orange County, N.C.](#) [21]

---



[Tryon](#)

[Palace](#) [22]

**Related Topics:**

[The Regulator Movement for K-8 Students](#) [23]

**Primary Sources:**

[Regulator Movement Digital Collection, State Archives of North Carolina](#) [24]

3 January 2018

---

**Source URL:** <https://ncpedia.org/anchor/primary-source-regulators>

**Links**

[1] <https://ncpedia.org/anchor/primary-source-regulators> [2] <https://www.ncpedia.org/colonial-and-state-records> [3] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/grievance> [4] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/redress> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/defray> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/civil> [7] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/colonial> [8] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/history> [9] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/north-carolina-5> [10] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/north-carolina-6> [11] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/page> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/politics> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/regulators> [14] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/students> [15] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/teachers> [16] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/creative-commons> [17] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/anchor-north> [18] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/fanning-edmund> [19] <https://ncpedia.org/biography/governors/tryon> [20] <https://www.ncpedia.org/backcountry> [21] <https://www.ncpedia.org/geography/orange> [22] <https://ncpedia.org/tryon-palace> [23] <https://www.ncpedia.org/regulator-movement-k-8-students> [24] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/digital/custom/regulator-movement>