

Green, Farnifold ^[1]

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by W. Keats Sparrow, 1986

30 May 1674–1714

Farnifold Green, planter ^[2], colonial militia officer, commissary, and Indian fighter, was born in St. Stephen's Parish, Northumberland, Va., the son of Timothy and Anne Farnifold (Farneffold, Farnifould, Furnsfield, etc.) Green. Anne Farnifold Green was the daughter of John Farnifold, an Anglican minister who served on the first Board of Visitors at William and Mary College ^[3], and the granddaughter of Sir Thomas Farnifold, MP, of Steyning, Sussex, England. Farnifold Green married Hannah Kent Smithwick (ca. 1675–ca. 1730), a widow and the daughter of Laurence and Sarah Consolvo of Princess Anne County, Va.

In 1697 Farnifold and Hannah Green moved to North Carolina, where he obtained land on Indian Creek in Perquimans Precinct. Around 1707 the Lords Proprietors ^[4] granted Green 1,700 acres on the north side of the Neuse River ^[5] between two creeks, Farnifold Green's Creek and Broad (now Smith's) Creek. This plantation where he settled, called Green's Neck, is near present-day Oriental, now in Pamlico County ^[6] but from 1693 to 1722 known as Bath County. Here as a planter Green was involved in a number of land transactions and held the rank of captain in the Bath militia ^[7].

Soon after the Tuscarora ^[8] massacre of 22 Sept. 1711, Captain Green wrote to Governor Alexander Spotswood ^[9] of Virginia that the Indians "have killed about 100 people and have taken prisoners about 20 or 30" ^[10] and that "we are forced to keep garrisons and watch and guard, day and night." Together with many of his neighbors, he also sent another letter to Governor Spotswood about this time saying "we must likewise perish with our brethren . . . [unless you] send to our relief some considerable force of men, arms and ammunition." This letter closes with the assurance that Captain Green and his fellow colonists "are ready to the utmost of our ability to assist the army if your Excellency pleases to send them."

Naturally the fear of another massacre stirred morbid thoughts among the North Carolinians, and on 26 Oct. 1711 Green prepared a will whose preamble represents this dark outlook. It states that he is "seriously considering the frailty and uncertain state of life at all times, especially in the dreadful times of Almighty God's visitation by sword and fire under which we tremble." His fears at this time would presage his own violent death a few years later.

As a part of the mobilization efforts to counter the renewed Indian attacks in the summer and fall of 1712, Governor Thomas Pollock ^[11] appointed Green as "Commissary to impress and supply the army with anything that is to be had in Bath County." Yet even in their desperate plight at this time, the Bath County residents were beginning to relax their vigil and to attend to daily affairs, as evidenced by Green's sale to Martin Frank of 250 acres at Nottingham's Neck on 21 Dec. 1712.

Soon, however, the "visitation" came that Green had dreaded. According to a family legend, it came on a Sunday while his son and namesake, Farnifold II, had taken his mother and other members of the family to church, thus sparing them from violent death. In a surprise attack, the Indians murdered Captain Green, one of his sons, a white servant, and two Negroes. They also shot another of Green's sons through the shoulder before he escaped. And they destroyed the plantation house and plundered the stock of cattle and hogs. The attack may have been in reprisal for Green's key role as a military officer and government official throughout the Tuscarora War ^[12].

Green's will ^[13] mentions his sons Thomas, John, Farnifold II (m. Sarah Graves), and James, one of whom died with him in 1714; daughters Jane and Elizabeth (m. Daniel Shine); brother Titus Green; "daughter-in-law" (stepdaughter) Ann Smithwick; and wife Hannah, who eventually married Richard Graves, a surveyor of Craven Precinct.

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