

Reform ^[1]

In the 1830s, a wave of reform swept the United States. A new political party system brought greater participation in democracy. In North Carolina, reformers gained power in the General Assembly, amended the state constitution, and established free public schools. Private reformers, particularly women, worked individually and in “societies” or associations to help the poor and improve society. In this chapter, we’ll evaluate the work of these many reformers — their reasons for wanting change and what they accomplished for North Carolina.

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David Swain (above) and William Gaston (below) led the push to amend North Carolina's constitution in the 1830s.



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