make a hanging file on Regulators

Eras Journal - Boulware, T.: "A 'dangerous sett of horse-thieves and vagrants': Outlaws of the Southern Frontier during the Revolutionary Era"

A "dangerous sett of horse-thieves and vagrants": Outlaws of the Southern Frontier during the Revolutionary Era

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Abstract

In the late evening hours of June 1766, a well-known storekeeper in the South Carolina backcountry became startled when a visitor unexpectedly called at his house. John 'Ready Money' Scott glanced at his wife, proceeded to the door, and immediately felt relieved when Thomas Gray, an acquaintance, appeared at his steps. After an exchange of greetings the two men entered the house. As they held a 'parley' inside, however, three notorious outlaws suddenly burst from the woods and charged through the door. John Fulsome, George Burns and Nathaniel Foster were heavily armed and in search of the hard currency they knew Scott possessed. When their victims proved less than willing to cooperate, Burns "seized Mrs Scott, throwing snuff in her eyes", while Fulsome treated Mr Scott in a like manner. The bandits then tortured the husband and wife with a hot iron to encourage a confession and were soon rewarded with a cache of over £320. The theives' gang, including the deceptive Thomas Gray, crossed the Savannah River "in a canow [sic]" and escaped into Georgia.[1]

In the decade before the American Revolution, outlaw gangs wreaked havoc throughout the southern frontier. These bandits were particularly active in the South Carolina backcountry, where there was a conspicuous absence of courts, jails, and the effective administration of justice. To counter this threat, backcountry inhabitants eventually took it upon themselves to combat the outlaw gangs. Hundreds and thousands of settlers - maybe as many as five thousand - united into large bands of vigilantes and adopted the name Regulators.[2] Eventually sanctioned by the government in Charleston, the Regulators administered their own brand of justice in the backcountry. They attacked outlaws and other persons of ill fame who they deemed harborers and abettors of the bandits. By the end of the decade, the outlaw problem was, as the story goes, sufficiently contained.

The outlaw menace is not unknown to historians and early writers of South Carolina history usually did not fail to mention these illicit activities.[3] Later historians, such as Richard M. Brown, Rachel Klein, and George Lloyd Johnson, Jr., continued this trend by detailing both the prevalence of outlaws in the backcountry and the Regulator response. What has either been overlooked or deemphasized in these accounts, however, is the important role outlaw gangs played in the construction of identity and group formation among a diverse and oft divided Euroamerican frontier population.[4] Indeed, one author recently suggested that because of the backcountry's extensive ethnic, religious and cultural plurality, scholars "may need to content themselves with documenting the region's diversity and celebrating its

inability to be synthesised".[5] While the heterogeneity of the southern frontier should be an important theme in backcountry studies, it should also be recognised that a broader sense of community developed among Euroamericans as the eighteenth century progressed. Central to this shifting sense of self and society were cross-cultural and cross-racial encounters. Interactions with culturally and racially ambiguous groups, like the outlaws, resulted in a hardening of racial lines and community boundaries among white Carolinians. A thorough examination of the outlaw crisis, in short, reveals that these lawless gangs were one of many culturally and racially marginal groups who played a critical role in shaping frontier society during the Revolutionary era.

Beginning in the mid-1760s, the reports of outlaw activities trickled in to Charleston - sporadically at first - then in waves. What seemed to be isolated cases of criminal deviance turned out to be an overt campaign of lawlessness. Individual horse thieves, robbers and murderers coalesced into gangs and terrorised the backcountries of the southern colonies. South Carolina was as hard hit. The interior of that colony lacked the societal institutions necessary to control the numerous and powerful bandits. There was no local government outside the coastal parishes, save magistrates and justices of the peace who were relatively few in number. There were no courts and jails. A militia existed, but it was ineffective. Unlike its neighbors to the north and south, South Carolina did not have a vagrancy law which would have limited the autonomy of this "dangerous sett of horse-thieves and vagrants".[6] Thus, due to the lack of the institutional means necessary to suppress the gangs, planters and yeomen in the Carolina interior endured an unrelenting attack on persons and property.

The exploits of backcountry outlaws frequently filled the pages of Charleston's newspapers. Reports indicated that outlaws often targeted the most valuable items of property holders, usually hard currency, horses and slaves. To achieve their ends, such men were not above murder, and they certainly were not above torturing recalcitrant victims. One observer wrote that their cruelties were "so numerous and shocking, that a narrative of them would fill a whole gazette, and every reader with horror".[7] In the summer of 1765, for instance, one gang attacked a planter named Reed who "they understood had laid up some money to purchase a couple of Negroes". The men entered Reed's house and asked him if he had any money. Reed plainly stated that "he owed them none", but the bandits charged back, "it was money they came for, and money they would have". They bound Reed and his family and "carried off his cash". The men moved on, assaulted a passing traveller, and then entered the house of an inhabitant named Glover, whereby they "forcibly took and carried off a trunk, containing all said *Glover's* papers. &c. amongst other things, the patent for land whereon he resides, sixteen dollars, forty pounds proclamation money, and some south currency".[8] Not long after, another group attacked Richard Baldrick, an innkeeper on the Congaree Road in Amelia Township. The bandits entered Baldrick's inn about ten at night and "called for some toddy and victuals". In order to pay for the meal and drink, they produced a piece of gold which Baldrick proceeded to weigh. But "while he was doing it, one of the men knock'd him down, bound and blindfolded him, as they also did his wife…and his little son". The gang then threatened Baldrick with his life to tell where his money lay, and upon finding out, took his cash and all else "that was valuable".[9]

One of the more infamous gangs was led by the Black, Moon, and Tyrrell brothers who conducted a series of attacks near the forks of the Saluda , Broad and Savannah Rivers. About the middle of June 1767 the bandits came to the house of one Captain Bassard, "who demanded their Pass". One of the thieves "presented a Pistol at him, telling him there it was, and shot him through the Breast and Shoulder". The villains went off but returned a few days later, and "robbed him of all his Horses, Household Furniture, &c". A man named Wilson was next attacked. The gang burned the poor man "in a shocking Manner with Light Wood and red hot Irons", and then robbed him of everything of value. These outlaws then moved along the Broad River, tortured Charles Kitchen and his wife, and "robbed and murdered one Gabriel Brown".[10]

The accounts of such attacks do not end with these few stories. Indeed, they are too numerous to recount here, and their broader implications too significant to offer merely a concise narrative. For it was not simply the number or the intensity of such crimes that unsettled the residents of the backcountry, it was also the threat they posed to Euroamerican conceptions of community. It is important to remember this *was* a frontier. Settlers realised society was highly unstable and could possibly revert back to the 'savagery' exemplified by nearby Indians. The frontier, in short, was not static or simply moving in one direction - or 'westward' - as is often thought. Rather, the frontier could and did recede for colonists as well as Native Americans. In the early stages of the South Carolina-Cherokee War (1759-1761), for example, the thickly settled region around Ninety-Six was hit so hard by Cherokee war parties, one observer noted, "'96' is now a frontier. Plantations lie desolate, and hopeful crops are going to ruin".[11] The vulnerability of Euroamericans in the backcountry therefore generated insecurities about the future of their communities. If Indians could turn settlements like Ninety-Six into a 'frontier', then what about an unregulated outlaw threat?[12]

The outlaw crisis thus played upon Euroamerican fears of societal degeneration. To ensure progress, backcountry planters and yeomen shared a similar view that the accumulation and protection of property was the foundation of an ordered society. This sanctity of property should not be understated, and it has fittingly held a central place in the arguments put forward by such notable authors as Rachel Klein, Joyce Chaplin and Jack Greene. But along with this emphasis on class, politics, and socioeconomics, issues associated with culture and race should also be stressed. Throughout the eighteenth century, the more 'industrious' colonists not only compared their society, but also themselves, to those that were different, namely Indians, Africans, and disaffected Europeans. These dissimilar, or seemingly dissimilar peoples, were perceived to be at the margins of society. These 'marginals', otherwise known as the quintessential 'other' in anthropological circles, proved central to identity and group formation, for as one scholar duly noted,'it is otherness that prompts self-description'.[13]

The cultural ambivalence of outlaws was a common concern for the more industrious backcountry settlers. Rather than practice settled agriculture, many of the bandits were instead part of a marginalised hunting population. A justice of the peace in 1762, for example, placed an advertisement in the *Gazette* concerning one Samuel McKay who escaped from him while en route to the Charleston jail. The peace officer called for the recapture of McKay so that he could obtain information about "a gang of Villains who are associated on the borders of this and the North province". It was reported that McKay was near thirty years old and "follows hunting".[14] A petition by back settlers near the North Carolina border also made the connection between hunters and outlaws. They grieved "that there are Numbers of Idle Vagrant Persons, who follow no other employment than hunting and killing of deer…and after the season of hunting is over Steal cattle, Hogs and Horses".[15] Lieutenant Governor William Bull empathised with the petitioners, noting that those whites who lived by "the wandering indolence of hunting" could "endanger the public peace of our Frontier Settlements" by destabilising Indian-white relations.[16] Governor Tryon of North Carolina warned Bull more specifically that "such lawless settlers on our frontier I apprehend may soon *provoke the Cherokees* to commence hostilities".[17]

On the one hand, outlaws were seen as culturally threatening. They did not adhere to the values of the developing Euroamerican community, where planting, property, and piousness were held as the foundation of civilisation. In this sense, they were considered similar to not only Indians and Africans, but also other Euroamericans whose cultural and political loyalties were suspect. Professional white hunters and 'white Indians' likewise fell into this categorisation. In *Unification of a Slave State*, Rachel Klein argued that although outlaws and hunters were for the most part distinct entities, the fact that "some hunters became actively involved with bandit gangs suggests that the groups overlapped". Klein supported her assertion with an examination of outlaw land holdings from 1767 to 1775. She revealed that of the 166 backcountrymen "referred to as horse stealers, robbers, or bandits in court records or newspaper accounts, more than half never purchased land or applied for headright grants". Klein,

therefore, concluded that outlaws "did not regard land ownership and planting as primary goals".[18]

Even more threatening to both backcountry settlers and lowcountry elites were reports which indicated Native American involvement in the gangs. Settlers in the interior, for example, became alarmed when a Mohawk Indian named David, reputed to be a "notorious Horse Stealer", joined these "*outlying men*". This particular band encamped along the Tyger River and was eventually attacked by back settlers, whereby David "defended himself against all authority by force of arms, but was at last killed".[19] Other evidence points toward frequent interaction between the two groups, as outlaws often found common ground with Native Americans by harbouring themselves in Indian communities. When the Public Treasurer discovered a counterfeiter in the spring of 1758, for instance, he supposed the criminal "fled toward the Cherokee Country".[20] Ten years later a surveyor for the colony wrote about the Savannah River area, that it was "a kind of assylum [sic] for Villains, who flies to elude justice, and settle on this river, that either live obscure or easily creep to the Creeks or Cherokees, and back again, as the case requires".[21] An outlaw named James Welch, who was notorious for stealing horses and slaves, also engaged in an illegal trade with the Cherokee. When authorities attempted to imprison him, Welch escaped to the Cherokee Lower towns, where he apparently had an Indian wife and children.[22]

Outlaws, then, occupied a sort of cultural 'middle ground' in which it became difficult to distinguish them from other marginal groups on the Carolina frontier. Many reports, for example, observed they were "all painted like Indians", and it was common knowledge that "the Inhabitants [were] wantonly tortured in the Indian Manner for to be made confess where they secreted their Effects from Plunder".[23] But it was not simply cultural ambivalence that placed these outlaws in what Bernard Bailyn called the "marchlands" of early America; it was also their racial profile.[24] Outlaw gangs were tri-racial in nature. Their presence and autonomy in the backcountry consequently heightened racial awareness and racial fears among whites who were already attentive to the dangers of an Indian and African majority within the colony. Thus, while cultural differences were central to distinctions made between frontier populations, racial ideologies became increasingly important to Euroamerican identity formation.

While Native American involvement in outlaw gangs distressed Euroamericans, their fears were especially heightened when African Americans joined the ranks. Planters were aware that some runaway slaves joined these criminal groups. In mid-July of 1767, for example, a slave named Ben absconded from his master's cowpen on the Carolina frontier. His "being well acquainted with most parts of the backcountry" convinced his owner that he might escape to the interior of South Carolina and then flee the colony. The fugitive, however, did not attempt to obtain freedom elsewhere, as he was spotted two months later near George Galphin's plantation at Silver Bluff. The report indicated that Ben was "in company with Timothy Tyrell, George Black, John Anderson, Anthony Distow, Edward Wells and others, all horse thieves". Ben then led his newfound cohorts back to his master's cowpen and stole three more horses. Soon afterwards, one of their number was captured and confessed that the gang was "going for Holson's river to steal horses".[25] Acting upon this information, a detachment of Rangers followed them into North Carolina and beyond. After an arduous trek for hundreds of miles, they eventually "pursued them into Virginia , where they apprehended them upon the New-River". Most of the gang escaped, but two of the leaders and four fugitive slaves - one of whom was Ben - were captured and taken to the jail at Charleston. After nine months on the run, Ben's sojourn as a criminal and absconded slave finally came to an end.[26]

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Other persons of African descent - not just fugitive slaves like Ben - became active members of the outlaw bands. Edward Gibson was a 'mulatto' who broke out of the Charleston jail twice in 1766 and 1767 before he received punishment.[27] Isaac Reeves, a tall man "of a dark complexion" who wore "his own black Hair", appeared at court six times from 1769 to 1774 for various offenses.[28] More notable were the two black outlaws Robert Prine and Winslow Driggers. The court at Savannah found Driggers guilty of cow stealing in June of 1770 and sentenced him to be hanged. A few months later, while under

reprieve by order of Governor Wright of Georgia, Driggers broke out of jail along with Prine. The two men crossed into South Carolina and by the fall of 1771, had "collected a Gang of other desperated Villains, in Number near fifty, who committed all Manner of Depredations upon the industrious settled Inhabitants". Settlers near the Cheraws attacked the gang and killed a number of them. One of the unfortunate bandits was their leader, Driggers, whom the vigilantes "tried on the Negro-Act, and hanged". [29]

Interracial gangs of outlaws, besides the Driggers' band, were also known to have attacked backcountry settlers. A report during the summer of 1768 related that Regulators had assembled near Lynch's Creek because a party of them had been "roughly used by a Gang of Banditti, consisting of Mulattoes, Free Negroes, & notorious Harborers of runaway slaves, at a place called Thompson's Creek".[30] Near two years later, William Foust and Christopher Davis were convicted of murder but soon after pardoned when the governor in Charleston learned that the "person they had shot, a daring Mullatto, by his repeated robberies and outrages, and the difficulty of apprehending & bringing him to justice, in the frontier parts of the Province, had been considered as a nuisance or ravening wolf, in so much that these two youths at first considered their act as meritorious and not Criminal".[31] In another incident, a former captain of the Rangers and perhaps "the tallest Man in this Province", Captain Lazarus Brown, "was shot, in the Woods, about a Half a Mile from his own House" near the Savannah River. The man supposed to have committed the murder was one Payne who belonged "to a desperated Gang of Villains".[32] One week later, however, the *Gazette* reported that the killer of Brown was "not Payne, but Prine; a notorious Offender, who some time ago escaped out of Savannah Jail".[33] The truth finally manifested itself at the end of July when the paper declared that Robert Prine was not guilty, but rather Brown "was shot by one of his Slaves, who has since been convicted and burnt alive".[34]

These stories, along with the *Gazette*'s misinformation, are important because they give testimony to the tri-racial character of the outlaw gangs and to the heightened racial fears found among whites. Reverend Charles Woodmason spoke to this racialisation of the frontier when he wrote of the Flatt creek area, "Here I found a vast Body of People assembled - Such a Medley! such a mixed Multitude of all Classes and Complexions I never saw".[35] He further added of the backcountry in general that there were "Free Negroes and Mullatoe's [sic], who greatly abound here" and "who have taken Refuge in these Parts".[36] Such observations and fears among whites became more pronounced as they comprehended the threat outlaws posed to the bi-racial plantation system that was edging its way south and west through the Carolina hinterlands. Those fears were, in part, the outcome of dramatic demographic changes in the Carolina borderlands. Where only a few years prior, the amount of white and black colonists had been minimal, their numbers had grown exponentially by the onset of the Revolution. The spread of slavery into the backcountry was particularly intense. One historian's estimate for the late 1760s held slaves to be about one-fifth of the total backcountry population of 35,000.[37] With a rising number of blacks and an increase in hostilities with nearby natives, Euroamericans on the frontier had good reason to seek solace with those of a like culture, but more importantly, of a like colour. A lowcountry newspaper recognized this trend when it cast Regulators as an "*Honest* Party [that] consists, in general, of People of good Principles," while the outlaws were held to be "a Gang of Banditti, or numerous Collection of outcast Mullatoes, Mustees, free Negroes, all Horse-Thieves".[38]

Historians, of course, recognise that the Regulation was not simply an 'honest party' of 'good' citizens combating a multiracial gang of criminals. Scholars rightly understand that reports concerning outlaw profiles and crimes should not always be taken at face value. Nevertheless, assertions made about outlaws and other frontier populations often reflected deep-seated insecurities, particularly those held by eastern elites. When accounts from the frontier reached the lowcountry, for example, Charleston newspapers were eager to have them published. Backcountry settlers likewise played upon these fears to achieve their own ends, which is a significant reason why the Regulation came to be seen as a cultural and racial struggle in the Carolina hinterlands. And though Regulators also resorted to violence and excessive force,

as did the outlaws, their actions were condoned by those who desperately searched for law and order on an unstable frontier.

This search for stability was put to the test even more as the Regulation ended and the American Revolution began. The Regulation, in fact, left the South Carolina backcountry in a precarious state. The intermittent and temporary nature of Regulator operations coupled with the ineffectiveness of provincial justice resulted in an unresolved crime problem in the backcountry. Scholars have often failed to recognise the continuation of the outlaw crisis. Noted historians Richard M. Brown and Rachel Klein, for instance, understated the outlaw threat after the Regulation ended in 1769. To them, 1769 was a benchmark year because the Regulators had presumably, by that time, crushed the outlaw gangs. Brown believed the vigilantes had "succeeded in establishing the permanent dominance of respectable property holders" in the region.[39] Klein likewise concluded that outlaws "could never again throw the region into chaos".[40] The evidence, however, reveals that a pervasive problem with backcountry outlaws continued during the crucial prewar years from 1769 to 1775 and throughout the American Revolution.

As the 1760s drew to a close, it appeared as if the Regulator attempt to subdue the outlaws had proved effective. This effort to disperse the gangs in South Carolina seemed so successful that a disgruntled Governor Tryon of North Carolina complained in October 1768, "All the horse thieves that were drove out of South Carolina last year, joined with those of this colony, find a secure retreat in those parts, to the great prejudice of our western frontiers".[41] But the Regulation did not eliminate the outlaw problem in the South Carolina backcountry. North Carolina also experienced its own Regulation, and though its aims and outcome were different than the movement to the south, outlaws were nonetheless attacked and dispersed.[42] Many fled back to the interior of South Carolina. The *Gazette* reported in December 1768, for example, "the North Carolina Regulators having drove [sic] a Gang of Villains back from their Country into this," has in turn given "fresh Uneasiness to the Inhabitants of our Back Settlements, the Consequences whereof we cannot pretend to tell".[43]

Dennis Hayes, a backcountry storekeeper, related what these consequences entailed when he informed the Assembly a full year after the Regulators disbanded that the "interior parts of this Province has and do still abound with a Number of Villains, who make practice of committing Robberies".[44] A backcountry constable likewise said of the outlaws, "the Country doth abound with such though the Regulators thinned them".[45] Lieutenant Governor William Bull verified these reports during a tour of the backcountry in the summer of 1770. When Bull called the militia together at the Congarees, he remarked that hardly a man showed because of the "apprehension of having their horses stolen away, if they were all absent from home".[46] Indeed, the outlaw gangs were still such a problem that the lieutenant governor issued a proclamation against "several persons of notorious ill Fame, have lately molested the Western Settlements of this Province, by going in confederate Gangs, with Fire-Arms, stealing Horses, robbing Houses, and committing other Outrages". To put a stop to the bandits, Bull offered £20 to those "who shall apprehend, and bring to Goal, within One Twelve-Month from the Date hereof", all persons who had committed such atrocities.[47]

Still, other evidence supports the assertion that the outlaws were not subdued by the onset of the Revolution. Winslow Driggers, as mentioned, terrorised the piedmont in the early 1770s. The killing of Captain Brown in the summer of 1772 was reported to have been done by a gang of outlaws "who, of late, we are informed, are returned seven Times worse than they were".[48] One year later the *Gazette* reported that the price of beef had risen enormously because of "the numerous Banditti that infest the Neighbourhood of the several Cowpens, who have already almost annihilated some entire Stocks".[49] Even Reverend Woodmason, a staunch advocate of the Regulators' effectiveness, realised the limited success of the vigilante activity. Woodmason wrote that the Regulators broke up the combined gangs of villains, "tho' not so fully as to secure many Individuals for Public Justice". He further added of the outlaws that the Regulators' attentions had been "turned to the securing the Country of such, and bringing

them to condign Punishment, tho' they generally escaped it".[50]

The failure to effectively handle the outlaw threat would have important consequences for South Carolina during the American Revolution. As many scholars have observed, the Revolution in the Carolina interior was more than just a war against the British; it was also a civil war.[51] Neighbour took up arms against neighbour and families were torn apart fighting for either the rebellious whigs or loyalist tories (or by not fighting at all). The two contending parties consisted of many different peoples who held varying visions of the future. Many former Regulators, for instance, became proponents of the whig cause. Rachel Klein stated this was because "It was the whigs rather than loyalists who, in the course of the Revolution, were best able to continue Regulator struggles" by furthering the interests of the planter class.[52] On the other hand, many backcountry outlaws joined the anti-whig forces.

Outlaws were a significant part of those anti-whig forces that fueled the internal struggle for power in the backcountry. David Ramsay, a nineteenth-century historian of South Carolina, stated, "Horse thieves and others whose crimes had exiled them from society attached themselves to the British".[53] Klein agreed with Ramsay that "individual bandits of the 1760s also attached themselves to the British".[54] Others similarly asserted, "most of them joined the tories".[55] Numerous outlaws like James Burgess and one Hutto terrorized back settlers under the loyalist banner. The bandit William Lee, who escaped the gallows for cattle stealing in 1763, rode with William 'Bloody Bill' Cunningham during the Revolution. Cunningham was one of "the most widely feared of backcountry tories." Also of great notoriety was the outlaw and tory leader Daniel McGirt. Klein stated, "by 1779 he had become a bandit leader whose 'corps' resembled the gangs of the 1760s".[56] A newspaper account revealed that atrocities were committed by "a large body of the most infamous banditti and horse thieves that perhaps ever were collected together anywhere, under the direction of McGirt".[57]

One scholar recently stated that the "single topic which has attracted the most attention in frontier studies, from Turner's day to the present, is the development of society as newly settled areas evolved into stabilised neighborhoods".[58] And so it is with this brief look at outlaws in the Carolina backcountry. The latter half of the eighteenth century witnessed a massive population surge in the Carolina interior whereby planters and yeomen increasingly displaced Native Americans, outlaws and other marginal elements of the colony's hinterlands. It is important to recognise, however, that this development cannot be viewed as evolutionary. To be sure, the spread of Euroamerican communities, and in particular the spread of South Carolina's plantation order, did progress. But as this study of outlaws points out, there were also periods of regression - of stagnant or receding frontiers - which hindered the westward flow of white planting communities. It would take time for the more industrious Euroamericans, as Woodmason noted, to "make the Country side wear a New face, and the People become New Creatures".[59] Frontier settlers eventually learned that it was not a Regulation but rather a Revolution and its aftermath that effectively subdued the outlaw gangs and secured the South Carolina backcountry. Thus, the outlaw problem should not be seen as an anomalous and brief uprising of moral deviancy, but rather as evidence of a larger cultural and racial conflict that plagued the southern frontier for much of the eighteenth century.

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Notes

[1] *South-Carolina Gazette*, Feb. 15, 1768, Aug. 18, 1766. Back

[2] This estimate comes from Richard M. Brown, *The South Carolina Regulators*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1963, p. 113. Back

[3] For just a few of these older accounts, see David Ramsay, *History of South Carolina from its First Settlement in 1670, to the year 1808*, David Longworth, Charleston, 1809 (Vol. II); William Gilmore Simms, *The History of South Carolina from its First European Discovery to its Erection into a Republic with a Supplement Book, Bringing the Narrative Down to the Present Time*, S. Babcock & Co., Charleston, 1840; Alexander Gregg, *History of the Old Cheraws*, Richardson & Co., New York, 1867; Joseph Johnson, *Traditions and Reminiscences, Chiefly of the American Revolution in the South*, Walker & James, Charleston, 1851. Back

[4] Rachel Klein does touch upon issues dealing with social and racial conflict in the Carolina backcountry, but her primary argument centers on a class and political interpretation. This paper, on the contrary, emphasises the importance of race and culture to Euroamerican identity formation. Rachel Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1767-1808*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1990; George Lloyd Johnson, Jr., *The Frontier in the Colonial South: South Carolina Backcountry, 1736-1800*, Greenwood Press, Wesport, 1997; Brown, *South Carolina Regulators* . See also Carl Bridenbaugh, *Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South*, Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 1952. Back

[5] A review by Johanna Miller Lewis of David C. Crass et al (eds), *The Southern Colonial Backcountry: Interdisciplinary Perspectives of Frontier Communities*, University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1998 in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 86(4), 2000. Back

[6] *South-Carolina Gazette*, September 26, 1768. It would not be until 1787 that South Carolina enacted a vagrancy law; a date well-after similar laws were established in Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia. Back

[7] *South-Carolina Gazette*, July 27, 1767. Back

[8] *South-Carolina Gazette* , June 1, 1765. Back

[9] *South-Carolina Gazette*, July, 20, 1765. Back

[10] *South-Carolina Gazette;* and *Country Journal*, July 28, 1767. Back

[11] James Creswell to W.H. Drayton, Gibbes, *Documentary History*, II, 81 in Hatley, *Dividing Paths*, p. 192. On the other end, when British armies decimated Cherokee villages toward the end of the war, the commanding officer wrote to his superior, "We extended the frontier of this Province". Archibald Montgomery to Jeffery Amherst, 7/2/1760 in Edith Mays (ed.), *Amherst Papers, 1756-1763: The Southern Sector: Dispatches from South Carolina, Virginia, and His Majesty's Superintendent of Indian Affairs*, Bowie, MD, 1999, p. 128.Back

[12] For a detailed view of this "sense of flux and fear of potential failure", see Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit: Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1993. Concerning ideas associated with "savagery" and "civilization", see Bernard Bailyn's "marchland" conceptualisation in *The Peopling of British North America: An Introduction*, Random House, New York, 1986. Back

[13] Greg Dening, "Introduction", in Ronald Hoffman, ed., *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America* , University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1997, pp. 1-6. Back

[14] *South-Carolina Gazette*, Sept. 25, 1762. Back

[15] South Carolina Commons House of Assembly Journal, Jan. 7, 1768 (hereafter cited as Commons Journal). Back

[16] William Bull to Lord Hillsborough, Oct. 4, 1769, Records in the British Public Records Office Relating to South Carolina, 1760-1775. Transcripts. South Carolina Department of Archives and History, Columbia, S.C. Back

[17] North Carolina Executive Records, June 7, 1770. Back

[18] Klein also highlighted the activities of the bandit Benjamin Burgess. Burgess was not only an outlaw, she noted, but also a member of "a hunting and trading community located between the Broad and Saluda rivers". Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, pp. 60-61. Back

[19] *South-Carolina Gazette*, June 1, 1765. Back

[20] Lipscomb (ed.), *Commons Journal*, May 2, 1758. Back

[21] *South-Carolina Gazette;* and *Country Journal*, Aug. 9, 1768. Back

[22] *South-Carolina Gazette*, Jan. 9, 1762 and June 30,1766; Lipscomb (ed.), *Commons Journal*, Jan. 19, 1759 and June 11, 1760. Back

[23] *South-Carolina Gazette;* and *Country Journal,* July 28, 1767; Charles Woodmason in Richard Hooker (ed.), *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant* , University of North Carolina Press, 1953, p. 214. Back

[24] Bailyn introduced the term "marchland" to describe early American culture as "the exotic far western periphery, a marchland, of the metropolitan European culture system". This "ragged outer margin of a central world", he wrote, was a "disordered border country" where "savagery and developing civilization" intermingled. Bailyn,*The Peopling of British North America*, pp. 112-114. Back

[25] *South-Carolina Gazette*, Oct. 19, 1767. Back

[26] *South-Carolina Gazette*, March 8, 1765. Unfortunately, after his capture, Ben disappeared from the records. Back

[27] *South-Carolina and American General Gazette*, Dec. 5, 1766 and May 29, 1767. Back

[28] Charleston Court of General Sessions Records, April 27, 1769, Oct. 26, 1770, Jan. 21, 1772 and Oct. 27, 1774; *South-Carolina Gazette* , July 18, 1771, Nov. 26, 1772 and April 12, 1773. Back

[29] *South-Carolina Gazette*, Oct. 3, 1771. Back

[30] *South-Carolina Gazette*, July 25, 1768. Back

[31] British Public Records Office, June 5, 1770. Back

[32] *South-Carolina Gazette*, July 2, 1772. Back

[33] *South-Carolina Gazette*, July 9, 1772. Back

[34] *South-Carolina Gazette*, July 30, 1772. Back

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[36] Woodmason, *CarolinaBackcountry*, p. 277. Back

[37] Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, pp. 19, 22n. Back

[38] *South-Carolina Gazette*, August 16, 1768. Back

[39] Brown, *South CarolinaRegulators*, p. 137. Back

[40] Klein, *Unification of a Slave State*, p. 74. Back

[41] North Carolina Executive Records, Oct. 27, 1768. Back

[42] Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill , 2002. Back

[43] *South-Carolina Gazette*, Dec. 8, 1768. Back

[44] Commons Journal, Feb. 15, 1770.Back

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[47] *South-Carolina Gazette*, June 21, 1770. Back

[48] *South-Carolina Gazette*, July 2 and 30, 1772. Back

[49] *South-Carolina Gazette*, July 5, 1773. Back

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