

Atticus ^[1]

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by Richard Rankin, 2006

Atticus was the pseudonym ^[2] employed by the author of a scathing, 4,500-word letter printed on the front page of the 7 Nov. 1771 issue of the *Virginia Gazette* ^[3] (Williamsburg). Atticus accused North Carolina royal governor ^[4] William Tryon ^[5] of mishandling the Regulator uprising ^[6] and called for an end to prosecution of the movement's leaders. Tryon's response to backcountry grievances, according to Atticus, exhibited a rashness, an arrogance, and a vindictiveness that infuriated the Regulators, deepened their antipathy toward the establishment, and contributed to continuing disorder.

Beginning with Francis X. Martin in his 1829 *History of North Carolina from the Earliest Period* ^[7], many historians have identified Atticus as Maurice Moore ^[8] Jr., a colonial jurist, Whig ^[9] pamphleteer, and member of an illustrious Lower Cape Fear ^[10] planter family. Neither Martin nor subsequent historians, however, have offered documentation to support their claim. As colonel of a troop of Gentlemen Volunteer Light Dragoons, Moore accompanied Tryon in his first military expedition against the Regulators in the hinterlands. If indeed Atticus was Moore, Atticus's call for leniency reversed his earlier opposition to the Regulators as evidenced by his participation in Tryon's expedition against them.

References:

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Additional Resources:

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1 January 2006 | Rankin, Richard

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