

Dissenters ^[1]

Dissenters

by [William S. Powell](#) ^[2], 2006

Dissenters were those people living in the North Carolina colony after the [Anglican Church](#) ^[3] was established who rejected its beliefs and rituals. In 1711, ten years after the church was established by law in North Carolina, missionary John Urmston found few churchmen in the colony. Instead there were numerous [Presbyterians](#) ^[4] and Independents, "but most anythingarians." Nevertheless, in that same year acting governor [Edward Hyde](#) ^[5] recommended harsh legislation against dissenters. James Reed, an Anglican missionary but not an objective observer, wrote in 1760 that dissenters "can hardly be said to be members of any particular Christian society, and great numbers of dissenters of all denominations come & settle amongst us from New Eng[lan]d[.] Particularly, Anabaptists, [Methodist](#) ^[6], [Quakers](#) ^[7] and [Presbyterians](#) ^[4], the Anabaptist are obstinate, illiterate & grossly ignorant, the [Methodist](#) ^[6], ignorant, censorious & uncharitable, the Quakers Rigid, but the Presbyterians are pretty moderate except here & there a bigot or rigid Calvinist." [Huguenots](#) ^[8] and [Roman Catholics](#) ^[9], of course, were also considered dissenters.

References:

William S. Price Jr., ed., *North Carolina Higher-Court Records, 1702-1708* (1974).

William L. Saunders, ed., *Colonial Records of North Carolina* (10 vols., 1886-90).

Subjects:

[Colonial period \(1600-1763\)](#) ^[10]

[Religion](#) ^[11]

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1 January 2006 | Powell, William S.

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