shopping locally? While the book effectively shows that the merchants and civil rights activists racialized the politics of consumption in the 1960s, nothing is said about the workers themselves, indeed the possibility of a continuing class divergence in patterns of consumption is left unexamined.

A related problem is the assumption that an ideological consensus existed in the community. The author mentions in passing the existence of a vocal liberal minority in the suburb in the context of her discussion of the debate over racial integration in 1964. But where these suburban liberals were in the 1950s is unclear. Also, the possibility that they used civic associations to challenge their neighbours' emerging conservatism is not considered. As my study of suburban Queens and Rosalyn Baxandall's and Elizabeth Ewen's work on Levittown have shown, community organizations were often sites where neighbours debated political issues. The same might have been true of South Gate as well.

The author's conclusions about the predominance of race in shaping local politics in the 1960s are not called into question by these criticisms. But the book could have been strengthened by a lesser reliance on the ever-problematic concept of "consensus" and a more careful attention to internal conflicts over class or other issues in the immediate postwar period. This said, *My Blue Heaven* remains a very important accomplishment, and will play an influential role in the ongoing debate about the changing politics of twentieth-century suburbanites.

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Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

Historians have long treated the Regulation in North Carolina as a prelude to the Revolutionary crisis. Along with the poor in colonial seaports, tenants in upstate New York, and border dwellers in New England, Regulators enter the narrative of the imperial crisis to stage a dress rehearsal for the independence movement to come. For some, their actions signaled that the Revolution would sometimes jump the boundaries of a confined, constitutional challenge to Great Britain to become a class-conscious social rebellion. For others their cause prepared the ground for wartime disaffection from the Patriot cause in the southern back-country. The study under review also places the Regulators squarely in the revolutionary generation, but Marjoleine Kars is much more interested in the causes of the uprising than the consequences of it. This beautifully written and argued book focuses on the long-term economic and political tensions that ulti-

mately produced the Battle of Alamance. Kars offers a truly new reading of the crisis as the first of many episodes in which southern farmers sought to protect familial independence against the worst excesses of the unregulated marketplace, even as they embraced trade, credit, and the rule of their economic and social betters. In sum, while this book is a must-read for specialists in the Revolutionary period, it probably has even more to offer to students of the American South more generally.

This book begins with a very close look at the settlement patterns and economic framework of Piedmont North Carolina in the decades leading up to the Regulation. Family farmers from diverse ethnic backgrounds, Kars finds, became neighbors there with the purposeful goal to achieve economic independence and secure the futures of their children through land tenure. Their plans to maintain a competency, however, were soon disrupted. Land offices, speculators, and the colonial government itself pursued various policies that left many newcomers to pay vastly inflated prices for tracts they had already poured sweat to improve. In the 1760s the colonial legislature created a sinking fund to retire North Carolina's paper money, which, in combination with revenue raising schemes of both the government and the Church, burdened family farmers with high taxes and little hard cash with which to pay them. According to Kars, suspicions that corrupt tax collectors were pocketing some of the receipts, thereby perpetuating the tax burden, only added bitterness to this toxic brew. Many faltering farmers then faced court proceedings governed by Piedmont elites who seemed to be in league with the tax collectors, lawmakers, and land agents that had put them in difficult financial straits to begin with. Rulings often deprived debtors of their land and possessions, which were sometimes then resold to local elites at below market value, reinforcing suspicions that the wealthy colluded against the common farmer with complete disregard for community well-being.

Kars claims that the Scots-Irish Presbyterians, German Moravians, English Quakers and Baptists, and a host of others who settled the backcountry soon came to question the morality of deferential politics under the circumstances and embraced popular protest in hopes of obtaining redress. Kars asserts that backcountry underdogs could talk of morality in economic and political life and consider acting against the interests of their social betters precisely because they were predominantly affiliated with radical Protestant faiths, some heavily influenced by a transatlantic awakening of the previous generation. While adhering to several competing denominations, backcountry North Carolinians shared a new light perspective. In Kars' view, evangelical adherence to the notion of a priesthood of all believers, the necessity of individual Bible study, and the inner light gave plain folk an inclination to question authority, to assert independence from their social leaders in some matters, and to challenge the traditional social order by example in their willingness to embrace household dependents as spir-

itual equals. Kars argues that "religious and secular dissent became progressively intertwined as people applied their religious beliefs to their understanding of legal and economic justice and used their experiences in dissenting churches to demand greater political participation" (109-10). The Regulation grew out of dissenting Protestantism not only in ideas, Kars argues, but also in practice – dissenting churches were intimately involved in the organization of protest.

The final pages of the book follow the Regulation itself. Kars claims that the Regulators, at first reluctant to challenge the fundamental framework of deferential politics, drew inspiration from the Sons of Liberty and the Stamp Act protests and to organize relatively peaceful, almost submissive resistance. She catalogs their attempts to encourage their leaders to address their grievances by withholding taxes, petitioning, and using the courts, in combination with mild extra-legal shows of force, as when they "liberated" some of their number from local jails. Gradually, however, frustration mounted as legal options failed to address the problems of the Piedmont family farmer, and it became more apparent that the colonial legislature and the Governor were as unresponsive as Piedmont elites to their plight. Finally peaceful protest gave way to armed conflict. In the face of organized efforts to quell popular protest with the force of the militia, primarily brought in from the eastern counties, Regulators prepared for a showdown. They were, however, no match for their opponents, and peace came to the backcountry at the muzzle of a musket.

While the Battle of Alamance was a thorough victory for the government and the propertied interests represented there, one of Kars' most important contributions is to suggest that the ideas which brought plain folk in the Piedmont to arm themselves against their own leaders were not snuffed out on this battlefield. The desire to preserve household independence would continue to drive the southern yeomanry to distance themselves from, and even challenge their leaders for the next century at least. This book leaves the impression that Steven Hahn's post-Civil War farmers, who engaged in a form of agrarian rebellion by embracing the Populist Party, were not so different from the Regulators. The Regulation, then, might be understood as a foundational moment in the history of the southern yeomanry even more than as a blueprint for the Revolution.

For historians of North Carolina, this book does not necessarily supercede previous literature so much as complement it. In particular, Kars' work might be seen as a companion volume to Roger Ekrich's seminal work, *Poor Carolina*. Ekrich focused his attention upon the social character of the elite in this colony, and Kars shifts our gaze to the yeomanry. Ekrich suggests that leadership inexperience among the elite and institutional weakness go a great distance toward explaining the chaotic nature of North Carolina politics. Kars' analysis suggests that this up-and-coming elite also embraced the opportunities of the market economy differently than plain farmers. The origins and nature of the elite

approach to market relations in the 1750s and 1760s is not a subject of discussion in this volume, however, and deserves further study.

Kars' work also revisits ideas made popular in Rhys Isaac's study of the evangelical contribution to revolutionary ideology in Virginia. While recent work has emphasized the conservative nature of southern evangelicalism in the Old Dominion over the long haul, bringing Isaac's interpretation under review, Kars makes a supporting case for the socially challenging potential of dissent. In North Carolina a weaker established church and a greater variety of more radical sectarians argue for the plausibility of this interpretation. While it is possible that "evangelical revolt" found a home among the Tarheels, Kars' assertion that many denominations might be taken together under the rubric of the "new light" is open to challenge. To be sure, Quakers and Moravians demonstrated a pronounced willingness to disengage from the mainstream when it challenged their moral principles, but Baptists and Presbyterians in other colonies were decidedly less comfortable in that role. Historians of religion in colonial North Carolina are blessed with the journals of Anglican missionary Charles Woodmason, but his inability to distinguish between the dissenting groups he despised should not provide guidelines for scholars.

In the end, this book does a masterful job of uncovering the sources of the Regulation and tying backcountry farmers of the eighteenth century to their more famous nineteenth century descendants. We now must await the next chapter of the story from Kars' or others' pens to discover how participants in the Regulation went into, and came out of, the Revolution itself.

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Richard S. Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

In 1775 a small group of Philadelphians met at the Sun Tavern to form the Pennsylvania Society for the Abolition of Slavery (PAS), the world's first organization ending human bondage whose "distinctly conservative style of activism" "set the standard" (p. 16) for early national American abolitionism. The story of the PAS is the subject of this fine study by Richard S. Newman. In telling the history of this key organization, Newman also tells the story of American abolitionism in the early republic and its transformation into a radical and interracial movement in the antebellum years.

Not to be mistaken for a mere trend, the PAS incorporated in 1789, winning legal recognition and standing. Their membership, the group touted, was made