

# Ratifying the amendments

BY DAVID WALBERT



Figure 1. This map shows North Carolina counties as they were drawn in 1840. A few counties were added between 1835 and 1840, you can use it to find the counties listed in the voting records below.

Not everyone supported the Amendments of 1835. They were put to a vote of all eligible voters in the state — “all freemen of the age of twenty-one Years, who... have paid public taxes,” according to the Constitution of 1776<sup>1</sup> — and the results were 26,771 for the amendments and 21,606 against, or 55.3 percent for and 44.7 percent against.

Although the amendments were adopted by a fairly close margin, support for them wasn’t evenly spread out through the state. In each of the counties below, the vote was overwhelmingly one way or the other.

The vote in selected counties on the constitutional amendments of 1835<sup>2</sup>

County	For	Against
Brunswick	0	466
Buncombe	1,322	22
Burke	1,359	1
Craven	131	270

County	For	Against
Edgecombe	29	1,334
Hyde	2	431
Iredell	1,184	18
Lincoln	1,887	42
Martin	14	795
Orange	1,131	246
Rowan	1,570	18
Rutherfordton	1,557	8
Tyrrell	1	459
Wake	243	1,124
Warren	46	580
Washington	14	409
Wilkes	1,757	8

### ACTIVITY

1. Find each of the counties listed in the data table on the map at the top of the page. (Click the map to see the full-sized version.) The simplest way to keep track of the counties is to print off a copy of the map, and to use crayons or markers to color them as you find them, using two different colors for counties voting for and counties voting against.
2. Once you've colored in the counties, the pattern of voting should be obvious. Does this surprise you? Given what you've read, why would people in different parts of the state have supported or opposed the amendments?

### On the web

#### Exploring the relevance of North Carolina's State Constitution

<http://www.sog.unc.edu/programs/civiced/resources/docs/ExploringRelevanceofNCStateConst8.pdf>

In this lesson from the North Carolina Civic Education Consortium, students will learn how the North Carolina Constitution is relevant in today's world. They will view and take guided notes from a Power Point that explains the changes made to the state Constitution since its ratification in 1776, helping students understand that the state Constitution is a "living document" and that it can be updated to reflect the times while keeping its core principals the same. Students will

then complete a "Comparing Constitutions Scavenger Hunt" where they will examine the NC and US Constitutions and compare the differences and similarities.

#### More from LEARN NC

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#### Notes

1. See <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/4330>.
2. Data from Henry G. Connor, *The Convention of 1835* (see <http://www.learnnc.orghttp://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/connoro8/connoro8.html>) (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1908), p. 23.

#### About the author

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David Walbert is Editorial and Web Director for LEARN NC in the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Education. He is responsible for all of LEARN NC's educational publications, oversees development of various web applications including LEARN NC's website and content management systems, and is the organization's primary web, information, and visual designer. He has worked with LEARN NC since August 1997.

David holds a Ph.D. in History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is the author of *Garden Spot: Lancaster County, the Old Order Amish, and the Selling of Rural America*, published in 2002 by Oxford University Press. With LEARN NC, he has written numerous articles for K–12 teachers on topics such as historical education, visual literacy, writing instruction, and technology integration.

#### Image credits

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##### Figure 1 (page 1)

Map by L. Polk Denmark from David Leroy Corbitt, *The Formation of the North Carolina Counties, 1663–1943* (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1950). Used by permission. All Rights Reserved.