



Sign posted today near the site of the Lawne's Creek Church. R07012

See detailed story about church on page 46.

Michael participates in Tax Rebellion.

Information to write this article was found in a variety of articles including R06061, R06062, R06086, R06134, and R07084.

December 1673						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						
January 1674						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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Pre-Revolutionary War, Birthplace of Freedom

Several communities have claimed to be the *Birthplace of Freedom*, but we Upchurches know that distinction actually belongs to Lawne's Creek Parish Church ... and our ancestor was involved! A tax rebellion in late 1673 stands as being the earliest recorded meeting or protest in Colonial history leading up to the Revolutionary War — well over a hundred years before the war took place.

Michael and Others Hold Secret Meeting

Over a hundred years before the Revolutionary War, the colonists were disgruntled with England's hold over them, and the taxes imposed. Taxes were levied on their exports of tobacco, and apparently on most anything they traded or dealt with of value.

Michael was living in Lawnes Creek Parish when he and thirteen friends and neighbors met to discuss the taxes being imposed. England did not look favorably on folks who spoke dissention of the crown, or who met secretly to oppose the crown. Remember this is 1673. There was no freedom of assembly, and England even had a law prohibiting such assemblies or gatherings. But meet they did do.

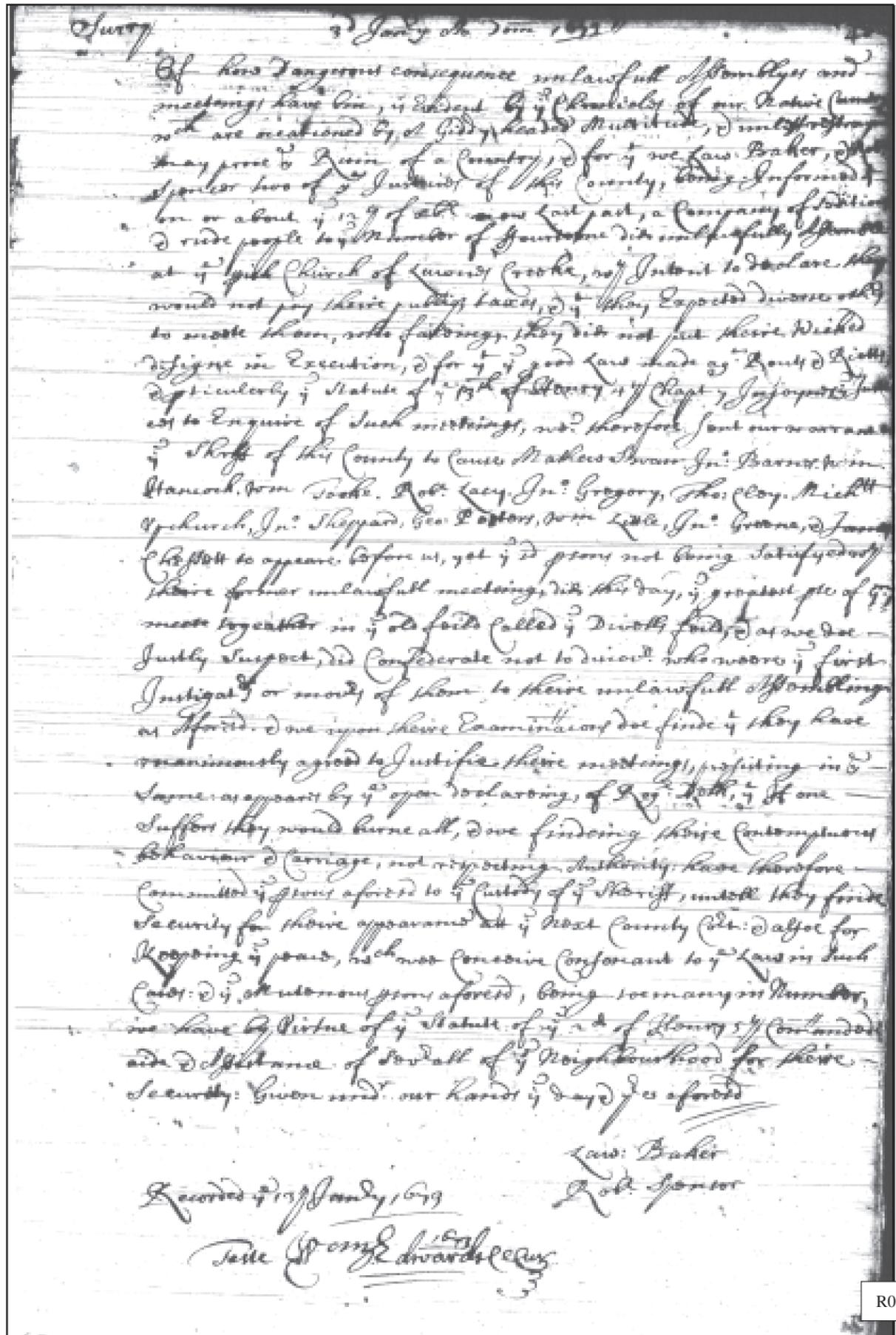
Michael and the others gathered secretly on Tuesday, December 12, 1673, at Lawne's Creek Church in Lawnes Creek Parish of Surry County, Virginia. At that gathering, dubbed *The Lawnes Creek Insurrection*, they vented their furor over the taxes, deciding they just wouldn't pay such taxes. Michael and his neighbors obviously trusted one another to voice their discontent, let alone to hold such an illegal gathering.

All fourteen were well-known upstanding members of the area, and small landowners or tenants with the exception of Roger Delke. Delke's father had been a powerful landowner and was known throughout the land. John Gregory married widow Alice Delke, and was Roger Delke's stepfather. Michael Upchurch's land adjoined the Delkes... as well as bordered land belonging to John Gregory.

Later, fearing legal repercussions, they met in *Devil's Old Field* and agreed they wouldn't divulge just who had organized the meeting at the church. But alas, authorities did hear of their unauthorized meeting, and became alarmed sensing the rebellious group represented a threat to British rule. Resurrecting a 300-year-old law, and on the basis of the 13th Statute of Henry IV, Chapter 7, the men were given warrants to appear in order to give account of their riotous assembling.

On January 2 and 3, 1673/4, Lawrence Baker, a Burgess and a Justice hosted, at his plantation south of Bacon's Castle, the inquisitory panel that included Robert Caufield and Robert Spencer. The fourteen men appeared and gave depositions. The records of the charges and depositions are provided on the next several pages with some of the original records, and several transcriptions included.

Note: The record on the next page and its transcription states there are fourteen people, yet only names thirteen. Roger Delke would have been the unnamed fourteenth person, as his name is given further into the text of the document. Plus his is the second deposition taken.



R08057