Loyalists- Part 2: Loyalists' Role in the War [1]

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Loyalists

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See also: Act of Pardon and Oblivion [2]; Brown's Marsh, Battle of [3]; Highland Regiment, North Carolina [4]; Lindley's Mill, Battle of [5]; Llewelyn Conspiracy [6]; Moore's Creek Bridge, Battle of [7].

Part 1: Introduction [8]; Part 2: Loyalists' Role in the War; Part 3: African American Loyalists[9]; Part 4: Loyalist Fate at War's End [10]; Part 5: References [11]

Part 2: Loyalists' Role in the War

In the weeks before the Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge [12] in February 1776, Loyalists responded to Governor Josiah Martin's [13] call to arms to oppose the "illegal" actions being taken by revolutionaries. The British troops that the government had promised to Martin failed to arrive, and the Loyalists who still remained in the rendezvous area (predominantly Scottish Highlanders) were dramatically defeated and humiliated. As a result, for some time thereafter men whose positive response to the governor's call was known or suspected found it unsafe to remain in their homes. Ethnic resentments against "Scotch" people in various areas worsened their position.

During the time between the Declaration of Independence in July 1776 and the arrival of British forces in Charles Towne (now Charleston, S.C.) in May 1780, many men who later would take a Loyalist stand served in the new state militia as it evolved from the colonial militia. Some militia leaders and their followers arranged compromises by which they agreed to fight Native Americans [14] but not the British government. Others refused to swear an oath of allegiance to the state, which during these years became a requirement for participation in the militia. Service in the militia was required from every able-bodied man, except Quakers [15], Moravians [16], Dunkards, and Mennonites [17], who paid higher taxes instead. So refusal to take the oath of allegiance generally meant that a man would have to hide in the woods to evade capture or else leave the area.

The years 1780, 1781, and even much of 1782 saw bitter civil war, sometimes called the "Tory War," led by men such as infamous Loyalist leader David Fanning [18]. There was also much side-switching among Loyalists and Patriots. In 1781 it was said that British commander Lord Charles Cornwallis [19] and American general Nathanael Greene fought each other with armies composed largely of the other's deserters. For prisoners of war, service in the captor's forces was a working option, and men were still joining the Continental Army in 1782 after having been captured as Loyalists in battle or its aftermath.

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Encyclopedia of North Carolina, University of North Carolina Press.[24]

1 January 2006 | Morgan, Laura

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[9] https://ncpedia.org/loyalists-part-3-african-american-l
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