

Southern Loyalists: Further Plans by Ray Blakeney UE

I started this research with the idea I would expand on the further information my cousin Ron Blakeney and I had acquired since I published "*My Help Comes From Above*". I wanted to add to the history of my own family but what I found was a fascinating history of the struggle of many of my ancestors neighbours and friends.

But not all neighbours turned out to be friends. The revolution in the Carolinas and Georgia was a civil war that bordered on hatred and murder. Southern Loyalists have a strong bond with the struggles of the Northern Loyalists. Although they appear to have been in the majority in their support of the British Government in South Carolina, especially in the Ninety-Six District, there was a lot of switching of sides throughout 1775 to 1782. It is a story of survival.

There is still a wealth of information available on Loyalists from South Carolina and their connection to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Canada. I want to put the resources I now have found available to anyone who has an interest in these Loyalists. This includes a chronological time line of events leading up to the Revolution in South Carolina.

Their story will never be totally told as many died in tragic circumstances. Still, there is enough that one can weave what I consider a heroic tale of faith and self-determination. As with most refugees they left their native lands to seek a better way of life, a place far from war and famine, only to be involved in this civil war, not of their making. They were caught up in the politics of the day and chose a side, win or lose, that would ultimately help form a new nation.

Many of those settlers, loyal to the Crown, stayed behind when thousands fled the new Republic. They blended in the best they could within a new country that considered them as traitors. Many felt they were the Patriots.

Those who left had been caught up in one of the worst bloody conflicts with their neighbours before a second civil war in the United States less than a century later.

It is interesting that I did not find one homogenous group of people with a radical belief in remaining loyal to the government of King George III. They differed in language and religion and ethnic background. It appears they first wanted to protect their families from the terror of neighbours who sought their very lives, even when they wanted only to live and raise a family. There was no remaining neutral. Conform to independence from Britain or be stripped of everything you had worked for. These Loyalists had truly felt the British would win and restore their homes to peace and tranquility. Instead they got defeat and exile.

They were helped by the British government to live in a new land. The cold, the wilderness and the poverty were the biggest setbacks for many who could not make it in a new harsh environment and they wanted to return to their farms in the warmer Carolinas. The majority stayed in what is now Canada or went to Britain and Ireland, or to other British colonies. Many

had been exiled at least twice but refused to give up.

I am hoping that this incomplete list of Loyalists will help others in their genealogy quest to get background on their ancestor and their history. Spellings are as I found them in the sources. Some entries may be in twice as I was working from several sources.

This was never intended to be a complete picture of all the Southern Loyalists but I wanted to stir up an interest in this neglected area of history. The story should not be so much on the leaders of the Revolution on both sides but the men, women and children on both sides that became drawn up in this first civil war.

Please carry on the research I have started. There are a lot of unsung stories yet to be told.

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