

Sophie H. Jones

2016 UELAC Loyalist Scholarship Award Recipient

The United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada is pleased to announce Sophie H. Jones of Liverpool, UK as recipient of the 2016 UELAC Loyalist Scholarship Award. Ms. Jones is a second year PhD candidate at the University of Liverpool, investigating the development of cultural identity in Colonial America and American Loyalism during the American Revolution.

Sophie's PhD research considers the cultural origins of Loyalism in New York as a consequence of 1690s Anglicisation policies and the later Consumer Revolution, before analysing the activities of Loyalists during the American Revolution and assessing their responses to its aftermath. Building upon undergraduate and postgraduate research, her project contributes to an emerging school of thought which highlights the strength of British cultural identity and Loyalist support within New York, which lasted until – and often beyond – the moment of independence.



In 2009, Sophie was awarded a BA Honours degree in History by the University of Liverpool with a dissertation entitled “Commercial Anglicisation in Colonial New York.” In 2014, she was awarded an MA in Eighteenth-Century Worlds by the University of Liverpool, with her dissertation “Detecting and Defeating Loyalist Conspiracies in Revolutionary New York: A Study of the Albany County Commission, 1778-1781.”

As part of her doctoral programme, Sophie has taught both undergraduate and masters level courses at the University of Liverpool relating to the Atlantic World, the Eighteenth Century and Atlantic Revolutions. She is an active member of her University's Eighteenth-Century Worlds Research Centre.

Following is an excerpt from Ms. Jones' research proposal – provisionally titled: “From Anglicisation to Loyalism: New York, 1691-1783”

Thus far, the main focus of my study has consisted of a detailed analysis of the memorials and evidence presented by loyalists before the Loyalist Claims Commission. Held at the British National Archives, these claims form the official records of the British Commission for the Compensation of American Loyalists, and were taken from those Loyalists exiled in both London and Canada.

Comprising of a cross-section of over four hundred individual claims lodged and heard, my sample provides a cross-section of New York Loyalists from different counties, socio-economic backgrounds, and ethnicities. From the information provided in their testimonies, I have been able to identify various motivations for Loyalism within New York and to suggest broader social,

economic, contextual and local circumstances which may have influenced individuals to join the British forces.

This builds upon my Masters-level research which critically assessed the reliability of the minutes and methods of the Commissioners for Detecting and Defeating Loyalist Conspiracies based at Albany; the evidence in both sources suggests that individuals may have exploited the committee infrastructure in order to resolve local tensions and historic grievances, effectively forcing undesirables in the community into 'involuntary' Loyalism.

During September 2015 I conducted a research visit to New York City, where I consulted the rare books and manuscript collections of the New-York Historical Society and the New York Public Library. At both archives, I consulted an array of diaries, letters and personal papers, account books, daybooks and inventories documenting Britain's involvement in the early administration of New York, contemporary reflections on events of the mid-eighteenth century, and personal accounts of the war and its aftermath. Significantly for my study, the New York Public Library also contains a sizeable set of manuscripts concerning interactions between Native Americans and colonial authorities, which are particularly sparse in British archives.

In 2016 Sophie has enjoyed a very busy calendar of speaking engagements, including: the British Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies; the joint British and Irish Associations for American Studies Conference in Belfast; guest lectures at the University of Georgia (Athens, GA); the University of Manchester (UK); and a public heritage event at Liverpool's Bluecoat Centre for Contemporary Arts.

In September 2016, Sophie will be in residence at the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts as a Peterson Fellow where she will consult the Society's collections relating to New York's loyalists during the American Revolution and the accounts of Loyalist exiles following the British defeat. Sophie has also been awarded the Larry J. Hackman Research Residency Programme to visit the New York State Archives in Albany, where she will consult collections concerning property confiscations and decisions taken against suspected Loyalists during the War.

Sophie plans to use the UELAC Loyalist Scholarship to enable a visit to archives in Canada during Spring/Summer 2017 to conduct primary research. She welcomes the opportunity to be part of the UELAC community of fellow Loyalist researchers, and will make details of any upcoming visits or speaking engagements public. In her words, "With the support of the UELAC Scholarship, I intend to contribute to UELAC's ongoing mission of promoting and celebrating the history and traditions of the United Empire Loyalists."