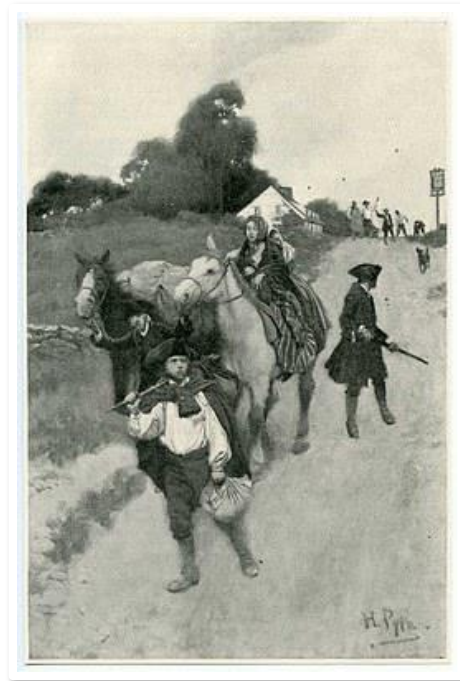


Loyalists in the American Revolution

Historical background

In 1775, 13 British colonies in North America began a rebellion and American patriots declared their independence from the British crown. But not everyone was on board with the patriot cause. Many Americans had familial and business ties with Britain, and some just liked the security of being under the protection of the powerful British Empire.

Those who sided with the British were called Loyalists, or Tories, and they often faced intimidation and violence, as well as property deprivations. In the face of this persecution, many fled to Canada or the UK. It's estimated that more than 70,000 Loyalists fled the American colonies with about 50,000 finding their way to Nova Scotia and Quebec.¹ With this massive influx of settlers, many of whom left with few provisions, the British government struggled to accommodate the refugees in camps.



Many Loyalists chose to serve with the British forces, sometimes fighting against family and former neighbors. The British offered freedom to American slaves who served in the British military, enticing many African-Americans to join the British cause. Some Loyalists offered material support to the British, rather than serving in the military.

Loyalists who relocated to Canada were rewarded with the title United Empire Loyalists and were allowed to append the U.E. post-nomial to their names. Loyalists and their descendants – male and female – were also granted lands in Canada, with the amount varying depending on whether they were the head of the household and rank in military service.

Support for refugees, military service, and rewards for Loyalists created a good paper trail, with records in the U.S., Canada, and England. Check state, provincial, and national archives, as well as historical organizations for publications, records, and guidance. Lists of Loyalists have also been compiled and published as well. Records will include correspondence, land records, records of refugees, claims for lost property, and military records.

In the U.S., check state and local archives. Here are links to key collections in the national archives of the UK and Canada:

- [The National Archives \(UK\)](#)
- [Library and Archives Canada](#)

¹ Irvine, Sherry and Dave Obee, *Finding Your Canadian Ancestors: A Beginner's Guide*. Provo, Utah: Ancestry Publishing, 2007.

Loyalist Resources on Ancestry



Compiled 06 August 2014

Loyalist Collections on Ancestry

In the UK and Canada: Records

- [Canada, Pension Applications For Widows and Family of British Military Officers, 1776-1881](#)
- [Canada, Loyalist Claims, 1776-1835](#)
- [UK, Royal Hospital Chelsea Pensioner Registers of Soldiers Who Served in Canada, 1743-1882](#)
- [Canada, Records of British Military Headquarters, 1775-1856](#) (browse only)
- [Canada, British Regimental Registers of Service, 1756-1900](#)
- [Canada, British Navy Ship Muster Rolls and Pay Lists, 1757-1836](#)

In the UK and Canada: Publications

- [United Empire Loyalists, Part I](#)
- [United Empire Loyalists, Part II](#)
- [British and German Deserters, Dischargees, and POW's Who May Have Remained in Canada and the USA, 1774-1783. Part One and Two](#)
- [The Loyalists in Ontario](#)
- [Loyalists and Land Settlement in Nova Scotia](#)
- [Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution, Vol. I](#)
- [Old United Empire Loyalists List](#)
- [Loyalists in the American Revolution: Miscellaneous Records](#)
- [United Empire Loyalists of the county of Dundas, Ontario](#)
- [Pioneer life among the loyalists in Upper Canada](#)
- [Loyalists and Their Times, Vol. 1](#)
- [Loyalists and Their Times, Vol. 2](#)
- [The United Empire Loyalists \(Griffin\)](#)
- [Kingston and the Loyalists of the Spring Fleet of A.D. 1783: with reminiscences of early days in Connecticut; a narrative to which is appended a diary written by Sarah Frost on her voyage to St. John, N.B., with the Loyalist of 1783](#)
- [Memorial to U.E. Loyalists](#)
- [The United Empire Loyalists of Canada: a sermon by the Reverend R.S. Forneri, B.D., Recotr of Adolphustown, preached in St. George's Cathedral, Kingston, Ont., on Sunday, May 18th, 1884](#)
- [United Empire Loyalists \(Harris\)](#)
- [The Loyalists and slavery in New Brunswick](#)
- [Coming of the Loyalists](#)

Loyalist Resources on Ancestry



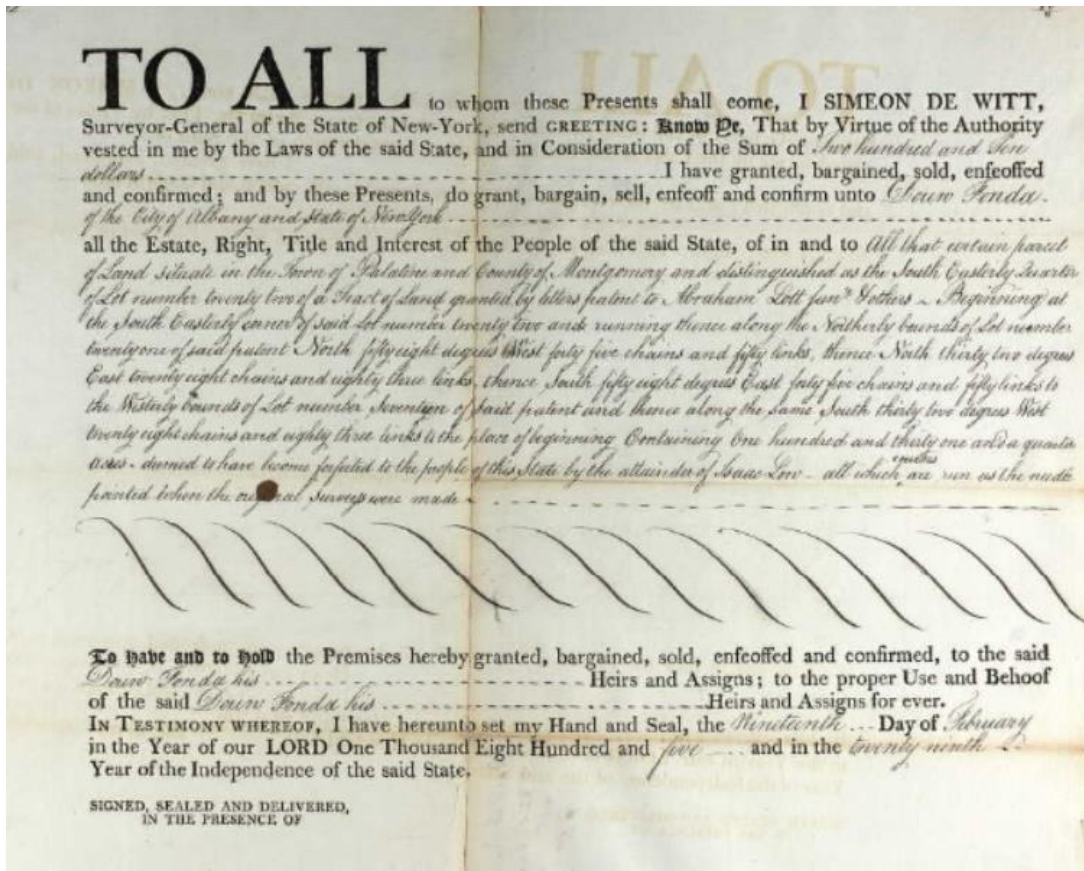
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In the U.S.: Records

- [New York, Sales of Loyalist Land, 1762-1830](#)

In the U.S.: Publications

- [The Loyalists in North Carolina During the Revolution](#)
- [Loyalists in the Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War, Vol. I](#)
- [Loyalists in the Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War, Vol. II](#)
- [Loyalists in the Southern Campaign of the Revolutionary War, Vol. III](#)
- [The New Jersey volunteers \(Loyalists\) in the Revolutionary War](#)
- [Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution, Vol. II](#)
- [The Loyalists of Massachusetts](#)
- [Loyalty and Reprisal \(Bergen County, New Jersey\)](#)
- [The Tories, or, Loyalists in America: being slight historical tracings, from the footprints of Sir John Johnson and his contemporaries in the revolution](#)
- [Orderly Book of the Maryland Loyalists Regiment, June 18, 1778, to October 12, 1778](#)



New York, Sales of Loyalist Land, 1762-1830