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### Your Revolutionary War Ancestor

- Events leading to the American Revolution
- Patriot or Loyalist?
- Did my ancestor serve?
- Migrations




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## Colonies in 1775

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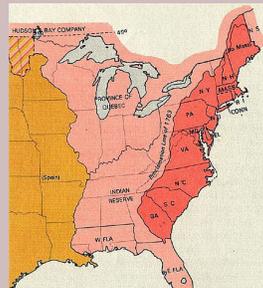
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### Colonies in 1775

- Population of 2.5 million in 1775  
– 500,000 enslaved people
- Diverse
- Population centers: Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Newport, Charleston




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6

**Economy**

- Regional economies
  - New England
  - Middle Colonies
  - Upper South
  - Lower South
- Trade
- Self sufficiency

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**Mercantilism**

- British Crown views the colonies as resource for raw materials
  - Controlled trade
  - Grew Crown's wealth
- Limits growth of wealth in colonies
- Tension

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**Events leading to Revolution**

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**Taxation**

- British Crown in debt after Seven Years' War and French and Indian War
  - Wars ended in 1763
- Needed to raise revenue from thirteen colonies
  - Revenue or Sugar Act of 1764
  - Stamp Act of 1765
  - Townshend Acts of 1767

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10

**Escalation**

- Boston Massacre - 1770
- British Crown sought to subdue Colonies
  - Tea Act of 1773
  - Coercive Acts of 1774
- Bolstered Patriot cause



Americans throwing the Cargoes of the Tea Ships into the River at Boston

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11

**First Continental Congress**

- Delegates from twelve colonies meet on September 5, 1774 in Philadelphia
- Adopt Articles of Association
  - No importation of British goods
  - No consumption of British goods
- Local committees established to enforce the Association

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12

### Articles of Association

- Those found guilty of subverting the Association were publicly renounced
- Names published in newspapers
- Publicly slandered



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### Emergence of Loyalists

- The Articles of Association were seen as catalyst
- Forced colonists to take a side
- Two groups emerged
  - **Whigs:** Supporters of Patriot cause
  - **Tories:** Supporters of British Crown

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### Battles of Lexington and Concord

- April 19, 1775
- Outbreak of war



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# Patriots and Loyalists

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16

## Patriots

- Individuals who wanted independence from British Crown
- Also known as Rebels, Continentals, and Yankees
- Hailed from all social and economic groups



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17

## Reasons for Rebellion

- Republicanism
  - Liberty
  - Equality
  - Civil rights
- Self-determination
  - Self-governance
  - Autonomy
- Economic independence

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18

**Loyalists**

- Individuals who remained loyal to the British Crown during and after the American Revolution
- Also known as Tories and Royalists
- Later referred to as Refugees




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19

**Loyalists**

- Lived in all thirteen colonies
- Hailed from all social and economic groups
- Roughly 15-20% population identified as Loyalists




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20

**Loyalists**

- Native Peoples
  - Iroquois
- People of color
  - Black Loyalists
- New Immigrants
  - Great Britain
- Scotch Irish
- Descendants of Dutch settlers



*Joseph Brant*

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21

**Reasons for Loyalty**

- Identified as British subjects
  - Morally wrong to oppose the British Crown
- Politically conservative
- Family ties to the British Crown
- Business relationship with the British Crown
- Personal advantage to remaining loyal
  - Property owners

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**Reasons for Loyalty**

- Employed by the British Crown
  - Clerks, officials, etc.
- Saw Patriot cause as radical
- Former soldiers who served in British Army
- Newly arrived immigrants from Britain
- Personal reasons

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**Was my ancestor a Patriot or a Loyalist?**

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**Establish Profile**

- Confirm parentage
- Identify family group (siblings, spouse, etc.)
- Determine residences
  - *When* did they live there?
- Research associates
  - Neighbors, business associates, etc.
- Learn about community

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25

**Important Questions**

- What were the affiliations of your ancestor’s family and neighbors?
  - Parents, siblings?
- What was their occupation?
- Where did your ancestor live **before, during,** and **after** the American Revolution?

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26

**Peter Earle**

- **Born:** in the 1740s to Enoch Earle and Grietje Van der Hoef
- **Siblings:** Lawrence Earle, Cornelis Earle, Dorothy Earle
- **Residence:** Bergen County, New Jersey
- **Married:** Rachel Ackerman on 7 April 1767
- **Occupation:** Blacksmith

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27

### Study Family and Associates

- Henry Ackerman, Abraham Ackerman, Jacob Roome
  - Peter Earle purchased land from these men
- Ackermans are likely relatives of Rachel (Ackerman) Earle
- An Abraham Ackerman and Jacob Roome settled in Maritime Canada after Revolutionary War
  - Same men?

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28

### Study Place

- Bergen County, New Jersey
  - Loyalist stronghold
- All socio-economic classes




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29

### Peter Earle

- Where was he **before, during,** and **after** the American Revolution?
- **Before: 1771** - New Barbadoes Township (Hackensack)
- **During:** ?
- **After: 1786** - Shelburne County, Nova Scotia

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30



**Not all Loyalists**

- Acadians
- Scottish
- Irish
- Germans
- New England Planters



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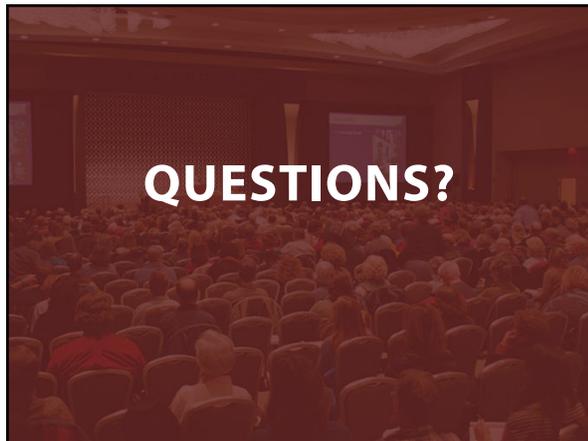
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34

**QUESTIONS?**



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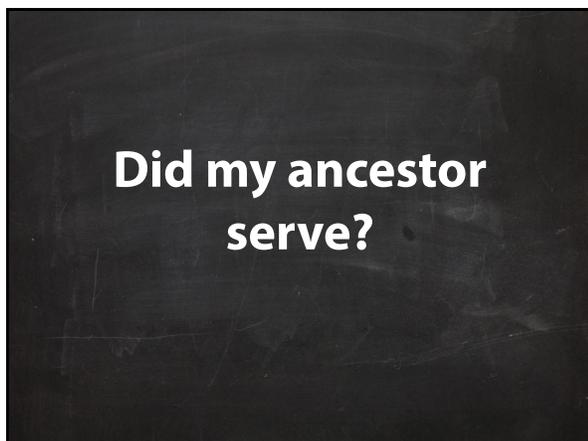
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**Did my ancestor  
serve?**



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36

**Establish Profile**

- Confirm parentage
- Identify family group (siblings, spouse, etc.)
- Determine residences
  - *When* did they live there?
- Research associates
  - Neighbors, business associates, etc.

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**Age**

- Was your ancestor the right age to serve?
- Average age of soldier was late teens to mid-thirties
- Birth years *can* range from early 1700s to 1760s




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**Tip**  
Make a timeline!

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**Make a Timeline**

- Birth, marriage, death
- Include residences
  - Census
  - Land transactions
  - Tax
- Include *who* they interacted with
- View data in a new way

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40

**Patriot Resources**

- Service records
- Pensions
- Bounty land records
- Censuses and Pension Rolls
- Manuscripts
- Town records
- Published state sources
- Lineage society records
- Published military sources

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41

**Service records**

- Muster rolls
- Payrolls
- Inspections
- Provisions
- Miscellaneous records

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## Where can I find these records?

- United States, Revolutionary War Compiled Service Records, 1775-1783
  - Abstracts
  - NARA M881
- Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783
  - Originals
  - Continental Troops and State Troops
  - NARA M246
- FamilySearch.org, Ancestry.com, Fold3.com

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43

**US, Revolutionary War Service Records, 1775-1783**  
Records: 431,818 - Complete: 100%

People, Records, Places, Dates, or Service Number...

**Summary**  
These are compiled service records for the regular soldiers of the Continental Army, and for the militia, volunteers, and others who served with them. The records are arranged under the designation "Continental Troops" or a state name, then by organization, and then alphabetically by a soldier's surname. Records consist of card abstracts of entries relating to each soldier from original records. Also included are regimental lists including muster rolls, pay lists, and caption cards.

**Description**  
by Craig R. Scott, CG  
This series of images consists of more than compiled military service records of soldiers who served in the American Revolutionary War. They include service records for the Continental Army, State Troops, and some state and local militias. They include the service records of infantry, artillery, cavalry, and other units. Also included are records that relate to the unit, rather than to the individual soldier.

A typical infantry regiment in the Continental Army generally referred to in this series as a regiment or battalion without the designation "infantry" might contain field officers, such as a colonel, lieutenant colonel, and major; a regimental staff, including an adjutant, quartermaster, surgeon, surgeon's mate, paymaster, and chaplain; and eight to ten companies. Cavalry companies were frequently called troops. Artillery companies included specialized soldiers, such as bombardiers, gunners, and masons. Artificers were civilian or military mechanics and artisans employed by the Army to provide necessary services. Artificer companies included cooperers, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, harness makers, cooper, nailers, and tanners.

**Related Publications**

- US, Revolutionary War Service Records - Name 1775-1783
- US, Revolutionary War Service and Imprisonment Cards, 1775-1778
- US, Service Records of Volunteers, 1784-1801
- US, Pennsylvania Revolutionary War Battalions and Militia Index, 1775-1783
- US, Massachusetts, Soldiers and Sailors in the Revolutionary War, 1775-1803
- US, Revolutionary War Manuscript File, 1775-1790's
- US, Revolutionary War Prize Cases - Captured Vessels, 1776-1787
- US, Numbered Record Books, 1775-1790

<https://www.fold3.com/publication/470/us-revolutionary-war-service-records-1775-1783/description>

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## Muster Rolls

- A list of members of a unit
- Prepared monthly, quarterly, etc.
- Records ranks of members

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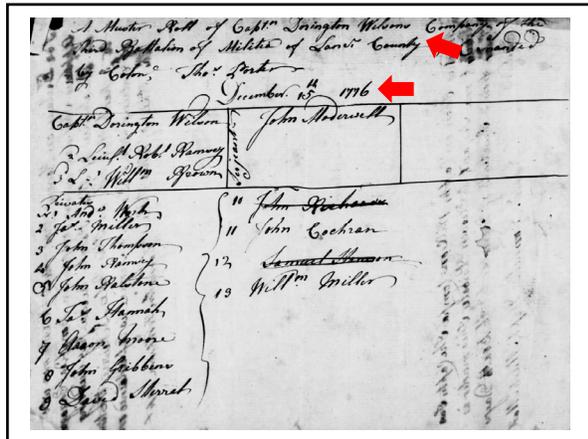
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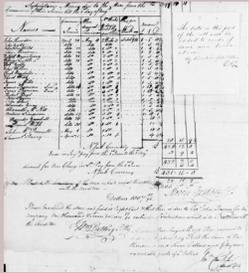
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### Payrolls

- Name of company
- Dates of service
- Pay rate
- List of members



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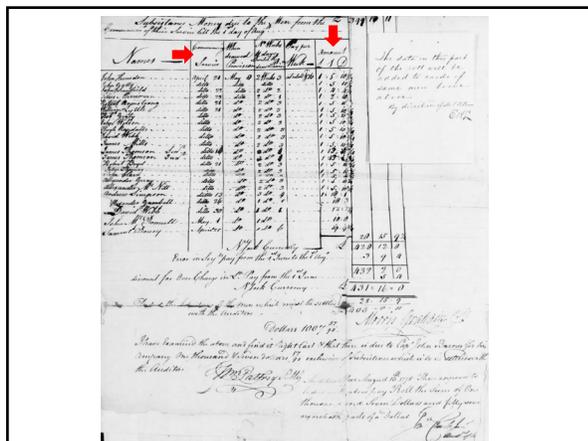
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**State Sources**

- Perform exhaustive search
- Check state muster rolls
- State Archives
- United States Revolutionary War Rolls – Inventory
  - [https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United\\_States\\_Revolutionary\\_War\\_Rolls - Inventory](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/United_States_Revolutionary_War_Rolls_-_Inventory)

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**Censuses and Pension Rolls**

- 1813 Pension Roll
- 1818 Pension Roll
- 1820 Pension Roll
- 1835 Pension Roll
- 1840 Census of Pensioners

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51



## Orderly Books

- Official record of a company
  - Orders
  - Discipline
  - Movements
- Administration
- Prisoners
- Camp life

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**ORDERLY BOOK OF MAJOR WILLIAM HEYR.** 303

10th. The General begs Col. Connor to accept this Thanks for his Obedience & personal discharge of the Office for the Time he acted in it.

HEAD QUARTERS M. BROOK, June 19th, 1777. G. O.

Major Genl for to-morrow, Stephen, Brigadier General for to-morrow, Woodford, Field Officers, Col. Muhlenberg and Major Heath, Brigade Major, Telling.

The Quarter Master of each Regt is to draw provision for such sick as remain with the regt for which purpose they are to be included and their Numbers ascertained in such Provision Returns. The Commissary will supply them with fresh meat when on hand.

The General Court Martial now sitting will proceed forthwith to the Trial of Major Peter, Brigade Major to General Woodford, arrested by order of Colonel Spotswood for refusing a true & just return of his Regiment, and sending him an insulting message by his Adjutant, all Witnesses to attend.

CAMP MIDDLE BROOK, June 20th, 1777. GENL'S ORDER.

Major General for to-morrow, Green, Brigadier General for to-morrow, Conroy, Field Officers, Col. Dayton\* and Major Davis, Brigade Major, Witherspoon.

General Wayne's Brigade is to proceed with actual firing this afternoon at 4 o'Clock. Each Captain or Commanding Officer of a Company is to make out an immediate Sign'd Roll of his Company according to which the Men are ever to be drawn up in when formed in two Ranks, the shortest Men are ever to be plac'd in the front, by which means the firing will be rendered the most effect more certain. The Commander in Chief approves the following Sentences of a General Court Martial, held the 19th & 18th Inst, when Col. Stevens\* was President, &c.

\* Colonel Elias Dayton, of New Jersey promoted brigadier general.  
\* Colonel Ebenezer Stevens of the New York artillery regiment.

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ARCHIVEGRID

Find Archives Near You

ABOUT ARCHIVEGRID

ArchiveGrid includes over 7 million records describing archival materials, bringing together information about historical documents, personal papers, family histories, and more. With over 1,400 archival institutions represented, ArchiveGrid helps researchers looking for primary source materials held in archives, libraries, museums and historical societies.

If you'd like to see your collections included in ArchiveGrid or have questions about the ArchiveGrid project, please get in touch with us.

LOOKING FOR DIGITAL CONTENT?

Some collection descriptions include links to digital content.

<https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/>

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## Town Records

- Administrative record of town
- New England, Long Island, Maritime Canada
- Military service
- Patriotic service

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Fremont, New Hampshire

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## Published state sources

- Transcribed military records
- Profiles of soldiers
- Many compiled late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries

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**Service Records**

- **Provincial Corps:**  
Loyalist *colonial* forces
- **British Army:** English, Welsh, Scottish, Irish soldiers, etc.




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64

**Service Records**

- Not in one centralized location
  - Gregory Palmer, *A Bibliography of Loyalist Source Material in The United States, Canada, and Great Britain*
  - The National Archives at Kew
  - Library and Archives Canada
  - <https://www.royalprovincial.com/index.htm>

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**Manuscripts**

- Ward Chipman Fonds (1754-1844)
  - Library and Archives Canada
- New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island
- Land grants, muster rolls, provisions, settler returns

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## Property Claims

- Peter Wilson Coldham, *American Loyalist Claims*
  - Archive.org
  - Ancestry.com
- American Loyalist Claims Commission
  - The National Archives at Kew

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- Prior residence
- Activities during war
- Current residence
- Property
- Associates

146

*No the Honorable Colonel Francis and J. Robertson Esquires, Commissioners appointed by Act of Parliament to enquire into the Rights and Services of the American Loyalists 1794-1795*

*The Statement of Peter Earle a Loyalist from the Province of New Jersey and formerly of New York*

*That your Memorialist resides in the town of Westmead, County of Devon and Province of that Kingdom at the present time of the late War between the United States and the British Kingdom and was in the United States during the late War and was in the Command of the Lord of Westmead and under the King's Arms and was not an active part against the United States and was by his fidelity to their Army and received a Gift in the year 1781 of the same Westmead and which he has made an agreed Sale within the British Lines but chiefly at Westmead and the Inhabitant of the Property into two Parts, the one being sold to Peter Earle and is now in the hands of the said Peter Earle, in the County of Devon.*

*Your Memorialist doth not at this time appear, being imprisoned and confined from the date which he is confined it is necessary for him to inform at the time of his Imprisonment.*

*Your Memorialist therefore prays, that his Claim may be heard and his Case taken in Consideration as early as possible and that under your Order he may be enabled to secure such aid and Relief as his Case may be found to deserve.*

*And as in duty bound he shall ever pray*

*Witness my Hand and Seal this 22<sup>d</sup> July 1794*

*Peter Earle*

Peter Earle Claim

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147

*Schedule of the Real Estate of Peter Earle formerly of Devon County in the Province of New Jersey, a suffering Loyalist, whose whole Property Real and Personal, hath been confiscated by the Laws of the State of New Jersey, and who is otherwise disabled of and who has Claim for the use of said Estate, which said Peter Earle is now an Inhabitant of and dwells upon a Part in the River Street East, in the County of Westmore in his Majesty's Province of New York.*

No	Date	Particulars	Quantity	Consideration	Estate	Value of the same in New York Currency
1.	1794	1/2 Part of the Estate of Peter Earle	1/2	£ 100	1/2	£ 100
2.	1794	1/2 Part of the Estate of Peter Earle	1/2	£ 100	1/2	£ 100
3.	1794	1/2 Part of the Estate of Peter Earle	1/2	£ 100	1/2	£ 100
4.	1794	1/2 Part of the Estate of Peter Earle	1/2	£ 100	1/2	£ 100

Total Value £ 400

Dated this 22<sup>d</sup> July 1794

*John J. Beckwith*

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**Newspapers**

- Loyalist newspapers
  - Declarations of support for Crown
- Property confiscations
- Movements

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73

- List of Loyalist Charleston residents
- Offering Lord Cornwallis congratulations for victory after Siege of Charleston in spring of 1780



*The South-Carolina and American General Gazette*

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74

**Lineage Society Records**

- United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada (UELAC)
  - Loyalist Directory
  - Different branches
  - Publications

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**Loyalist migration within Colonies**

- Moved to a different region within home colony
  - Some banished
- Migrated to another colony
  - Protection amongst more Loyalists
  - Opportunity to participate in war effort
  - Banded together to protect interests
  - Loyalist culture – plays, concerts, balls, etc.

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**Protection**

- British Government assumed duty of protecting some Loyalists
- Some Loyalists settle near British executive headquarters
  - New York City




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**British Army**

- Many Loyalists joined the British Army
- Loyalist regiments formed
  - Most known as Provincials
- Various regiments raised by individuals
  - Butler's Rangers




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80

**Firsthand accounts**

- Robert S. Allen, *An Annotated Bibliographic Guide to the Writings on the Loyalists of the American Revolution*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1982)
- William Matthews, *American Diaries in Manuscript, 1580-1954*, (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1974)
- William Matthews, *American Diaries: An Annotated Bibliography of American Diaries Prior to the Year 1861*, (Boston: J.S. Canner, 1959)

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81

**Treaty of Paris of 1783**

- Acknowledgement of the United States
  - Britain relinquishes all territorial claims/property
- Established boundaries of United States
- Prisoners of war released by both sides
- Prevent future confiscations of Loyalist property

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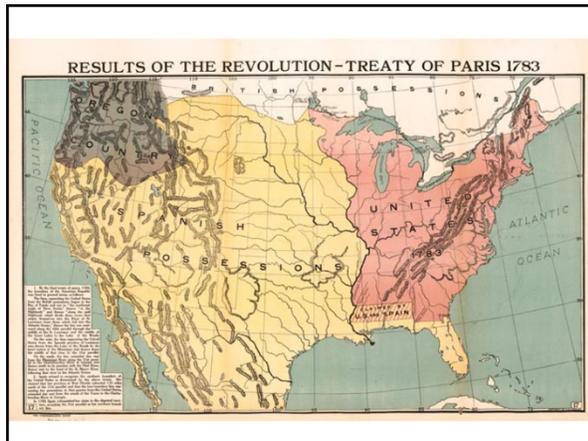
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**Migrations**

- Altered economy
  - New economic opportunities
- Migrations north, south, and west
  - Long-settled areas crowded
  - Less land
- New territories
- Land speculation

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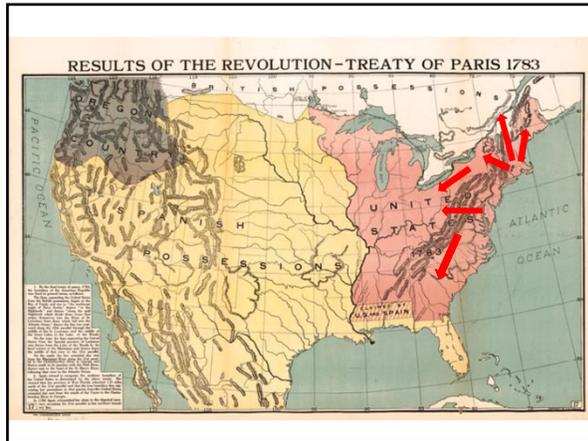
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**Land Ordinance of 1785**

- Legislation passed to establish rules for Public Domain lands
  - Survey
  - Sale
  - Settlement
- Townships divided into 36 one-mile square sections
- Sections of each township reserved
  - 16 for support of public school
  - 8, 11, 26, 29 reserved for future sales

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**Loyalists**

- Offered refuge by British Crown
  - Land grants
- Migrated to Canada, Great Britain, Caribbean during and at the close of the war
- Established new communities

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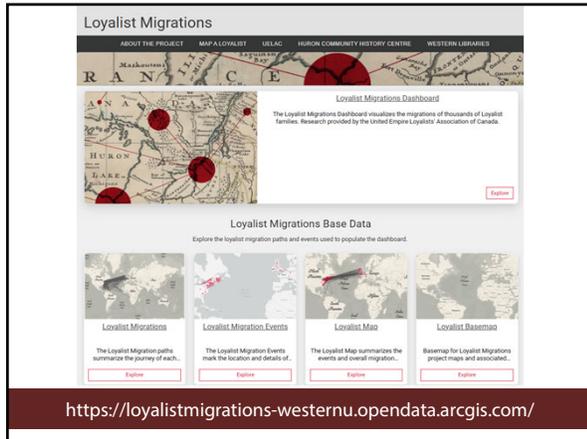
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## Conclusion

- Establish profile
  - Where did they reside?
  - Who did they affiliate with?
  - Where did they reside *after* the American Revolution?
- Examine primary and published sources
  - Don't forget manuscripts!
- Stay organized!

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# QUESTIONS?

**Schedule a consultation**  
consultations@americanancestors.org

**Hire Research Services**  
research@americanancestors.org

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