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## The Reintegration of the Loyalists in Post-Revolutionary America

### Abstract

Most White Loyalists were able to successfully reintegrate into society after the American Revolution. They made their case through decisions to stay and petition for amnesty, which was helped by demonstrating that they embodied republican civic virtues and by making amends with their community. Americans were willing to accept them back into society because of republican ideals, exhaustion from the war, the desire to repair community cohesion, and the social ties that prevailed between both sides throughout the war.

### Keywords

Loyalism, Revolution, Reintegration, America, History, Colonial, Revolutionary, Tory

# **The Reintegration of the Loyalists in Post- Revolutionary America**

*Marco J. Lloyd | Gettysburg College '23*

Enduring historical perceptions of the Loyalists emerged almost as soon as the war ended. Early Americans wanted to create a sense of identity and unity in the new republic, portraying the Revolution as a unified overthrowing of a tyrannical and oppressive government, both to glorify their nation and serve as a model for future national unity. Loyalists were thus resigned to an ignoble footnote in American historiography for almost two centuries.<sup>1</sup> Historians did not extensively reexamine the role of Loyalists until the rise of new social history in the 1960s and 1970s. With this, there was a newfound interest in the stories not previously told and history from the bottom up. There is now an understanding that the American Revolution was a civil war in many regards, with significant numbers of active individuals opposing independence. Scholars such as Robert Calhoun were instrumental in developing the concept of Loyalists as complex

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<sup>1</sup> Eileen Ka-May Cheng, "American Historical Writers and the Loyalists, 1788-1856: Dissent, Consensus, and American Nationality," *Journal of the Early Republic* 23, no. 4 (2003): 495-97.

and dynamic actors in these events.<sup>2</sup> Historians have broken down the misconception that Tories were primarily the aristocratic elites of the community, committed to conservatism out of their desire to maintain their position at the top.<sup>3</sup> There is now an understanding of Loyalists as a diverse group, economically, racially, and behaviorally.<sup>4</sup>

As a heterogeneous group, Loyalists encountered a diverse array of treatment after the war. Most historians focus primarily on the Loyalists who absconded to Canada. This is likely because many of those who left were elite and highly committed, and thus the most prominent and well-recorded.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, historians often emphasize the persecution of Loyalists, looking at confiscation and harassment, arguing that Americans took vengeance on those who worked against their idea of liberty. However, recently several historians have studied small communities and groups of Loyalists

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<sup>2</sup> Robert M. Calhoon, *Tory Insurgents the Loyalist Perception and Other Essays* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), xvi-xix.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph S. Tiedemann, Eugene R. Fingerhut, and Robert W. Venables, *The Other Loyalists: Ordinary People, Royalism, and the Revolution in the Middle Colonies, 1763-1787* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009), 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ruma Chopra, *Choosing Sides: Loyalists in Revolutionary America*, American Controversies Series. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, Publishers, 2013), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Rebecca Brannon, *From Revolution to Reunion: The Reintegration of the South Carolina Loyalists* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2016), 5. For a thorough and well-researched account of Loyalists abroad see Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World*, National Book Critics Circle Award (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011).

who decided to remain in the United States. Judith L. Van Buskirk examined the complex interactions between Loyalists and Patriots in New York City.<sup>6</sup> Valerie H. McKito examined a case study of New York Loyalists.<sup>7</sup> Rebecca Brannon provided a comprehensive understanding of reintegration in South Carolina.<sup>8</sup> Finally, this paper will draw on a study of Loyalists in the rural community of Deerfield, Massachusetts.<sup>9</sup> These studies collectively provides valuable insight into why post-Revolutionary society was so willing to accommodate those that had worked against independence.

Creating a narrative for the fate of Loyalists after the Revolution is a challenge because there was not a uniform process. Besides vague guidance from the Continental Congress and the mostly ignored provisions in the Treaty of Paris, there was no national policy towards Loyalists. The matter of their treatment was primarily handled by the states, which often devolved that responsibility to the local level.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, any discussion of

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<sup>6</sup> Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies: Patriots and Loyalists in Revolutionary New York* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

<sup>7</sup> Valerie H. McKito, *From Loyalists to Loyal Citizens: The DePeyster Family of New York*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2015)

<sup>8</sup> Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*.

<sup>9</sup> Marco J. Lloyd, "The Reintegration after the Revolution: The Deerfield Tories from 1781 to 1800" (Deerfield, MA, Historic Deerfield Library, 2022).

<sup>10</sup> Rebecca Brannon, "America's Revolutionary Experience with Transitional Justice," in *The Consequences of Loyalism: Essays in Honor of Robert M. Calhoon* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2019), 191.

Loyalist reintegration must be a discussion of overall trends, with many differences in individuals' experiences.<sup>11</sup> However, a pattern emerges throughout the states. During the war, Patriots took measures to neuter the threat caused by Loyalist opposition. This was done extralegally, through mob action and intimidation, and legally through Test Acts, amercement, confiscation of property, banishment, and even imprisonment. Legal actions against Loyalists came to a head at the end of the war when many radicals called for vengeance in victory, and the British army's withdrawal left Loyalists without a safe haven. 1783 and 1784 saw the height of Loyalist persecution and flight. Even then, persecution was relatively moderate. There was no widespread policy of execution for political enemies, a feature of many revolutions. The main methods of persecution, confiscation and banishment were very limited in scope. Historians estimate that at least a fifth of colonists had demonstrated Loyalism in some way, but only 1/40th absconded. This is a tiny fraction, especially when one considers

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<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, the scope of this paper also must be limited to the experiences of White Loyalists, both for the sake of maintaining the focus of this paper and because Blacks and Native Americans can hardly be described as "reintegrating" into a society they were all but excluded from. Additionally, the fate of female Loyalists was often so intertwined with their husband's it was difficult to find information unique to their experiences. Some women did petition the South Carolina General Assembly, but the legislature refused to afford them political agency. Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*, 71-72. Women likely participated in social reintegration with the local community, but future research needs to be done to support this.

that most of those who left did so by choice.<sup>12</sup> Legislation naming those for confiscation and banishment rarely listed over a few hundred names in each state, compared to the tens of thousands who ended up leaving.<sup>13</sup>

After the immediate post-war action against Loyalists, the situation greatly improved for those able to weather the storm. Tempers cooled, and many Loyalists were able to reconcile with their neighbors. Many who had their property confiscated were able to regain it, and many who had absconded were able to return. Even before 1783, state legislatures and courts began hearing Loyalist petitions and cases. In 1784 many states pulled back on the confiscation laws and began passing amnesty acts as the decade progressed. The ratification of the Constitution, with its assurances of rights for all, theoretically prohibited any continuing legal persecutions, such as denial of the franchise or other sanctions. States with outstanding anti-Loyalist laws gradually relaxed them, allowing Loyalists to rejoin society as equal American citizens.<sup>14</sup> Within a decade, the losing side of a civil war was able to successfully reconcile themselves with the country they fought against. This was possible through the actions of Loyalists who

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<sup>12</sup> Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, 6-8.

<sup>13</sup> Brannon, "America's Experience," 203.

<sup>14</sup> Brannon, "America's Experience," 203-207.

helped their own integration and through the willingness of both elite and common Patriots.

### **Loyalists made a case for their reintegration**

Accounts of the injustices suffered by Loyalists can often take away the agency Loyalists had in determining their fate. However, Loyalists were not helpless victims, subject to the whims of the Patriots, but independent actors whose choices influenced their reintegration. Very few Loyalists were compelled to leave. Those named for expulsion were a tiny fraction of those who left. Many of those who absconded did so by choice. Some were fearful of future retaliation if they chose to stay. After the liberation of New York, the papers were filled with calls for vengeance against the Loyalists.<sup>15</sup> The author of one broadside, under the pseudonym “Brutus,” egged them on to flee while they still can, assuring them that it is foolish to think that Congress will give them “favor or protection,” and any who say so “are deluding you to destruction.”<sup>16</sup> Messages like these understandably intimidated Loyalists, although time would show that the radical’s bark was worse than their bite. By contrast, New York’s papers painted a

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<sup>15</sup> Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies*, 183-87.

<sup>16</sup> Brutus [pseud.], “To All Adherents to the British Government and Followers of the British Army, Commonly Called Tories” (Poughkeepsie, NY, 1783).



rosy picture of life in Nova Scotia as a land full of harmony and opportunity. In addition, many had little faith in the success of the new republic, fearing injustice, instability, and poverty.<sup>17</sup> Others were too committed to king and country to become citizens of a new nation. While some were too despised to be able to stay peacefully, the choice to leave was often motivated by self-interest and ideology rather than force.<sup>18</sup>

Many of those who fled in 1783 were still able to return successfully. McKito's study of the DePeyster family is a valuable case study of this scenario. They were a prominent New York Tory family, and all male members took up arms for the British. In 1783, they fled to Canada. After a decade in exile, one of the sons, Frederick, returned to New York. He not only survived in post-Revolutionary New York but thrived, becoming a very successful merchant. Neither he nor the commercial dynasty he founded were persecuted for his Tory past.<sup>19</sup> Even one who had taken up arms against his fellow citizens was effortlessly reintegrated back into society because by the time he returned, individuals were generally more concerned with new issues and day-to-day life than past conflicts. In this regard, Frederick was representative of many exiles who were successfully able to return after their tempers had

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<sup>17</sup> Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies*, 177-79.

<sup>18</sup> Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, 8-9.

<sup>19</sup> McKito, *Loyalists to Loyal Citizens*, 2-7.

cooled.<sup>20</sup> In some cases, exiles in other states could return before the war concluded if they demonstrated loyalty to the United States.<sup>21</sup>

However, an overwhelming majority of Loyalists decided to stay, demonstrating that whatever persecution they faced at the end of the war was tolerable to some degree. Remarkably, even some of those formally expelled by state legislatures staunchly stayed put. At least one-third of those banished by the Massachusetts General Assembly never left the state.<sup>22</sup> In South Carolina, so many Loyalists stayed on their theoretically confiscated property that the legislature caved and gave them clemency.<sup>23</sup> This further demonstrates how *de jure* proscription against Loyalists can often overstate their *de facto* persecution and that Loyalists had agency in their interactions with Patriot governments. Those that chose to stay were also able to reintegrate easier than those who chose to leave and later return.<sup>24</sup> This is partially because those who left severed their interpersonal connections and thus lost a driving force behind social reintegration.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Brannon, "America's Experience," 203-206.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas N. Ingersoll, *The Loyalist Problem in Revolutionary New England* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 287.

<sup>22</sup> Brannon, "America's Experience," 203.

<sup>23</sup> Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*, 112-13.

<sup>24</sup> Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*, 113-14.

<sup>25</sup> Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies*, 191-95.

Additionally, those that stayed had the opportunity to demonstrate that they could peacefully coexist with Whig neighbors and live under an American government. In general, Loyalists helped their case by embodying (or making the appearance of embodying) civic virtues. A major argument against reintegration was that Tories lacked republican virtues, with many accusing them of being treacherous, barbarous, and tyrannical in nature.<sup>26</sup> Former Loyalists made the case that even while aiding the British, they were merciful and charitable to their adversaries. After the war, they attempted to display that they possessed the honorable character necessary for a good citizen of a republic.<sup>27</sup> For example, the former Tories of Deerfield took a very active role in town government, aiding the community in mundane services like repairing a meadow fence or establishing a fund for an itinerant minister.<sup>28</sup> Demonstrating that they could be constructive members in an American republican society helped Loyalists win back the trust and support of their Patriot neighbors and convinced the legislatures that they should be allowed to fully reintegrate.

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<sup>26</sup> Aaron Nathan Coleman, "Justice and Moderation? The Reintegration of the American Loyalists as an Episode of Transitional Justice," in *The Consequences of Loyalism: Essays in Honor of Robert M. Calhoon* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2019).

<sup>27</sup> Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*, 82-90.

<sup>28</sup> Lloyd, "Reintegration," 19-20.

Loyalists also made their case in very concrete ways. Those who had been accused of treason were often allowed clemency based on an oath of allegiance to the new republic. The use of an oath of allegiance for reintegration stems from the ideas of “volitional allegiance,” that were emerging at the time.<sup>29</sup> Resulting from the American Revolution, ideas about citizenship and loyalty were in flux. The rebels had recently flung off their British subjecthood. Therefore, it followed that American citizenship and allegiance were an individual choice, and in the chaos and confusion of a civil war, individuals could reasonably need time to make that choice.<sup>30</sup> Beyond this theoretical understanding, an oath of allegiance was also a practical means for reintegration. There were far too many Loyalists to try for treason. Oaths were cheap, quick, and uniform procedures that were generally effective as written records of submission, admissions of wrongdoing, and prescriptions for future good behavior.<sup>31</sup> It seems naïve today to expect reformed behavior based on words alone. However, eighteenth-century American Enlightenment society placed heavy emphasis on honor, civility, and public virtue.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, oaths

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<sup>29</sup> Robert M. Calhoon and Timothy M. Barnes, “The Reintegration of the Loyalists and the Disaffected,” in *Tory Insurgents, The Loyalist Perception and Other Essays* (University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 352.

<sup>30</sup> Calhoon and Barnes, “Reintegration,” 352-353.

<sup>31</sup> Calhoon and Barnes, “Reintegration,” 353-356.

<sup>32</sup> Gordon S. Wood, *Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006), 12-16.

were forceful in the sense that breaking one would sabotage an individual's reputation and confirm to the state that an individual did not possess the necessary civic virtues to be a responsible citizen.

Finally, Loyalists who had been subject to legal punishments made effective use of petitions to appeal those decisions. In South Carolina, seventy percent of Loyalists who faced punishment promptly petitioned the legislature.<sup>33</sup> Petitioning was popular because it was effective. In the eighteenth century, petitioning was a highly valued right and a way for the otherwise voiceless to have their cases heard. Loyalists used them to argue the rule of law, plead their case for citizenship, and explain the reasoning behind their actions. Brannon argued that the most vital part of a petition was demonstrating to the legislature that their local community accepted and supported them. In other words, legal reintegration often hinged on a demonstration of existing social reintegration.<sup>34</sup> This involved them providing evidence they possessed the aforementioned social virtues. Loyalists often had friends and neighbors sign their petitions or write letters to attest to their virtues and display their social reintegration.<sup>35</sup> In order to get the backing of their neighbors, Loyalists often had to make

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<sup>33</sup> Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*, 65.

<sup>34</sup> Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*, 90-95.

<sup>35</sup> Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*, 91-93.

personal amends. Few records survive of interpersonal interactions between community members, but those that do show that many Patriots expected an apology. Some did not feel they had anything to apologize for, but those who were willing to humiliate themselves and show sincere contrition were better able to repair the social ties that were so vital to their reintegration.<sup>36</sup> Therefore, Loyalists were able to make choices that helped their case for forgiveness.

### **American society was willing to reconcile the Loyalists**

American society was generally receptive to Loyalists' cases for reintegration, accepting most but the most notorious and unrepentant. The nation's willingness to reintegrate Loyalists came from both the bottom-up and the top-down. At the end of the war, many elite Whigs supported Loyalist reintegration, blunting, and later helping to repeal, legislation against the Tories.<sup>37</sup> They also penned highly influential defenses of reintegration that appealed to both republican values. One of the most outspoken advocates for integration was Alexander Hamilton, who adopted the pen name "Phocion" in reference to an Athenian general who advocated for coexistence with their former Macedonian enemies.<sup>38</sup> He appealed

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<sup>36</sup> Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*, 73-76.

<sup>37</sup> Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies*, 186-93.

<sup>38</sup> Coleman, "Justice or Moderation?" 185.

to republican sensibilities, saying that the “spirit of Whiggism is generous, humane, beneficent, and just” and it “cherishes legal liberties, holds the rights of every individual sacred, and condemns or punishes no man without regular trial.”<sup>39</sup> Hamilton equated republican virtue to forgiving one’s enemies. He also implicitly pointed out the hypocrisy of fighting for liberty, just to deny that to others. Aedanus Burke, a conservative revolutionary from South Carolina, pointed out the illiberal nature of anti-Tory laws based on the South Carolina constitution, the Magna Carta, and common law legal reasoning.<sup>40</sup> For example, he described all Tory laws as ex post facto laws which “even in arbitrary governments is reckoned tyranny.”<sup>41</sup> He continued, arguing doing these injustices to Loyalists would have endangered the freedom of them all. The republican case for reintegration was perhaps most succinctly put by Christopher Gadsden when he said, “he that forgets and forgives most, such times as these, in my opinion, is the best citizen.”<sup>42</sup> After a long struggle for liberty and individualism, many felt they had to tolerate former opponents to demonstrate their republicanism and commitment to liberal pluralism.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Alexander Hamilton, “A Letter from Phocion, to the Considerate Citizens of New-York” (Philadelphia, PA, 1784), 3-4.

<sup>40</sup> Aedanus Burke, “An Address to the Freemen of the State of South Carolina” (Charleston, SC, 1783), 19-20.

<sup>41</sup> Burke, “An Address,” 23.

<sup>42</sup> Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*, 107.

<sup>43</sup> Ingersol, *Loyalist Problem*, 303.

These elites also gave practical and economic reasons for clemency. Burke cited Machiavelli, arguing that amnesty after a civil war is often an effective strategy for avoiding future bloodshed. He backed this up by contrasting Crowell's ill-fated lustration with the example of Charles II's successful policy of amnesty after the Restoration.<sup>44</sup> The English Civil War and the brutal fighting of the Revolution would have been all too clear to his audience. The citizens would not want their republican victory to turn to tyranny nor to fail and require the restoration of the monarchy. Therefore, they should resist the desire to purge their opponents, or their sacrifice will be for nothing. Hamilton was even more practical. He argued that by continuing the confiscation of property against the recommendations of the Treaty of Paris, America was losing international credibility, and even jeopardizing the treaty itself.<sup>45</sup> At this point, Britain was still largely in control of the territory west of the Appalachians that it had formally ceded in the peace treaty. Hamilton argued that if the Americans did not hold up their side of the bargain, Britain could reasonably refuse to hold up their end, which was something no one wanted. Both men also argued that reintegration was essential to the economic success of the new republic because many Loyalists were

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<sup>44</sup> Burke, "An Address," 29-31.

<sup>45</sup> Hamilton, "Letter from Phocion," 8-10.



merchants, and their expertise and international connections would be vital for moving the country towards successful global trade.<sup>46</sup> These men are examples of prominent Whigs who used their influence to call for amnesty for Loyalists.

The tendency for some elite Whigs to take the side of Loyalist reintegration was for similar reasons expressed by Hamilton and Burke. However, it can also be explained as a part of the conservative reaction against the more radical elements of the revolution. Throughout the war, elite Whigs viewed the leveling and redistributive tendencies of the revolutionary mob with great concern. They needed popular support to gain independence from Britain, but once the war was won, they wished to maintain the internal American hierarchy. Therefore, elite Whigs saw the calls for vengeance against Tories, especially fellow elites, as a dangerous step towards anarchy and equality. Many conservative and moderate Whigs were even willing to align themselves with former Tories in the New York government to work against the radicals.<sup>47</sup> This political allegiance can also be seen in smaller communities. The Deerfield Whigs marched side by side with their former Tory adversaries to defend the Springfield arsenal against the radicals during Shays' Rebellion.<sup>48</sup> In South Carolina, elite

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<sup>46</sup> Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*, 131.

<sup>47</sup> Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies*, 185-89.

<sup>48</sup> Lloyd, "Reintegration," 24-26.

Whigs were especially motivated to create White unity to discourage slave revolts.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, elite Whigs aided the reintegration of Loyalists because of perceived shared interests.

While moderate elite Whigs played a significant role in pushing for Loyalist reintegration, it would be inaccurate to describe it as a top-down affair. These elite calls for reintegration were likely influential because a great portion of the populace already favored reintegration.<sup>50</sup> Evidence for this can be seen in the fact that there were remarkably few crowd actions against remaining Loyalists after the war. In the lead-up and duration of the war, the Patriots furthered their cause through mob actions intended to intimidate and humiliate Loyalists and Neutralists to attempt to punish them for their Toryism and disincentivize potential sympathizers from working against independence.<sup>51</sup> However, after the war, there were very few crowd actions against Loyalists and their sympathizers, even when tempers were still running high. During the Revolution, crowds harassed lawyers who represented Loyalists, accusing them of being friends of government. However, after the war, many high-profile lawyers built successful careers helping former Loyalists regain their

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<sup>49</sup> Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*, 130.

<sup>50</sup> Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies*, 193.

<sup>51</sup> Benjamin H. Irvin, "Tar, Feathers, and the Enemies of American Liberties, 1768-1776," *The New England Quarterly* 76, no. 2 (2003): 221-25.

properties.<sup>52</sup> There were still some mobs, but there were remarkably few, and they often targeted a few high-profile individuals, who refused to play by the rules of reintegration by brazenly flaunting community norms. Brannon argued that the limited mob actions against a few high Tories served as a safety valve for popular frustration and allowed the crowds to have an important feeling of agency in deciding who got to reintegrate. This allowed the vast majority of Loyalists to pass unmolested.<sup>53</sup> One explanation for the lack of opposition towards Loyalists is exhaustion from the war effort. The Revolution lasted eight long years. During this time, people experienced disorder, violence, and economic uncertainty. Many simply wanted an end to conflict, and to further persecute the Loyalists would be to continue the strife.<sup>54</sup> Supporting this idea, South Carolina, the state most torn apart by civil war was the most clement, not the most vengeful as one might expect, likely because people were so tired of conflict.

In addition to the desire to end the war, there was a great desire to repair the fractured community. Eighteenth-century American communities were built around consensus and the common good. Therefore, when someone held heterodox views, it

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<sup>52</sup> Salley E. Hadden, "Lawyering for Loyalists in the Post-Revolutionary War Period," in *The Consequences of Loyalism: Essays in Honor of Robert M. Calhoon* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2019), 135-36.

<sup>53</sup> Brannon, *Revolution to Reunion*, 114-15.

<sup>54</sup> Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies*, 189.

was often seen as a danger to society.<sup>55</sup> Consequently, most people's treatment of Loyalists was not purely motivated by a desire to punish ideological opponents, but to repair the cohesion of society. This understanding is key to explaining the actions of Patriots towards Loyalists. Those sent into exile were the ones too divisive and notorious to coexist with.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, they would usually grant forgiveness to Loyalists who demonstrated their willingness to be reintegrated into society, through the aforementioned means of penitent apology and demonstrations of civic virtue. Recanting one's deeds against the community was often enough to restore one's reputation.<sup>57</sup> According to Barbara Clark Smith, these methods of reintegration were already used for other types of nonconformists before the Revolutionary War, and Loyalists were treated in the same manner: "Such public acts of contrition, reform, and conformity were repeated countless times in countless localities."<sup>58</sup> The people of the community were willing to accept Loyalists for the repair of their community cohesion and used existing methods of reintegration.

Finally, the Patriots were willing to accept the Loyalists because the groups were not as distinct as sometimes thought.

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<sup>55</sup> Barbara Clark Smith, *The Freedoms We Lost: Consent and Resistance in Revolutionary America* (New York: New Press, 2010), 111-12.

<sup>56</sup> Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies*, 177.

<sup>57</sup> Calhoun and Barnes, "Reintegration," 350-352.

<sup>58</sup> Smith, *Freedoms We Lost*, 111.

Most people had family or close friends that fell on the other side of the civil war. As Van Buskirk argued, Patriots and Loyalists maintained these interpersonal connections throughout the war. Borders between British and American-occupied territories were permeable. While the leaders labeled the other side as enemies and tried to ban contact between the two, ordinary people kept in contact with their friends and family even on the other side.<sup>59</sup> The hardships of war and the influx of refugees often made these connections necessary as people depended on the assistance of the other side, further blurring people's political allegiances.<sup>60</sup> These wartime connections became invaluable for post-war reconciliation. As Van Buskirk says, "in 1783, they did not have to begin building bridges to one another; those bridges had never been destroyed during the war."<sup>61</sup> For most people, the relationships between people and communities were more important than former disagreements about kings and governments.

## Conclusion

Brutus' New York broadside boldly claimed that it is not possible that "Whigs and Tories can live peaceably in the same

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<sup>59</sup> Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies*, 1-4.

<sup>60</sup> Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies*, 5-7.

<sup>61</sup> Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies*, 195.

society.”<sup>62</sup> He was incorrect in this prediction as well. Most White Loyalists were able to successfully reintegrate into society, through their decisions to stay and by advocating for their rights and reconciling with their community. Patriots were willing to accept the Loyalists because of the ideals of republicanism and the desire to return to a harmonious society. However, in some regards Brutus’ words were true. Whigs and Tories did not live peacefully in the same society because after the war those distinctions became irrelevant for those who stayed. Both the victors and losers of the war for independence lived together as American citizens.

For a civil war that was so long and costly, it is remarkable that the victors did not seek out greater punishments from their former enemies. Just a few decades later, the victors of the French Revolution would carry out a series of brutal purges against the defenders of the old order. In the history of revolutions, such moderation and amnesty is the exception, rather than the norm. Some may attribute this to the limited extent of the American Revolution as radical and redistributive. It was indeed a conservative revolution in the sense that it did not immediately upend the social order. However, by instituting a liberal society that was willing to tolerate people like the Loyalists, who held beliefs contrary to the government, the war for independence truly

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<sup>62</sup> Brutus, “To All Adherents.”

was *revolutionary* in the sense of being novel and unique. Just as it was remarkable for Washington to hand back power to republican institutions, it was remarkable that American society as a whole was willing to reconcile with their former enemies. It was not a painless process, and certainly many faced injustice in the time it took to reintegrate. However, one could reasonably trace the ideal of Loyalist reconciliation to the ideals of ideological pluralism and freedom of association that would become central tenants of American political philosophy.

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