

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

LOYALISTS AND THE CHAMPLAIN FRONTIER

A point of view from PROCEEDINGS OF THE
VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY. Loyalists who
came into Lower Canada via the Champlain
Frontier Route were among those settling
in Gaspesia.

KEN ANNETT

LOYALISTS AND THE CHAMPLAIN FRONTIERPREFACE

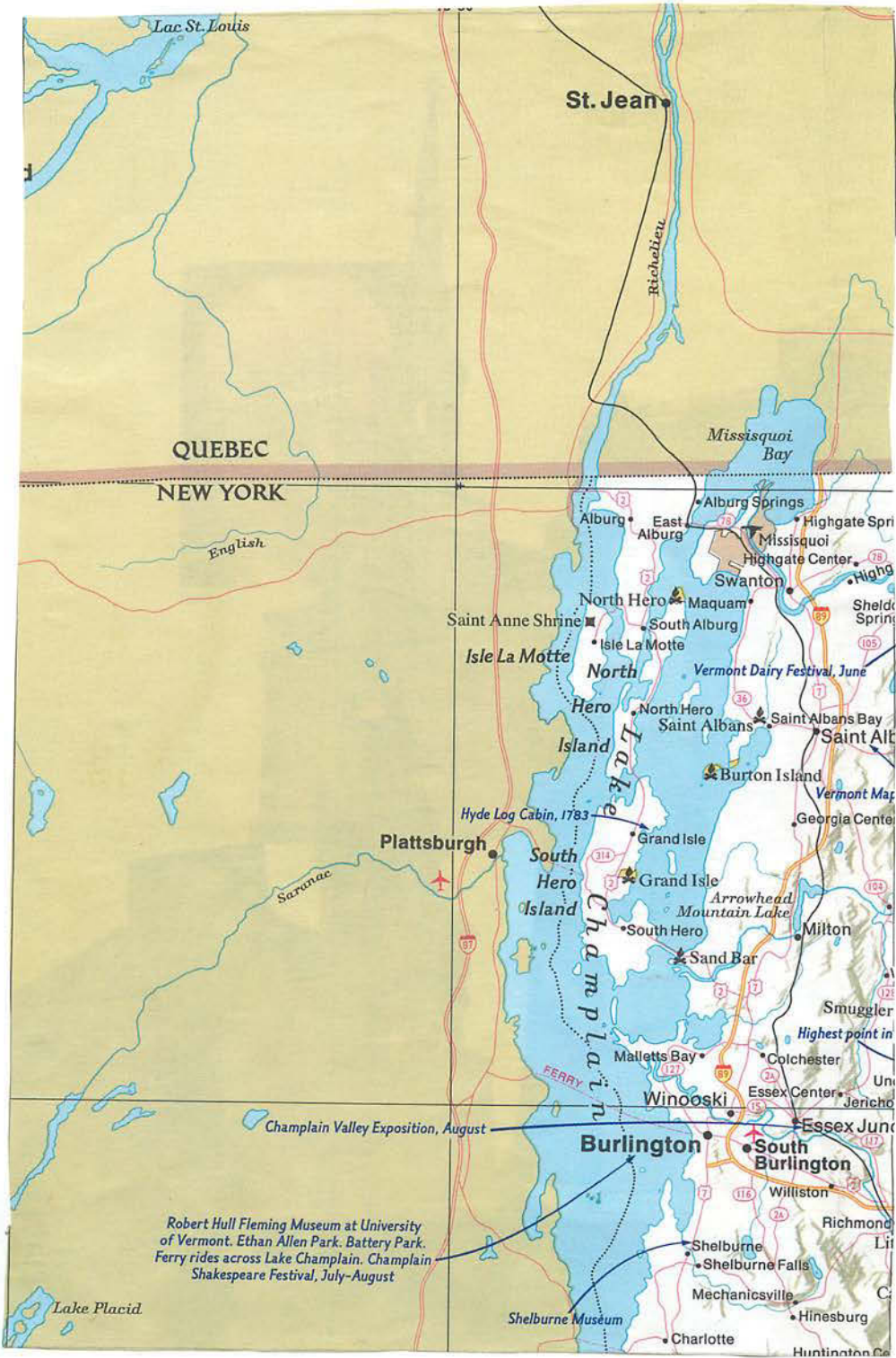
To date, GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY has several articles on the personalities and experiences of the United Empire Loyalists because of the important role the Loyalists played in the settlement and development of Gaspesia.

Among these articles have been the following:

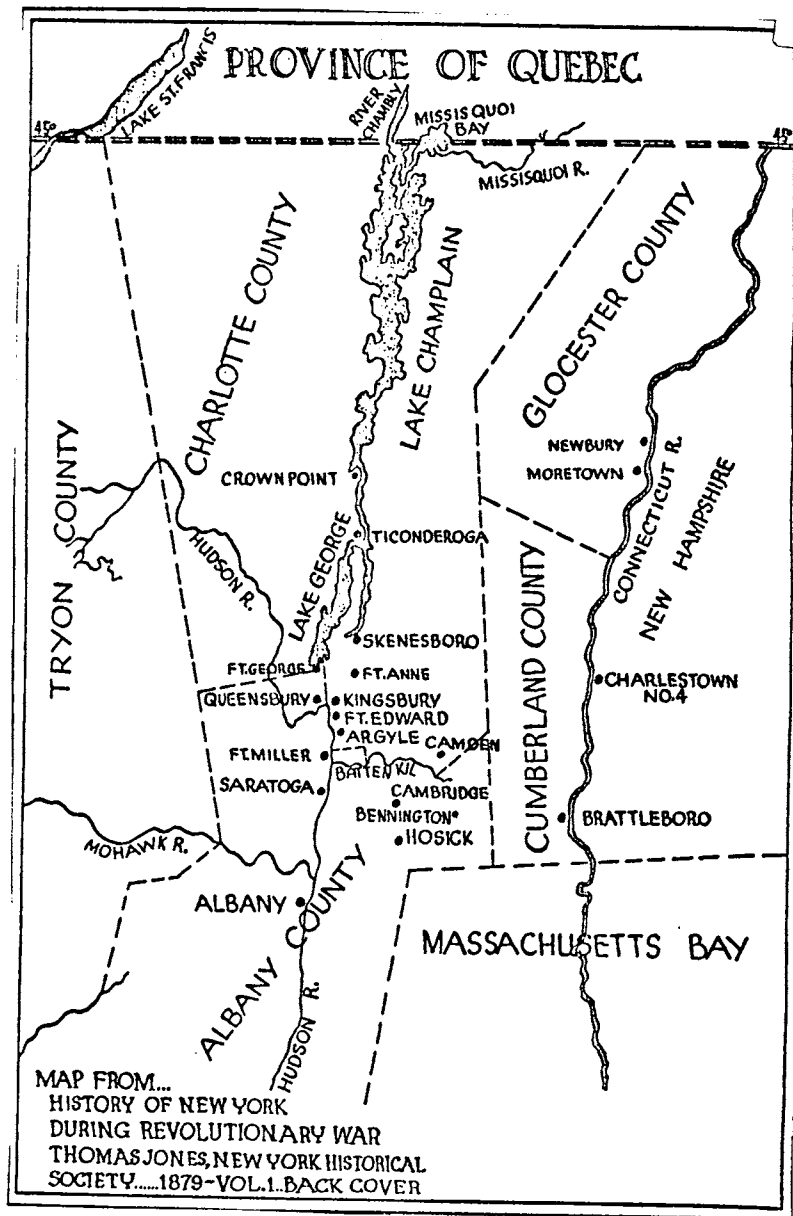
- #001 CALDWELL MANOR.
- #010 BENJAMIN HOBSON-PIONEER SCHOOLMASTER.
- #016 CAPT.GEORGE LAWE,Sr.
- #017 THE RESTIGOUCHE.
- #018 EARLY JUDGES OF THE DISTRICT OF GASPÉ
- #020 THE O'HARA FAMILY.
- #036 LOYALIST CLAIMS-PART I.
- #037 LOYALIST CLAIMS-PART II.
- #043 EARLY TOURIST IN GASPEZIA-CAPT.JUSTUS SHERWOOD.
- #044 LIFE AND TIMES OF NICHOLAS COX.
- #045 CORRESPONDENCE OF THE COX PERIOD.
- #069 EDWARD ISAAC MANN AS WITNESS.
- #072 NEW CARLISLE IN INFANCY-1785 PLAN.
- #094 THE LOYALIST CASS FAMILY.
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- #114 THE BEEBE FAMILY-PART I.
- #128 THE BEEBE FAMILY-PART II.
- #129 CAMP MACHICHE.
- #130 LOYALIST SETTLEMENT ON THE GASPÉ PENINSULA.
- #135 CAPT.AZARIAH PRITCHARD,Sr. SEEKS TO RECOVER LANDS.
- #150 CAPT.AZARIAH PRITCHARD,Sr. AS SEIGNIOR OF BIC.
- #156 NEW CARLISLE REAL ESTATE SALE. WIDOW COX TO Th.MANN.
- #159 EARLY NEW RICHMOND LOYALISTS SELL AND EXCHANGE LANDS.
- #168 FOR SERVICE IN 1775
- #194 INCIDENT IN SECRET SERVICE CAREER OF CAPT.AZ.PROTCHARD.
- #265 THE RANGERS.
- #272 BURN THE "GASPEE"
- #279 BRITISH INFLUENCE IN GASPEZIA
- #283 TWO LOYALIST WOMEN LINKED TO GASPEZIA.
- #343 RESTIGOUCHE-HISTORIC EVENTS OF EARLY DAYS.

PREFACE
(ctd)

As several of the Loyalist families that settled in Gaspesia two centuries ago entered Lower Canada via the Champlain frontier route, the following PROCEEDINGS OF THE VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY give a point of view of particular interest. It may also serve as a timely reminder of the human tragedy and incalculable loss that can follow on a political act, such as the American Declaration of Independence, that set in motion the long, bitter and divisive Revolutionary War



Proceedings of the
Vermont Historical Society



CHAPTER I. *The Champlain Frontier*

IT is a well-known fact that during the American Revolution, New York State was a stronghold of Loyalism. While a difficult matter to estimate with any degree of certainty, available records would seem to indicate that the Loyalists may have constituted an actual majority of the total population, and the statement has even been made that New York furnished more men to the British forces engaged in this war than to the American.

What was true of the state as a whole applied equally to the then recently settled region extending from a point a few miles above the city of Albany to Lake Champlain. This area lay directly across the old war trail that ran through the Champlain Valley from Canada

the Hudson, and within easy striking distance of the French fortified posts at Ticonderoga and Crown Point; consequently, during the entire period of the Colonial Wars it had been unsafe for occupation.

The fall of Quebec in 1760 removed the menace of the French and Indians, and the region above Albany was soon opened for settlement in the manner usual to the colony. The lands were granted in large tracts to speculators: the Cambridge Patent of 31,500 acres in 1761, the Anaquassacoke Patent of 10,000 acres in 1762, the Wilson Patent for 8,000 acres in 1765, and others in like manner. These speculative proprietors in turn disposed of their holdings as rapidly as possible, usually by means of long-term leases on easy payments.

The tenants who leased these lands included large numbers of recent immigrants from Europe, some Scotch and Irish from the British Isles, with many Germans from the Rhine provinces. There was one small group of these new arrivals who could have been classed as of either Irish or German derivation. They were from Limerick County in Ireland, the descendants of refugee Germans from the Palatinate who had been colonized in Ireland during the reign of Queen Anne in an attempt to promote the Protestant interest in that kingdom. Due to the ministrations of John Wesley, these Irish Palatines had become zealous Methodists. The exactions of landlords eventually rendered living conditions in Ireland so difficult that in 1760 Phillip Embury, a lay preacher, conducted a party of his neighbors to New York City for the purpose of establishing there a linen industry. Cheap land on the frontier proved more attractive than the fabrication of linen, with the result that in 1773 Embury negotiated from James Duane, lawyer of New York City, a perpetual lease covering lands in the Camden District of Charlotte County on behalf of himself and the following associates: David Embury, Paul Heck, John Dulmage, Edward Carscallen, Peter Sperling, Valentine Detler, Abraham Binninger, Nathan Hawley, Elizabeth Hoffman, and Peter Miller.¹

Peter Miller had been a weaver by trade. He had not come with the original party but had sailed from Ireland with his family in April, 1769, and on the long voyage to America one of the small children had been lost overboard. Soon after landing at New York City he had removed to Charlotte County and in 1773 participated in James Duane's lease to Embury to the extent of 125 acres. In the year following he secured, on a lease forever from Ryer Schermerhorn, an additional 210 acres just across the Battenkil in the Cambridge District of Albany County. The rent of the Cambridge farm was not to begin until five years after the date of the lease; it amounted to £7 annually in "York currency." By 1776 Peter Miller had made considerable progress in his farming, having cleared and fenced 46 acres of land, and erected a house and farm buildings at a cost of £39 "York." In addition, he had gotten together a respectable head of stock consisting of two mares, two colts, six cows, a yoke of oxen, a young steer, two calves, six sheep, and fourteen swine of assorted sizes. Relatively, he had prospered.

The advent of the political troubles in 1775 found a large section of this frontier population apathetic toward the issues involved. The foreign immigrants had not been long enough in the country to have become imbued with the political philosophy of the Revolution; they had come to America as a result of economic pressure and they had come land-hungry, intent only on the laborious task of subduing a wilderness. As a rule, these immigrants were not "politically minded"; they preferred a stable government under whose protection

they could continue to clear their farms in peace, and in this case the established British institutions seemed to offer the desired strength and security. The conditions and opportunities that they had found in the new country were so great an improvement over those that they had left in Europe that an armed insurrection seemed to most the height of folly. As to the little Methodist colony in the Camden District, it was naturally influenced by the attitude of John Wesley, who was a militant opponent of the Revolution. With a population so constituted, a strong Loyalist sentiment would be expected, and such was the case on the Champlain frontier.

Moreover, there was scattered through the countryside a sprinkling of half-pay British officers, many of whom had settled down in the province following the reduction of two battalions of the 60th, or Royal American Regiment, at the conclusion of the last French War. These retired officers were persons of consequence in their communities, the natural leaders of public opinion, and as a matter of course their influence was actively exerted in their neighborhoods in the interest of the constituted authority.

Despite their numbers, the New York Loyalists were unable to offer any effectual resistance, and the Revolutionary Party was soon in control of the government. For the balance of the year 1775 the cause of the Revolution was everywhere successful and, with an American army invading Canada by way of Lake Champlain, the Loyalists on the border could do little but bide their time and wait for the tide to turn. The tide did turn in the following year, but the difficulties of the Loyalists increased rather than diminished. A neutral attitude would have suited many, had it been possible to maintain it, but the inhabitants were required to take an oath of allegiance and serve in the militia or else to submit to some form of restraint. There was the case of Peter Miller, farmer of Cambridge District in Albany County, who refused to subscribe to the oath of allegiance on the ground that he had already taken one as a British subject. John Younglove, chairman of the Cambridge District Committee of Correspondence, entered a complaint with the county committee, and it was voted "to apprehend the said Peter Miller, dis-arm him, and place him under bonds for his future good behavior";² the expense of his subsequent arrest and appearance before the committee in Albany, nineteen shillings and five pence, was ordered "levied by distress on the goods and chattels of the aforesaid Peter Miller."³

Until midsummer of 1776 the belief had been prevalent that a peaceful solution would be found of the matters at issue between the colonies and the Ministry, but with the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4th it was generally realized that a serious conflict would follow, and there set in a steady trickle of the more zealous Loyalist partisans toward Canada. The Johnsons and Butlers, the landed gentry of the Mohawk Valley, had already departed with their Highland Scotch retainers and Indian allies. Their example was soon followed by others, including such colorful figures as John Peters, a Yale graduate resident in Mooretown, Gloucester County, the Jessup brothers, lumber barons of Charlotte County, and sundry of the half-pay officers.

On July 12, 1776, the Albany County Committee of Correspondence passed a resolution requiring all the half-pay officers of the British Crown resident in the county to give a parole not to bear arms against the United States, hold any correspondence with enemies of the United States, or to depart the county without the leave of their district committee; the alternative offered was arrest and confinement.⁴

On the day following the passage of this resolve, Francis P. Phister appeared before the committee and entered into a parole.⁵ Mr. Phister, a reduced lieutenant of the famous Royal Americans, lived at Hoosac Four Corners where he had a fine estate and a mill, and was known by the courtesy title of "Colonel" Phister. During his service in the Royal American Regiment he had been an engineer officer and in the previous February had refused an offer tendered by General Schuyler to serve as chief engineer of the American army in Canada.⁶ He now under compulsion had given a parole, a violation of which would deprive him of the privileges that he might normally expect should he later find himself a prisoner of war.

As the months passed, the more restive spirits among the Loyalists continued to slip away toward Canada to take service in Sir John Johnson's newly organized Provincial corps, the "King's Royal Regiment of New York," or more familiarly, the "Loyal Yorkers," which was being recruited from the Mohawk Valley and the Champlain region. However, it was in the autumn of 1776 that the opportunity came for which so many of the Loyalists had been waiting.

During the summer General Sir Guy Carleton had swept back the American invasion from Canada, and by October had penetrated deep into enemy territory at Crown Point. Here he was held up by the lateness of the season and ultimately was forced to retreat to winter quarters in Canada, but while the British army was at Crown Point Loyalist recruits flocked in. Among them was Peter Miller, who had earlier suffered arrest at Albany. He came with a party of some thirty Irish Palatine farmers from his neighborhood under the leadership of Justus Sherwood. Sherwood, as proprietor's clerk of New Haven, Vermont, had been active in the land troubles that preceded the Revolution and just before this had been mistreated by the Bennington mob, a piece of bucolic horseplay that cost the colonies the services of a brilliant officer.

It is probable that these Loyalists had left their homes for what they believed would be but a temporary absence, the brief interval necessary for Carleton to reach Albany and restore authority in the province. The event proved quite otherwise, and it was just as well that they were not aware of the misfortunes that were to follow. When the British army retreated over the Lake, they had no choice but to go with it, hopeful, of course, that they would be back as soon as the season would again permit of active operations.

CHAPTER II. *The Burgoyne Campaign*

IN the spring of 1777 the stage was set in Canada for the most spectacular and dramatic military operation of the war, the ill-fated expedition of Lieutenant General John Burgoyne. During the previous winter a splendidly officered and equipped army had been assembled, and carefully trained in the tactics of wilderness warfare. The plan was to ascend the Champlain Valley by boat, take the forts at Crown Point and Ticonderoga, then march overland to the Hudson to effect a junction at Albany with Sir Henry Clinton, who was expected to advance from New York City.

Burgoyne did not anticipate serious military resistance, but the problem of maintaining the long line of communication and supply was a troublesome one, and he was counting heavily on the support of the New York Loyalists, once in the difficult country south of the Lake. With this in view, Ebenezer Jessup and John Peters had each received provisional appointments to the command of Loyalist corps, which they were expected to raise, Jessup in Charlotte and Peters in Albany County. Carleton had supplied Burgoyne with blank commissions, to be issued when the respective corps were two-thirds complete.

Both Jessup and Peters were early at work, with secret agents reaching down into the Loyalist sections north of Albany, spreading propaganda and soliciting recruits. When the army left Canada in June, they had the nucleus of their battalions, a combined total of eighty-three men,¹ most of whom had followed Carleton from Crown Point the previous autumn. Justus Sherwood was a captain under Peters and in his company Peter Miller was a private. The forts at Crown Point and Ticonderoga proved impotent to impede the British advance and in July the army was at Skeneshoro, now Whitehall, the southern extremity of the Lake and near the country where Jessup and Peters expected to secure the bulk of their men. From there Burgoyne wrote to Lord George Germain on July 11th that his Loyalist battalions, though in embryo, were very promising; they had fought, and with spirit, and some hundreds of men had joined since arriving at that place.²

Four weeks later when Baum was detached to seize the stores at Bennington, Peters' Loyalists formed part of his force; in fact, the completion of this unit was one of the primary objects of the expedition, which was entering a region where Peters was well known. As Baum's troops moved out from Fort Miller, they were preceded by Sherwood's company of Peters' corps. An American picket was encountered at Cambridge, there was a trifling skirmish, and the advance continued. When the movement began, Peters had something over two hundred and sixty men; on the march he was joined by nearly two hundred more, enough to make his required quota and secure the coveted commission.³

Meanwhile, "Colonel" Phister of Hoosac in conjunction with Mr. Robert Leake of Pittstown, son of the late British commissary general, had been active in raising the countryside. An American participant in the action that followed wrote that "the greater part of Dutch Hoosac was in the battle against us."⁴ Phister and Leake gathered their men in time to join Baum on the Walloomsac, where the whole command was cut to pieces by Stark's militia. Baum and Phister, both mortally wounded in the action, were taken to a house

in Shaftsbury where they died on the following day. For the Loyalists, Bennington was a catastrophe. In addition to the heavy casualties in Phister's corps, Colonel Peters had lost upwards of half his command, and the men who would have been more than enough to ensure his commission were either killed or taken before they had been even formally mustered.⁵

When the survivors of Baum's shattered force rejoined the army on the Hudson, Captain Samuel MacKay, another reduced officer of the Royal Americans, was appointed to command the remnants of Phister's corps, now known as the "Loyal Volunteers." Peter Miller secured a transfer to this unit, which had been raised in his own neighborhood. He had escaped the carnage at Bennington, but his brother had been wounded and taken prisoner.

By this time Burgoyne's Loyalists were divided into four distinct corps under the three commanders already mentioned, and a fourth, Captain Daniel MacAlpin, also a retired officer of the Royal American Regiment. On September 1st these four corps reached the maximum strength attained at any one time on the campaign, a combined total of six hundred and eighty men.⁶ As Burgoyne worked slowly southward, the Loyal Volunteers formed the advance posts of Fraser's "flying army," and daily screened the march with their scouting parties. On September 21st one hundred and twenty "brave men of courage and fidelity" were drafted from the four Loyalist corps as replacements into the regular British battalions, which had become sadly depleted from the heavy fighting at the first battle of Saratoga.⁷

When it finally became evident that he could not fight his way through to Albany, General Burgoyne reluctantly decided on a retreat. To facilitate this proposed movement he despatched a working party, guarded by the 47th Regiment and MacKay's Provincials, back up the Hudson to repair the roads and bridges. When within three miles of Fort Edward, the threat of a serious American attack necessitated the recall of the 47th to the army. The regulars were hardly out of sight before the Loyal Volunteers found themselves confronted by a superior enemy force and cut off. MacKay succeeded in withdrawing from the river bank to the cover of a nearby wood, where he was able to maintain his position, but in so doing lost forty-three of his hundred and eighty men. Finding it impracticable to return to the British camp, he made good a retreat to Fort George, from where, learning of Burgoyne's surrender, he continued on to Ticonderoga.⁸ Brigadier Powell reported from Mount Independence on October 19th that MacKay had arrived with a hundred men and that other small parties had since come in.⁹

The three remaining Loyalist corps were also fortunate enough to avoid the consequences of the surrender at Saratoga. The night before the Convention was signed, the commander-in-chief, through General Phillips, gave leave to the Provincials to attempt an escape to Canada.¹⁰ This was done, in all probability, because a grave doubt existed as to whether the Loyalists would be accorded the status of prisoners of war, inasmuch as so many of them had already taken the oath of allegiance to the State of New York. Fortunately, the Loyalists were able to make their way back successfully without further losses, and a total of five hundred and sixty-two men subsequently returned in safety to Canada.¹¹

In the investigation that followed his return to England, General Burgoyne was severely critical of the New York Loyalists and of the troops that they had furnished to his army. He had expected the

country to rise *en masse* at his approach and felt that he had been sadly misinformed in regard to the Loyalists, both as to their numbers and their zeal for the Royal cause. In this connection it must be remembered that the General was a bitterly disappointed man, anxious to advance other reasons than his own errors, for the misfortunes that had overtaken him. The country through which he had penetrated was at best but a thinly settled frontier, and in the latter part of the campaign it must have been evident that his success was problematical. He had displayed throughout a total lack of tact in the tone of his official proclamations, and above all, in his threats to let loose the Indians. Candor compels the admission that there had been considerable shuffling about on the part of the inhabitants, following the fluctuations in the fortunes of war. It was true that many who flocked to Burgoyne's camp to "take protection," as it was termed, were actuated by expediency rather than conviction, but it was the only way that those exposed settlers could ensure the safety of their homes and families.

Burgoyne was particularly harsh in his strictures on the Provincial troops. "Their various interests made them hard to handle; one's view was to the profit to be enjoyed when his corps was complete, another's the protection of the district in which he resided, while a third was wholly intent on personal revenge." The General had found them all insubordinate, involved in a multiplicity of personal squabbles that required the personal interposition of the commander-in-chief, and "useful only for searching cattle, patrolling roads, and guiding; a few were of distinguished bravery, including Mr. Fistar [Phister] and Captain Sherwood."¹² He referred to the "desertion or timidity of the Provincials in the last days of the Expedition";¹³ again, "not half of the four hundred Loyalists may be depended upon, the rest are trimmers, actuated by self interest."¹⁴ Colonel Kingston, his adjutant general, referred to MacKay's corps as "that party of Provincials that ran away while they were employed to repair roads, and that were never heard of afterwards."¹⁵

It may be admitted that the Provincials were not trained troops and could not be expected to display the steadiness of the disciplined British regulars. However, in addition to the guiding and scouting activities enumerated by the General, the Loyalists, from Hubbardton on, had been heavily engaged in every action of the campaign; if casualties are any criterion, and they are usually so considered, the record of the Provincials compared favorably with that of the best British battalions. In joining the British forces the Loyalists had risked not only their lives, but their homes and property as well, and the dismal failure of the Expedition cost them one or the other, or both. To the Provincial officers in particular, the campaign proved an unmitigated hardship. They had expended freely their money and credit in recruiting, expecting to recover from the pay and allowances of their prospective ranks, but in this they were grievously disappointed, for General Burgoyne saw fit to withhold the commissions on the ground that, technically, their units had failed to attain the required strength.

CHAPTER III. *After Saratoga*

THE Burgoyne Expedition was the outstanding and, in fact, the last major military operation of the war on the Champlain frontier. The Provincial corps, although reorganized from time to time, were continued as auxiliaries to the British forces in Canada, but in the succeeding years were employed either on minor raids and scouting parties, or in the operations in the Mohawk Valley. These troops were not Canadians, as is sometimes stated, but were recruited exclusively from the revolted colonies and principally from the northern counties of New York. It was with the greatest difficulty that these units were kept up to strength, and recruiting was actively carried on by secret agents who operated even in the city of Albany itself.

Following the return to Canada the Loyal Volunteers were temporarily attached to Sir John Johnson's corps. In the succeeding reorganizations of the Loyalists this unit lost its identity, but Captain Robert Leake's "Independent Company," formed at Sorel in the summer of 1779, had much the same personnel.¹ This unit saw service on the Mohawk, and in 1780 relieved the Loyal Yorkers at Carleton Island, the fortified post at the entrance to Lake Ontario. Peter Miller served in this company until his honorable discharge in the winter of 1781; his two stepsons were with Butler's Rangers at Niagara.

~~The failure of the Burgoyne Expedition affected profoundly the fortunes and futures of the Loyalist families in the northern counties of New York. They had openly declared themselves and were marked down for reprisal; it was not long before there was a program of persecutions and confiscations directed at the families of those "who had gone with the enemy," and with it the resultant opportunities for the satisfaction of personal grudges and neighborhood spites. Later, the program of confiscations or sequestrations developed into a series of measures that had for their purpose the bodily removal of these families from the state.~~

On June 30, 1778, the New York legislature passed an act to "prevent mischiefs arising from the influence of Persons of equivocal and suspected characters."² It was intended to counteract the influence of certain prominent people who had professed neutrality, but whose motives were in question; they were required to renew their oath of allegiance in a positive manner and, if they refused, were to be removed forthwith to within the enemy lines. In accordance with this act, John Stevenson, Richard Cartwright, John van Alen, and Isaac Man were ordered to appear at the Albany Court House on August 19, 1778, to be removed northward within the enemy lines.³ They were to provide fourteen days' provisions for themselves and such of their families as they chose to accompany them (persons capable of bearing arms excepted). Also, they were permitted to take with them all their clothing and household furniture, but the charges for transportation to the enemy lines were to be defrayed by themselves.⁴

Up to now the migration of Loyalists to Canada had been largely confined to men of military age on their way to take service with the Provincials, but on July 23, 1778, Mrs. Phister, widow of Colonel Phister, and a Mrs. Cooper had arrived from Albany.⁵ In the fall of that year Brigadier Powell reported from St. Johns that women and children from Albany County and the Connecticut River were coming down the Lake.⁶ They were the families of Loyalists with

the troops in Canada who had found their situation intolerable, and had been fortunate enough to be able to make their way out. On September 21st the Commissioners for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies directed General Stark to provide a "flag" to Canada for Mrs. Wrag of Fort Miller, Catharine Rederpach, and Mary England, as it appeared that these women whose husbands were with the enemy had become chargeable to the districts in which they resided and were being subsisted at public expense.⁷

The fact was that these families of Loyalists "with the enemy" were becoming something of an embarrassment to the New York authorities. They were, rightly enough, suspected of being in communication with their relatives in Canada, and their presence was considered inimical to the public security. They had been already stripped of most of their possessions, and as they were, or were likely to become, public charges, there was no point in their remaining longer. On April 15, 1779, the Commissioners for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies resolved that "from the frequent complaints which are exhibited to the Board that the wives of such disaffected Persons who are gone over to the enemy daily harbor Persons who conceal themselves and their holding correspondence with their Husbands it is conceived necessary to prevent this evil, to remove them within the Enemy lines."⁸

On July 1, 1780, and again on March 22, 1781, the New York legislature enacted laws for the purpose of the "Removal of the Families of Persons who have joined the enemy."⁹ They were to be given twenty days' notice to either depart the state or to go to such parts of it as were within the enemy's power; at their discretion they could take any of their children not above twelve years of age. The authorities were empowered to take and sell all the goods and chattels in the possession of these persons, and apply the money to defray the expense of their removal.

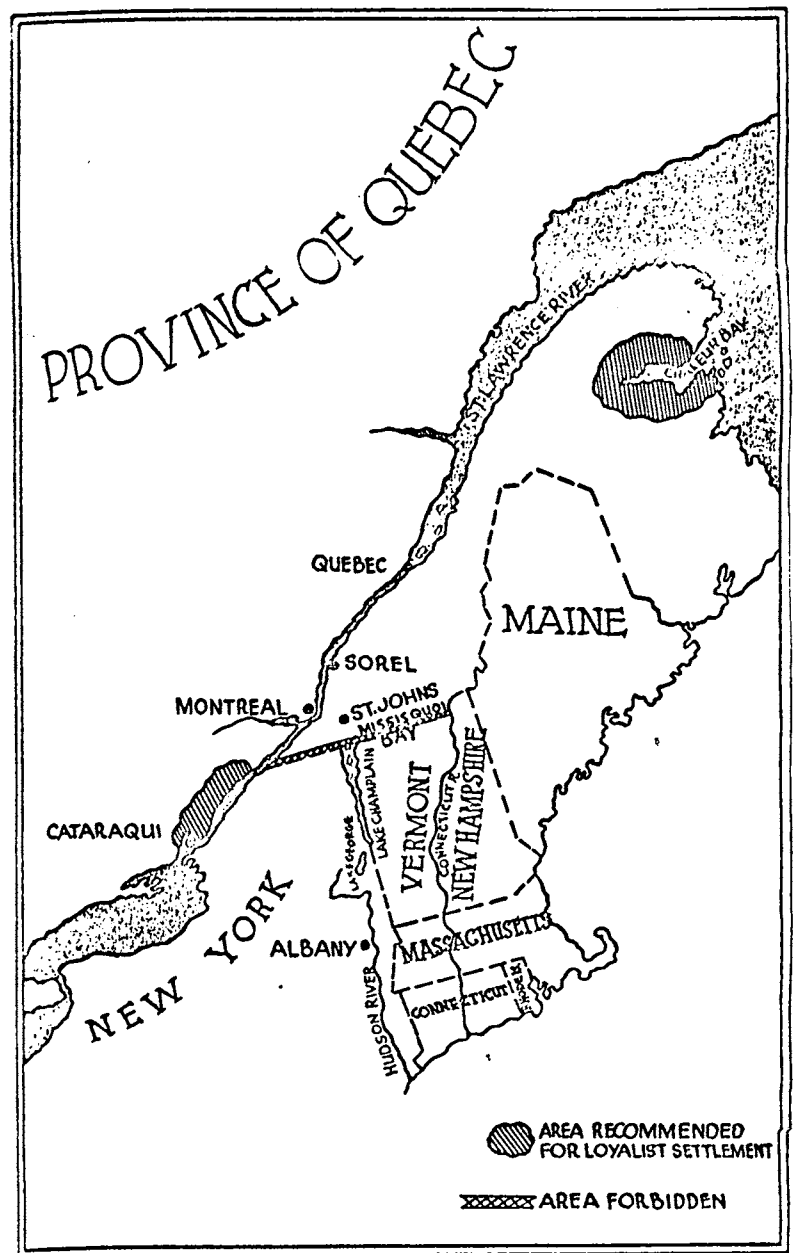
In accordance with these laws Daniel B. Bradt, Supervisor for the District of Hosick, certified on September 20, 1780, that he had warned the following women to depart the state within twenty days: Rebecca Ruyter, Sarah Cameron, Catharina Best, Elizabeth Ruyter, Hannah Simpson, Elizabeth Letcher, Arcante Wies, Maria Young, and Susannah Lantman.¹⁰ On October 7, 1780, a return was signed by John Younglove of Cambridge District that he had warned the following: Elizabeth Hogle, wife of John Hogle, who had been killed at Bennington, Jane Hogle, wife of Francis Hogle, and the three children of Simeon Covell.¹¹

Concentration points were named where these parties designated for removal were to report with two weeks' provisions. From these places the refugees were forwarded under a flag of truce to Crown Point where they boarded British vessels that brought them to Pointe Au Fer and thence to St. Johns.¹² To the end of the war there was a constant succession of these "flags" over the Lake, bringing refugee families from New York and New England. The family of Peter Miller, who had joined the British five years earlier at Crown Point, came in during the fall of 1781. They had been turned from their two farms, which reverted to the possession of the landlords; the house and barns, the horses and cattle, the sheep and hogs, and the growing crops had all been lost,—but his wife had saved the furniture!¹³

The Champlain Valley was not the only avenue of approach to Canada used by the Loyalists. The same things were happening in the other counties of the state, and as the war slowly dragged to a conclusion the refugees were streaming in overland by every available

route. When peace finally brought the melancholy business to a close and the city of New York was evacuated by the British troops, whole shiploads of Loyalists left by sea for Quebec.

As the Loyalists for the most part entered the province in a distressed or destitute condition, the government was placed under the necessity of providing for their maintenance and comfort, and this was done as adequately as the available means would permit. Cantonments were established for the accommodation of the refugees at Montreal, Machiche, Sorel, St. Johns, and other places, and a system of rationing instituted. Peter Miller was quartered at Montreal with his wife and three children.¹⁴ They were allowed two portions of provisions per day, but when the oldest daughter was married the allowance was reduced to one and one-half portions.¹⁵ On November 16, 1784, there were 5,652 refugee Loyalists—men, women, and children—on the provision list;¹⁶ at this time the total population of the Province of Quebec, which then included the area later divided into Upper and Lower Canada, was less than 115,000 souls.¹⁷



CHAPTER IV. *Haldimand's Problem*

THE burden of the maintenance of these hundreds of refugees proved a severe tax on the resources at the disposal of the Provincial government. The Governor General at the time, Frederick Haldimand, was a Swiss soldier of fortune who had entered the British service in 1754 at the formation of the 60th, or Royal American Regiment, of which he had organized and commanded the second battalion. Through sheer merit he had risen through the various grades until in 1773, at the departure of Gage for England, he had succeeded to the rank of commander-in-chief in America. On the return of General Gage in the following year Haldimand continued on the staff as Major General, second in command, and the logical successor to Gage in the event of the latter's impending retirement. It is interesting to speculate as to what would have been the probable outcome, if the conduct of the war had been left in his competent hands. However, the actual state of rebellion in the colonies required on constitutional grounds that the troops should be commanded by native-born officers; consequently, Haldimand was relieved in October, 1775, and given a nominal appointment as Inspector General of the West India Department,¹ but was recalled to the American continent in 1778 to succeed Sir Guy Carleton as commander-in-chief of the Province of Quebec.

Haldimand was a soldier, and his was frankly a military government, but he was a capable and conscientious officer with an imperial breadth of view. When the refugees first began to come into the province, he had not hesitated to assume the responsibility for their relief; as the months passed and their numbers increased, he had done all in his power to alleviate their condition. There were times when Haldimand felt that the refugees did not properly appreciate his efforts in their behalf; in fact, his relations with the Loyalists frequently moved him to the point of exasperation. The refugees were difficult to satisfy and often unreasonably demanding; they did not get on well with the authorities or with each other, and they were restless, critical, and impatient under any restraint, however well-intentioned. Their attitude, however, is easily understandable when it is recalled that they had suffered the loss of their homes and possessions, and found themselves destitute in a strange land for no fault other than loyalty to their legally constituted government. It was too much to expect that such a situation could or would be taken philosophically.

Naturally, the arrangement of housing the refugees in cantonments was an emergency measure designed to relieve a temporary condition. Until nearly the end of the war the Loyalists had confidently expected an outcome that would permit them to return to their former homes in the revolted colonies, but when the terms of the Treaty of Paris became known it was painfully apparent that there were no provisions to safeguard their interests effectually. Any thought of a return to the United States was definitely out of the question, and they were now squarely presented with the problem of a permanent disposition of their affairs.

This question of what was to become of the Loyalist refugees was one that had given General Haldimand much concern. Racial and religious factors would render difficult their easy assimilation into the older and more settled portions of that former French province; neither could they be expected to take kindly to its peculiar political institutions or semi-feudal land tenure.

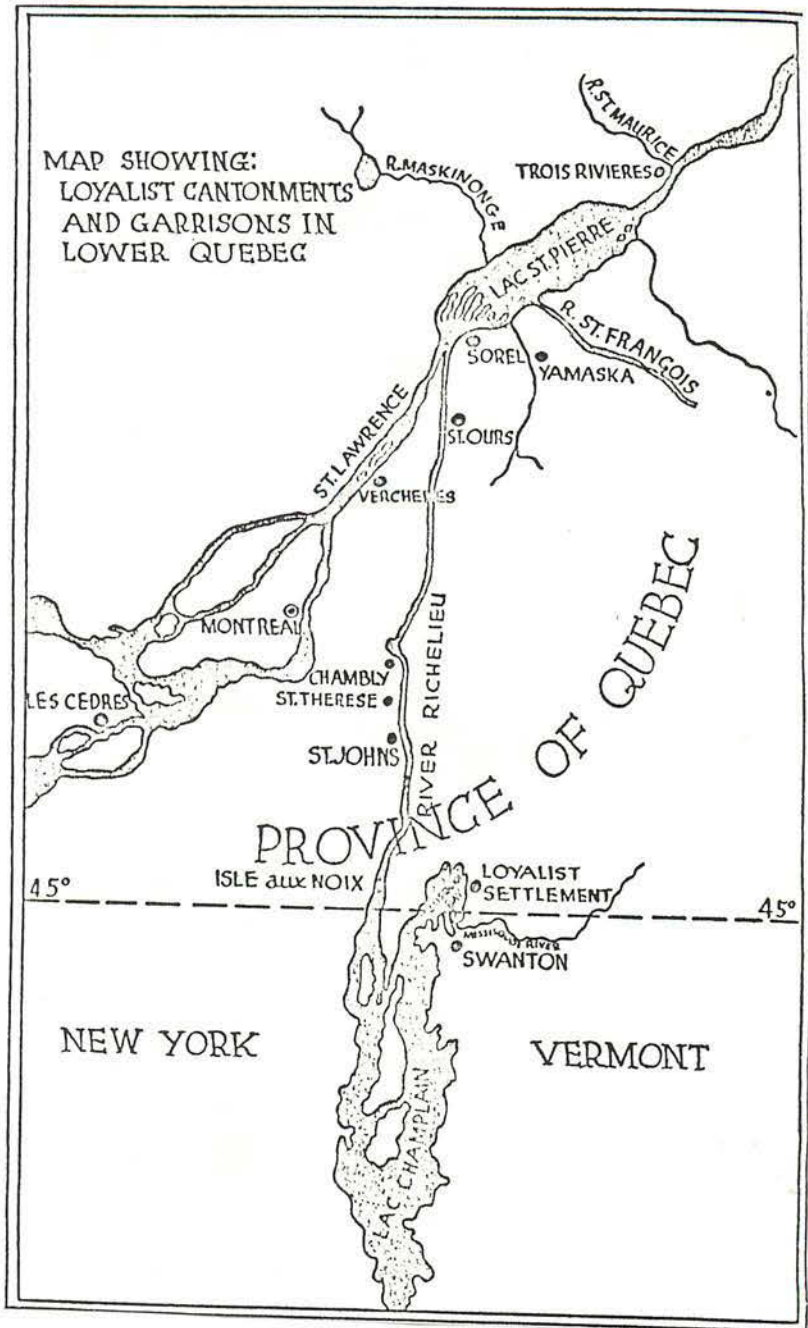
In August, 1783, the Governor General had received a suggestion from Lord North to the effect that the land to the eastward of the St. Lawrence, bounded south and west by the revolted colonies, also the Bay of Chaleurs, were eligible places for Loyalist settlements.⁷ Replying to Lord North, Haldimand had definitely stated his policy on this point, as follows: "the frontier to the east of the St. Lawrence should be left unsettled for some time, and then by French Canadians, as an antidote to the restless New England population . . . the danger of mischief by the settling of Loyalists, who could not agree with the Americans . . . will settle them on the St. Lawrence towards the Ottawa, and on the Bay of Chaleurs."⁸

The key to Haldimand's policy lay in the fact that the events of the war had demonstrated the urgent necessity of settlements in the vicinity of the "Upper Posts," the forts on the upper St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes. The excessive cost of the maintenance and supply of these remote points had imposed a terrific financial burden, but their retention was a political and military necessity. The General had now in his grasp a complete solution to the problem. On the one hand, there was a surplus and unattached population absolutely under his control, a population already inured to the privations of pioneer life and thoroughly fitted in every way to cope with frontier conditions; on the other, a wide extent of desirable territory whose settlement was dictated by every consideration of governmental policy.

Accordingly, during the summer and early fall of 1783 surveying parties were despatched to locate suitable tracts for settlements, both up the river west of Lake St. Francis⁴ and down the St. Lawrence to the Bay of Chaleurs.⁵ Already, on August 27, 1783, Haldimand had written to Lord North that he was preparing for a settlement of Loyalists at Cataraqui, now Kingston, Ontario.⁶

Meanwhile, the Loyalists who had received some inkling of these preparations began to manifest signs of uneasiness. The upper St. Lawrence was then a remote wilderness frequented by tribes of fierce savages and to be reached only after a long and hazardous journey; it was hardly an inviting prospect to a people that had already travelled far and suffered much. However, on September 6th Captain Justus Sherwood of the Secret Service reported that "he had taken means to reassure the Loyalists in regard to the intentions of His Excellency as to their settlement; for the time being they appear to be satisfied."⁷

By the end of the year Haldimand's plans were well advanced. On December 24, 1783, the various Provincial corps were disbanded, but quarters and provisions were to be continued through the winter.⁸ On the same day His Excellency issued his proclamation granting lands to the Provincial troops and refugee Loyalists, together with the rules and regulations governing such grants.⁹ It had been tentatively decided to move the Loyalists to their new homes as early in the spring of 1784 as the weather would allow, and during the winter months plans were perfected for this removal. There had been sporadic indications of discontent and unrest, but the arrangements seemed to be moving smoothly forward when, on March 1, 1784, a disturbing intelligence was received from Captain Sherwood at St. Johns. Certain Loyalists, in direct defiance of the orders of His Excellency, had begun a settlement at Missisquoi Bay from which they swore that they would be driven only by a superior force!¹⁰



CHAPTER VIII. *Missisquoi Bay*

DURING the Revolution St. Johns was the largest British base near the Champlain frontier, and frequently the headquarters for the various Provincial units attached to the Northern Division of the army. Prominent among these Provincial corps in the last two years of the war were the "Loyal Rangers," Major Edward Jessup, and the "King's Rangers," commanded by Major James Rogers, a younger brother of the famous Robert Rogers who had destroyed the St. Francis Indian settlement during the last French War. There was also in the town a cantonment of Loyalist refugees and by far the greater part of this Loyalist population, civilian and military alike, had come from the Province of New York.

As General Haldimand's preparations for a settlement on the upper St. Lawrence were in progress, it was only natural that the attention of the Loyalists at St. Johns should be directed to the advantages of the unoccupied region at nearby Missisquoi Bay. During the war the region had been continually traversed by the Provincial scouting and foraging parties, and hence was well known to these Loyalists at St. Johns. The land was reasonably fertile and partially cleared, and it enjoyed the advantage of a water transportation. Most important to the minds of prospective settlers, there would be a ready market for their produce at St. Johns, only twenty miles by land and sixty by water. Finally, it was easily accessible and not too far removed from previous connections at the other end of the Lake. These were advantages that contrasted strongly with the remote isolation of Cataract.

This interest in Missisquoi Bay had been expressed as early as August 30, 1783, when Captain John W. Meyers and Ensign Thomas Sherwood of the Loyal Rangers, on behalf of themselves and associates, petitioned for a grant of land along the line of the forty-fifth parallel to the eastward of Missisquoi Bay.¹ The Governor General's objections to grants in that quarter have already been stated, and no official attention was given to this application.

In the meantime, Captain Meyers, not content with one refusal, had renewed his application which was answered by Major Mathews on February 16th. The Major did not mince matters. After giving assurance of His Excellency's inclination to gratify the wishes of the Loyalists in all things consistent with propriety, he concluded by saying that the General "does not think fit, merely to gratify a few individuals whose views point to a paltry traffic with the colonies rather than a spirit of cultivation, to risk the consequences mentioned in my former letter."¹⁶

This was a plain intimation of General Haldimand's evident belief in the existence of an ulterior motive back of the repeated petitions for lands at Missisquoi Bay, and that it was the opportunity for illicit trade afforded by the proximity of the international boundary and not its agricultural advantages that rendered the locality on the line of the forty-fifth parallel so attractive to the Loyalists of St. Johns.

CHAPTER IX. *A Connecticut Yankee*

THE Governor General's suspicions, as indicated by the reference to "a paltry traffic with the colonies," may have been aroused by the presence among the proponents of the Missisquoi project of individuals such as Meyers, Peters, and Taylor, whose reputations at headquarters were none too good. Then there was also a certain (Azariah Pritchard), captain in the King's Rangers. Major Rogers, his commanding officer, had written to Mathews on January 26th that Pritchard had induced a number of men to go to Missisquoi Bay, that he had been telling them that the plan was to take the men to Cataract to make slaves of them.¹ Major Mathews had replied that the conduct of Pritchard, if proved, was unpardonable.²

Azariah Pritchard, the most colorful character engaged in this episode, was from the town of Derby in the Nutmeg State.³ According to his own statement, Pritchard had always been loyal in conduct and principle, but conveniently for him his father and brother were violent partisans of the Rebel cause. Under cover of this family reputation for regularity he had been able to make some lucrative

ventures in the profitable contraband trade; in fact, he held a written agreement with Lord Howe to supply provisions to the British fleet at New York. All had gone well until 1777 when Pritchard had the misfortune to have one of his cargoes intercepted by the Rebels and the fact of his ownership come to light. The fat was now in the fire and Pritchard was brought before a General Court-Martial at New Haven, the consequences of which he evaded by the naïve expedient of bribing the prosecuting officer.

As Connecticut was no longer a comfortable environment, Pritchard fled to Canada where he succeeded by a subterfuge in recruiting a company and was duly posted as a captain in the King's Rangers. The monotony of garrison duty proving irksome to his roving spirit, he then obtained a detail as a guide and scout for the Secret Service on the eastern side of Lake Champlain, a much more congenial employment and one that offered greater scope to his varied talents. In this service Pritchard was extremely active and efficient, repeatedly gaining the commendation of his superior officers.

In November of 1782 two Vermonters, John Nichols and Nathaniel Holmes, were intercepted while attempting to smuggle beef into the Province of Quebec.⁴ The beef, much to their chagrin, was sunk in the Lake in their presence, and as there was reason for suspicion they were brought before a court of inquiry where they implicated Pritchard as the real owner. The latter vehemently denied the charge, but after an investigation that lasted for some weeks, Captain Sherwood and George Smyth of the Secret Service were able to produce enough evidence to clearly establish his guilt.⁵ General Riedesel, in command at Sorel, wrote Haldimand that "Pritchard's plausible story of the beef transactions was enough to make it appear that he was innocent, were the facts not known";⁶ he was working hard on the case and the papers would show the "genius of deceit made use of by this man in the desire for gain."⁷ During the investigation it also developed that Pritchard had been selling tea up the Lake for \$1.00 per pound and had employed one Uriah Baldwin to retail it for him.⁸ In addition to these charges there was another involving the passing of counterfeit money, which, however, was not pressed.⁹

To make matters worse, the news of the beef episode in some manner reached General Washington, who sent a sharp rebuke to the Vermont authorities for permitting supplies to be sent to Canada. As the Vermonters were then still engaged in their rather delicate negotiation for a separate peace with the Quebec government, they could ill afford to be placed in such an unfavorable light. Consequently, Governor Chittenden and General Ethan Allen sent a request to Haldimand to keep Pritchard out of Vermont as he had been the cause of all the trouble about the beef!¹⁰

Riedesel was placed in something of a quandary in dealing with Pritchard. If punished, he was liable to desert to the Americans where his intimate knowledge of confidential affairs would enable him to take vengeance; if pardoned, his shame and his hatred of Sherwood and Smyth might lead to the same mischief. The General had in mind the fact that the British Secret Service had numbers of agents and correspondents scattered through Vermont and the region south of the Lake, whose safety depended on the continued concealment of their identity; Pritchard knew who they were and once safely over the border would be in a position to betray these people to the Americans, with tragic results.

This was indeed a dilemma which Riedesel solved, army fashion, by passing the disposition of Pritchard's case along to General Haldimand, adding the recommendation that Pritchard be "transferred to New York with orders that he is not to be employed toward Canada, as the best way to get rid of him, especially as his first ideas of clandestine trade were obtained in New York."¹¹ Haldimand decided not to bring Pritchard to trial; he had been culpable but very serviceable and might be made use of again. Instead, he directed that Pritchard be sent to Quebec as it was dangerous to leave a man of his stamp at St. Johns.¹² On January 13, 1783, the Captain was still cooling his heels in the frigid climate of Quebec, from where he wrote to Riedesel asking to be allowed to return to St. Johns to join his regiment,¹³ and to his wife, telling her that His Excellency was angry with him and God knows what was to become of him.¹⁴

CHAPTER X. *Pritchard's Purchase*

OWING to the absence of Captain Meyers, Mathew's letter of February 16th, reiterating His Excellency's refusal to permit a settlement at Missisquoi Bay, was answered on March 2nd by Lieutenant Wehr over his own signature.¹ Christian Wehr, a native of Germany from Claverack, Albany County, had joined the British forces in August, 1777. During the Burgoyne Campaign he had served as a captain in Jessup's corps with forty men in the field,² but in 1781 he had accepted an appointment as a lieutenant in the King's Royal Regiment of New York, as he preferred it to his chance of raising a company for one of the other Provincial corps.³ The letter in which he now replied to Mathews was so typical of Wehr's unique literary style, and withal so fervently eloquent an exposition of the aims and aspirations of this group of Loyalists that it is well worth reproducing in full, as follows:

St. Johns, March 2d. 1784.

May it Please Your Excellency

We humbly beg to inform your Excellency That we received a letter from Major Mathews dated Feby 16th in answer to a letter to your Excellency, concerning the Kings lands East of Missisque Bay, and we are very sorry to hear, that your Excellency has so bad an opinion of us, as to our views of settling them lands we Petition for, as if it were only for the sake of Trafficing with the Colonies, we humbly beg to inform your Excellency, that it is nowise our intention, nor never was, to settle East of Missisque Bay with a view to Traffic with the Colonies, no, it is quite otherwise, for we do assure Your Excellency, that our only aim is, the cultivation of the lands and not Traffic—We can not but think that the spirit of cultivation will fail, if we consider that we shall or must go, to a place, where our labor will be in vain, because we must almost expend the value of our produce before we can bring it to a market, and moreover it borders very nigh upon exile, if a man that possesses any spirit of Freedom, must Go to a place where he does not wish to go, and if Your Excellency is of opinion, that there is but a few of us, and them few has no spirit of cultivation, we humbly beg your Excellency will Please to order, or Permit, two or more men, to go round to the Loyalists, and let them signify, by signing their names to what Place they would wish to go, and then your Excellency will find, that it is not a few individuals only who now so earnestly, and humbly Petition Your Excellency for their lands, East of Missisque Bay but that there are more

than three hundred, of whom the most General Part have been well liveing Farmers, and sons of able farmers, before the Rebellion in America, and those People who were brought up to cultivate the ground, have no other way, nithere do they desire any other ways to maintain themselves and Families, than by cultivation, therefore we humbly beg since we all have been such Great sufferers by being driven from our homes and connections, that we might have our land Granted in the Parts we have Petitioned for, which would afford us some satisfaction.

And as for quarrelling with our nighbors we have not the least apprehension, of being in any more danger from the United States by being settled in the Place we Petition for, as in the upper countrys or on Caldwell's Manor.

We most humbly beg Pardon of Your Excellency for troubling you so much concerning the aforesaid lands, but since it is of so much consequence to mankind to live in the Place, where they can make the most of their labour, and where they are most inclined to settle, that it constitutes the Greater half of their Happiness in this world. Therefore, we can not find it in our hearts to leave off begging and Praying, until Your Excellency in your Clemency, are most Graciously Pleased, to Grant us our lands in the Parts we Petition for, I humbly beg to subscribe myselse, with due respect.

Your Excellency
Most obedient, and very humble serv.,
Christian Wehr.

N.B. Since Captain Waldemeyer is from home, and we do not know when he will return again, the rest of the Officers and men which are at this place Desired that I might write the foregoing letter in my name, and humbly beg, that if Your Excellency will Please to condescend, to send us an answer, do direct it to Chn. Wehr Lieut.

General Haldimand's resolution must have been very firmly taken to resist such a moving appeal as that contained in the foregoing letter, but on March 8th Mathews replied that His Excellency was surprised at Wehr's persistence; reasons had been given that were still effective and although His Excellency was most anxious to satisfy the Loyalists, he could not give an acre to gratify individuals at the expense of the public good.⁴

As this correspondence was in progress, Pritchard, Meyers, Wehr, *et al.*, had been far from idle. On February 24th Captain Justus Sherwood of the Secret Service reported to headquarters that the Missisquoi Bay party had given up the project except a few headed by Pritchard and Ruiter, who had purchased what they called an old Indian title, from which they were selling lots and had actually begun a settlement.⁵ A week later Sherwood informed Mathews that most of the people at St. Johns were inclined for Cataraqui except those dictated to by Meyers and others, who had begun a settlement at Missisquoi Bay, from which they said that they would be driven only by force.⁶

What had happened was the reappearance on the scene of Mr. James Robertson, now an old man, who represented to Meyers and the others that he had a good lease of a large tract of land signed by a number of the chiefs of the St. Francis Indians, and referred them to Richard Dobie, lawyer of Montreal, for further particulars. This

was a proposition of definite interest, so Captain Meyers and Lieutenant Ruitter repaired to Montreal to consult Mr. Dobie, who confirmed Robertson's statements and apparently added that the lease was founded on the old grant to Levasseur. Here there arose a very serious misconception, intentional or otherwise, that was further enhanced by an uncertainty as to the exact compass course of the Missisquoi River. Meyers and his associates evidently assumed that the boundaries of the tract covered by Robertson's lease were coextensive with those of the grant to Levasseur, which included lands along the Missisquoi River three leagues in depth on either side. It was a convenient assumption, but one that hardly squared with the facts, for it will be recalled that James Robertson's lease specified a depth on either side of the river of only sixty arpents, which would amount to about a mile and a half on each side.

Nevertheless, Meyers, Ruitter, and Best took the trouble to go to the locality at Missisquoi, where they ran the east and northwest line. Having done so, and being under the impression that the river emptied into the Lake west by north, they persuaded themselves that some 20,000 acres of the tract would fall within the Quebec line. Accordingly, a bargain was struck with Mr. Robertson by Pritchard, on behalf of himself and the others, and the lease purchased for the sum of sixty pounds.⁷

According to Dr. George Smyth, Secret Service, eleven men were equally concerned in this venture, namely, Captains Pritchard, Meyers, and Ruitter; Lieutenants Wehr, Ruitter, and Best; Ensign Best, Martin and Taylor; and two others, Lieutenant Tyler and Ensign Burt or Bird.⁸ Of these, Captains Pritchard and Meyers, Lieutenant Wehr, and the two gentlemen from the "Rookery," Martin and Taylor, have already been introduced. The Ruitters, brothers from Pittstown, Albany County, had excellent war records and were esteemed highly by their superior officers; Henry, a captain in the King's Rangers, had served first in Phister's corps under Burgoyne, while John was a lieutenant in the Loyal Rangers (Jessup's). The two Bests, Conrad and Hermanus, were also brothers and from Hoosick, Albany County; they were both Loyal Rangers. Lieutenant William Tyler of the King's Rangers, the man who had searched the records at Quebec, was from Kingsbury in Charlotte County; he had served with Burgoyne and after the return to Canada had been active in the recruiting and scouting service. Ensign Burt or Bird is not accounted for, and his name does not appear further in these proceedings.

Captain Pritchard, although participating in the purchase, had been skeptical as to any of the land extending into the province, inasmuch as one Abner Barlow, a man well acquainted with the locality, was of the opinion that the river emptied north or nearly so. To verify matters, he sent Barlow to the spot within four acres of the falls to run a due north line, which Barlow did and reported that he had struck Rock River a mile outside of the Canadian boundary line. Convinced that the lease covered no land that could be settled, Captain Pritchard shortly after got clear of his eleventh share, and, according to his own statement, acquainted Major Campbell of his discovery, who thereupon advised Lieutenant Ruitter to lay out no more money on the land.⁹

CHAPTER XI. "Them Indian Lands"

APPRISED of the fact that a settlement was actually being made at Missisquoi Bay contrary to orders, Mathews wrote to Captain Sherwood on March 8th that the refusal to settle the locality had been arrived at after mature deliberation, but His Excellency desired to have a full account of any Loyalists that might be there, their situation, etc.; he did not believe that any of them would venture to settle there contrary to express commands.¹

Sherwood replied on March 12th that the Loyalists already enumerated had erected some houses about three miles south of the mouth of Pike River and on that part of Rock River that ran in the province; Captain Ruiter had taken up a yoke of oxen, while Captain Meyers had already cleared a sufficient quantity of land to raise a thousand bushels of corn. He intended to send a confidential person to make a detailed report. After relating the story of Pritchard's purchase from old Mr. Robertson, Sherwood continued that Pritchard had disposed of his share as he had found by measurement that the Indian title fell all or mostly in Vermont, but that the others, by a trick of measuring lately performed by themselves, had brought the Indian title into the province as far as the mouth of Pike River. Doctor Harris, son-in-law to old Mr. Robertson, was then endeavoring to render Pritchard's bargain invalid by proving that Mr. Robertson was insane. Captain Ross and Dr. Moseley, lately come from New York, were in pursuit of the same lands under a French grant to one Levasseur and were, so he understood, on the point of concluding a bargain for one thousand pounds with an unnamed gentleman in Montreal. They had offered Sherwood a sixteenth share, but he wanted Mathews' advice as to whether Levasseur's title was good or not, before giving them his answer.²

Agreeable to instructions, Sherwood despatched Sergeants Closson and Sweet to make an investigation of the new settlements. Their report, which follows, gave the names of the settlers with lots attached, "upon the east side of Messisque Bay who says they have bought lands of Mr. Robertson at St. Johns who bought it from the Indians nine miles south of Missisque River and nine miles north of Missisque River, bounding upon the Lake":

- | | | |
|---------|--|---|
| Lot #1. | <i>Harmonus Best</i> | <i>Ensign</i> |
| 2. | <i>George Feller</i> | |
| 3. | <i>Christian Wehr</i> | <i>Lieutenant</i> |
| 4. | <i>Messers Martin & Taylor Merchants in Rookery occupied by John Mock with a hut built, his family in it, & one horse.</i> | |
| 5. | <i>John Ruiter</i> | <i>Lieutenant. House built and his family in it, has a horse and cow.</i> |
| 6. | <i>Captain Ruiter</i> | <i>with a hut built and is building a house and has a yoke of oxen.</i> |
| 7. | <i>Conrad Best</i> | <i>beginning</i> |
| 8. | <i>James Loveless</i> | |
| 9. | <i>Abraham Hyatt</i> | |

All north of the province line.

N.B. There are thirteen hired men in the officer's employ viz: W. Meyers and the two Ruiters, and the lots are all laid in this province.

This report was signed by Caleb Closson and Oliver Sweet, both Loyal Rangers detailed on Secret Service duty, who also told Sherwood that the officers had sworn that they would have the lands, and settle them, whatever the consequences might be.⁸

George Smyth, Sherwood's associate in the Secret Service, also reported to headquarters on March 19th his information of the new settlements at Missisquoi Bay. He stated that, "if there is not a stop put to them, I believe they are still determined to settle on those Lands, as some of them was stop'd yesterday from going there, when on their way with furniture, baggage, etc."⁴ He had already informed Captain Sherwood that those people were determined not to "move off from that land for the General's order or any other nor to be drove off except by a superior force, for by Lord North's declaration they had a right to settle on any of the King's land they should choose in this province."⁵

The next development was a letter on March 22nd from Mathews to Major Campbell at St. Johns, desiring him to send an officer to the new settlements. This officer was to have orders, if the settlements were within the province line, to notify the people that His Excellency required that they desist from settling in that quarter; the principal men were to report without loss of time at Quebec; all others were to go to St. Johns. Should the settlements prove to be within the American lines, he was to acquaint the settlers of His Excellency's command with the fact and notify them that they were no longer to expect provisions or any indulgence experienced by His Majesty's loyal subjects within the province. The officer was to be very particular in his remarks and specify in his report the names and descriptions of all persons that he might find there.⁶

Lieutenant William Buckley of the 29th Regiment, the officer chosen for this mission, made his report on March 31st. He first had visited the house of Lieutenant Rüter, who had with him his wife, two sons (one small), and a son of Captain Rüter. A short distance north Captain Rüter had built the frame of a house. Lieutenant Best had begun to cut some wood for the purpose of building. Abraham Hyatt, late private in Jessup's corps (Loyal Rangers), had begun to build; with him were two sons (one had been a corporal in Jessup's corps), and a servant. John Mock, also a private in Jessup's, had built a hut; he had a wife, five daughters, and two small sons. Captain Meyers had built a hut a short distance from Rock River about three miles from the Bay; he had in family his wife's brother, a small son, and a servant (late private in Jessup's). Ensign Harmonius Best, Lieutenant Wehr, and George Feller, lately come from New York, were not on the spot nor had they cut any timber for building. Lieutenant Buckley found that all the lots were situated a mile or two within the lines. According to instructions, he had ordered the heads of families to Quebec, all others to St. Johns; however, he added the observation that the women and children would be unable to leave until there was a water communication.⁷

Buckley's report was forwarded to headquarters on April 2nd by Major Campbell. Although informed that Pritchard had disposed of his share in the land, the Major had thought it proper, in view of the fact that Pritchard had been a leading figure in the whole transaction, to order him to Quebec also. Lieutenant Rüter was ill of the rheumatism and unable to travel with the others; Campbell regretted that Rüter and his brother were concerned in the affair, as they had always been looked upon as honest, inoffensive men of approved loyalty and ever forward in the service of the government. He

added that, as Mr. Buckley had observed, the condition of the swamps and rivers was such that it would be impossible to move the families until the spring was farther advanced.⁸

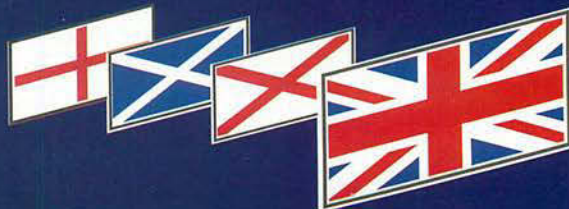
Campbell's letter enclosing Lieutenant Buckley's report was acknowledged on April 8th, with permission for the families to remain where they were until the season would admit of their being removed with convenience.⁹ A few days later Captain Meyers wrote to Mathews from St. Johns, reciting the hardship it would entail for him to be obliged to proceed to Quebec.¹⁰

Finding himself again in trouble, Captain Pritchard addressed a memorial to headquarters, couched in the most extravagant terms, in which he piously disclaimed any intention of opposing the wishes of the government. After reviewing the details of the purchase, he stated that having satisfied himself that none of the land lay within the province line, he had not only communicated the fact to Major Campbell but had also strongly urged his associates to desist from the project, but that a subsequent offer of 750 gns. for their lease had given them great encouragement; whereupon he had repudiated any further connection with the affair and had made preparations to settle at the Bay of Chaleurs (which he later did). He concluded his disclaimer with the fervent hope that he would "not be under censor for something of which he was not guilty," and the declaration that he would "rather risk himself in a field of battle than to incur a frown from His Excellency."¹¹

The idea for the Gaspesian British Heritage Centre was born in 1984 when the bicentennial of the Loyalists' arrival on Gaspé soil was celebrated. It was the first major English Protestant immigration, in a colony where previously the majority of the small population were French-Catholics of Acadian descent. The Loyalists were opposed to the American Revolution and remained faithful to the British Crown.

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The Missisquoi Loyalists

Postscript

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JUNE
1938

Solemn declarations

American colonists had far more to complain about than separatists do

DAVID CAMERON

In a document tabled in the National Assembly on Dec. 6, Premier Jacques Parizeau says that Quebec's Declaration of Sovereignty will be modelled on the American Declaration of Independence.

Really?

The American document was adopted by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776 in the early stages of a six-year war in which the American colonists fought for their liberty from Great Britain. The American colonists, acknowledging that prudence dictates "that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes," asserted that "when it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another. . . , a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."

What were these causes? More than two dozen specific evils and abuses are listed, all of them demonstrating to the satisfaction of the Continental Congress that "the history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States." These are no peccadilloes; they are black political sins. A few examples:

- The repeated dissolution of legislatures and the refusal to hold elections.
- The obstruction of justice.
- The keeping of standing armies, in times of peace, without civil consent.
- Cutting off trade with other parts of the world; imposing taxes on the people without their consent; the denial of trial by jury.
- The waging of war against the people. ("He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.")

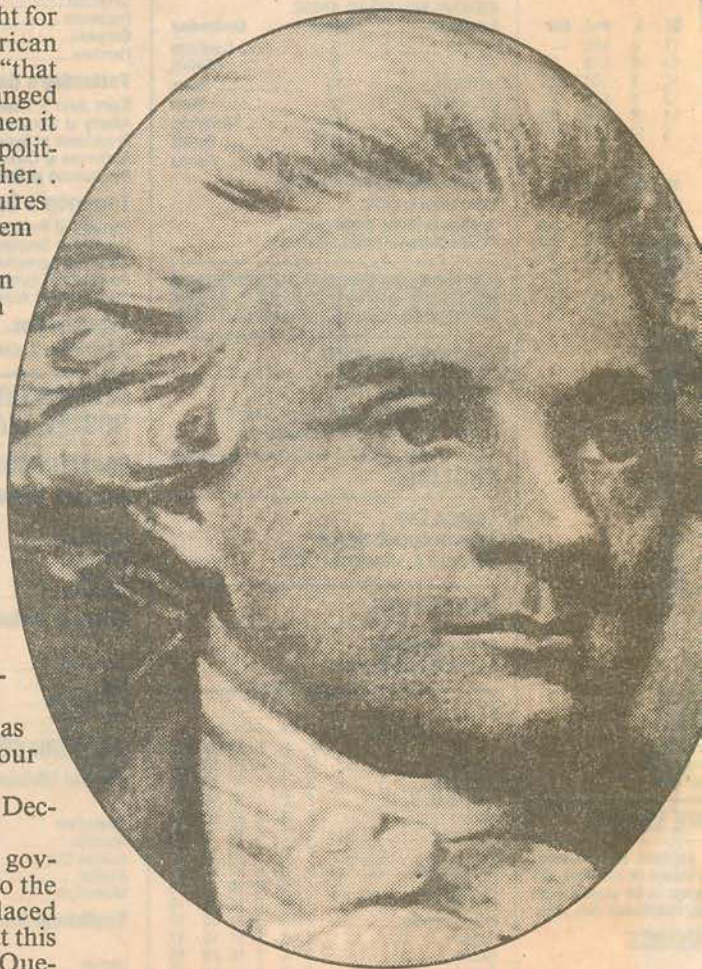
This is the model for the premier of Quebec's Declaration of Sovereignty?

What causes of separation are offered by the government of Quebec to satisfy "a decent respect to the opinions of mankind?" In all the documents placed before the National Assembly earlier this month at this solemn moment in the history of the people of Quebec, only one cause of separation is mentioned: "to settle definitively the constitutional problem that has been confronting Quebec for several generations." No allegations of tyranny, no abuse of power, no denial of democratic rights, no confiscation of property, no infringement on the liberties of the citizen. Just a "constitutional problem." Thomas Jefferson would weep.

The American colonists were struggling to free themselves from despotism, from the tyrannical oppression of Great Britain.

The difficulty for the separatists of Quebec is that they are already free.

As individuals, they are unquestionably living in one of the freest countries on the face of the globe, protected by the rule of law, an independent judiciary and a constitutional Charter of Rights, benefitting from membership in a society that places a high value on respect for freedom and the rights of others, operating in a democratic political system muscular enough to allow a secessionist political party to form the official opposition in the Parliament of Canada.



Thomas Jefferson would weep over PQ claims.

The vast majority of francophones in Canada live within Quebec, where they make up more than 80 per cent of the population. Enjoying the benefits of what is arguably the most decentralized federal system on the globe, their government is free to fashion very much the kind of society that the majority wants — in health care, in education, in social policy, in the structure of the economy and, to a substantial degree, in immigration. Their government is able to borrow abroad, sell hydro-electric energy internationally, en-

gage in quasi-diplomatic representation, set up an "embassy" in Paris larger than that of many sovereign states. The people of Quebec have been free enough to utterly transform their society in little more than three decades, all within the framework of Confederation. When they have pushed on the door, it has opened. This is tyranny?

Meanwhile, despite the regrettable fact that the country has been unable to recognize Quebec as a distinct society in the constitution, Canada has nevertheless substantially redefined itself to take into account the French fact, which 35 years ago was barely acknowledged as being of national significance. This is oppression?

Quebec separatists implicitly recognize all this. They do not use the language of an oppressed people; that would be silly. Quebecers are already in charge. They don't argue that they need to separate so that the rights and freedoms of their people can be protected properly; they already are. They don't contend that it is their desire to build a new economic order, based on different principles; they wish to maintain the existing role of the private sector and they want in, not out of NAFTA and GATT and any other economic acronym going. Part company with the Western military alliance? No way: they aim to be part of NATO and NORAD. They are not fed up with an alien British parliamentary system; in fact, they intend to keep it as is, and plan to seek membership in the British Commonwealth.

So why do the separatists want out? What do they want to be free of? A cynic, or a tired federalist, might say that they want out so that they can get back in.

They want to be free of the rest of Canada so that they can economically associate with it. They want to separate from the country, but keep Canadian citizenship. They want to secede, but continue to use the Canadian dollar. They want open borders, free movement of people, closer economic ties with Ontario. And Jacques Parizeau is supposed to be far more committed to hard-line independence than René Lévesque was years ago. The next thing you know, they will be saying they want to keep Elizabeth as the Queen of Quebec.

This is a very Canadian national-independence movement.

You can see why the rest of the world finds it a little difficult to take our perpetual wrangling too seriously. The idea of seceding from one of the wealthiest and freest democracies in the world makes about as much sense as it would for you to agree to your genial dentist's proposal that he pull all your teeth out so you won't have to worry about cavities.

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson and the other members of the Continental Congress are, I have no doubt, speechless in heaven.

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