Loyalist Ancestors

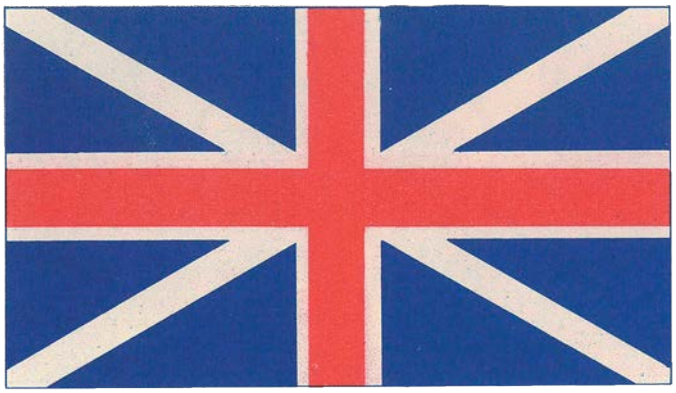
In July, we asked readers of our *Weekly Genealogist* enewsletter to share stories about their Canadian ancestors. A selection of the responses on Loyalist ancestors is presented here.

Tom Hughes, Cincinnati, Ohio: In 1782, my ancestor Catherine Reid Munro Leech fled to Canada with her six children between the ages of 6 and 16. Her husband, John Munro, had died at the hands of the rebels. The family traveled from near Whitehall, New York, to Crown Point, New York, on the south end of Lake Champlain, where they were picked up by a British ship and taken to St. Johns, New Brunswick. As a Loyalist who suffered loss during the Revolution, Catherine was granted 200 acres of land near Mallorytown, Ontario, in 1789. In 1870, her great-grandson (my great-grandfather) Willis C. Munro, immigrated to the United States, eventually obtaining US citizenship and settling in Cincinnati.

Kathryn Sencabaugh, Chattanooga, Tennessee: I am descended from William Sencabaugh, a Loyalist who left New York State in 1783 and ultimately settled in Murray Harbour, Prince Edward Island. My paternal grandparents left PEI in the early 1900s and settled in Massachusetts. Although I live in Tennessee, I serve remotely as Vice-President of the Abegweit Branch of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada. (Through my maternal lineage, I belong to the DAR.)

Tina Snell, Glenwood, Minnesota: Five of my ancestral families had to leave for Canada after the American Revolution. As Loyalists, they were either going to be jailed or killed. One of them, Luke Knoulton, even had a price put on his head by George Washington for supplying the British with critical information. Some of the families lost their properties; all settled in southern Quebec. Most of these families were there for several generations, but later settled in the US.

Bill Jameson, Yorktown, Virginia: I know the details of the life of my ancestor George Gillmore due to his entry in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5. He came to the American colonies from Scotland in 1769 and served as a preacher in Voluntown, Connecticut. When the Revolution began, Gillmore refused to "pipe the popular Tune of Tumult Faction Sedition and Rebellion." Denounced as a Tory by the governor and deserted by his flock, Gillmore was forced to stop preaching in 1775. Harassment by local rebels prompted him to move to Nobletown, New York, where he lived until the British surrender at Saratoga in October 1777. Gillmore taught school in Spencertown, New York, until 1782, when he fled to Quebec. In 1785, the Reverend Gillmore and his family members sailed to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and eventually settled in Grand Pre, where George continued to preach.



The 1606 Union Flag was used by the American colonies until the Revolution and adopted by Loyalists. W. H. Waldron, *Flags of America* (1935), 9.

Robert Snyder, Midland, Michigan: My ancestor Simeon Covell (1748–1799) is listed as a United Empire Loyalist for his service to the British. He fought with General Burgoyne at the Battle of Bennington on August 16, 1777. On January 22, 1780, the state of New York confiscated Simeon's New York property in the Cambridge District of Albany County, New York, and deported him and his children to Prescott, on the St. Lawrence River in present-day Ontario. In the late nineteenth century, some of Simeon's descendants settled in north central Michigan.

Diane Blakely Saulnier, Fruita, Colorado: In about 1756, my ancestor William Blakely and his family sailed from Northern Ireland to Charleston, South Carolina, settling in Laurens County, South Carolina. His son James Chambers Blakely was a Loyalist. After the Revolution, James and his family were escorted out of South Carolina and resettled in Musquodoboit, Nova Scotia. The family flourished there, but in 1875 my grandfather came to Northborough, Massachusetts.

Debra Lawson, Clayton, California: My Rose ancestors arrived in Long Island, New York, in the 1600s. During the Revolution, the family was Loyalist. They relocated to Ernestown, Ontario, after the war and received land for their loyalty to the crown. My great-grandfather James Rose grew up on that land. He served for a short time in the Canadian Army in the 1880s, then migrated south and joined the US Army, later becoming a citizen.

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