ABSTRACT

EXILED: LOYALIST IDENTITY IN REVOLUTIONARY-ERA ST. JOHN

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My research work focuses on the social and political identity of the loyalist exiles in St. John, New Brunswick in the Revolutionary Era. Specifically, I offer a view of the Revolution from the loyalists’ perspective—their ideology, exile, resettlement, and relationship with Great Britain—elucidating their precarious position within and, later, between two distinct worlds. Subjected to an intense process of social ostracism and legal penalties, approximately 80,000 loyalists emigrated to England and other parts of the British Empire between 1774 and 1784. St John became the largest and most prosperous loyalist settlement. Focusing on the elite group of loyalists that settled there, I hope to demonstrate that the loyalists’ social and political identities reflect both their own senses of self as well as outwardly inflicted labels placed on them by their adversaries, peers, and benefactors. Loyalists’ political and social identities were full and rich, revealing a different perspective on the American Revolution as well as the relationship between British subjects, colonists, and the Empire in the eighteenth century.
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INTRODUCTION: The Loyalist Diaspora

On March 25, 1783, newspapers across the globe published the first reports of a peace agreement between the American revolutionaries and the British Crown. Bells rang out throughout the colonies. Excited colonists raised triumphant toasts as fireworks lit up the skies, marking the formal end of the eight-year conflict. For the forty to fifty thousand loyalists that remained in the colonies, however, the news was hardly a cause for celebration. The war may have been over, and the United States’ independence granted, but there was no compensation guaranteed for the loyalists. The loyalists blamed the British government for failing to secure their reparations in the peace negotiations, yet the loyalists had no other option but to place their trust in the Crown. Thus, a feeling of defeat and disappointment manifested amongst the loyalists in America as they struggled to plan for an uncertain future. In response, sixty thousand loyalists fled the new United States for safe haven in other parts of the British Empire. Leaving behind friends, relative, lucrative careers and property, they embarked on an unknown journey, hoping the empire they had defended so fiercely would offer them asylum.¹

This study aims to illustrate the story of those loyalist exiles, so often overlooked in Revolutionary-era history. It is difficult, certainly, to put more than two hundred years of history built on partisan narratives of the heroic efforts of Revolutionary leaders aside. Nonetheless, a view of the American Revolution as a civil war from the “losers’” end offers a rich alternative perspective. A closer examination of the particular settlement of loyalist exiles in St. John, New Brunswick provides compelling evidence of the loyalists’ unique identity within the eighteenth-century British Empire. The original governing class of the region was composed almost exclusively of elite loyalist leaders. These men worked tirelessly to form the basic institutions of St. John, and in the process fashioned the region’s commercial activities and social rituals. In doing so, St. John came to reflect the loyalist dream for North American development and their desire to remain relevant in the British Empire.

St. John’s continued expansion, however, often created tension between the loyalist leaders at its helm and the British metropole. Specifically, the extraordinary flux that dominated the loyalist leaders’ early lives in British North America made them highly resistant to change in later years. Moreover, St. John’s growth occurred during a period of profound transformation

within the postwar-British empire. In this sense, loyalist colonies were an integral part of the solidification of a new imperial framework for British rule, providing a model of liberal constitutional empire in stark contrast to the democratic republics also taking shape in the United States, France, and Latin America. Because the loyalist leaders in St. John clung to an outdated view of empire, however, their dream to become an integral, thriving part of the empire went largely unrealized. In reality, the loyalists that came-of-age during the revolution were often dismissed by the empire as relics of another era that failed to adapt their policies to reflect a new model of imperial authority and progress.

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Considering Bernard Bailyn’s comment that “Atlantic history is the story of a world in motion,” with its “dominant characteristics [shifting] repeatedly,” the movement of the loyalist exiles played a role in a wider reconfiguration of the British empire during the era of the American Revolution. Subjected to an intense process of social ostracism and legal penalties, approximately sixty thousand loyalists, along with fifteen thousand slaves, emigrated to regions throughout the British Empire between 1774 and 1784. While about seven thousand loyalists ultimately settled in England, over forty thousand exiles, by far the largest group, traveled to British North America—or, present-day Canada—settling in the provinces of the Maritimes, Ontario, and Quebec. It is important to note that, in addition to the large loyalist concentration in British North America, about three thousand former slaves, who had gained their freedom fighting for the British during the war, also settled in the region. In a second great migration, nearly twelve hundred of these black loyalists eventually emigrated from Nova Scotia to the experimental “free black colony” of Sierra Leone. Several hundred of Britain’s Indian allies, most notably the Mohawks of upstate New York, also settled in the upper regions of the provinces while another contingent of loyalists traveled to British-controlled Caribbean islands and East Florida. When considering such staggering figures, it is clear that a pressing concern

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3 Jasanoff, “The Other Side of Revolution,” 2.  
4 Ibid., According to Jasanoff, most historians place the total number of loyalist exiles between 60,000 and 100,000. Jasanoff’s research indicates 30,000 loyalist migrated to the Maritimes (including 3,000 free black loyalists) 6,000 to Quebec (including several hundred Mohawk Indians), five thousand to East Florida, 3,000 to Jamaica, 1,000 to the Bahamas, and 7,000 to England (mostly London). Added to these figures are approximately 5,000-7,000 black loyalist emigrants in other parts of the British empire (separate from the 3,000 that traveled to the Maritimes, specifically) and 15,000 -17,000 slaves later exported to Sierra Leone and other parts of Africa by the loyalists. While the slaves are not loyalists, per se, they are still important to the total numbers of displaced persons following the American Revolution.
for the British Crown in the wake of the American Revolution would be the accommodation of its most loyal members now scattered throughout the Atlantic empire, welcoming them into the imperial fold.

In 1783, following the British departure from the loyalist enclave in New York, approximately fifteen thousand loyalists settled along the St. John River in the eastern coastal region of Nova Scotia. Here, the pre-loyalist population of the province heavily resisted the refugees’ arrival. In response, several prominent loyalist leaders in the region petitioned British authorities for the creation of a new "loyalist colony—an asylum that would become the envy of the American states." The Crown granted their request, partitioning the eastern most region of Nova Scotia to create the colony of New Brunswick on August 16, 1784. In New Brunswick, St. John quickly became the most desirable region for settlement due to its location—the point where the St. John River delta joins the Bay of Fundy. St. John, a town of approximately five hundred families before the exiles, became the home to approximately five hundred new loyalist settlers. Specifically targeted for settlement by the wealthiest and most influential loyalist leaders, the new settlers comprised nearly a fourth of St. John’s overall population. Drawing on their political and social connections with British authorities from the outset, these loyalist elites quickly gained control of the town, causing much resentment among St. John locals. While this group of fifty five hundred loyalist exiles is a relatively small proportion of the total number of exiles in the Maritime provinces, their successful development of St. John as a distinctive “loyalist settlement” elucidates their position within a precarious British imperial system.

Loyalist Studies: An Historical Perspective

The loyalists, as a historical topic, have captivated historians for over a century in several important ways. General introductory works on the loyalists surfaced in the early twentieth century as part of a larger re-evaluation of the “Nationalist School” of historical discourse. As relations with Great Britain improved, historians writing about the Revolution became more favorable in their portrayals of the British. Such works became the nexus of the emerging “Imperial School” historical tradition that characterized the Revolution as the result of a series of unfortunate trans-Atlantic misunderstandings based on political and constitutional issues.

Loyalist efforts to retain allegiance to the Crown despite such “misunderstandings” made the group an enticing topic of study for many Imperialist scholars.

Claude H. Van Tyne’s *The Loyalists in the American Revolution*, published in 1929, is a compelling example of the Imperial School standard. Van Tyne portrayed the group as a collection of politically astute aristocrats. While the group recognized unsavory policy and government mismanagement, they still believed in the superiority of the English Constitution. In highlighting this ideological contrast, Van Tyne dispelled the myth that the prospect of independence from Great Britain was a widely accepted course of action among a majority of colonists. Although Van Tyne’s portrayal of the American Revolution as an institutional conflict between prosperous elites added little to the existing discourse, he did succeed in setting a framework for future studies. Specifically, Van Tyne positioned loyalists within a trans-Atlantic context and recognized the ideological underpinnings of the Revolution that separated not only Americans and Britons, but also American colonists themselves.7

The most influential work on the loyalists published in the middle of the twentieth century was Bernard Bailyn’s Neo-Whig biography, *The Ordeal of Thomas Hutchinson*. Bailyn defended loyalist Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson’s enforcement of established laws and emphasized the importance of ideas and institutions. Conceding the influence of the events of the late 1960s on his work, Bailyn explained that his understanding of Hutchinson’s dilemma in using troops to quell public disorder became sharper in this contemporary context.8 His sympathetic look at Hutchinson illuminated the “human reality” of the conflict, measuring the struggles of both the losers and victors of war.9

Inspired by Bailyn’s research, scholars writing in the late 1970s and 1980s selected several loyalist enclaves as sites for historical research, such as Upper Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. Simultaneously, as forces of globalization became more obvious, scholars began to examine transnational connections with deep historical underpinnings. Increasingly, globalization prompted historians to examine the United States from an “outsider” perspective.

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8 Ibid.
and specialized works focused on loyalist efforts to create new British colonies throughout North America fit squarely within such a framework.\(^\text{10}\)

Within this context, new studies on the loyalist settlement of St. John attempted to distinguish the loyalist exiles from their “Patriot” counterparts in terms of ideology, social standing, economic interest, and psychology. In *Early Loyalist St. John: The Origin of New Brunswick Politics 1783-1786*, Canadian historian D.G. Bell argued, “Loyalist was synonymous with all that was good and noble and upright, patriotic, and self-sacrificing, and that to be descended from a Loyalist is to be possessed of the inheritance of all these virtues.”\(^\text{11}\) Further, Bell argues that the loyalist population in New Brunswick possessed great control over their own destiny. To demonstrate, Bell tracks the groups’ attitude towards the British government from their November 1784 arrival in the Province to New Brunswick’s first election campaign one year later. According to Bell, the loyalists morphed into hard-working, average “folks” from a wide cross-section of American society, causing tension with the elite class of local imperial authorities and other officials. Moreover, the steadfast determination the loyalists exhibited during the Revolution manifested itself in a new pledge of loyalty to their fledgling home. This bond, however fragile, held the group of exiles together and allowed them to rise up within Provincial politics and alter existing societal structures to suit their own specific needs.\(^\text{12}\)

In recent years, this focus on specific loyalist settlements within the British empire has prompted historians to examine the relationship between the Empire and its various colonies during the eighteenth century. Greatly influenced by post-colonialism, historians have analyzed the effects of colonialism in these regions, specifically, and the cultural legacy of imperialism, in general.\(^\text{13}\) Eliga H. Gould, is one such historian that offered a reassessment of prior assumptions about eighteenth-century British political life and its effects throughout the Empire. In *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution*, Gould argues that most Britons supported the British government’s policies regarding the taxation of

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\(^{11}\) Bell, *Early Loyalist St. John*, vii.

\(^{12}\) Bell, 99.

colonial America, as well as other such measures that ultimately led to the American Revolution. Gould analyzed the Whig ideology that dominated eighteenth-century politics in the British metropole. In a general sense, a belief in a “balance of power” was the basis of Whig ideology during the era, and the public viewed Britain as an “empire of liberty…personal freedom, commercial prosperity, and constitutional government.” Moreover, Britons took great comfort from the knowledge that their own personal freedoms were not dependant on a King’s whims, or a particular minister of factions’ leanings, but on the “unshakable foundation of Parliament’s unlimited authority.” Gould’s argument reinforced the top-down approach to British political identity, portraying eighteenth-century metropolitan British political culture as narrowly confined within certain institutions and perpetuated through limited channels.

Several historians have built-off arguments about British “political identity,” such as Gould’s, in their focus on American loyalist exiles. Incorporating various tangents of established loyalist discourse as well as post-colonial studies and works on eighteenth-century British political culture and identity, such scholars have placed the loyalist exiles within a narrative of a dynamic and contentious British Atlantic world in the eighteenth century. Emerging approaches in the field point towards new understandings of terms such as gender, race, nation, and politics. Many historians viewed loyalist exiles through this new lens and saw loyalist exile settlements as forming a “diaspora,” or a given community’s migration under traumatic circumstances, moving in complex patterns and producing both dispersal and cohesion. At the forefront of such studies is historian Maya Jasanoff, whose work on the loyalist diaspora is unparalleled in its breadth.

Maya Jasanoff and the Loyalist Diaspora

At the core of Jasanoff’s approach are two central concepts: social structure and imperial policy. In her recent monograph, Liberty’s Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World, Jasanoff traces the journeys of loyalist exiles after the American Revolution, revealing the legacy of the revolution on the British Empire. She argues, “Loyalist refugees personally conveyed American things and ideas into the empire…But they carried cultural and political influences too.” This loyalist legacy shines light on a period of transition within the British Empire wherein a period of ten years it not only rebounded from its greatest defeat, but reshaped

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14 Gould, Persistence of Empire, viii.
15 Ibid., 3.
16 Ibid., 15.
18 Jasanoff, Liberty’s Exiles, 11.
itself and expanded across the world. Further, the events of the 1780s helped solidify an imperial framework for British rule, providing a model of liberal constitutional empire in stark contrast to the democratic republics also taking shape in the United States, France, and Latin America.\(^\text{19}\)

Referring to the transformation within the empire as the “spirit of 1783,” Jasanoff outlines the three major elements of the American loyalists’ role in the postwar restructuring. First, the loyalists were both “agents and advocates of imperial growth” as the British Empire expanded around the world. Bridging the gap between the “first” commercial, colonial British Empire reliant on the Atlantic trade system and the “second” empire centered in Asia and reliant on the direct rule over millions of foreign subjects, the loyalist settlers in British North America, the Bahamas, and Sierra Leone demonstrated the continuity between the two models.\(^\text{20}\) To demonstrate, in St. John, loyalist leaders worked to cultivate their rugged surroundings and erect viable commercial enterprises. Logging and fishing business erupted in St. John, transforming the settlement into one of the Crown’s most profitable Atlantic trade centers. At the same time, the expansionist efforts of loyalist leaders in British North America, particularly the settlement of St. John itself and the subsequent creation of New Brunswick, exhibited their ambition to spread the values of the empire across the world.

Second, the loyalist refugees exhibited a resound commitment to liberty and humanitarian ideals. Jasanoff points out, “Although the American Revolution demonstrated that British subjects abroad would not be treated exactly as British subjects were at home…the revolution also had the effect of deepening an imperial guarantee to include all subjects…in a fold of British rights.”\(^\text{21}\) The Crown established an empire-wide system for refugee relief that secured land and supplies for needy loyalists. American loyalists also received financial compensation for their losses through a commission specifically established to oversee their reparations. In St. John, loyalist exiles received generous amounts of land, supplies, and financial aid. This allowed the settlers to quickly erect homes and establish viable businesses. Further, the Crown’s decision to separate New Brunswick as a “loyalist province” allowed those settlers favored by the Crown to gain important posts, titles, and salaries within the new government. All of these efforts only deepened the American loyalists’ commitment to the empire.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 11.
\(^{20}\) Ibid., 12.
\(^{21}\) Ibid.
While certain liberal values took root in the empire, British officials still feared the effects of excessive liberty. Concluding that they had given the thirteen colonies too much freedom, the Crown adopted a more authoritarian style of rule. The third element of the “spirit of 1783” that Jasanoff provides is the loyalists repeated resistance to this centralized, hierarchical government. She argues, “Confronted with top-down rule, they [the loyalists] repeatedly demanded more representation than imperial authorities proved willing to give them.”

While the St. John loyalists generally agreed with the decisions handed down from London, there were certain instances in which their expectations did not align with the Crown’s actions. Following a controversial 1784 election, in which an imperial agent installed a government-backed ticket, angry loyalist settlers protested the results, citing the violation of their rights as British subjects. They called on King George III to dissolve the assembly and call for a new election, yet he denied their request. The monarch instead deferred to the judgment of the Governor in the province, whom his cabinet appointed earlier that year. The Governor, for his part, passed legislation that made the petition presented by the dissenters illegal. In this instance, imperial authority trumped a popular call for liberty.

A detailed analysis of the loyalist exiles in St. John exhibits the three facets of the “spirit of 1783” as outlined by Jasanoff, yet it also reveals important contradictions. It was the most elite of the loyalist leaders that first targeted St. John as a potential site for industry in the region. Drawing wealthy loyalists with capital for investment, the St. John became ground-zero for an elite segment of loyalist society with connections in London. Soon after, loyalist leaders lobbied for the creation of a loyalist colony separate from Nova Scotia. Not surprisingly, British officials were quick to back their efforts, creating New Brunswick in 1784 with St. John at its center. The exclusivity of the new province, however, led to frequent clashes between the loyalist leaders and British authorities. The hardships they faced in the early years, specifically the unstable nature of fledgling new settlement, made the loyalist leaders highly resistant to change in later years. Clinging to anachronistic visions of empire and liberty, their idealized notions fell short. In reality, British authorities in London viewed the aging loyalist leaders in St. John as vestiges of another era who failed to adapt to changing imperial policies.

As a comparison with Jasanoff’s work suggests, the St. John exiles are an important topic of study for a continued conversation regarding the loyalists’ place within the postwar British

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22 Ibid., 13.
Empire. This study seeks to give character to those who charted St. John’s course, focusing on their political ideologies and the institutions that they established. The first chapter details the development of the social and political identities of the loyalist exiles as shaped by the events leading up to the American Revolution. A survey of the wider imperial ideology of the eighteenth century makes sense of the loyalists’ unyielding devotion to the Crown, and all they suffered as a result. This chapter also chronicles the decisions that led to the loyalists’ exile and the process of their mass evacuation into Nova Scotia and, eventually, St. John. The second chapter focuses on one integral loyalist leader’s vision for St. John—Edward Winslow. Winslow championed the movement to form a separate, loyalist province—New Brunswick—and helped shape that colony as a reflection of the loyalist vision of empire. In this sense, Winslow serves as a symbol of the wider loyalist ideology of the 1760s and 1770s centered on a commitment to the British definition of liberty and deference to imperial authority. The third, and last, chapter of this study expands on Winslow’s vision, offering an in-depth analysis of his fellow loyalist leaders in St. John who worked to create the province, establish its institutions, and develop St. John into a thriving commercial center. Essentially, these loyalist leaders aimed to establish an aristocratic form of government in the province in which power would flow downward from King to Governor, to Council and judges, and finally down to elected representatives in the Assembly, where a limited amount of power would serve local need. In other words, the leaders in St. John envisioned a strict hierarchical map of top-down authority that coincided with the empire’s wider ideological transformation in the 1780s.

While the loyalist leaders enacted the hopes in St. John as best they could, they confronted various challenges along the way. Their efforts were often marred due to dissent among the masses of loyalist settlers, imperial inattention and, at times, indifference, and the challenges of cultivating a harsh, northern wilderness. It is important to point out that at no time did the ambitions of the loyalist leaders command total agreement among the general loyalist population. Yet, the loyalist leaders clung to their dreams and continued to persevere in their establishment of New Brunswick and, in turn, St. John as a loyalist refuge. Eventually, the result was an impressive province with a high degree of self-government within an imperial framework—a combination that finally secured the liberty they sought.
CHAPTER ONE: The Loyal Subjects of the British Crown

The developments of the political and social identities of the St. John loyalists reflect important changes within the British Empire during the Revolutionary-era of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It is important to remember that, despite significant differences in occupation and status, the loyalists, as a group, “came of age” in the same colonial political atmosphere as the revolutionary republicans. The vast differences in the political ideologies of these two blocs speak to the precarious nature of British imperial authority in the American colonies. As noted by Maya Jasanoff, [the loyalists’] “greater value as historical subjects lies in the perspective they grant onto the wider British world in a moment of crisis and change.”23 The question, then, is what factors led to the rift between the loyalists and their colonial brethren? — and, more importantly—what specific aspects of British policy prompted the loyalists’ fierce devotion to imperial authority? The answers to both questions rest in the nature of eighteenth-century British imperial ideology and policy, or, Britain’s “political culture.”

Historian Kathleen Wilson defines “political culture” as the “realm encompassing political values and ideologies, the forms of their expression—verbal and non-verbal, embodied in both actions and artifacts—and the mechanisms of their dissemination and transformation.”24 Accepting Wilson’s definition, British imperial “culture” in the Revolutionary-era depended on “being Protestant, commercial, maritime, and free.”25 James Thomson’s ode “Rule Britannica” captured this ideology perfectly in its description of Britain as a divinely protected island, destined to rule the world.26 In particular, three distinct factors formed the basis of the British empire’s political culture during the eighteenth century: the widespread acknowledgement amongst Britons of the need for a balance of power between European nations, their fierce dedication to the empire’s Blue Water Vision of commerce and control, and, most importantly, their unquestioning reverence for the British constitution. Taking each of these factors separately elucidates the basis of the loyalists’ position during and after the Revolution.

The balance-of-power ideal that dominated British policy during the eighteenth century stemmed from a long series of conflicts between the British, French, and their respective allies

26 Ibid., 94.
dating back to the War of the League of Augsburg in 1689. King William III, after displacing the Stuart King James II a year prior in the “Glorious Revolution,” quickly conjured a Grand Alliance against the French, triggering a process of shifting multinational alliances throughout the century. A running conflict between the Protestant King William and the Catholic Louis XIV of France exasperated the inherent differences in British and French monarchical rule. The two powers recognized each other as sovereign entities with the power and willingness to engage in military conflict, but the lack of a clear precedent for effective diplomatic channels among the nations made efforts towards balanced and limited sovereignty challenging. In basic terms, the maintenance of a balance of power depended on the preservation of mutually beneficial political relationships that recognized European powers as independent states with limited sovereignty, the moral unity encouraged by religious toleration, and, finally, British trading relationships with European partners with interests linked to their own.27 Certainly, at times the balance-of-power model of European diplomacy proved to hold-up more as an ideal than a reality. In regards to the loyalists’ position during the Revolution, however, the system served as a basic frame of reference that guided their political priorities and ambitions throughout the era.

The balance-of-power ideal was also manifest in the Hanoverian Kings’ policy decisions of the era and popularized by the dominant Whig Party in Parliament. The dominant Whigs conceived of Britain as an “empire of liberty…personal freedom, commercial prosperity, and constitutional government.”28 Most assumed that the government’s actions on the continent served as a framework for the freedom granted to colonists throughout the English-speaking Atlantic.29 Directly linked to the idea of such freedom was Great Britain’s long-standing Blue Water Vision that gained recognition in the midst of the Seven Years’ War. 30

The latest in a long succession of European Wars, the Seven Years’ War that waged between 1754 and 1763 made apparent the responsibilities of ruling a global empire and, hence, challenging prior notions of blue water policy dependant on dominant naval power and hegemony over Atlantic trade. The most outspoken advocate for a re-evaluation of former policy was William Pitt—appointed Prime Minister in 1756. Pitt strongly encouraged a British “isolationist” phase on the European continent, stressing the necessity of further expansion

27 Ibid., 4-10.
28 Gould, 3.
29 Ibid., 32.
30 Ibid., 36.
throughout North American and the subsequent reconfiguration of fiscal and political structures throughout the empire.\textsuperscript{31} By seizing French claims to land on the continent, Pitt’s Blue Water Vision conjured prospects of a “vast English-speaking empire founded on a shared religious, patriotic, and cultural heritage.”\textsuperscript{32} Hence, blue water policy moved beyond a strictly military and economic interpretation, reflecting the grandeur of British authorities’ vision of an expanding global empire.

Targeting North America as the next important theatre for a war between the two great powers, Pitt and other British authorities recruited colonial military and fiscal aide for the war by promising the colonists American citizenship within the empire based on equal rights and participation. The colonists quickly realized the limits of Pitt’s promises, however, and, in the wake of the war, dissenting attitudes and old tensions resurfaced, eventually culminating in outright calls for Revolution. The loyalists, on the other hand, seemed to take Pitt’s promises of liberty to heart, placing devout faith in him and his cohorts and trusting the benevolence of the Crown to prevail in the end.

The loyalists’ devout trust in Pitt, specifically, and the British government, as a whole, grounded their belief in the Empire’s “matchless constitution.” The loyalists, above all else, defined themselves as British subjects and took great comfort from the protection they perceived as inherent in the British Constitution. According to Eliga Gould, they placed great stock in the “knowledge that their own rights and privileges did not depend on the King’s personal benevolence or the influence of a particular minister or faction, but on the unshakeable foundations of Parliaments’ unlimited authority.” British subjects enjoyed the benefits of the Constitution and the negative freedoms it guaranteed from a position of deference referred to as “armchair politics” in which they placed complete faith in their representatives in Parliament. While proven an ill-fitting ideal at times, both within the British metropole and its colonies, this basic system of deferential politics shaped the reality of the loyalists.\textsuperscript{33}

\textbf{Loyalist Ideology}

Loyalist support for the Crown during the Revolution depended on a political ideology reflecting an unwavering belief in the superiority of the British Constitution, a devotion to maintaining a rational and levelheaded viewpoint in political discourse, as well as a commitment

\textsuperscript{31} Armitage, \textit{Greater Britain}, 96.
\textsuperscript{32} Gould, 66.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 15.
to the preservation of a “traditional” way of life. The loyalists’ faith in the Constitution was most blatant in their arguments against the Revolutionaries’ qualms regarding representation. Claude VanTyne writes, “The principle ‘No taxation without representation’ was not violated as it was understood and practiced by Englishmen; but as understood and practiced in colonial affairs.” The loyalists, as the “proper” Englishmen they considered themselves to be, argued that the Constitution did, in fact, guarantee representation in Parliament to the American colonists. They acknowledged that the concept of representation in the colonies—enforced in pre-Revolutionary America through appointed Royal Governors and British-controlled political and social institutions—was problematic in a political environment where menacing domestic issues trumped devotion to a distant monarch and an ill-suited, out-dated political ideology. Unlike their revolutionary counterparts, however, the loyalists advocated reconciliation and reform. For them, the problem was not with the rights guaranteed by the Constitution, these were unquestionably just and fair; it was with the specific application of these rights in the American colonies.

The loyalist position also rested on a deep-seated belief in a deferential system of politics rooted in reason and temperance. They generally conceded the distance between the imperial center and its disparate American interests, coupled with the Parliamentary policies regarding taxation in the colonies following the Seven Years’ War, made it difficult for many to place stock in a system of empire that they perceived as increasingly authoritarian. To an extent, loyalist leaders shared this frustration. The loyalists’ response to the mounting frustration was, in their view, an engagement in rational thought and action. The loyalists realized the validity of the system, overall, and logically sought solutions to the crisis within the designated parameters of British legal and social codes.

American colonists might have continued to idealize the British Constitution’s infallibility had it not been for real-life experiences. The fact that, in the early months of the conflict, the camps later labeled “Patriot” and “Loyalist” both advocated efforts of accommodation over revolution demonstrates that the majority of the population at one time sough practical ways of reconciling colonial liberty and imperial authority. The loyalists, versus

34 VanTyne, 9.
35 Mary Beth Norton, The British Americans, 6-7.
the revolutionaries, simply chose to place a greater value on the ideological aspect of the Constitution, as a whole, over the breakdown of many of its principles in practice.

Political positions did not begin to shift until increased radicalism forced the loyalists into a position of defense. As Van Tyne astutely recognized, “They [the loyalists] were honestly aghast that men could be so mad as to cast away all these blessed fruits of union and to fly to independence that they knew not of.” The loyalists refused to place stock in an argument they viewed as dependent on blind emotion, rash actions, and a haphazard republican ideology. Van Tyne also points out, “loyalty was the normal condition, the state that had existed, and did exist; it was the Whigs—the Patriots, as they called themselves—who must do the converting, the changing of men’s opinions to suit a new order of thing.” While it is certainly arguable that this position did not serve the loyalists well, in the end, it was, nonetheless, a valid and rational response. Due to the unprecedented nature of the revolutionaries’ calls for independence, the loyalists’ fidelity to the Crown was, by all measures, the more logical response at the time.

In this context, the validity of the loyalist position, often depicted as “backwards” or unpatriotic, becomes clear. Considering their overall ideology—largely dependent on a deep reverence for the British Constitution, appeals to reason and composure, and self-interested motives for preservation of the status-quo—a tangible loyalist identity emerges as a striking contrast to a more defined “Patriot” identity in historical narratives of the Revolution. Moreover, this loyalist identity did not die with the revolutionaries’ triumph. As loyalist exiles settled throughout the Atlantic world, the loyalist position developed during the American Revolution became the foundation for their visions of community. Ideas regarding appropriate social structures, legitimate systems of government, and the role of imperial authority stemmed directly the loyalists’ experience during, and immediately after, the Revolution.

Preparing the Way

At the end of the war, those loyalists who remained in their homes faced banishment and the liquidation of almost all of their possessions. New York City quickly became the site where these men and women assembled to make plans for their future. At the helm of this influential group of loyalist leaders was Sir Guy Carleton and it was his belief that Nova Scotia was an easy and natural place for the loyalists’ retreat. Carleton was emphatic in his belief that continued

36 Van Tyne, 106.
37 Ibid., 2-3.
British control of the remaining colonies largely depended on the loyalists and coastal areas, such as Nova Scotia, were and ideal place for relocation. In the spring of 1783, British authorities placed Carleton in charge of loyalist transportation from New York to three ports in British North America: Port Roseway, the St. John River, and the shores of Passamaquoddy Bay.

Scholars have placed much emphasis on the arrival of the band of loyalist exiles in the Maritime Provinces, yet a detailed analysis of the state of the Canadian colonies before their arrival is necessary to understand their full impact in the region. In fact, the loyalist migration completely altered the appearance of the region formerly known as Acadia. Even though British Crown kept local leaders in the Maritime Provinces up to date regarding plans for the loyalist migration, the region was ill prepared for the influx of over fifty thousand refugees. Specifically, in Nova Scotia, conflicts regarding overpopulation, development, and land ownership presented a challenge for local authorities.

Though Nova Scotia stretched from its northern peninsula to the borders of Quebec and Maine to the west, the colony had barely twenty thousand settlers in 1783, whereas the thirteen American colonies were attracting hundreds of thousands each year. Prior to the arrival of the American loyalists in 1783, Nova Scotia had undergone only one previous surge in development since the establishment of Halifax as the capitol in 1749. In the aftermath of the Seven Years’ War in the early 1760s, the removal of the French commercial rivals from the area and the prohibition of expansion from the British empire across the Appalachian mountains westward created a brief land boom in Nova Scotia. Instead of transforming the colony into a thriving commercial center rivaling the American port cities of Philadelphia and Boston, however, the

Figure 1. Jedidiah Morse, A New Map of Nova Scotia & New Brunswick, 1794.

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mismanagement of the settlement of these new tracts of land created a sense of skepticism about the region’s potential among both its native population and the British authorities. In only a few years, the Crown granted millions of acres of poorly measured land tracts to wealthy foreign promoters who promised to promote future settlement. To the chagrin of local farmers and other laborers looking to cultivate the new land for subsistence, Halifax merchants joined the rush, eager to acquire land tracts in attempts to further their own commercial endeavors.\(^{39}\)

Perhaps the most eager investor in Nova Scotian land development was Virginian Alexander McNutt. Throughout the 1760s, McNutt acquired approximately two and a half million acres across the entire Nova Scotian colony. McNutt traveled endlessly between New England, Europe, and Nova Scotia in his pursuits to make his land profitable by attracting immigrant settlers. He tirelessly promoted the region as a wilderness ready for the taming by the most innovative and savvy foreign settlers looking to make their fortune. Initially, McNutt’s efforts seemed to pay off, as a large band of New Englanders moved north to take advantage of the fertile Acadian farmlands and to exploit the trading opportunities of the Atlantic coastal regions. These early settlers quickly filled the most desirable areas and settlement waned thereafter. Then, the outbreak of the American Revolution in 1775 halted any further settlement of the region. McNutt’s vision of a thriving colony of foreign immigrants never materialized in the way he had intended.\(^{40}\)

In fact, the failure of McNutt and other land promoters to attract settlers to the region left the local population convinced that prospects for future settlement were bleak. Small communities of fishermen and traders sheltered in coves along the Atlantic coast exercised almost autonomous control over the region since the exile of the French Acadian population in 1758. Wary of outsiders and content with their way of life, these local communities had little desire to develop Nova Scotia beyond the disparate enclave for fishermen and trades people that it had existed as for decades. Nova Scotia evolved from a colony owned and operated by the Crown to a privately owned expanse without settlers. As a result, no vast acreage of British-owned land existed for the Loyalist refugees in 1783.\(^{41}\)

\(^{39}\) Ibid., 157-159.
\(^{41}\) Ibid, 28.
Solving the “land problem” by regaining government control over the land to be allotted to the exiles became the primary goal for the government of Nova Scotia on the eve of the loyalists’ arrival. Colonial officers themselves involved in land speculation, however, were reluctant to seize land grants from their fellow merchants and members of the officer class. Needed was a strong leader to willing to take bold measures. In 1782, such a leader emerged in the form of 56-year old John Parr, an ex-soldier with a solid reputation and political ties to the Earl of Shelburne, William Petty. Parr expected the job to be a relatively easy conclusion to his long career, reaching his post in October. Settling comfortably into his residence, he professed that he was “determined to be happy and to make everyone so who comes within my line.”\(^{42}\) Within a matter of months, however, the influx of thousands of loyalist refugees tested his vow to an extraordinary degree.

Almost immediately after taking office, Sir Guy Carleton wrote Governor Parr to inform him of the imminent arrival of over six hundred loyalist families to the province. Per Carleton’s advice, the governor outlined a plan to give three hundred acres of land to every individual man and five to six hundred for each family. He also arranged for food, lumber, and other supplies. Officials drew plans for new townships with land set aside for a church and a school. Parr himself was a cautious leader, but, to his credit, he worked diligently within a carefully outlined system of distribution planned by the British authorities in England and implemented in the colonies.\(^{43}\)

The first step taken to prepare Nova Scotia for the loyalists was escheat, the process of cancelling the land grants that had transferred millions of acres into private ownership. Since McNutt had gone back to Virginia during the Revolution, his many competitors, whom the colonial government found more likely to cooperate, recovered his land. The extent of the crisis compelled landholders to give-up their claims and the escheat procedures were largely successful across the colony. The Crown regained 2.5 million acres of Nova Scotia in total and quickly drew up tracts of available land for the incoming American loyalists.\(^{44}\)

With a substantial amount of Nova Scotia’s land recovered, Governor Parr’s attention turned to housing, feeding, and settling the refugees expected from New York in the spring of

\(^{42}\) John Parr to Charles Grey, quoted in MacKinnon, *This Unfriendly Soil*, 12.


1783. British authorities had decided that every loyalist household that relocated to the remaining British colonies would receive a free grant of a hundred acres of land, with fifty more acres for each member of the family and additional acres if having served in the military. The British government also committed to providing food rations for several years and materials and tools to help the exiles clear their land and build adequate shelters.\textsuperscript{45}

The Spring Fleet of Loyalists arrived at Port Roseway on May 4, 1783. Located on the southern tip of Nova Scotia, provincial officials deemed it an ideal destination for the American exiles. Recruiting in the New York City area began the year prior by the Port Roseway Associates—a group of loyalists that petitioned Governor Parr for the land—and, as a result, the port became the sought-after destination for this first mass migration.\textsuperscript{46} Deputy Surveyor Benjamin Marston, hired by Governor Parr to oversee the Spring Fleet’s arrival in Port Roseway, described the influx of refugees in his diary for May 5, 1783: “Last night the fleet got in below, upward of thirty sail in all, in which there are three thousand souls.”\textsuperscript{47} To the loyalists—many newly arrived from New York City, one of the largest metropolises in the colonies,—British North America seemed a vast wilderness. Nonetheless, Port Roseway and other nearby regions quickly took shape under detailed settlement plans executed by Governor Parr.

Parr himself was greatly pleased with the thriving settlement and renamed it Shelburne, in honor of his patron, the Earl.\textsuperscript{48} Parr reported, “From every appearance I have not a doubt but that it will in a short time become the most flourishing town for trade of any in this part of the world, as the country will for agriculture.”\textsuperscript{49} As Parr, Marston, and other officials had hoped, the successful settlement of Port Roseway led to the regular traffic of ships bringing more bands of civilian loyalists to Shelburne, including 1,500 black loyalists. The Fall Fleet brought 3,000 loyalist soldiers to the region and Shelburne soon grew into a settlement of 12,000 by the end of

\textsuperscript{45} W.S. MacNutt, \textit{The Atlantic Provinces} (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1965), 89-92.  
\textsuperscript{46} W.O. Raymond, “Benjamin Marston of Marblehead, Loyalist,” \textit{Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society} 7, 84.  
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online}, “John Parr.”  
\textsuperscript{48} Raymond, “Marston,” 85.  
\textsuperscript{49} John Parr, quoted in ibid., 86.
1783. Similarly, Halifax took in several thousand refugees as landings continued across the Nova Scotia peninsula. Towns arose seemingly overnight as companies and families unloaded their possessions and set up shelters in tents, makeshift huts and ships’ holds. Everywhere surveyors were overworked and officials struggled to organize muster-lists tracking their arrival, grant land of appropriate acreage, and to provide supplies and equipment to the exiles.

The St. John Settlement

While 20,000 loyalists landed in peninsular Nova Scotia to create Shelburne and transform the capital, Halifax, just as many headed for the St. John region. British General Guy Carleton in New York first encouraged travel up the Bay of Fundy towards the St. John River in the winter of 1783. Carleton envisioned the region as a loyalist bulwark against the nearby American rebels. General Carleton and other officials in New York worked closely with the Halifax government planning the new community, since the western region of St. John was still a remote frontier among most Nova Scotians, including Governor Parr. Parr was unable to muster enthusiasm for the loyalists’ plans to populate the most distant part of his colony and foresaw potential problems in terms of communication and control. Soon, the river itself became the focus of his uncertainty. Following a visit to Shelburne in July of 1783, Parr expressed his doubts: “I greatly fear the soil and fertility of that part of the province is overrated by the people who have explored it partially. I wish it may turn out otherwise but have many fears.”

By that time, however, two fleets of nearly 3,000 refugees each had settled along the St. John River and General Carleton was preparing several more expeditions of civilians and disbanded troops alike. Despite Parr’s uneasiness, the loyalist exiles continued to arrive at the mouth of the St. John River at rapid rates. The Governor realized his relative lack of power in the

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50 Moore, The Loyalists, 167.
51 John Parr, quoted in W.O Raymond, “Marston,” 86.
situation and was, therefore, forced to place aside his personal reservations regarding the region’s settlement for the time.\textsuperscript{52}

Due to Parr’s skepticism, the oversight of the loyalists’ migration fell to commanders on the scene. Parr deputized his authority to Major Gilbert Studholme and Lieutenant Samuel Denny Street who found themselves in charge of the arrival of 15,000 American loyalist exiles. Studholme and Street supervised land surveying for hundreds of plots, the distribution of supplies by the ton, and the establishment of civil government in the new community. As was the case in Shelburne and other areas of inland Nova Scotia, there was an air of confusion surrounding the settlement as thousands of loyalists disembarked into a seemingly menacing wilderness. At the same time, however, there existed an underlying order created by British officials in London and directed by men such as Harston, Studholme, and Street in the colony. These men directed a cross-flow of human traffic across the peninsula and soon several companies that arrived at the mouth of the St. John moved up the river and cleared new sites for towns and farms. For the most part, though, the loyalist exiles remained at the mouth of the river to form the city of St. John.\textsuperscript{53} It was here that the loyalist leaders formed the basic institutions of a new province—executive, legislative, judiciary, churches—and also fashioned the region’s commercial activities and social rituals. In doing so, St. John came to reflect the loyalists’ dream for North American development and their desire to remain relevant in the British Empire.

\textsuperscript{52} Moore, 167.
\textsuperscript{53} Moore, 168.
CHAPTER TWO: “The Envy of the American States”: Edward Winslow’s St. John

The ways in which loyalist leaders settled the New Brunswick island town of St. John—the land allotments and the development of local government institutions, for instance—reflect a distinctively British system of centralized authority. On the other hand, the loyalists in St. John and other regions throughout the British Atlantic fought for some provisions of local autonomy within these new settlements, suggesting their own weariness of imperial ambitions in the wake of the Revolution. In the case of St. John, loyalist leaders worked tirelessly for the implementation of a governmental structure that reflected “their special identity as loyalists,” divorced from their urban counterparts in the metropole. It is certainly plausible, as historian Keith Mason suggests, that the loyalists’ shared status as settlers prompted their desire to create government institutions that reflected the democratizing effect of living in an unsettled and unfamiliar environment. It is even more likely that, despite their status as loyal supporters of the British Crown” during the Revolution, the loyalists had far more in common with their colonial cohorts than they cared to admit. Coming from the same colonial political environment, that stressed a more practical, “rugged” American spirit built on the principles of egalitarianism and individualism, the loyalists’ understanding of the world developed in a society that stressed uniqueness and originality over similarity and tradition. More influenced by this tendency than they perhaps realized, the loyalists clung to notions of their “particular” and “separate” identity as displaced subjects within the British Empire, organizing a new society based on these sentiments.

Edward Winslow’s Vision

From the outset, the loyalist exiles in St. John were optimistic about their new home. Particularly, among the well-connected loyalists who knew fragments of the resettlement plans, a surge of enthusiasm and ambition quickly overcame any trepidation regarding the unfamiliar land. With government aid in distributing land and supplies, many realized, the refugees could quickly turn thick forests and rocky terrain into lush farming villages and trading ports. The rapidity in the transformation of St. John amazed contemporary observers. As late as June 1783

54 Condron, 2-3.
there were, according to fellow exile John Clarke, only two huts erected by the loyalists.\textsuperscript{55} Soon, however, the St. John settlement’s remarkable progress became evident. When English sailor Samuel Kelly caught sight of the place on October 17, he reported to be:

\begin{quote}
Highly gratified in beholding the numerous huts and houses scattered over the hills and rising grounds near the entrance on the river…and great numbers of new wigwams, framed and log houses were continually beginning as the Settlers arrived.\textsuperscript{56}
\end{quote}

Moreover, the interval land surrounding the St. John River was amongst the most fertile lands on the continent due to centuries of flooding along the site. As a result, agricultural land of good quality lay for hundreds of miles along the banks of the navigable St. John and its many tributaries. Thousands of acres of timber resources were available for the loyalist newcomers.\textsuperscript{57}

An ambitious young leader of the migration named Edward Winslow was among those men most eager to lead the new loyalist society onto the Atlantic-world stage. Originally from Plymouth, Massachusetts, the Winslow family had deep roots in the colony dating back to their Mayflower descendents. A Harvard graduate, Edward Winslow looked to continue his family’s tradition of public office and social influence. For Winslow, the Revolution—which he viewed as a conspiracy, led by a gang of ill-bred and impulsive men—threatened to derail his political ambitions, challenging his family’s position in the community. At the same time, the Revolution provided Winslow the opportunity to shine among fellow loyalists, as he quickly became one of the most outspoken and respected supporters of the Crown. When fighting first broke out in and around Boston, Winslow volunteered for service with the British. Once enlisted, he spent most of his tenure serving at the commander-in-chief’s headquarters, keeping diligent records of the growing loyalist corps. Working closely with senior British commanders and other loyalist leaders, Winslow rose quickly in rank and by 1783 he was made a lieutenant colonel. By the age of thirty-six, Winslow’s knowledge of loyalist plans, ideologies, and personalities was unmatched.\textsuperscript{58}

Winslow first relocated to Halifax as one of the first loyalist agents to precede the mass migration of 1783. Winslow soon realized that the colonial government offered him little opportunity in Halifax and in July 1783, he joined the mass settlement already landed on the St.

\textsuperscript{57} Moore, 187-188.
\textsuperscript{58} Raymond, Winslow Papers, 7-9.
John River. In a letter to friend and loyalist ally Ward Chipman Winslow confided, “In the situation I left, my views were at an end, I had no plans and my prospects were blacker than hell.”\(^{59}\) His landing in St. John, however, revived his optimism. He continues, “The reception I met with from the General, Governor, and all the great people in the country was beyond my most sanguine expectations, it has revived all my old spirits.”\(^{60}\)

Despite certain rigors faced by the loyalist settlers in St. John during the summer of 1783—crowding, expenses, lack of amenities—Winslow remained focused on his larger goals, as reflected in his correspondence during the period. After his first voyage up the St. John River in July, Winslow wrote to Joshua Upham, former Harvard classmate and fellow loyalist, “A number of young bucks and myself have explored this grand river one hundred and twenty miles from its mouth and we have returned delighted beyond expression.”\(^{61}\) In August he wrote to Chipman, “the River St. John’s is the most pleasantest part of this country…the land is better than any I have ever seen.”\(^{62}\) His initial optimism bolstered by equally enthusiastic reports among others within the merchant and gentlemen class, Winslow turned his attention towards the development of the region. Assessing timber resources, Winslow determined that the industry would thrive, for “the fund of timber is literally inexhaustible,” while the forests and rivers provided a suitable means of transport for the cut lumber.\(^{63}\) Winslow looked to the thousands of homes already created from local materials in the first year in St. John as both proof of his fellow loyalists’ hardiness and determination as well as his plan’s feasibility, overall. Similarly, St. John’s prime location convinced Winslow that a fishing industry could thrive. So obvious was this potential, Winslow argued, it hardly warranted explanation:

> In the same vein, he showed great enthusiasm for St. John’s agricultural prospects, reporting that “beef and pork are produced in great abundance. One could hardly imagine a more delightful grass country, better cattle, or better grain, or more abundant crops.”\(^{64}\)

The loyalists provided a population to exploit these resources and, for Winslow, there seemed no limit for what they could achieve as a community.

In fact, as Winslow predicted, St. John flourished. The community’s swift development was certainly due to the loyalists’ ability to sustain themselves from the resources identified by

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\(^{59}\) Winslow to Chipman, 7 July, 1783, in ibid., 98.

\(^{60}\) Ibid.

\(^{61}\) Edward Winslow to Joshua Upham, July 1783, in ibid., 102.

\(^{62}\) Winslow to Chipman, 27 August, 1783, in ibid., 127.

\(^{63}\) Winslow to Chipman, 26 April, 1784, in ibid., 187.

\(^{64}\) Ibid., 189.
Winslow. As Bishop Charles Inglis traveled into St. John 1788, he marveled at the region’s progress. “Scarcely five years have elapsed since the spot on which it stands was a forest,” Inglis noted, “yet with upwards of 1000 houses…it affords a striking instance of what industry is capable of doing.”65 What Bishop Inglis viewed on his 1788 tour was a colonial society created almost overnight. Loyalist refugees had flooded into the provinces in the space of only eighteen months. As he noted, their work was far from done—churches were unfinished, schools not yet built, and farmland remained in desperate need of cultivation—but the overall demography had changed remarkably.66

Relishing in their early success, several influential loyalists predicted that the burgeoning St. John industries could become a key component of the British mercantile system. Winslow echoed the sentiment, writing, “There are assembled here an immense multitude, not of dissolute vagrants such as commonly make the first efforts to settle new countries, but gentlemen of education, farmers formerly independent, and reputable mechanics, who by the fortune of war have been deprived of their property.”67 Winslow saw St. John and neighboring regions as providing an opportunity for himself and his brethren to regain the wealth and social influence they had possessed in the American colonies.

From London, British officials surveyed the development of British North America with satisfaction. “His Majesty feels great satisfaction that the disputes and disagreements which had subsisted amongst the New Settlers have entirely subsided,” Lord Sydney wrote to Governor Parr in early 1785. He continued to express his pleasure that the region, had fulfilled their goal of “providing a comfortable Asylum” for loyalists.68 With unwavering faith in the British empire’s definition of liberty and an increased confidence in his loyalist brethren, Edward Winslow echoed Sydney’s appraisal exclaiming, “Yes—by Heaven! We will be the envy of the American States.”69 For Winslow, it was the loyal, imperial provinces of British North America that would serve as the model for the world. Bolstered by the loyalists’ early success in the region, and the Crown’s favorable appraisal, Winslow and other loyalist leaders began to recognize the need for a province under their direct control.

65 Charles Inglis, “Journal of Occurrences, beginning, Wednesday, October 12, 1785,” August 1-2, 1788, quoted in Jasanoff, Liberty’s Exiles, 150.
66 Jasanoff, Liberty’s Exiles, 151.
67 Ibid., 191.
68 Lord Sydney to John Parr, 8 March, 1784, in Raymond, Winslow Papers, 191.
69 Winslow to Chipman, 26 April, 1784, in ibid., 193.
The Creation of New Brunswick

Greatly exacerbated by an increasing sense of isolation from peninsular Nova Scotia, in early 1784, key loyalist figures began campaigning for the St. John region to become its own colony, separate from Nova Scotia and its distant capitol. The loyalist leaders in St. John had come to British North America with a sense of hope and intended to build a great, new society loyal to the Crown. Instead, they found themselves coming to resemble an appendage to “little Nova Scotia.” To gain influence and authority, they called on their many ties to Britain forged through their loyalty as they campaigned for separation from Nova Scotia. ⁷⁰

Winslow himself first proposed the division, calling on all of his influential contacts. Winslow’s strategy was to draw British officials’ in London attention to the shortcomings of British policy regarding loyalist settlement in the region. The confusion, shortages, and delays experienced during the loyalists landing in 1783 would have been avoided, Winslow argued, had St. John possessed a separate government capable of combating complex, on-the-ground challenges as the arose. Commenting on the geography of the St. John region itself, Winslow wrote to Chipman in province. Observe how detached this part is from the rest—how vastly extensive it is. See the rivers, harbors and consider the numberless inconveniences that must arise from its remoteness from the Metropolis and the difficulty of communication.” ⁷¹ Winslow concluded by urging Chipman to evacuate New York and travel to England where he could better persuade London politicians to back Winslow’s proposal for the partitioning of a new colony. ⁷² Further, upon landing, many St. John settlers faced challenges in acquiring the land and material promised to them by the Crown. They immediately blamed the difficulties on the Nova Scotian government’s perceived

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⁷⁰ Moore, 188.
⁷¹ Winslow to Chipman, 7 July 1783, in Raymond, Winslow Papers, 97.
⁷² Bell, 87.
stranglehold on official allotments. Resentments between the two regions continued to mount as they competed for financial backing and control in the colonies.

In any case, Winslow considered the Nova Scotians weak and far too sympathetic to the American rebels, furthering his vigorous campaign for separation. Writing to Chipman in April 1784, Winslow insisted that “republicanism was bred in their [the Nova Scotians’] bones” and that they would be “turbulent if they dared, notwithstanding the protection and all the other favours they had received from the King’s Government.” In the same letter, he further described the Nova Scotians as a “despicable race” that “were not only hereditary dissenters from the Established Church of old England, but dissenters also from their dissenting brethren in New England.” He believed that a complete division of responsibilities would ease the tensions between the two regions, with each colony able to pursue their own future.

A separate region, with the St. John River as its cornerstone, would also ensure that Winslow and his friends obtained government titles and salaries. A firm believer in the British paternal system of governance, Winslow believed that a government comprised of educated gentlemen was the proper means in which to govern the St. John loyalists en masse. “Here they stand,” he wrote of the St. John loyalists, “with their wives and their children looking up for protection, and requesting such regulations as are necessary to the weal of society. To save these from distress, to soothe and comfort them by extending indulgences which at the same time are essentially beneficial to the country at large, is truly a noble duty.”

For his part, Governor Parr, greatly distracted by increasing resentment amongst the loyalist arrivals and native Nova Scotians in the peninsular regions of the colony, remained weak in the face of the St. John loyalists’ challenge. Within a little over a year of their arrival, the loyalist exiles had grown as numerous as the original inhabitants. Many of these arrivals once held prominent political positions in the American colonies and looked to oust the established Nova Scotian officials from their seats of influence. Additionally, wealthy loyalist leaders continuously petitioned for more land grants. When Governor Parr denied their request, they immediately looked within their ranks for a candidate to replace him as governor. The Earl of

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73 Winslow to Chipman, 26 April, 1784 in Raymond, Winslow Papers, 193.
74 Ibid., 192.
75 Ibid., 193.
Shelburne, Parr’s patron, was losing influence in England so Parr did not have the backing to counter the lobbying refugees and their respective British supporters.76

In June 1784 the British government moved towards the division of Nova Scotia, creating the colony of New Brunswick.77 The official minutes of the Privy Council meeting that produced the decision in favor of partition discreetly attributed the verdict to the “great inconvenience” of having to travel from St. John to Halifax for access to a superior court.78 The Crown appointed Thomas Carleton, the brother of Commander Guy Carleton in New York, as governor and well-connected loyalists in St. John and London obtained titles, salaries, and responsibilities for the administration of the new colony. Winslow received several senior appointments, his place among the elite of New Brunswick now solidified by a royal endorsement.

Loyalist leaders quickly banded together to determine plans for New Brunswick. Like Winslow, they believed that the new community and its settlers needed powerful, paternal leadership.79 Recalling a petition made by fifty-five loyalists in New York City in June 1783 to General Guy Carleton requesting additional land partitions, the new government saw a way to make their vision of a paternalistic, hierarchical society a reality.80 Known as the “Fifty-Five,” a group of loyalists from various parts of thirteen colonies banded together with the goal of recovering the land and property they had lost during the Revolution. The group recommended to General Guy Carleton that he grant each 5,000 additional acres of land, for a total of 275,000 acres, in the new regions of loyalist settlement. While most of the Fifty-Five had served during the war, the petition hardly stressed their right for compensation as members of the King’s Army. Instead, the petitioners suggested that the new colonies would need an elite group of leaders to organize the masses of lower-class loyalists pouring into British North America. Land-ownership was the cornerstone of their plan. They suggested to Carleton that:

Settling such a Number of Loyalists, of the most respectable Characters, who have Constantly had great Influence in His Majesty’s Dominions—will be highly Advantageous in diffusing and supporting a Spirit of Attachment to the British Constitution, as well as To His Majesty’s Royal Person and Family.81

76 Moore, 170-171.
77 MacNutt, The Atlantic Provinces, 93.
78 Bell, 94.
79 Ibid.
80 Wright, The Loyalists of New Brunswick, 175-177.
81 Ibid., 175.
Opening their vast new estates to thousands of poorer tenants, the Fifty-Five argued, would create a social structure similar to that of England in which the rents they received would provide the capital needed for investments in the regions’ various industries. 82

While the petition may not have been practical, as it meant thousands of new inhabitants would not likely receive the 1,000 acres of land allotted to them by the Crown, it did establish a view of society where military services, political power, and land ownership went hand in hand. This vision, however, did not go unchallenged. Soon after the petition became public, a group of six hundred loyalists presented their own counter-petition denouncing the pretensions of those who appointed themselves to lead the new society. The paternal system of government proposed by Winslow and the Fifty-Five had always depended on the consent of those governed, and the counter-petition made clear that a large number of loyalists were no longer willing to participate in the traditional British model for a strictly hierarchical society.

Following the partitioning of New Brunswick from Nova Scotia, orders were given entitling every loyalist household in St. John 100 acres of land, with additional acres for each family and as rewards for military services. As London officials handed down these orders to the newly appointed officials in New Brunswick, including Edward Winslow, those in charge realized their vision of an ordered hierarchical society based on landed estates must change if the settlement were to prosper. It quickly became evident that as more and more individual families acquired their own small plots, the value of larger holdings of land granted to the elites became less certain. The vast majority of the fifteen thousand loyalist exiles that arrived in New Brunswick between May and December 1783 were of humbler backgrounds than those of Winslow and his friends in government. 83

Winslow’s plan for a powerful, prosperous New Brunswick led by land-holding elites collapsed as a society of small, independent investors led the charge. Two-hundred acres being the average property size, few lacked for land. Even with pasturage, timber-cutting operations, and game reserves, the land grants were generous enough to accommodate most. Vast expanses of land to exploit and the easy communication provided by the St. John River meant that farmers were not obliged to live near their neighbors, and isolated farms developed along the river. At the end of 1783 construction trades flourished, the result being fifteen hundred finished homes.

82 Ibid.
83 Moore, 191-192.
Citizens held town meetings, created newspapers and opened churches. Merchants and farmers alike were poised to control the future exports of the local industries.84

The political leaders and elites within society quickly amended their vision for St. John to reflect this development. They moved to take advantage of blossoming businesses and maneuvered to obtain government positions. Winslow, chief among such men, became a member of the governing council from 1784 and served as secretary to the governor. He then became a country magistrate and later a judge, a position he would hold for the duration of his public career. In 1788, reflecting on his ascent in the new colony, he wrote: “I am in the midst of as cheerful a society as any in the world.” He scoffed at American predictions of disaster in New Brunswick arguing that the loyalists were not “in the least of danger of starving, freezing, or being blown into the Bay of Fundy.”85

While the success of the region greatly pleased Winslow and he continued to praise the farmers who set-up farms along the river, he still clung to his original vision for St. John. He criticized British officials for what he considered the reckless granting of property to loyalists of every class. “A great proportion of the original patentees were idle, dissipated, and capricious,” he lamented, “as soon as they were fairly in possession of their lands and had expended the bounty of government, they sold it for a trifle.”86 While he celebrated in the success of early loyalist settlers, he was also quick to place blame elsewhere when they failed. Chiefly, he blamed the settlers themselves, but he also targeted New Brunswick’s fractious legislature.87 In any case, Winslow continued to advocate for a firmly defined hierarchy that would give the most prosperous loyalist men authority in the colony. Yet, even unlimited control over the colony would not have enabled Winslow to enable all of his hopes for it. An excessively optimistic man, Winslow at times failed to comprehend the reality of the world around him. Despite New Brunswick’s abundant resources, the colony could not surpass the American states in every new field it had entered. Coastal towns across British North America that tried to outdo New England in timber production and fishing failed and saw their mills close, forcing people to move away. St. John, for its part, eventually accepted trade with New England as inevitable and traded

84 Ibid., 194-197.
85 Winslow to Ephraim Spooner, 19 April, 1788 in Raymond, Winslow Papers, 357.
86 Winslow to Colonel Lutwyche, 4 March 1800, in ibid., 443.
87 Moore, 200.
as much with the Americans as with Britain or any British colony. Nonetheless, while Winslow had not made New Brunswick the uncontested envy of the American states he had once dreamed it could be, his unflinching devotion to the British Crown—its government, culture, and societal structure—proved him loyal to the core. The quintessential loyalist gentleman, Winslow’s concepts of liberty and government became the foundation from which the loyalist leaders built St. John. Attempting to amalgamate their “Old World” philosophies with a changing imperial ideology, however, these men endured constant setbacks in the process.

88 Ibid.
CHAPTER THREE: The Loyalist Leaders of St. John

Like Edward Winslow, the original loyalist leaders of New Brunswick were proud and confident men. Born into an apparently safe, secure world with their paths to distinction carefully laid out before them, the Revolution had diverted the lives of these men in unfathomable directions. Throughout the Revolution, living in a constant state of flux, the Loyalist leaders lost the sense of control they had enjoyed their entire lives. Unable to exhibit their talents in any satisfying manner, while coping with an unfamiliar wilderness and struggling to provide the bare necessities of life, the loyalists looked for meaning in their sacrifice. In short, the Loyalist leaders in New Brunswick feared that all they had worked for in their youth was in vain, as they endured repeated hardships and failures.

Loyalist leaders who envisioned an ideal constitution for the new provincial administration believed that the American controversy had occurred largely as the result of weak local governments. For them, the Revolution was the direct result of the evolution of local societies far from the model of the parent state Great Britain. Accordingly, loyalists set about creating a colony with a strong executive, robust local aristocracy, an established church, a church-dominated college, and a judiciary independent of democratic control. They envisioned New Brunswick as firmly rooted on hierarchical lines, in firm contrast to the more egalitarian thirteen republics to the south. In the colony of New Brunswick, loyalist leaders aimed to reverse the downward course their lives had taken, seeking to reproduce the social customs and the legal, religious, and educational institutions of the British Empire they revered.

A Loyalist Province

While loyalist refugees throughout British North America represented a wide cross-section of American society, the leaders of New Brunswick tended to be wealthy, politically connected, and socially prominent young men when the Revolution broke out. Like Edward Winslow, many had served in the military during the war or had held important posts with the British Government. They were “gentlemen officials” of New England—office holders, lawyers, clergymen, and their dependents—that chose the losing side in the greatest political quarrel of

89 Bell, 86.
their time. Elite loyalist leaders established New Brunswick as an enclave for themselves and, as a result, local politics and customs tended to reflect the interests of their class.

Not surprisingly, the most prominent of the loyalist leaders tended to be members of Winslow’s close network of Harvard-educated, Massachusetts men. In attempts to gain support for his 1783 campaign to establish New Brunswick as a separate, loyalist colony, Winslow urged his fellow members of Tory society to follow him to St. John. Political men who were once Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson’s closest confidantes—Ward Chipman and Jonathan Sewall—were among the first to lend their support to Winslow’s cause.90

Jonathan Sewall graduated from Harvard in 1748, two decades before Winslow and Chipman’s respective commencements. Following graduation, he taught school in Salem until 1765 and then went on to study law under Judge Jonathan Russell in Charlestown, Massachusetts. It was during this time that Sewall met a young John Adams, also studying law with the Judge. The two men lived together for some time and then remained in constant correspondence throughout their lives. Sewall was successful as a lawyer and was appointed Attorney General of Massachusetts in September 1767. The following year, he also received the post of the Judge of Admiralty for Nova Scotia.91

As tension mounted in Boston on the eve of the Revolution, Sewall and Adams engaged in heated political debates that ran in the city’s newspapers for months. Sewall, originally a Whig-sympathizer, lent support to Hutchinson’s loyalist faction after the governor helped him win a dispute over the estate of his deceased uncle, the Chief Justice of Massachusetts. Sewall was also convinced that a colonial armed opposition would meet defeat, ruining the colonies even further. Sewall’s fierce loyalty to King George and the British government prompted Governor Hutchinson to name him an Addressor in 1774. When Sewall urged his former roommate not to attend the first Continental Congress, Adams replied: “The die is now cast; I have now passed the Rubicon; swim or sink, live or die, survive or perish with my country is my unalterable determination.” The two men did not speak again for nearly a decade.92

Ward Chipman was a Harvard classmate of Winslow and among his most trusted confidantes. The fourth son of John and Rebecca Chipman—John a prominent lawyer living in

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90 Gorman Condon, 105.
91 Stark, The Loyalists of Massachusetts, 455.
Marblehead, Massachusetts—Ward’s family had deep roots in the colony. Fulfilling the destiny his family imagined for him, Ward turned to legal studies after his Harvard graduation. At the time of the Revolution, Chipman was serving as the young protégé of Sewall. While Chipman studied under the Attorney-General, he repaid his debt by tutoring Sewall’s two sons, Jonathan Jr. and Stephen, and became more and more a member of the family. During their political discussions, Sewall’s conservative leanings greatly influenced Chipman’s own loyalist views.

On September 1, 1774, Chipman and Sewall were conducting business at the elegant country home of the Attorney-General when an angry mob of rebel sympathizers gathered outside. Earlier in the day, two hundred British soldiers had boarded boats and headed up the Mystic River into Boston and the surrounding countryside. They marched into a powder house and confiscated two hundred and fifty half barrels of rebel-stored gunpowder. Enraged crowds of rebel sympathizers gathered throughout the area to organize demonstrations in Boston the next day. The eager crowd gathered at the Sewall residence, however, decided to act immediately. Aware of the events of the day, a member of the Sewall family, undoubtedly frightened by the crowd, fired a warning shot from the upstairs of the house. Immediately, the mob attacked the building, throwing rocks and breaking windows. Then, unexpectedly, the mob dispersed. Shaken, Sewall, Chipman, and the rest of the Sewall clan fled to Boston.

In Boston, life was grim for the family. After the Battle of Bunker Hill in June 1775 the death toll was high. Funerals had become so commonplace that Sewall wrote to a friend “you met as many dead folks as live ones in Boston streets.” Food shortages, the crowding of refugees from other colonies, and the constant presence of British troops also contributed to an atmosphere of tension. Petty crimes increased and various atrocities, at times violent, began against proclaimed loyalists and British sympathizers. The situation soon grew intolerable for Chipman and the Sewalls, and they decided to leave for London in the summers of 1775 and 1776, respectively. They joined approximately 7,000 other loyalist exiles in the city.

The scene in London proved no fairer, however, as the loyalists who fled to England often felt out of place and insignificant. Even former Governor Hutchinson, whom the London political elite greeted with respect and admiration in 1774, soon learned that his ideas were of

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little importance to Prime Minister Lord Frederick North and his cabinet. In February 1776 Hutchinson bitterly reported to friends in the colonies that, “We Americans are plenty here and very cheap. Some of us at first coming were apt to think ourselves of importance but other people do not think so, and few if any of us are much consulted or inquired after.”\(^95\) The loyalists, as a group, were generally ignored because, first, the English population was not united in its opinion of the revolution and, second, because the loyalists were thought to be temporary refugees. Many loyalists also held the belief that they would quickly return to the colonies, causing them tremendous financial difficulty. Rampant unemployment rates and poor preparation before they fled to the most expensive city in the world caused the loyalists to seek assistance from the British government. While the North Administration did not seek loyalist advice, it did assist many loyalist families. The administration offered grants that extended the salaries of colonial officials while in exile and by 1777 had established a system in which they gave a standard stipend of £100, on average, to each refugee. This system cost up to £68,000 by 1778, generating further ill will towards the loyalists amongst Londoners.\(^96\)

Confronted with such hostility, loyalist refugees banded together in “colonial ghettos,” based upon the colony from which they fled. Within each colonial consortium, the exiles reinforced the social arrangements of their homeland. Thus, the Massachusetts colonists divided themselves on three levels: the elite circle of Governor Hutchinson and his officials, the professionals and minor government officials, and the lower class. Both Chipman and Sewall had connections in the first and second circles, but tended to mostly frequent gatherings of those in the second. Sewall wrote home about life in England, confessing, “The situation of American Loyalists is enough to have provoked Job’s wife, if not Job himself, but still we must be men, philosophers, and Christians, bearing up with patience, resignation, and fortitude against unavoidable suffering.”\(^97\)

While life was generally acceptable for Chipman in London, his expensive lifestyle was difficult to maintain. Sir William Howe granted him the position of Deputy Muster-Master General of His Majesty’s Provincial Forces for New York and Chipman returned to America to serve under Muster-Master, and old friend, Edward Winslow in the summer of 1777. Chipman’s duty was to muster the provincial forces, or Loyalist Regiments, six times a year and to oversee

\(^95\) Thomas Hutchinson to Sarah Oliver, 1 November 1774, quoted in ibid., 306.
\(^96\) Norton, 76.
\(^97\) Sabine, *Biographical Sketches*, 276-277.
their payment. Never seeing a battlefield, he traveled throughout New York inspecting troops for the duration of the war. Chipman’s annual salary was £500, allowing him to continue to indulge in the extravagant lifestyle he felt fit his position.

Sewall became concerned with Chipman’s excesses. In 1782 he chastised his protégé for not putting money aside, writing, “Permit my friendship to suggest that at your time of life you out of that sum to be laying up something.”98 Uncertainty about the future was on Sewall’s mind. The British had begun the peace process with their former colonies. What followed was a scramble for political positions among the most influential loyalist leaders both in the colonies and abroad. Early in 1783, Chipman, Sewall, Winslow, and others within their circle presented memorials to Lord North in London requesting a half-pay pension. Soon after, Sir Guy Carleton, who had replaced Sir Henry Clinton as Commander-in-Chief of his Majesty’s forces in North America a year prior, sent Henry E. Fox to be his Commander-in-Chief in Halifax. Throughout 1783, Carleton, Fox, and Nova Scotian Governor Parr oversaw the settlement of thousands of loyalist refugees in the province.99

Reports of the disillusionment among loyalist exiles in England and other parts of the British Empire generated apprehension within loyalist circles in the United States. Many began to seek out profitable speculation elsewhere. Chipman, Sewall, and Winslow successful lobbying for a loyalist colony resulted in the partitioning of land north of the Bay of Fundy to form New Brunswick. The colony’s formation and the massive amounts of land said to be available in the St. John River Valley, drew thousands more loyalist exiles in London to the region. Chipman spoke for many in London when he wrote in July 1784 that he “had rather move in a reputable and respectable line in that Country [New Brunswick] with a competent subsistence, than with the same income supports the mortification of seeing in obscurity millions insulting me with their wealth in this country.”100 Men such as Chipman hoped to live out their days in New Brunswick in a climate wherein the “common people” would be their “obedient and grateful subjects.”101 The British authorities named Chipman Solicitor-General and Winslow Surrogate General of the province.

99 Ibid., 152.
100 Chipman to Sewall, 9 July 1784, quoted in ibid.
101 Winslow to Chipman, 7 July 1783, quoted in Raymond, Winslow Papers, 67.
The generous compensation offered to the elite loyalist leaders by the Loyalist Claims Commission as well as their decision to partition New Brunswick proved to them that British government was favorable to their demands, giving them hope that they could retrieve their fortunes. Hence, they characterized their new home as an “asylum of loyalty,” guided by a profound sense of cultural mission to make the province finer, better, and more respectable than the rival American Republic to the south. In contrast, the loyalist leaders strove to establish a highly civilized society in New Brunswick that justified the Loyalists’ choices during the Revolution—both for themselves and for posterity.

Discord and Dissent

Three weeks after New Brunswick’s formal establishment, General Guy Carleton recommended his younger brother, Colonel Thomas Carleton, for the post of governor. Officials in Whitehall backed General Carleton’s request and Thomas Carleton became the colony’s first governor. On Sunday, November 21, 1783, cannon salutes, huzzas, and cries of “long live the King and the Governor” met Carleton and his party upon their landing in St. John. Soon after his arrival, as was the ritual of eighteenth-century public life, the new governor was read an “Address,” sponsored by those who described themselves as a “number of oppressed and insulted Loyalists,” who looked to Carleton to “check the arrogance of tyranny and crush the grown of injustice.”

The governor’s appointment gave the loyalists of St. John genuine cause for rejoicing, as Thomas Carleton seemed a promising protégé of the powerful and much esteemed Sir Guy Carleton, a man the St. John loyalists knew to be just and amicable.

Thomas Carleton’s political life was far less illustrious than that of his older brother. Thomas, however, was far more cosmopolitan, bringing to New Brunswick a practical knowledge of the world that he had gained first-hand during his time in the military. An honest and generous leader who was genuinely sympathetic towards the plight of the thousands of refugees under his command, Governor Carleton’s tenure in New Brunswick lasted thirty-three years. While Carleton’s public service record was remarkable in terms duration, the quality of his leadership was mediocre, at best. The public generally liked Governor Carlton but he lacked the political finesse of his older brother. He tended to be single-minded in his judgments and lacked the ability to evaluate all facets of a political quagmire. Referred to as “Simple Tom” by his adversaries, at times Carleton appeared to be a lackey for powerful men such as Winslow.

102 Winslow to John Wentworth, 27 November 1784, quoted in Raymond, Winslow Papers, 251.
Sewall and Chipman. To an extent, their judgments were correct. During the long constitutional crisis of the 1790s, Carleton tended to adopt the same perspective of his close circle of advisors, almost exclusively comprised of elite loyalist gentlemen.\textsuperscript{103}

New Brunswick’s first election campaign in 1785 greatly contributed to Carleton’s growing reputation as an ineffective leader. In the year since New Brunswick’s creation, Carleton had made progress, introducing a sense of decorum and order where formerly there was only chaos. He granted the land allotments promised by the British authorities to nearly all of the loyalist settlers and relied on an established system with prominent loyalist leaders at the helm—to resolve disputes among the colonists. The governor and his agents also instituted government departments and assigned day-to-day duties in running the colony. Carleton instituted a civic administration in St. John, specifically, and chose St. Anne as the capital city of the province. The Supreme Court was open for business and scouting for potential Agents of the Church of England had begun in earnest.\textsuperscript{104} Noticeably absent from Carleton’s list of accomplishments, however, was the calling of a provincial assembly and the election of its assembly members.

Carleton delayed an election because he was nervous about the volatile nature of an elected body, as evidenced by the American Revolution. He confessed himself, “anxious to finish everything respecting the organization of the Province that properly belonged to the prerogative before a meeting of Representatives chosen by the people.” By first “strengthening the executive powers of Government,” he hoped to “discountenance its leaning so much on the popular part of the Constitution.”\textsuperscript{105} By 1785, however, the governor could procrastinate no longer, as further delay would alarm the people, who had gone nearly a decade without an elected government. On October 15, 1785, Carleton ordered elections for an assembly to convene early in the new year. St. John, the most populous county, was to choose six of the assembly’s twenty-six members. In announcing the election to those in London, Carleton explained that because many settlers were actually living on their promised land, without yet receiving a formal land grant from the Crown, it was practically impossible to confine voting privileges to free, landholders. Instead, Carleton proposed that all adult males resident in their

\textsuperscript{103} Raymond, “A Sketch of the Life and Administration of General Thomas Carleton, First Governor of New Brunswick,” *New Brunswick Historical Society Collection*, vol.II (1899–1905), no.6, 439.

\textsuperscript{104} Bell, 101.

\textsuperscript{105} Carleton to Lord Sydney, 25 June 1785, quoted in Bell, 102.
county for more than three months could vote, meaning that New Brunswick’s first election was to be conducted on universal, male suffrage.106

The governor hoped that his unusually democratic measure would ease the factious spirit that had long haunted St. John. But, Carleton’s allies in government saw his measure as potentially harmful to their own political ascent. The election unleashed resentments that had been mounting in St. John since the first weeks of settlement. The geography of the city itself reflected this tension and played a key role in voting patterns. In the waterfront area of the city, known as the “Lower Cove,” shopkeepers, carpenters, laborers, and seamen tended to resent the authoritarian style of government taking form in St. John and they lent their support to a New York military veteran who had been one of the leading opponents of the “petition of fifty-five.” On the higher ground near Fort Howe, the “Upper Cove,” provincial office holders, lawyers, and educated professionals sponsored a ticket led by Ward Chipman.

Voting began in Macpherson’s Tavern in the Lower Cove in early November and continued two days later at Mallard House Tavern in the Upper Cove, in an effort to balance the voting tally. At both locations, voters turned out in droves and heatedly discussed the early election returns. Discussion intensified, however, and debate gave way to taunts and threats. Soon, a brawl broke out between rival voters. At Macpherson’s, Lower Covers left the tavern and marched up the street to Mallard’s, trying to force their way past the government supporters guarding the entrance. Yelling, “Huzza for the Lower Cove,” and “Come on, my boys, we’ll soon dislodge’em,” the protestors became violent. They threw stones through windows as clubs and fists met faces. The chaos ended only when troops rushed down from Fort Howe and pulled the rioters apart, carting the protesters off to jail.107

In the immediate aftermath of the protests, the governor was quick to blame the riot on zealous radicals “intoxicating the lowest class.” He was also quick to point out the “decisive measures” he had taken to “check this licentious spirit.” Carleton let tempers cool for a week and then reopened the polls, exclaiming, “The Election is now conducted in the most peaceable manner.”108 In the end, the Lower Cove candidates won by a margin of more than 10 percent, much to the chagrin of Carleton and his circle of loyalist leaders. Refusing to let the results stand, the Governor ordered a recount. Over Christmas week of 1785, the sheriff of St. John

106 Bell, 102-104.
107 Royal Gazette, 15 November 1785, quoted in Bell, 105.
108 Thomas Carleton to Lord Sydney, 20 November 1785, quoted in Bell, 104.
sifted through local ballots, disallowing almost two hundred votes in favor of the six Lower Cove candidates and certifying the government-backed Upper Cove ticket.¹⁰⁹

Enraged, supporters of the opposition ticket wrote angry letters to the Saint John Gazette and circulated petitions, the largest signed by 327 men, nearly one-third of the electors of St. John. The petitioners insisted that:

We have proven ourselves to be the most faithful and Loyal Subjects to the best of Governments and yet we have publicly seen British Subjects confined in Irons…The military introduced and unnecessarily and unlawfully patrolling the streets, during an Election…taxes levied by the Incorporation Contrary to Law…The freedom of Election violated in the most public manner. We most positively affirm these Proceedings to be unjust, Injurious to the Freedom of Election, manifest Violations of the Rights of the People and Subversive of the first Privileges of the British Constitution.¹¹⁰

The setting described by the petitioners, as well as the rhetoric used, reminded Carleton and other St. John leaders of events leading up to the Revolution a decade prior. Just as the American patriots had invoked the British Constitution in their pleas for just representation, the St. John loyalists invoked the same constitution in protests against the violation of their rights as British subjects. Unlike the American revolutionaries, however, the St. John loyalists directed their anger at the king’s colonial representatives, not against the king himself. In this sense, they remained loyal subjects. In fact, they called on King George III himself in asking for redress. They pleaded with the monarch to dissolve the assembly and call for a new election.¹¹¹

Still, Governor Carleton had no intention of backing down. He swiftly branded the opposition as disloyal, pitting loyalist against loyalist. To stop anti-government petitions, the assembly passed “An Act against tumults and Disorders, upon pretence of preparing or presenting Public Petitions…to the Governor”—making such petitions illegal.¹¹² Unlike revolutionary America, in loyalist St. John, imperial power won out. The tumult surrounding the 1785 election revealed that political conflict between British subjects did not end with the Revolution. Rather, the loyalists’ struggle to establish a functioning government of elected representative reflected the transformation of the empire during the period, as the settlers struggled to align their commitment to British rights with their changing ideas of what those rights ought to be. Authority trumped a popular call for civil liberty, marking the first of a series of political clashes between the American loyalist exiles in St. John and British imperial power.

¹⁰⁹ Jasanoff, Liberty’s Exiles, 187.
¹¹¹ Jasanoff, Liberty’s Exiles, 188.
¹¹² Carleton to Sydney, 14 May, 1786, quoted in Bell, 117.
Further, for politicians in London, the entire ordeal confirmed that a little democracy could be a dangerous thing. Lord Sydney’s blame fell squarely on Carleton’s early decision to allow for such expansive enfranchisement guidelines, and the governor, for his part, agreed. The election of 1785 vindicated Carleton and other loyalist leaders their authoritarian response to dissent in St. John. The election also highlighted the fact that political divisions among British subjects did not end with the war. The importance was that although loyalists held varying political and social viewpoints, they agreed on one thing: the sovereign authority of the king. In this sense, monarchism bound together a disparate population of American exiles. The suppression of the riots pleased Carleton, Winslow, et al., as they delighted in the return to a legitimate, “gentlemanlike government.”

Loyalist Leaders in Action

Local government actions, public service records, social institutions, and various cultural activities best reveal the loyalist leaders’ inclination to emulate British values and customs in St. John, no matter how outdated. For instance, after the tense 1785 election local leaders feared it would be difficult to maintain authority in such a factitious setting. Their response was adopting a more centralized, rigid, and hierarchical government system mirroring that of the empire twenty years prior. Additionally, as the loyalist leaders grew older, familiar tasks became exhausting. The long rides on horseback to attend meetings, the harsh wintertime climate, and the time-consuming nature of managing a farm—all wore down their energy and zeal for public service. As was customary in Britain, they began to send agents to these meetings on their behalf, if bothering to attend at all. In the world in which the loyalist leaders came-of-age—when titles were often inherited instead of earned—there was scant need for a gentleman to exhaust himself with the menial duties of a public official. While the British empire of the 1780s became more inclusive and reliant on the work of dedicated public servants, loyalist leaders preferred their system of armchair politics. Moreover, these men brought to New Brunswick government some other practices of eighteenth-century politics, including nepotism and multiple-office holding.

The most relentless office-seeker was Edward Winslow. During his years in New Brunswick, Winslow held the following posts: secretary of the province, member of the council,

113 Sydney to Thomas Carleton, 19 April 1786, quoted in Jasanoff, Liberty’s Exiles, 188.
114 Jasanoff, Liberty’s Exiles, 188.
surrogate general of the province, justice of the peace, deputy paymaster of His Majesty’s Troops in New Brunswick, secretary to the Boundary Commission, receiver general of the quit rents, deputy surveyor of the King’s Woods, collector of customs, justice of the supreme court, and the president of the council.\textsuperscript{115} While such a gleaming resume on its own indicates nothing more than an ambitious and well-respected man’s relentless drive and dedication to public service, Winslow’s public service record was not without its blemishes. The most egregious display of Winslow’s blinding ambition was his position as receiver general of quit rents. When the British Government endowed the loyalists with their original land grants, they excused them from paying quit rents, a colonial land tax, for a period of ten years in recognition of their wartime services. These fees finally became due in the 1790s and neither the provincial nor the imperial government regarded them of immediate significance and did not press for their payment. Winslow, however, advocated the enforcement of the quit-rent provision in New Brunswick in order to fund the British war effort against France. In a letter written in 1800 to Edward G. Lutwyche, an influential loyalist that relocated to London after the Revolution, Winslow defended his case, claiming that a system of voluntary contributions to the effort was not working properly: “The loyal and ambitious were making sacrifices beyond their means and...The factious and mercenary part of the community avoided all connection with the subscriptions.” By contrast, Winslow argued, a quit rent would tax people according to the extent and nature of their property and would be more evenhanded. He suggested that the inhabitants of New Brunswick “should realize and (on all occasions) acknowledge their dependence upon Great Britain.” The quit rent, he argued, was the most “rational” way for citizens to demonstrate their allegiance.\textsuperscript{116}

Although Winslow denied that he stood to benefit personally from the proposal, he made it known that he was willing to serve as the receiver general for the quit rents. Friends on the council seconded his proposal and unanimously voted for his assignment to the post. Prompted by Winslow’s friend Governor Carleton and other provincial officials, Great Britain agreed to let New Brunswick collect quit rents, if the House of Assembly of the province formally approved the measure. This last proviso completely unraveled Winslow’s entire scheme, however, as he and the governor both knew the assembly would never establish a fund over which it no control.

\textsuperscript{115} Condon, 181.
\textsuperscript{116} Winslow to Edward Lutwyche, 4 March 1800, quoted in Raymond, \textit{Winslow Papers}, 442.
Thus, with memories of the 1785 election and the American Revolution lingering, Winslow and the other New Brunswick leaders who originally supported his quit rents proposal completely reversed their position and prevented the proposal’s passage—a measure they knew would thwart another political confrontation in the assembly. Careful political maneuvering on the part of Winslow and his cohorts ensured the concealment of the fact that Winslow himself had originally proposed the quit rents’ collection. Demonstrating his shrewd political skill, the public was none the wiser. In fact, in 1806, with the issue of New Brunswick’s land regulations finally settled, Winslow proudly reported that he had been “instrumental” in relieving the province “from the shameful oppression of Quit-rents.”

Winslow’s almost immediate reversal in position reveal his original arguments in favor of patriotism and support for the British Army as trite politicking meant to secure for himself a coveted position.

Winslow relentlessly sought after public office positions throughout his career, with little opposition. Winslow’s 1806 appointment to the Supreme Court of New Brunswick, however, openly mocked the loyalists’ high standard of public service, igniting a firestorm of criticism directed at Winslow by his closest allies. Using his English connections, particularly Lord Sheffield and the Duke of Northumberland, Winslow received the 1806 appointment despite the fact that he had no legal training or degree. Governor Carleton protested, “Nothing can be more absurd or more injurious to the King’s Service” than to appoint a nonprofessional man to such a high post. Winslow’s affront to the profession mortified even Chipman. Winslow, true to nature, however, dismissed these criticisms and argued that his public service record justified his appointment to any post that was available to him.

The loyalist leaders’ public office seeking was a severe example of behavior that persisted from the British form of empire of the 1760s and 1770 but the rules had changed in the post-revolutionary empire of the 1780s. A much more common behavior, the loyalists’ failure to perform day-to-day duties, further illustrates their outmoded attitudes towards imperial operations. For instance, Governor Carleton constantly complained of the difficulties involved in assembling a quorum of the five to twelve council members required to hold council meetings. The governor became so frustrated he requested permission to reduce the quorum number to three. Carleton’s despair was justified, as several of the council members never attended a single

117 Ibid., 12 October, 1806, quoted in ibid., 567.
118 Thomas Carleton to John Saunders, 6 July, 1809, quoted in Condon, 183.
meeting of the Board. The attendance records of the Supreme Court and the House of Assembly of New Brunswick were similarly bleak. All of this, again, points to the inconsistency between the loyalists’ service records and the changing nature of the British Empire that depended on diligent public servants working within a system of increased authoritarian rule.

While the glaring discrepancy between the loyalists’ actions and ideal is seemingly irreconcilable, there is an explanation to the obvious lapses in their records of public service. For one, the loyalist leaders regarded practices such as nepotism and plural office holding as the legitimate rewards of public service, rather than corrupt politics. Thus, when Edward Winslow advocated retaining his office as surrogate general after his appointment to the Supreme Court, he did so on the grounds that Thomas Hutchinson held plural office while Governor of Massachusetts. Likewise, Jonathan Odell considered it his responsibility as a father to negotiate a position in public service for his son, and he ignored criticism to the contrary. Moreover, the failures of the loyalist leaders to live up to their stated standard of excellence owed much to their weakening physical conditions rather than any lack of commitment on their part. The burdens of age paired with heavy financial demands that lingered from the Revolution led, in many cases, to the frantic office seeking by Winslow and other leaders in the community.119

Social Institutions and Cultural Activities

The loyalist leaders never gave up on their idea of creating a respectable society in New Brunswick along the lines of an idealized British empire. Their efforts to establish the Church of England in New Brunswick was one such an example of their quest. Most of the loyalist leaders were member of the established Church, and they were eager to see it flourish in St. John. As the British Empire expanded its territory, it adopted a policy centered on the direct-rule over millions of foreign subjects. Missionary efforts within the Church significantly increased during this period, as organizations formed intent on bringing Anglican Christianity to the people of these new, remote colonies. Likewise, loyalist officials regarded the Church as a primary agent for instilling the habits of respect and obedience among the public in St. John and they viewed Anglican ministers as cultural assets to the community.

Despite the leaders’ high levels of commitment, the Anglican Church was largely ineffective in the early history of the province. Several factors contributed to its weakness, including New Brunswick’s rugged terrain, the unique needs of a diverse frontier community,

and the Church’s’ formal organization. While the loyalist founders made great strides in cultivating and civilizing the province, New Brunswick remained a scattered collection of rough settlements until well after 1815. The pockets of settlement, while generally prosperous, were small in comparison to the vast stretches of uncultivated wilderness that comprised the region’s topography. Further, the long harsh winters and the lack of a transportation system other than the river contributed to a feeling of isolation among most inhabitants. Whether their trade was fishing, farming, lumbering, or commerce, most New Brunswickers spent their lives in a constant struggle with the natural environment. This intimate contact with the powers of the physical world caused inhabitants to seek solace in religion, hoping to find justification and reassurance for all they had endured. While such longing for an emotional form of spirituality was a familiar phenomenon in frontier communities across North America, the Anglican Church in New Brunswick was unsuited to meet the religious demands of the regions’ inhabitants. Its first ministers were the aged survivors of the Revolution and were physically unable to spread the Gospel in a demanding frontier environment.120

Further, the Church’s organization tended to alienate the general population. Formally established in 1786 at the same time the Crown extended toleration to all dissenting Protestant sects across the British Empire, the Church of England in New Brunswick was poised to become the primary religious force in the province. In support of this goal, the British government agreed to finance the construction of the first churches in the province and to pay the ministers’ salaries during the initial transition period. While this aid allowed the church to expand physically, it also tended to isolate the clergy psychologically from the daily concerns of the general population. The sense of community that often developed from a collective effort to build a church and support a minister, therefore, did not occur.

Additionally, the highly formal and materialistic policies of the Anglican hierarchy did not bode well among local inhabitants. The New Brunswick clergy was under the jurisdiction of two conservative church authorities—Charles Inglis, the first Bishop of Nova Scotia, and William Morice, the British Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (S.P.G.). Both men were distrustful and tended to equate religious enthusiasm with the excesses of republicanism. Both Inglis and Morice sought to extend the Church’s influence by building programs rather than through the development of more meaningful rituals that would

120 Rev. Samuel Cooke to Rev. Jacob Bailey, 6 May 1786, quoted in Condon, 185.
bring the community together. For instance, in the first twenty years of the Church’s activity in New Brunswick, those in charge placed primary emphasis on the erection of new churches, the acquisition of land, and the definition of the powers of governor, the bishop, and the vestry. Even the assignment of pew spaces seemed to take precedence over the spiritual needs of the population at-large. In 1809, for example, Inglis—distressed to learn that the pews in the Church at Kingston, New Brunswick, were held in common rather than assigned—severely reprimanded the local vestry.

I never knew an instance before this, in Europe or America, where pews were thus held...and where men—perhaps of the worst character—might come and set themselves down by the most religious and respectable characters in the parish. Thus must ultimately produce disorder and confusion...What could occasion such an innovation—such a departure from the usage of the Church of England I am unable to conceive.\footnote{121}

In most social and political arenas, the loyalist leaders in New Brunswick were successful in building a society built upon the accepted conventions of the English gentry. Regarding organized religion, however, their efforts were fruitless, as the preoccupations of Inglis and other clergy did not match the needs of the overall population.

While the Church of England drew members from the official and proprietor class of society, the majority of New Brunswickers preferred the more humanist approach to worship allowed for by dissenting sects, such as the Baptists and the Methodists. In several instances, those in Anglican leadership positions were largely dismissive of members of such sects, whom Inglis denounced in 1809 as “Fanatical Itinerant Preachers who obtrude themselves in every district. The People,” he continued, “are insensibly alienated from the national Church and its worship.”\footnote{122} Edward Winslow condemned dissenting preachers as “harpies,” and felt that only time and the continued presence of a “correct, righteous” clergy could rescue the common people from such extremism.\footnote{123} For Winslow and other loyalist leaders, the Church of England was a bulwark of imperial order and they were confident of its necessity in St. John’s overall design.

As loyalist leaders set about establishing a new society that mirrored Britain in legal, political, and religious institutions, they also took up residence in the province in a style that represented their status as gentlemen and public officials. Despite the excessive cost, most loyalist leaders were so eager to emulate English gentility that they exhibited a preference for

\footnote{122}{Inglis to Sir George Prevost, 22 June 1809, quoted in Condon, 186.}
\footnote{123}{Winslow, “Edward Winslow on the Old Inhabitants and Itinerant Preachers,” c.1803, Raymond, *Winslow Papers*, 531.}
only English goods, furniture, and clothing. Loyalist leaders lived on spacious farms overlooking the St. John River, in houses stocked with mahogany furniture, all the rage in England at the time. Ward Chipman built an architectural marvel of a town house in St. John and adorned it with the finest trimmings imported from Britain and America. Described by Bishop Inglis as “exceedingly neat and in good taste, and resembles a gentleman’s villa in Europe,” Chipman’s home stood as a symbol of the loyalist dream realized.124

Elaborate balls and galas were the apex of social intercourse in loyalist high-society in the province. At these balls, the loyalist leaders and their families exchanged gossip, made matches for their children, and displayed expensive gowns and military dress uniforms from the Revolution. In June 1810, Scottish artist George Heriot remarked on such extravagances, writing to Winslow, “You seem to possess in New Brunswick great abundance of every article for the support of life, and to enjoy the most perfect, undisturbed state. But your society is composed of reasonable people who have learnt to value on the tranquility of retirements, from a recollection of the evils of warfare and internal dissension.”125 Additionally, in a 1784 letter to fellow loyalist and Harvard graduate John Wentworth, Winslow himself boasted of these New Brunswick balls, noting that the women danced “in the style and taste of Boston.”126 Winslow and other loyalist men faithfully replicated the social customs of certain parts of New England society, preserving their preferred way of life in the backwoods of New Brunswick.

Two weekly newspapers—The Royal Gazette and The Saint John Gazette—allowed the relatively isolated loyalist community to remain in contact with the world-at-large. The main items of interest were news from England and the United States, with provincial politics receiving attention only in moments of contention. News of King George III and the Royal Family, as well as British military efforts during the Napoleonic Wars, were the principal subjects featured from London. American news consisted of political reports from New York and Boston papers with a decidedly pro-Federalist or, pro-British leaning. While early on the New Brunswick papers tended to simply reprint items of interest from American journals, at times they did put forth their own editorial viewpoints. In 1801, The Royal Gazette lamented John Adams’ presidential defeat, “There is every reason to apprehend that a new administration will produce very different measures from those pursued under the mild and equitable system for

124 Diary of Bishop Charles Inglis, entry for 20 July 1792, quoted in Condon, 188.
125 George Heriot to Winslow, 13 June 1810, quoted in Raymond, Winslow Papers, 650.
126 Winslow to Wentworth, 27 November 1784, quoted in ibid., 250.
which Mr. Adams has been so highly and justly distinguished.”\footnote{Royal Gazette, Feb. 17, 1801, quoted in Condon, 178.} The two New Brunswick papers also reported frequently on the events of the French Revolution. The \textit{Saint John Gazette} ran a series of articles detailing the “Crimes committed during the French Revolution” that provided the more lurid details of the atrocities committed by the Revolutionaries.\footnote{“New York. Further Translations from the ‘History of Crimes Committed during the French Revolution,’” \textit{Saint John Gazette}, Nov. 30, 1799, quoted in ibid.} Such stories were indicative of a certain morbid satisfaction among the loyalists that came from the collapse of the French experiment in republicanism.

The leaders placed a high value on both internal social and political developments, causing them to be quite exclusive and self-righteous in laying out the “proper” path for the new province. Their standards for their social institutions were rigid and did not cater to the public. Further, the leaders’ relationship with their children reflected their sense of cultural mission. They were determined that the younger generation would not suffer from the effects of the Revolution as they had. Their efforts to establish rich cultural and political institutions was a result of their determination to protect New Brunswick’s youth, instilling in them “respectable” values centered on proper educations, lucrative careers, and suitable marriages.

In the process of carrying-out their vision for an “asylum of loyalty” in New Brunswick, the loyalist leaders firmly ingrained certain civil and moral codes in society. They had made the ultimate sacrifice for the British Empire and their actions in the years immediately following New Brunswick’s establishment aimed to ensure that law, liberty, and culture would flourish together in the province for generations to follow.
CONCLUSION: St. John within the Empire

Deep respect for the concept of liberty and deference to the British Empire grounded the settlement of St. John. Determined to preserve the world they knew, the loyalists kept faith with their empire and clung fiercely to their original ideals. With a zeal matching their rebellious counterparts, the loyalists fought against their fellow compatriots for the sake of their concept of liberty.

The province of New Brunswick was the direct product of their decision to fight for British rule in America. Established in 1784 as a refuge for loyalist exiles, the original governing class was composed almost exclusively of those elite loyalist leaders taking place in the debates prior to the Revolution and that later led loyalist regiments into battle. Located mainly in St. John, these men formed the basic institutions of New Brunswick—executive, legislative, judiciary, churches—and also fashioned the region’s commercial activities and social rituals. In doing so, St. John came to reflect the loyalist dream for North American development and their desire to remain relevant in the British Empire.

The loyalist leaders’ based their ideology on classic British political thought. Liberty, they maintained, was a precarious and delicate concept. Only the British Empire was sufficiently strong enough to nurture its constant development and provide an environment in which it could flourish in North America. To expose liberty to a barren wilderness and passions of a zealous mob—without any stabilizing institutions or forces in place by the empire—was to trade liberty for despotism. The loyalist’s based their rejection of the revolutionary cause was entirely on this notion and New Brunswick was their attempt to prove the validity of their claim. The Loyalists hoped that it, and the other remaining provinces in British North America, would combine the benefits of empire with local self-government, allowing them to claim their rightful place within the British Empire as a model colony.

The missionary zeal that first compelled the loyalists to settle in St. John, also affected their attitude towards the United States and Great Britain in the years to follow. Throughout their lives, the loyalist leaders sought to legitimize their efforts through the recognition of their settlement as an integral part of the British Empire. The loyalists were always careful that their actions fit within their proscribed role within the empire, the “Mother Country” a constant source of reverence in their minds. At the same time, they also looked to the developing United States as the measure for their own accomplishments. As a result, most of the loyalist leaders in St.
John endured an intense, life-long tension between their instinctive love for their native country and their equally strong feelings of jealousy and resentment.

Much had changed in the years since their exile, for both the United States and the British empire and the loyalist leaders in St. John were not always able to adapt. The extraordinary flux that dominated their early lives in British North America made the loyalist leaders highly resistant to change in later years. This is not to say that their fierce devotion to the mother country was a conditioned reaction. On the contrary, they quite preferred the authoritative, paternalistic empire of the 1760s and 1770s that they had known in their youth to the empires’ new accommodating policies towards its colonies. Though the new British policies demanded that the loyalists assume a higher degree of financial and political responsibility, they continued to advocate that the English political and cultural system was the best in the world. The British government’s benevolent, embracing view towards its colonies was conducive to the loyalists’ overall vision for society: aristocratic, stable, and accomplished.

In reality, the British Empire in the 1780s fell short of their expectations. Its attitude towards the loyalists in St. John and the rest of New Brunswick were narrow-minded—devolving into a relationship of a timber-supply colony for an industrializing metropolis. Officials in London seemed unresponsive to the loyalists’ dream of an integrated, thriving empire characterized by a common respect for liberty. To call the loyalist leaders of St. John anachronistic in their thinking may be just. To deny the magnitude of their vision and the scope of their accomplishments, however, is not. Despite their growing disillusionment, the loyalists still clung to their outdated view of their empire—because it held a special place in their memories. To denounce the empire they had sacrificed so much for was unbearable for men of their particular principles.
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