



Name _____

Date _____ Class _____



BACKGROUND: Patriot or Loyalist?

Once the 1st Provincial Congress published resolves to protest Great Britain's actions in 1774, citizens felt growing pressure to choose a side. Would they support the Patriots or "rebels," or would they support the Crown? Those who remained loyal to Great Britain were known as "Tories" or loyalists.

In May 1775 a Patriot mob of protesters surrounded the royal governor's palace at New Bern, and the governor—Josiah Martin—fled the capital at night, seeking safety at Fort Johnston, near the mouth of the Cape Fear River. Weeks later, he exiled himself to a ship off the coast. Martin believed many North Carolinians would remain loyal and would rally to defend him and the Crown. The initial support he gathered soon disintegrated.

Those who did remain loyal included Highland Scots, who had settled along the Cape Fear River from Wilmington west to Cross Creek (later named Fayetteville) and even further into the backcountry of the Sandhills. Many of this group had immigrated to North Carolina in recent years and felt gratitude for land grants from the Royal government and responsibility to stay true to the loyalty pledges they had made the King of England. After a defeat of a force of mostly Highland Scots at the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge in February 1775, loyalist support in that region dwindled. Those who would not take the Oath of Abjuration and Allegiance to the new North Carolina government were forced out of the state or imprisoned. The state also confiscated loyalists' property.

Still, some North Carolinians remained loyal, while others supported the patriot cause, whether willingly or through military drafts and supply confiscations. Still others, such as Quakers and Moravians, tried to maintain neutrality and weather the storm of war.



Bergschotten [Mountain Scots] Regiment, 1778, after Friedrich Konstantin August von Germann, from William Stone, *Memoirs, And Letters And Journals, Of Major General Riedesel V1: During His Residence In America*, Albany: Munsell, 1868, 2 vols., New York Public Library.

take the following Oath of Abjuration and Allegiance, or depart out of the State, viz. *I will bear faithful and true Allegiance to the State of North-Carolina, and will to the utmost of my Power support, maintain, and defend the independent Government thereof, against George the Third, King of Great Britain, and his Successors, and the Attempts of any other Person, Prince, Power, State or Potentate, who by secret Arts, Treasons, Conspiracies, or by open Force, shall attempt to subvert the same, and will in every Respect conduct myself as a peaceful orderly Subject; and that I will disclose and make known to the Governor, some Member of the Council of State, or some Justice of the Peace, all Treasons, Conspiracies, and Attempts, committed or intended against the State, which shall come to my Knowledge.*

Oath of Abjuration and Allegiance, "Acts of Assembly of the State of North Carolina," (New Bern: James Davis, printer, April 1777), p. 13, State Publications Collection, State Library of N.C.

Reflection: Read this oath out loud and imagine living during the Revolutionary War. Would you feel comfortable making this vow? Why or why not?

Quick Fact Check

1. What was another name for patriots and loyalists during the American Revolution?
2. What N.C. battle was a defeat for loyalist forces in February 1776?
3. Which immigrant group was most likely to be loyal to Great Britain?
4. Name a group that tried to remain neutral during the Revolutionary War?