

To the Honourable Commissioners appointed by act of Parliament, further to enquire into the losses and services of the American Loyalists:

The Memorial of David Fanning, late Col'o of the North Carolina Militia, humbly sheweth; That your Memorialist is a Loyalist from North Carolina; who uniformly and religiously adhered to his duty and loyalty to the best of Sovereigns; for which he suffered persecution, and many other inconveniences—that your Memorialist, by a warrant from Major Craigg of the 82d Reg't then commanding at Wilmington was placed at the head of the Militia of that province—that, your memorialist during the late war, did command from one to nine hundred and fifty men; with whom he was engaged in six and thirty skirmishes in North Carolina, and four in South Carolina; all of which were of his own planning and in which he had the honour to command—that your Memorialist killed many of the Rebels—and took many of them prisoners. Among the latter were, Governor Burke, his council, and many officers of distinction in the Rebel army—that your Memorialist was during that time, twice wounded, and fourteen times taken prisoner: That, on the conclusion of peace, your Memorialist settled two hundred and fifty souls in East Florida; and having took refuge in several parts of his Majesty's remaining possessions in America, finally settled in the province of New Brunswick where he now is, in great distress, with his family. That your Memorialist, in consequence of his said loyalty, to his Sovereign; and the many services rendered him; and attachment to the British Government, had his property, real and personal, seized, confiscated, and sold by rebel authorities—Your Memorialists therefore that his case may be taken into consideration; in order that he may be enabled under your report to receive such aid or relief as his case may be found to deserve.

DAVID FANNING.

Reference:-

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Schedule with an Estimate of the value of the losses
sustained by Colonel David Fanning, during the
late disensions in America, in consequence of his
loyalty to His Majesty and attachment to the British
Government.

	L	S	D
Two Hundred and Fifty Acres of land in Indiana County Virginia, whereon was a dwelling House and other Out Houses; part of it consisted of a large Apple and Peach Orchard, and had other large and inclosed improvements - - - - -	687	10	"
Two Hundred and Fifty Acres of land near the above with a dwelling House and other improvements claimed in right, as His & law to the Estate of his late Father - - - - -	412	10	"
Three Saddle Horses - - - - -	40	"	"
Twelve Plantation Horses and three Colts - - - - -	96	"	"
Debts on Bonds Notes &c - - - - -	289	"	"
Two Negro Slaves - - - - -	100	"	"
Services done Government during the late War - - - - -			
	<i>L</i> 1625	0	

David Fanning

Witnesses to be examined and where Residing
John Leggett Capt. late Regt. 8th & 9th Regt.
John W. Ma Capt. 40th & 50th Regt.
Frederick W. Duquesne for his services
Samuel A. Andrews
Benjamin Underwood
John S. S. S.

Schedule with an Estimate of the value of the Losses
sustained by Colonel David Fanning, during the
late dissentions in America, in consequence of his
loyalty to His Majesty and attachment to the British
Government.

	L	S	A
Two Hundred and Fifty Acres of Land in Amelia County Virginia, whereof was a dwelling House and other Out Houses; part of it consisted of a large Apple and Peach Orchard, and had other large and inclosed improvements...	687	10	"
Five hundred and Fifty Acres of land near the above with a Dwelling House and other improvements claimed in Right, as Heir at law to the Estate of his late Father...	412	10	"
Three Saddle Horses...	40	"	"
Twelve Plantation Horses and three Colts...	96	"	"
Debts or Bonds Notes &c...	289	"	"
Two Negro Slaves...	100	"	"
Services done Government during the late War...			
T	1625	.0	

David Fanning

SECONDARY SOURCES

David Fanning



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Fanning, David

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1755-1825

David Fanning was probably born in Amelia County, Virginia, although some sources give his place of birth as what is now Wake County in North Carolina. His father died before he was born and his mother died shortly thereafter. He later claimed his guardians abused him as a child and he ran away from them when he was about sixteen.

Fanning suffered from a condition known as “scald head,” probably one of several skin diseases characterized by oozing sores, scaly scalp, and loss of hair. His appearance was said to be so distasteful that he would not impose himself on others while they were eating nor sleep in the same bed with anyone else, in a day and age when people often shared beds in roadside taverns and inns. If he became the villainous monster Revolutionary War Patriots claimed, it is easy to see why in light of his childhood and disfigurements.

By age 16, Fanning had taken up board with John O’Deniell in Orange County, North Carolina, who helped cure him of his ailment. For the rest of his life, he wore a silk scarf on his head to hide his baldness and the scarring that the disease had caused. While working with O’Deniell, the young man became proficient in breaking horses and learned to read and write.

He moved to the Pee Dee area of South Carolina when he was about 19 and eventually became an Indian trader, becoming acquainted with both the Catawba and Cherokee...

At some point near the beginning of the Revolution, he claimed a group of Whigs attacked and robbed him, resulting in him becoming a rabid Tory (loyalist to the British Crown).

Throughout the Revolution, Fanning wreaked havoc upon his Patriot adversaries, joining with both the British and Cherokee in his exploits in South Carolina. Whig forces captured him repeatedly and he escaped just as often.

By 1781 he had made his way back into North Carolina, following Lord Cornwallis' troops. He set up camp near Cox's Mill on the Deep River in present-day Randolph County, launching repeated attacks on area Whigs. The hostilities in central North Carolina as a result of clashes between Fanning's Loyalists and area Patriots resulted in a bitter and violent backcountry civil war.

Shortly after the encounter at Alston's House in the Horseshoe in 1781, Fanning and his forces occupied Hillsborough, North Carolina's temporary capital. They took Governor Thomas Burke prisoner, as well as members of his council and the general assembly. In the subsequent attempt to rescue the prisoners, one of the largest battles of the Revolution in North Carolina occurred at Lindley's Mill resulting in 250 casualties and captured soldiers.

By late 1781, when Cornwallis left Wilmington, Fanning found himself outnumbered by Whigs and unable to get needed supplies and equipment. Now the Whigs turned the tables on Fanning by continually harrassing and attacking his followers. He did find time to marry his wife, Sarah Carr, in April 1782 and the two made their way to South Carolina, reaching Charleston later in the year.

By 1784 they had arrived in Canada, where Fanning ended up as a shipbuilder, after successfully dodging a charge of rape. He died in Nova Scotia in 1825 at the age of 70. Had the British won the war, David Fanning may have been hailed as a hero and a wily guerilla fighter, much like Patriots' Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter, constantly surprising opponents with unorthodox tactics that kept them on their toes, but usually caught them off guard. As things turned out, he was one of only three men excluded by the state of North Carolina in its "Act of Pardon and Oblivion" of 1783.