

## NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

4. The treasonous conduct of Benedict Arnold who, while an officer in the American army, plotted to turn the strategic fortress of West Point, New York, over to the British in 1780.
5. Manes: the spirits of the dead.

### 16 The Monmouth County Association to Oppose the Return of Loyalists

[Revolutionary War Documents, Monmouth County Historical Association.]

During the latter stages of the war, it became apparent that the greatest Loyalist threat to the state was political rather than military. As the fighting diminished and the independence of the new nation seemed assured, hard-core royalists and British sympathizers alike began increasingly to operate within the framework of the republican regime. For all the rhetoric directed toward preventing the return of refugees, they were not the major problem. Rather, the principal fear was that the considerable number of disaffected persons who had attempted to undermine the state government during wartime would strive to weaken the political establishment during peacetime. Control over suffrage was one of the principal weapons used to limit Loyalist influence in governmental affairs. As early as 1776 the franchise was restricted to those who signed the Association (see Sec. V, Doc. 1), and after 1777 anyone who joined or assisted the enemy was barred from political activity. But these temporary wartime measures produced only limited results; a more effective means of identifying Tories and trimmers was necessary. Responding to public pressures, the legislature in September 1782 passed a law substituting viva voce voting for the ballot as a means of ensuring the political purity of the voters. However, since voice voting was a two-edged sword that intimidated Whigs as well as Loyalists, the statute was repealed in June 1783. Finally, in December 1783 the legislature enacted a comprehensive election law that denied the vote to all persons who had either voluntarily joined the enemy, been convicted of treasonous acts, suffered confiscation of property, or been fined or imprisoned for refusing to take the state loyalty oath (see Sec. XI, Doc. 1). Of course, the effectiveness of laws depends upon enforcement, and the measure did not prevent extensive Loyalist participation in politics. Thus local Whig vigilante groups, like David Forman's Committee of Retaliation (see Sec. XI, Doc. 17), which had used violence against admitted or suspected Loyalists during the war, turned to more peaceful methods of intimidation to keep the dissidents out of the new political order. In signing the Association that follows, more than two hundred residents of Monmouth County publicly announced their determination to exclude active Loyalists and suspected Tory sympathizers from meaningful participation in the affairs of the community and to consign them to a second-class citizenship.

## VIII THE LOYALIST OPPOSITION

[1783]<sup>1</sup>

Whereas it hath pleased Almighty God in his gracious providence to bless the exertions of the virtuous citizens of the United States of America with the establishment of their Independence, and a restoration of peace after a long and arduous struggle: Upon this important event we think it the duty of everyone who wishes to perpetuate the inestimable blessings thereof, to exert himself in order that the helm of Government and all civil and military offices may be kept in the hands of such men as have been most instrumental in effecting the glorious revolution; and also by every means in his power to discountenance, and treat with neglect all such persons as have uniformly opposed the same. And that we may be the more united on this important occasion, and the better enabled to carry the same into effect, We the Subscribers, Inhabitants of the County of Monmouth, do solemnly associate and resolve under the sacred ties of honor and love to our country, that we will from this date, act in conjunction with and endeavour to support each other as far as we are able, and our influence can extend in the following articles:

1. That we will support the laws of the State passed since the happy revolution, inflicting certain penalties and disabilities on such persons as have adhered to the King of Great Britain, by joining his army, or otherwise aiding and assisting them.

2. That we will endeavour to support such other laws as have passed since the revolution for the support of the Independence of America, as far as they have been carried into execution.

3. That we will by every means in our power, prevent the return of every individual former Inhabitant of this State, who hath at any time since the revolution gone off or joined the enemy.

4. That we will upon all occasions of electing men to offices civil or military amongst us, or of recommending the same to be appointed by the Legislature or his Excellency the Governor,<sup>2</sup> pay a strict regard to the part they have taken in the past war, and give our voices and influence for, and recommend none but such as have from the commencement of the revolution been uniformly and spiritedly opposed to the tyranny of the British King<sup>3</sup> and zealous supporters of the Independence of America.

5. That as we have had numerous intestine enemies who still remain amongst us, we will treat all such with neglect, and always have a jealous and watchfull eye over their conduct, and that such of this character as have been laid under any disabilities by law, we will endeavour to continue them subject thereto.

6. That if any such as have joined the enemy, and are thereby declared guilty of high treason, should be hardy enough to return, and throw themselves on the mercy of their much injured country, and should be so favored by Government as to be pardoned and have their forfeited lives spared, we will use our utmost endeavours that all such may be banished from the United States of America.

7. That we will make it a point to attend all elections and meetings of public concern and endeavour to unite as much as possible to carry the above association into effect.

8. That if after all our endeavours on this important occasion there should be a necessity of further Legislative authority, we will remonstrate and petition the Legislature to enact such laws as if duly executed, with the blessing of Providence, will insure us what we have so dearly purchased.

[Two-hundred and seven names affixed.]

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1. The undated document was probably circulated in 1783 after either the announcement or signing of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the war and recognized American independence. See Sec. IX, Doc. 12.
2. William Livingston.
3. George III.

### 17 Bernardus La Grange, A Loyalist Testimonial

[La Grange Papers, Alexander Library, Rutgers University.]

American Loyalists suffered both mentally and monetarily for siding with the British in a losing cause. The psychological damage was irreparable, but they expected help in recouping the pecuniary losses. King and Parliament agreed, and in July 1783 the Compensation Act established a five-man commission to investigate Loyalist claims and award compensation. But the British government never intended to provide full reimbursement for losses; even at that the commissioners would consider only claims relating to property lost as a direct result of Loyalist activities and professional income lost during the war. Losses stemming from military action, economic dislocation, or personal obligations such as contracts and debts were not allowed. The claimants went to great lengths to demonstrate the depth of their loyalty and the magnitude of their losses. The testimonial of Bernardus La Grange which follows is representative. Also typical is his ultimate realization that principle is not easily translated into principal—he received an award of £2,638.0.0 on a claim of more than £8,300.0.0 in addition to a pension of £120 and £240 a year for a lost wartime income of over £400 per annum. La Grange's petition is like all the others in another way: it is not the memorial of a boastful or belligerent man, but a pathetic plea from an individual who has paid the ultimate price short of death for his political convictions—exile in a foreign land.

Mutton Lane, Hackney, November 1783

To the Commissioners Appointed by Act of Parliament for Enquiring into the Losses and Services of the American Loyalists.

The Memorial of Bernardus Lagrange Late of the province of New Jersey in America, Attorney at Law, But Now of the City of London in the Kingdom of Great Britain, Humbly Sheweth.

That your Memorialist is and ever was a faithfull Subject, as well to the Late King<sup>1</sup> as to his present Majesty<sup>2</sup> and Uniformly Opposed in principle and practice to the Revolters from the Sovereign Authority of Great Brittain and Every Measure of the Faction Leading to the Late Rebellion.