

NEW JERSEY IN THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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 King¹ as to his present Majesty² 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.

VIII THE LOYALIST OPPOSITION

That Early perceiving Independence to be the Object of the Leaders in the Rebellion, He Employed his best powers and Abilities in Attempts to undeceive his infatuated and Misguided Neighbours, and in Open Opposition to the Pursuits of their Leaders.

That this Conduct of your Memorialist Exposed him to the Resentment and fury of the Factions; A Detail of his Suffering Might be Tedious, He will therefore No further intrude on your Patience, than to Observe that as Early as June 1775 he was Carted in New Brunswick in Effigy, his house Attacked for the purpose of Exposing him personally to the Rage of an inflamed Populace, That he has been Publicly Advertised as an *Enemy* and *Traitor* to his Country (a Copy of the Advertisement Annexed)³ and his personal Safety rendered so precarious, that abandoning all attention to his interest he was reduced for a Long time to hide and Secrete himself from their pursuits, from which he at last Relieved himself by Joyning the British Army under his Excellency Sir Will[ia]m Howe on Staten Island the 14th July 1776.

That when his Majestys Troops in the fall of the Same year passed thro New Jersey⁴ he returned with them to his Own home in New Brunswick in hopes of Returning Peace, and of preserving what Remained of his Effects. At this time he was Honoured with A Mark of his Excellency Sir William Howe and Brigadier General Skinner's⁵ Confidence in being Appointed to Administer the Oaths of Allegiance, and to Deliver protections to Such persons as Came in there pursuant to the Declaration of his Majesty's Commissioners of the 30th November 1776.⁶ In which Service your Memorialist Employed himself with unwearied assiduity, untill his Majesty's Troops Evacuated the Western Division of that province.⁷ From which time untill the Ensuing Campaign Your Memorialist, besides General Skinner his horses and Servants, Had Seventeen Hessian Officers with upwards of Twenty Servants and Carters, and as many horses Quartered upon him, *for which No Allowance has been made him*. Your Memorialist forbears to Mention the Losses and inconveniences Sustained by him and his family, who on this Occasion were reduced to the Necessity of Confining themselves and their Effects in One Room Only of his house.

That upon the Evacuating the province of New Jersey by his Majesty's Troops in June 1777⁸ Your Memorialist was again forced to fly from his Home to New York with his family, and the few Effects he Could bring off with him Abandoning his Chief personal property, and his Real Estate, all which has Since been Seized and Confiscated, and his personal property (together with Other Damages Sustained Amounting to a Large Sum of Money as by the Annexed Inventory and Valuation Appears)⁹ Sold by the Usurpers of the Royall Authority. And all the assistance your Memorialist has had from Government is One Dollar a Day from his Excellency Sir Henry Clinton¹⁰ for About two years, and Twenty five pounds New York Currency Since from his Excellency Sir Guy Carleton.¹¹

Your Memorialist humbly Beggs leave to Mention, that he has practised the Law as an Attorney Since the Twentieth of May 1745 (as by a License from his Late Excellency Lewis Morris Esquire Governor of New Jersey¹² will appear) and flatters himself with Credit and Reputation, and was in good business when the Rebellion broke out, by which he Supported himself and family in Ease Affluence and Credit. And Now at the Age of Sixty two years, with two Children with him (and two more with ten Grand Children now in London on Account of their Loyalty) Stript of all

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Resourses in Consequence of his Loyalty Zeal and unshaken fidelity to his Sovereign, in a Strange Place, Altogether unknown, and without the Means of Support, finds himself Reduced to a State of Suffering and Difficulty ill Suited to his Advanced time of Life to Struggle with.

Further your Memorialist begs leave to lay before you the Annexed Inventory and Valuation as a Just Estimate of the Losses and Damages Sustained by him Since the Commencement and on Account of the American Rebellion Occasioned by his Loyalty to his Majesty, and his Attachment to the Constitution of Great Britain.

Wherefore your Memorialist Humbly Prays you will be pleased to take his Case under your Consideration, in Order that he may be Enabled, under your Report to receive Such Aid or Relief for his Losses, Services and Damages as his Situation Merits. And your Memorialist as in Duty Bound will Ever pray.

BARNARDS. LAGRANGE

1. George II, who reigned from 1727 to 1760.
2. George III.
3. See Doc. 3.
4. The British army swept through New Jersey in November-December 1776 and occupied the state along a line from Bergen to Burlington Counties; New Brunswick was a principal command post.
5. Cortlandt Skinner (see Doc. 18).
6. Howe's proclamation offering amnesty for those who avowed allegiance to the crown (see Sec. XI, Doc. 2).
7. The British abandoned West Jersey after the defeats at Trenton and Princeton (see Sec. IX, Docs. 2 and 3).
8. Howe evacuated New Jersey in order to launch an assault on the nation's capital in Pennsylvania; he took Philadelphia in September-October 1777.
9. La Grange calculated his losses at £8,149.0.0 in real estate and £157.8.0 in household goods.
10. General Sir Henry Clinton succeeded Howe as commander in chief of the British army in May 1778.
11. General Sir Guy Carleton replaced Clinton as commander of the Royal Army in April 1782 and subsequently supervised the British evacuation of New York City during May-November 1783.
12. Lewis Morris served as chief executive from 1738 to 1746; he was the first royal governor of New Jersey, the province previously sharing governors with New York.