

“Universal Confusion?”

A Historiography of Loyalist Women in Canada

By Shannon M. Risk

Erroneously, we have come to use the term Loyalist as a masculine appellation only. Let us be just. In the sorrow and sadness of that wonderful exodus...the larger part by far must have fallen to the lot of our Loyalist foremothers - *Reverend T. Watson Smith, 1888.*<sup>1</sup>

The Loyalist experience has long been examined in Canadian history as it pertains to men. But there has been little done to examine this same Loyalist history and its impact on Canadian women. This historiography will address this topic by examining the scant historical materials that exist. The scope of this project will encompass both Upper and Lower Canada, later known as Ontario and Quebec, respectively, and the Maritimes which was bolstered by Loyalist majorities after the American Revolutionary War, when 30,000 exiles fled to New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and St. John Island (later renamed Prince Edward Island). Loyalists migrated to these regions from 1777 to 1884.

In order to access women's Loyalist history within American and Canadian history, it is useful to first review sources that discuss Loyalist men or Loyalists in general. Building upon that knowledge, one can then proceed to the beginnings of scholarship about female Loyalists in Upper and Lower Canada and the Maritimes. Finally, accessing firsthand accounts, such as diaries, Loyalist claims, and correspondence will round out the female Loyalist experience. After a full discussion of these resources, it is then constructive to describe what could be further done in this field.

How do historians treat the Loyalists? The American Revolutionary War “produced not one country but two: a nation and a non-nation,” according to historian

David V. J. Bell.<sup>2</sup> Those who chose to remain loyal to the British crown, the “Loyalists,” escaped or were banished to Canada, to “Upper Canada,” which is today the province of Ontario, “Lower Canada,” now known as Quebec, and to the Maritimes which consisted of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island. Loyalists also fled to England and to British outposts in the Caribbean and countless Loyalists stayed in the United States to face adversity there. A host of Canadian and American historians have scrutinized the differences which set these Loyalists apart from Americans or “Yankees.”

Historian John Brebner, writing in 1945, saw the Loyalist identity formed in these early years because they *had* to develop a new identity. A Loyalist would insist that he is British which is a myth. Brebner said, “The Loyalist builds an American society and calls it by British names.” In his analysis, Brebner responded to other views on the Loyalist identity. Some historians, he said, see the Loyalist as having been able to “interpret” the American Revolution and reject it.<sup>3</sup>

In 1965, Seymour Lipset built upon Brebner’s early scholarship, describing the Canadian Loyalist tradition as one that encompassed a:

Counter-revolutionary past, a continuing need to differentiate itself from the United States, the influence of monarchical institutions, a dominant Anglican religious tradition, and a less individualistic and more governmentally-controlled frontier expansion than was present on the United States Frontier.<sup>4</sup>

Bell, who followed suit with his own study on the Loyalists in 1970, disagreed with this interpretation of “conservative” Loyalists:

A careful analysis of the pre-Revolutionary debate between Whigs and Tories reveals that both groups shared liberal (Locke) assumptions about the nature of sovereignty, good government, and the rest of resistance. The debate did not juxtapose one ideology with another, instead it featured the conflict of two views of the existing situation derived from identical premises.<sup>5</sup>

By 1972, Canadian historians were engaged in nationalist and conservative histories as a reaction to the perceived aggression of the United States and to its failures, most notably Vietnam. H. A. Morton represented this more conservative Canadian view as applied to the Loyalists. His Loyalists felt “Americanism” was too restrictive and that only through the British Empire could a citizen have political options. Loyalists, claimed Morton, could still be individuals without having to give up the “family.” Morton wrote, “to be sent into exile means you said or did things unacceptable in a context: to remain in exile proves you meant them.”<sup>6</sup>

In the late 1980s, Canada and the United States politically revitalized their relations, which were reflected in the historical take on the Loyalists. One example in 1989 was put forth by Robert M. Calhoun, who wrote of the Loyalist: “His belief [was] that he was primarily a defender of colonial liberty and that prudent submission to British authority was a subtle strategy for preserving that liberty.”<sup>7</sup> Historians John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall in 1994 took a more measured approach and expressed umbrage with Lipset’s idea that there was a revolution in the United States and a counter-revolution in Canada. To them, quite simply, the Loyalists sought to build a superior society but maintain their important ties to the Mother country and a worldwide empire. Thompson and Randall argued that post-revolutionary Canadian society was “spiritually British but materially American.”<sup>8</sup>

White Loyalists in Canada, especially in the Maritimes where they became the majority population, alongside minority Acadian, black and black Loyalist, Mi’kmaq and French communities, envisioned and tried to realize a hierarchical system, where law-abiding citizens were ably led by a sympathetic but wise monarch – which was not an

accurate depiction of King Charles of England. Loyalists looked on in disgust as their former American homeland was transformed into what they viewed as a lawless, raucous, and unstable populace-led government. They were convinced that the democratic system could not work and would quickly fall apart. This soon gave way to fears that the new American republic would attempt to invade and conquer Canada. In many ways, this belief still holds true today, manifested by a fear of cultural and economic annexation. It is interesting to note, however, that no recent histories, that is within the last decade, have addressed the dissimilarity between these two nations just after the Revolutionary War.<sup>9</sup>

Within all of the past, male-centric interpretations of the Loyalist, is there evidence of an egalitarian society under the British monarchy if the elite still ruled in Canada? Did Canada flourish under British rule or fall even more behind the times as they clung to their Loyalist tradition? And what impact did this have on female Loyalists in Canadian society? They were ruled both by a king and also their immediate male relative (as well as not so immediate males in their lives) in this “family hierarchy.” Were the female Loyalists simply pawns in the aftermath of war, or did they actively shape their own futures? A closer look at the female experience will attempt to answer these questions.

Historians did not turn to the female Loyalist experience until the 1970s. The earliest work that interpreted the lives of Loyalist women was conducted by Mary Beth Norton. Appearing in 1976, her article, “Eighteenth-Century American Women in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists,” turned historians’ attention to an untapped wealth, the 281 volumes of Loyalist claims housed at the Public Record Office in London. Norton felt that little attention had been paid to the central role that the family, especially

women, held in shaping American (and Loyalist) society during the Revolutionary War. In 1981, a PhD student at Cornell University, Beatrice Spence Ross (also known as Beatrice Ross Buszek), completed the first specific study of Loyalist women in Nova Scotia. Ross agreed with Norton that these Loyalist women should be granted recognition. In fact, Ross maintained that the Loyalist women “adapted” in their exile in Nova Scotia. Ross wrote, “In playing out the female role they defined themselves as wives, homemakers and mothers and thereby maintained a sense of usefulness and worth.” They did not cease to exist in history because of their exile. Writing in 1987, Beatrice Ross Buszek complimented Norton’s and her own previous work in, “By Fortune Wounded: Loyalist Women in Nova Scotia,” (Appendix A) agreeing that until recently, Loyalist women’s account, anguish, and contributions have been ignored. She believed that Loyalist women “suffered unique stress; and furthermore, that the responses of individual women had an impact on the immediate family, the community, and the developing colony.” To these historians, Loyalist women existed in a world of patriarchy, but were able to glean some agency from within it.<sup>10</sup>

Buszek laid out the general themes running through female Loyalist history such as the trauma of their experience, being defined by their husbands’ political preference, being perceived as traitors by rebel relations, and being forced to flee to a strange land, which led to “anxiety, despair, hopelessness, helplessness, betrayal, heartache, and prayers for resignation and fortitude.” Furthermore, Buszek maintained that women felt a double betrayal by both their countrymen in America, but also by the mother country as they arrived at their harsh, forested Maritime environment. And they also blamed their husbands for leaving them unprotected. Norton wrote of women’s ignorance and

confusion in this time of great stress. Over 450 claims to the Crown were from Loyalist women left alone for one reason or another and who had great difficulty identifying their husbands' property by value. They were, of course, able to identify household items that were part of their domestic world. Buszek and others maintained that despite the women's desperate situation, they were able to keep some control. For example, many women chose not to accompany their husbands in exile.<sup>11</sup>

Historian Margaret Conrad, who wrote in the mid-1980s, also focused on the Maritimes and attempted to dispel a myth. The idea of the Maritime region as the "stronghold of conservatism" has endured because of the lack of scholarship since Catherine Cleverdon's pioneering work *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada*. Conrad, along with several other historians, began work on a group project called the Maritime Women's Archives Project, in which they attempted to gather as many primary sources on women's history as they could. Using some of this material, Conrad shaped her article, "Recording Angels: The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of Canada, 1750-1950," with the largely unexploited and rich collection of materials left behind by women in Nova Scotia. Conrad acknowledged that the bulk of the material dated from the 1850s onward to the present and she cautioned the researcher that this body of material held class and ethnic bias. "Diaries were written overwhelmingly by Protestant, Anglo-Saxon women from rural and small-town environments." Indians and black and Acadian women were left out of the picture. She touched on works by Mary Fisher, Sarah Frost (see below), Hannah Ingraham, Elizabeth Johnston, and Rebecca Byles (see below). The diaries and correspondence revealed that these Maritime women were educated and their letters encompassed women's rights,

discussions of the status of women, as well as what was expected of Loyalist women in society.<sup>12</sup>

Aside from Norton's, Ross'/Buszek's and Conrad's studies, there were no other studies of Loyalist women in the 1970s and 1980s, and none specifically about women in Upper and Lower Canada. Prominent women's historian Gail Campbell wrote in 1990 about the paucity of Atlantic Canadian women's research. At that time, Campbell lamented:

“...The women of Atlantic Canada were not more silent, less notable, less active or less worthy than their western counterparts, there have, to date been no scholarly monographs or books of essays that focus exclusively on the history of this region.”<sup>13</sup>

Even now, there is still a scarcity of both records and secondary analysis of these records. One historian credits the lack of resources as a “reflection of the bleak society in exile.”<sup>14</sup>

Within the few works that center in part on female Loyalist history, the most comprehensive work to date on Loyalist women is Janice Potter-MacKinnon's *While the Women Only Wept: Loyalist Refugee Women in Eastern Ontario*. Published in 1993, Potter-MacKinnon's work focused on the Loyalist settlements in Upper Canada (now Ontario). She drew upon universal truths about Loyalist women in Canada. These women existed within a system of patriarchy, as evidenced by Norton's earlier work, one where men, whether husbands, fathers, brothers, sons, etc., determined the course of their lives. The author said:

Patriarchy in the eighteenth century meant that within the household, there was a hierarchy of power, with men acting as the decision-makers and women and children as the subordinates...it was also the duty of the household head to protect and provide for his subordinates...in return, wives dutifully obeyed their husbands...Femininity in this world was associated with dependence and passivity.<sup>15</sup>

Potter-MacKinnon described the patriarchal system as being grounded in the bonds of “heritage, affection, and duty.” Men held exclusive ownership of land, “which was the central foundation of the colonial economy.” Within this system, it seemed women could have no voice.<sup>16</sup>

Within this patriarchal hierarchy framework, Potter-MacKinnon addressed some of the myths surrounding Loyalist history. By the 1780s, the Loyalists in Ontario had created the idea of the “refugee experience,” painting themselves as the top echelons of society, dedicated servants to the British crown who should be rewarded for their sufferings. Potter-MacKinnon disputed the idea that these “dedicated servants” were from the upper classes and represented the best and brightest. Instead, her study looked at women from all economic brackets, joined to men from respectable *and* questionable circumstances. Also, women, in a continuation of Loyalist myth, were seen as “frail, helpless creatures who suffered but played no major role in the revolution.”<sup>17</sup>

Contradicting this sentiment throughout her work were countless examples of Loyalist women without the protection of their men, finding food for their children and defying the winter cold in settlement camps, encountering indigenous peoples, or braving desolate foot paths en route to their new world. These Loyalist women, she claimed, did not endure specifically because of their devotion to the British crown and its ideals, but more so because they were linked to the immediate needs of their family, ethnic, and community bonds. Ultimately, Potter-MacKinnon believed that women were left out of the Loyalist legacy as amply demonstrated in the poem by William Kirby entitled, *The Hungry Year*, from which she drew her title (Appendix B). She contended that women of all classes and backgrounds did not sit idly by and let events happen to them, rather they

actively shaped their own destinies as well as they could under the great strain of the American Revolutionary War.<sup>18</sup>

A contemporary feminist perspective adds to previous scholarship about Loyalist women. There was also an embedded racial component for men and women of the Loyalist patriarchy –what historian Pauline Schlosser, writing more recently in 2002, called the “fair sex ideology.” The gist of this system was that white Loyalist women associated most closely with white men as opposed to identifying with their black sisters. Schlosser says this system, “empowered white women with a limited moral authority that allowed them to become ‘somebody’ through the subordination of ‘others’.” These were women on the “tight rope between racial privilege and gender oppression.” This theme returns again later on in this study when addressing the plight of black Loyalist women.<sup>19</sup>

An example of Schlosser’s thesis of racial patriarchy existed within the letters left behind by Loyalist Ann Hulton. On the surface, Hulton disguised the stress of the Revolution by describing her priorities: the importance of home life filled with social activities, “abounding in sentiment and in piety,” and fidelity to the men in her life. But it was how she assessed her new living arrangements in Canada that betrayed societal harmony:

There are two great inconveniences for families in this country, the want of good servants. No one will call another master. It’s owing partly to there is [sic], no distinctions, scarcely in the society. Another is the want of good schools for education. Here is a college indeed, but the independency and liberty with which the youths are brought up, and indulged makes too many of them proficients in vice...

Indeed, to Hulton, the revolutionary fervor invaded every corner of life and the lack of propriety in the confusing years after the war left little to be desired. She implied that other white women beneath her station were not willing to submit to lowly jobs, but also

within this statement was a lack of acknowledgment that blacks also trekked to Loyalist bastions, either free or as slaves.<sup>20</sup>

Advancing on the themes already introduced, more Loyalist women's personal accounts are useful. The quintessential Loyalist woman was Anne Murray Powell, who lived in New York, Washington, England, and finally Toronto, during and after the Revolutionary War. Powell and her fiancé William Dummer Powell found their relationship in a crisis when war broke out and her Loyalist betrothed had to flee. The couple hastily married and made their way to England. Within her story are the classic outside influences that pressed in on Loyalist women like the growing capitalism of the industrial revolution, the emergence of a distinctive middle class and world view, and the rise of nonconforming Protestantism, out of which, according to editor Katherine M. J. McKenna, "came a new ideology about male and female gender roles and family life."<sup>21</sup> Powell bore a child every year and three months for the first fifteen years of her marriage, was taken hostage by a privateering ship on the Atlantic on her way to Quebec where her husband was stationed, and watched "rebels" confiscate her family's Massachusetts estate. Powell felt it necessary to get back to Canada and to entice her relatives, who were still in America, to the new land, encouraging them to:

Become an inhabitant of this happy and prosperous country, where industry meets its certain tho' [sic] slow reward...a finer climate or more delightful country is not within the King's dominions and say the dissatisfied what they may, there is not in the world a more equal government...what you are by birthright a British subject ... you know the estimate in which I hold this privilege and will forgive my earnest desire that all whom I love should share the blessing.<sup>22</sup>

Powell upheld her end of the bargain, functioning as the companionate wife who ran household affairs while her husband took care of finances. Powell said in a letter to her husband: "My life is devoted to promote your pease [sic]." Despite the complimentary

relationship of Powell and her husband, she still found herself in the same predicament that many Loyalist women faced. Her husband grew senile in late middle age and their finances dwindled. When her husband died, Powell was forced to rely on the charity of a brother. McKenna asserted “the Cult of True Womanhood did not provide a woman with a map to plot a socially acceptable route out of such a morass.” McKenna aimed to show through the life of Anne Murray Powell, the merging of the Loyalist ideal with the rising middle class ethic by the late eighteenth century, which eventually created nineteenth-century “domestic motherhood.”<sup>23</sup>

The story of Sarah Sherwood, a Loyalist from Vermont who eventually escaped to Quebec, also sheds light on the female experience. Sarah was married to Captain Justus Sherwood, once part of the Green Mountain Boys who tried to defend their grounds from New Yorkers. Captain Sherwood eventually held several appointments under the governor of Canada, General Frederick Haldimand. Her husband was off fighting with the Queen’s Loyal Rangers while Sherwood gave birth en route to the Loyal Blockhouse on the Quebec border near Isle au Noix. Sherwood would spend seven years in exiled limbo at Fort St. Jean while her husband engaged in Loyalist activities during the war. Sherwood bided her time, caring for her small family, assisting other exiled Sherwood family members who arrived over the years, tending to the sick and brewing spruce beer to ward off scurvy. Her trials ended in 1784 when she accompanied her husband to their new settlement in Augusta, in Grenville County, Quebec. But settlement did not bring complete relief. For example, between 1787 and 1789, the “Hungry Year,” there was drought. It was not until 1791 that Sherwood and her family had fully recovered from their losses from the Revolutionary War.<sup>24</sup>

Personal accounts can also be gleaned from anthologies. Margaret Conrad continued her work in a provincial context with the book, *No Place Like Home: Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women, 1771-1938*, edited by Conrad, Toni Laidlaw, and Donna Smyth. Within this study were two diaries of Loyalist women, Anna Green Winslow and Rebecca Byles (Illustrations 1 and 2). Anna Green Winslow, who attended school in Massachusetts and boarded with her aunt, wrote to her parents in Cumberland, Nova Scotia, in 1771 and 1772. Even in her twelve-year-old scribbles, one can see the contradictions in her world. During the unstable early 1770s, her diary was rife with female upper-class concerns of inner and outer beauty and practical and ornamental accomplishments. But she also wrote: “As I am (as we say) a daughter of liberty I chuse [sic] to wear as much of our own manufactory as pocible [sic].” Although it was not clear why her parents resided in Nova Scotia and she in Massachusetts, her parents did move back to join their daughter in April 1772. While she worried about wearing homespun, the choice of patriots, her father, Joshua Winslow, an avowed Tory, was soon pressured to return to Nova Scotia. He was given administrative appointments in Quebec to reward his loyalty while his wife and daughter remained in Massachusetts. But Winslow was not to survive the war; she died of consumption at the age of 19 in 1779. Her mother joined her husband in Quebec, but he too died in 1801. Upon his death, Mrs. Winslow returned to New England and lived fifteen more years. Winslow’s diary (and the fate of her mother) was a testament to the rupture Loyalist families experienced during the war.<sup>25</sup>

Rebecca Byles, the daughter of an Anglican reverend, moved with her family from Boston to Halifax in 1776. In Halifax, Byles attended academies similar to the ones she knew in Boston. Historian Gwendolyn Davies, in her study of the Loyalist literary

movement in the Maritimes, confirmed that the Loyalists preserved traditions and alleviated distress by re-establishing educational and religious institutions in their new homelands. Byles was indoctrinated in the proper sphere of Loyalist women at the time by reading such works as Dr. John Gregory's *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters*. Dr. Gregory's advice urged Byles to "embrace the noble bonds of marriage and motherhood."<sup>26</sup> From Nova Scotia, Byles maintained correspondence to her two aunts in Boston for over fifty years. Editors Conrad, Laidlaw and Smyth include excerpts from 1777 to 1785, which encompassed many themes Loyalist women faced: exile, new beginnings, and shaping their womanhood to their surroundings. For Byles, Halifax provided a continuation of her days of comfort in Boston, including marriage to a prosperous doctor, unlike the unforgiving wilderness that many Loyalist women faced. She wrote: "I know it will give you pleasure to hear how happily we are situated in this time of universal confusion. We enjoy a large share of the comforts of life, and the greatest uneasiness is the situation of our country...we have enjoyed our health better since we came down here than ever we did before in our lives." Byles had a full life, remaining a faithful congregant of the Church of England, "a Loyalist to the last."<sup>27</sup>

Another first-hand account of the Loyalist exile to the Maritimes is taken from the diary of Sarah Frost, a young married woman from Connecticut whose diary spanned a month. The very pregnant Frost and her husband and children, along with 250 other passengers, were gathered on a ship called the *Two Sisters*, anchored off the coast of New York City, from May 25 to June 15, 1783. Her diary was a poignant reminder of the stress under which the Loyalists traveled. Frost described the mood of the passengers as they waited day to day for news that their ship would depart for Nova Scotia: "We bear it

pretty well through the day, but as it grows towards night, one child cries in one place and one in another, whilst we are getting them to bed. I think sometimes I shall be crazy.” By June 15, the winds were suitable and fifteen other ships, containing a total of 2,000 people, had anchored in New York harbor for the migration of the Loyalist exiles. Frost reported their adversity: “we have measles very bad on board our ship.” Her diary ceased as the exiles reach the St. John River in New Brunswick where they were informed that they would found a new settlement eventually called Kingston, thirty miles up the river. The continuing theme of suffering and ill preparedness was apparent in Frost’s diary: “We are all ordered to land to-morrow [sic], and not a shelter to go under.”<sup>28</sup> Another passenger, Mrs. Mary Fisher, said, “How we lived through that awful winter, I hardly know. There were mothers who had been reared in a pleasant country enjoying all the comforts of life, with helpless children in their arms.”<sup>29</sup>

While acknowledging the skimpy personal accounts and scholarly studies of white Loyalist women in the Maritimes, one sees that the chronicle of black Loyalist women is even harder to unearth. Of the 30,000-plus Loyalists that made their way to Nova Scotia, ten percent were free black men, women, and children. The goal of the black Loyalist, according to historian James W. St. G. Walker who wrote in 1979, “was to become self-sufficient and secured by British justice in his rights as a subject of the crown. The passage to Nova Scotia was therefore regarded not merely as an escape from slavery, but as an entry into a new world where the dignity and independence that came of equal citizenship were to be his.”<sup>30</sup> Another historian, Sylvia Hamilton, endeavored to piece together the evidence specifically about black Loyalist women in her 1999 short study. She asserted that the black woman’s experience in the Maritimes was always one

of survival from the 1700s onward. Hamilton said, “She has had to battle slavery, servitude, sexual and racial discrimination, and ridicule. Her tenacious spirit has been her strongest and most constant ally.” These black women “suffered the added indignity of their social and legal position in the colonies.” The black Loyalists were promised land in Nova Scotia but they were not often able to claim it, or if they did, it was so remote they couldn’t even access it. Black settlers found that they continued to lead a segregated life in Nova Scotia. Because of this, many black Loyalists left for Sierra Leone to start a colony there before the close of the eighteenth century. Hamilton also detailed the life of Rose Fortune, a descendant of the black Loyalists, who lived in Annapolis Royal in the mid to late nineteenth century. Fortune’s life symbolized the outcome of the early black Loyalist settlers, becoming a “Jane” of all trades in order to survive, living as most blacks did since arriving in 1783. Ann Gorman Condon, writing primarily about white male Loyalists in 1984, did touch upon the black Loyalist experience. “Virtually all who remained (instead of going to Sierra Leone) slipped into a state of semi-dependency as servants or day laborers. This status would remain their fate long after slavery disappeared from New Brunswick,” Condon said.<sup>31</sup> Merging with the idea posed earlier in this review by Schlosser of enduring racial patriarchy, St. G. Walker noted that by the 1830s white prejudice had become entrenched in Nova Scotia society.<sup>32</sup>

Black, white, rich, poor, or radically financially altered, in the end, Loyalist women in the Maritimes did the best they could. Buszek wrote: “Mothers reluctantly muted their expectations, and settled for a roof over their heads and food on the shelves.” Loyalist women persisted and made a life for themselves, passing on to the second generation their value system under patriarchy. Theirs was the image of “the stoic, long-

suffering, self-sacrificial female who bore her unhappiness bravely, worked from dawn to dusk, fulfilled the words of the Scriptures, [and] carried her lot in life without complaint.” These women and the ensuing generations would renew their vow to Crown and patriarchy in the years leading up to the War of 1812.<sup>33</sup>

Much more can be done to add to the existing dialogue on Loyalist women in Canada. Missing from this historiography is a legal-based analysis of women’s status in the post-Revolutionary world. For Loyalist women, this would entail research on British law. Richard B. Morris’ “Women’s Rights in Early American Law,” would provide a suitable launching point.<sup>34</sup> It would also be useful to discuss further influential texts that Loyalist women may have read such as Eugenia Stanhope’s *Married Life*, Thomas Gisborne’s *Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex* (1797), or Elizabeth Griffith’s *Essays Addressed to Young Married Women* (1782) as Canadian women would have been exposed to these works.<sup>35</sup> Canadian literature would have also been an influence, reinforcing the “earnest moral values...lofty religious beliefs...and law, order, and hierarchy,” as discussed by Mary Jane Edwards in her article, “Early Canadian Literature in English: A Survey and a Challenge.” Gwendolyn Davies’ study, “Consolation to Distress: Loyalist Literary Activity in the Maritimes,” argued that the Loyalists left behind “an identifiable literary tradition.” A more detailed discussion of the power of their Anglican faith and its evangelistic foils, Methodism and Baptism, could also be included and could even constitute its own study.<sup>36</sup>

In conclusion, no new articles or books have surfaced in the last decade on Loyalist women. Is this because historians feel that the existing materials have been sufficiently tapped and that there is nothing new to say? Or have historical trends shifted

to other eras during the last ten years? Despite the lack of new material on this topic, one can deduce that Loyalist women found their lives turned upside down due to their husband's political allegiance. Gail Campbell believed that "historians need to reformulate old definitions of politics, broadening their perspective in order to take women's as well as men's political activities into account." Women's social actions were essentially political and contributed to the political fabric of the Loyalist existence. By reviewing the early roots of the Loyalist tradition in Upper and Lower Canada and the Maritimes, it is apparent that these women adapted to the "universal confusion" of the Revolutionary War and postwar years. They did not choose to uproot themselves and settle in a new and undeveloped land, however, they claimed their destinies by continuing the traditions from their homeland, following dutifully the lines of patriarchy and Anglicanism, and hierarchy where it existed in urban centers, and pursued their just reward in claims filed after the war. They also passed on their value system to the next generations through child-rearing practices and exposure to the emerging literature. In this way, they overcame the setbacks of a wilderness existence in their new homeland of Canada.

APPENDIX A

**Verses to the Tories**

By Joseph Stansbury

Come ye brave, *by Fortune wounded*/  
More than by the vaunting foe/  
Chear [sic] your hearts, ne'er be confounded/  
Trials all must undergo/  
Tho' [sic] without Rhyme or Reason  
Hurried back thro' Wilds unknown,  
Virtue's smiles can make a Prison  
Far more charming than a Throne  
Think not, tho' wretched, poor, or naked,  
Your breast alone the Load sustains:  
Sympathizing Hearts Partake it –  
Britain's Monarch shares your pains.  
This Night of Pride and Folly over,  
A dawn of Hope will soon appear.  
In its light you shall discover  
Your triumphant day is near.

From Winthrop Sargent, ed., *Loyal Verses of the Revolution* (Pennsylvania, 1850), pp. 22-23.

APPENDIX B

**The Hungry Year**  
By William Kirby  
*Canadian Idylls*, 1894

The war was over, Seven red years of blood  
Had scourged the land from mountain-top to sea: ...  
Rebellion won at last; and they who loved  
The cause that had been lost, and kept their faith  
To England's crown, and scorned an alien name,  
Passed into exile; leaving all behind  
Except their honour and the conscious pride  
Of duty done to country and to king.  
Broad lands, ancestral homes, the gathered wealth  
Of patient toil and self-denying years  
Were confiscate and lost; for they had been  
The salt and savor of the land; trained up  
In honour, loyalty, and fear of God...  
They left their native soil, with sword belts drawn  
The tighter; *while the women only wept*  
At thoughts of old firesides no longer theirs;  
At household treasures reft, an all the land  
Upset, and ruled by rebels to the King.

ILLUSTRATION 1



ANNA GREEN WINSLOW

Conrad, Margaret, "Recording Angels: The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of Canada, 1750-1950," in *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History, Volume 2*, edited by Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1985.

ILLUSTRATION 2



Conrad, Margaret, "Recording Angels: The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of Canada, 1750-1950," in *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History, Volume 2*, edited by Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1985.

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Notes:

<sup>1</sup> The title of this paper is taken from the words of Rebecca Byles in Margaret Conrad, Toni Laidlaw, and Donna Smyth, *No Place Like Home: Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women, 1771-1938* (Halifax: Formac Publishing Company Limited, 1988); Reverend T. Watson Smith, "The Loyalists at Shelburne," in *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, VII (1888), 62 as cited in Beatrice Ross Buszek, "'By Fortune Wounded': Loyalist Women in Nova Scotia," *The Nova Scotia Historical Review*, 7 (2) 1987, 45-62.

<sup>2</sup> David V. J. Bell, "The Loyalist Tradition in Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 5 (May 1970), 22.

<sup>3</sup> John B. Brebner, *North Atlantic Triangle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945), 24-25.

<sup>4</sup> Seymour M. Lipset, "Revolution and the Counter Revolution – the United States and Canada," in T.R. Ford, ed. *The Revolutionary Theme in Contemporary America* (1965), p. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Bell, "The Loyalist Tradition," 22.

<sup>6</sup> H. A. Morton, "The American Revolution: A View from the North," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 7 (May 1972), 45-46.

<sup>7</sup> Robert M. Calhoun, *The Loyalist Perception and Other Essays* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1989), 5.

<sup>8</sup> John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall, *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1994), 16-17; for a more recent treatment of male Loyalist exiles (and some female content), see Ann Gorman Condon, *The Loyalist Dream for New Brunswick: The Envy of the American States* (Fredericton, New Brunswick: New Ireland Press, 1984); Condon writes, "perhaps this sentiment (leaving America for fear, necessity, pride and pangs of separation) would be felt by their womanfolk, those faithful companions of the loyalists who never fired a shot or wrote a pamphlet, but who endured all the sufferings that war and exile inevitably bring," 38.

<sup>9</sup> Brebner, *North Atlantic Triangle*, 46; Bell wrote, "The debate did not juxtapose one ideology with another. Instead it featured the conflict of two views of the existing situation derived from identical premises." Whigs endorsed the American Revolution; while Tories saw British blunders as 'stupid' but not 'tyrannical', "The Loyalist Tradition," 22. Bell also conjectured that the Loyalists were "Revolutionary waste material!" 29.

<sup>10</sup> Mary Beth Norton, "Eighteenth-Century American Women in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser., Vol. 33, No. 3 (July 1976), 386-409; Beatrice Spence Ross, *Adaptation in Exile: Loyalist Women in Nova Scotia after the American Revolution* Dissertation (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1981), 106; Buszek, "By Fortune Wounded," 45.

<sup>11</sup> Buszek, "By Fortune Wounded," 45-46; Norton, "The Case of the Loyalists," 386-409. Norton describes the discrimination the women faced in their claims to the British Government due to the fact that they did not directly serve in the King's army and also the pervading idea that women did not need as much as men to survive; see also Mary Beth Norton, *The British-Americans: The Loyalist Exiles in England, 1774-1789* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1972).

<sup>12</sup> Margaret Conrad, "Recording Angels: The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of Canada, 1750-1950," in *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History, Volume 2*, edited by Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1985), 41-60. Conrad felt that the lack of Indian and black and Acadian women's written materials may correlate to a bias "of public record collections and the largely oral culture of Maritimers of non-British origin;" See Leslie Francis S. Upton, *Micmacs and Colonists: Indian White Relations in the Maritimes, 1713-1867* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979) for more information on this interaction; Catherine Cleverdon, *The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada* (Toronto: The University of Toronto, 1972).

<sup>13</sup> Gail Campbell, "Canadian Women's History: A View from Atlantic Canada," *Acadiensis* 20 (1) Autumn 1990, 192.

<sup>14</sup> Buszek, "By Fortune Wounded," 47.

<sup>15</sup> Janice Potter-MacKinnon, *While the Women Only Wept: Loyalist Refugee Women in Eastern Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1993), 7-8.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 148, 157.

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid, 158-159.

<sup>19</sup> Pauline Schlosser, *The Fair Sex: White Women and Racial Patriarchy in the Early American Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 11, 192; Norton, in "The Case of the Loyalists," cautions against assuming that Loyalists were of one class. In the 468 claims to the British Government after the war were made by "white women of all descriptions, from every colony and all social and economic levels: they were educated and illiterate; married, widowed, single, and deserted; rural and urban; wealthy, middling, and poverty-stricken," 388.

<sup>20</sup> *Letters of a Loyalist Lady, Ann Hulton* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927; reprint by Arno Press, Inc., 1972), x, 49; for more information about social stratification, see John B. Brebner, *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia: a Marginal Colony During the Revolution* (New Haven, 1937) and Margaret Ellis, "Loyalist Attitudes," *The Dalhousie Review*, Vol. XI, No. 3, 1935, 320-334.

<sup>21</sup> Katherine M. J. McKenna, *A Life of Propriety: Anne Murray Powell and her Family, 1755-1849* (Montreal: Mc-Gill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 9.

<sup>22</sup> McKenna, *A Life of Propriety*, 83. See also Elizabeth Lichtenstein Johnston, *Recollections of a Georgia Loyalist* (New York: M.F Manfield & Co., 1901).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 14, 92; For another example of a female Loyalist in Upper Canada, see Barbara Hume, *Barbara Heck* (Toronto: Methodist Mission Rooms, 1895); and F. H. Wooding, "Barbara Heck," *Canadian Geographics*, July 1935; The Cult of True Womanhood is further described in Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860," *American Quarterly*, XVIII (1966), 151-174; She said that women withdrew from the public sphere and focused their energies on perfecting the domestic sphere through their moral superiority to men and children.

<sup>24</sup> Mary Beacock Fryer, "Sarah Sherwood: Wife and Mother, An "Invisible" Loyalist," in *Eleven Exiles: Accounts of Loyalists of the American Revolution*, edited by Phyllis R. Blakely and John N. Grant (Toronto: Dundurn Press Limited, 1982), 244-263.

<sup>25</sup> Margaret Conrad, Toni Laidlaw, and Donna Smyth, *No Place Like Home: Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women, 1771-1938* (Halifax: Formac Publishing Company Limited, 1988), 27-44; for a full account, see Alice Morse Earle, ed., *Diary of Anna Green Winslow: A Boston School Girl of 1771* (Boston: 1894).

<sup>26</sup> John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (London and Philadelphia: Reprinted for William Aikman in Annapolis, 1775).

<sup>27</sup> Conrad et. al. *No Place Like Home*, 44-59; to access the complete set of letters by Rebecca Byles, see the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, MG1, Vol. 163; Gwendolyn Davies, "Consolation to Distress: Loyalist Literary Activity in the Maritimes," *Acadiensis*, Vol. XVI, No. 2 (Spring 1987), 56.

<sup>28</sup> Walter Bates, *Kingston and the Loyalists off the "Spring Fleet" of 1783* (Saint John, New Brunswick: Barnes and Company, 1889; reprint: Fredericton, New Brunswick: Centennial Print & Litho Ltd., 1980), 28-32.

<sup>29</sup> "The Grandmother's Story," in Peter Fisher, *The First History of New Brunswick*, ed. W.O. Raymond (reprint, Woodstock, 1980), 126-30. See the appendices in Ross' dissertation for more excerpts of Loyalist women's writings.

<sup>30</sup> James W. St. G. Walker, *The Black Loyalists: The Search for a Promised Land in Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone, 1783-1870* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1976), 12, 18.

<sup>31</sup> Ann Gorman Condon, *The Loyalist Dream for New Brunswick: The Envy of the American States* (Fredericton, New Brunswick: New Ireland Press, 1984), 192.

<sup>32</sup> Walker, *The Black Loyalists*, 87, 393; Buszek, "By Fortune Wounded," p. 54; Sylvia Hamilton, "Our Mothers Grand and Great: Black Women of Nova Scotia," in *Canadian Woman Studies: An Introductory Reader*, edited by Nuzhat Amin, Frances Beer, Kathryn McPherson, Andrea Medovarski, Angela Miles, and Goli Rezai-Rashti (Toronto: Inanna Publications and Education, Inc., 1999), 64-65; for more comprehensive studies on the black experience in Canada, see also Robin Winks, *The Blacks in Canada, a History* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1971) and William A. Spray, *The Blacks in New Brunswick* (Fredericton: New Brunswick Press, 1972).

<sup>33</sup> Buszek, "By Fortune Wounded," 60.

<sup>34</sup> Richard B. Morris, "Women's Rights in Early American Law," in *Studies in the History of American Law* (New York, 1930), 126-200.

<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth Griffith, *Essays Addressed to Young Married Women* (Philadelphia: From the Press of John Turner, 1897; reprint Toronto: Canada-American Committee, 1989); Samuel Jennings, "Proper Conduct of

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the Wife Towards Her Husband," *The Married Lady's Companion, or Poor Man's Friend* (Rev. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., New York, 1808) pp. 61-68; John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (London, 1774).  
<sup>36</sup> Mary Jane Edwards, "Early Canadian Literature in English: A Survey and a Challenge," *College English*, Vol. 51, No. 5 (Sep., 1989), 508-516; Davies, "Consolation to Distress," 51.

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