

Who were the Loyalists?

About one-third of the people living in the colonies wanted to remain as citizens of England. They stayed loyal for different reasons:

1. They believed the king had the right to rule the colonies and that his laws were fair.
2. They were afraid of the British soldiers.
3. They had family in England and didn't want to put them in danger.
4. They felt that a government run by rich Patriots would be worse.

These people were known as “Loyalists,” “Royalists,” “friends of the government,” “the King’s friends,” or “Tories.”



Some Loyalists joined the British army and became regular British soldiers (called “Redcoats” or “Lobsterbacks” by the Patriots because of the color of their uniforms).

Others formed Loyalist units that fought with the British. Among these were the Loyal Greens, King’s American Regiment, Queen’s Loyal Rangers, and Royal American Regiment.

Many Native Americans, including the Iroquois and Seneca nations, joined the British side. So did thousands of African Americans. They had been slaves, brought over to the colonies from Africa against their will to work on plantations in the South, or born in the colonies as slaves. The British gave them their freedom in return for their help.

Soldiers from Germany, called “Hessians,” were paid by the British to come and help their troops.

Loyalist soldiers



Redcoat



Freed Slave



Iroquois brave



Member of the
Royal American
Regiment



Hessian

Many people who had recently come to the colonies from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Germany also remained loyal to the King of England.

There were so many Loyalists in New York City that it became known as the Tory capital of America. Delaware and the southern colonies also had a large number of Loyalists. All types of people were Loyalists, including lawyers, merchants, ministers, government officials, farmers, and workers.

