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Loyalists in Albany

1775- 1783

Albany Loyalists were mainly old and wealthy men who greatly benefitted from British rule. Merchants, especially, gained their status from trading goods at the Port of the Albany and with the British. Loyalists in Albany comprised only about 50 individuals.¹ According to the Colonial Albany Social History Project, most of the loyalists were “Royal officials; those with economic ties to the royal government or the British economy; the spouses of the first two groups; a larger but less definable number of "passive loyalists"; and would-be neutrals.”² Some of the loyalists were of high importance in Albany society. These included Mayor Abraham C. Cuyler, city and county clerk Stephen De Lancey, Sheriff Henry Ten Eyck, postmaster John Monier, and Reverend Harry Munro of the Anglican Church.³

Most of the Albany residents, and most residents of the American colonies for that matter, became dissatisfied with British rule after the passing of the Stamp Act. The Stamp Act, which was levied on colonists in British America in 1765 to offset British debt brought on by the French and Indian War, stated that all printed materials must be produced on stamped paper from London.⁴ This tax, as viewed by many of the colonists in British North America, was unfair to the colonists since they lacked any representation in British Parliament. This established a clear line of division between Loyalists and Patriots in Albany.

¹ Colonial Albany Social History Project, “Friends and Enemies,” *Nysm.nsed.gov*, accessed March 10, 2010, <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/friends.html>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ “A Summary of the 1765 Stamp Act.” *History.org*, accessed March 11, 2010, <http://www.history.org/history/teaching/tchersta.cfm>.

The growing tensions between Loyalists and Patriots culminated on the night of June 4th 1776. Many loyalists including Mayor Cuyler, Clerk De Lancey, Postmaster Monier and a small group of others were gathered at the Cheapside Tavern to celebrate the birthday of King George III.⁵ The Patriots in the city, having been made aware of the incident, took action. They arrested Cuyler, De Lancey, Monier, and three other organizers and had them deported to Hartford, Connecticut.⁶

Incidents like this were not isolated to Albany. All over the colonies loyalists and patriots opposed one another. The events on June 4th and in the weeks following set the standard that loyalist activities in Albany would not be tolerated by the patriots.

⁵ Stefan Bielinski, "Beginning of the End," *Nysm.nsed.gov*, accessed March 11, 2010, <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/or/or-be.html>.

⁶ Ibid.