Scottish Highlander Loyalism in the American Revolution: An Exploration of Identity

By
Kelly Bunting
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Submitted by

_________________________
Kelly Bunting

Approved by:

_________________________  _______________________
Stephen R. Berry, PhD         Sarah L. Leonard, PhD
Associate Professor of History Associate Professor of History

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Introduction

"...[T]hey can betake themselves than to the large continent of America... where their posterity still live well and independently, and to which, of late, numbers have gone, who shew no inclination to return; but, on the contrary, send the most favourable accounts to their friends and acquaintance in the Highlands, and the most pressing invitations for them to follow after them across the Atlantic. Here they still belong to the British empire, and are happy under the benign influence of its administration. Here, at ease, they may enjoy all those civil blessings which the noblest constitution under heaven was intended to communicate to all ranks belonging to it, and to make these blessings permanent and sure."¹

So wrote Scotus Americanus in 1773, the anonymous author of the pamphlet "Informations Concerning the Province of North Carolina, Addressed to Emigrants from the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland." He wrote to his fellow Scottish Highlanders, encouraging emigration from the Highlands of Scotland to the wilds of America. Expressing sadness for the lowly circumstances of Highlanders in their homeland, Scotus Americanus described to hopeful Highland readers the possibilities they could encounter in America and the place they could secure in that new land within the comfort of the British Empire. Scotus Americanus proved to be right, and many Highlanders arrived in America not only to find prosperity, but to find a home.

Scottish Highlanders come from the region of Scotland north of the Highland Boundary fault, stretching from Helensburg to Stonehaven. In the eighteenth century, this was a sparsely populated land punctuated by few large towns such as Inverness. What this landscape lacked in population, it more than made up for with a rich cultural make-up. Speaking Gaelic, wearing the plaid, and working under a laird in the clan system, Highlanders cultivated a distinct identity that set them apart from their Lowland Scot and English neighbors. This distinctness often led to conflict with those to the south. The motivations behind the actions of Scottish Highlanders in

¹ Scotus Americanus, "Informations Concerning the Province of North Carolina, Addressed to Emigrants from the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland" (Glasgow: James Knox, Bookseller; Edinburgh: Charles Elliot, Bookseller Parliament Close, 1773), 11.
those conflicts throughout history have been unclear and, at times, downright confusing, to historians who have attempted to construct their history. From the multiple Jacobite rebellions in Scotland to the Revolution in America, Highlanders appear to support a losing cause with alarming frequency, whether or not it appeared that way at the outset of the conflict. The actions of Highlanders in the American Revolution seem particularly difficult to understand. Just 30 years after the British crown systematically deconstructed Highlander life and culture in the wake of the 1745 Jacobite Revolution, many of those who had been exiled or laid low by that defeat and its aftermath found themselves taking up arms for that same crown to fight Loyalists in the American Revolution. What motivated these men and women to support the English king who extinguished their way of life in Scotland? Why remain loyal to the crown of an empire that has repeatedly attacked, looked down upon, and undermined the success of your nation and culture for most of its history?

This thesis seeks to demonstrate that Scottish Highlanders supported the Loyalist cause in the American Revolution as a result of the formation of a distinct Highlander-American identity located within the British Empire. This thesis relies on the conception of identity and its formation drawn from psychologist Shridhar Sharma's review of social science conceptions of self, identity, and culture. Sharma synthesizes the works of prominent contributors to the field such as developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst Erik Erikson and professors Lawrence J. Kirmayer and Harry Minas. He defines individual identity being formed from three phenomena, "a sense of continuity, a sense of uniqueness from others and a sense of affiliation." While this concept of identity is intended for the individual, Sharma goes on to say that individuality and

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society are dependent upon one another for formation.³ In forming the individual, society and culture is also formed. As a result, this conception of identity can be expanded to the cultural as well as the individual. This thesis applies this framework of identity construction to the formation of a distinct Highlander-American cultural identity. This new identity was generated from a continuation of Highlander culture including fealty to a leader (continuity), a sense of othering upon their arrival to America (uniqueness from others), and opportunities within the established British Empire (affiliation). By demonstrating these three phenomena in Highlander immigrant communities and how they each encouraged loyalism, the thesis will establish the formation of a Highlander-American identity that resulted in Highland support of the British government in the American Revolution.

In order to fully understand the life of a Highlander immigrant to America, it is important to understand what he or she left behind. The relationship between England and Scotland has been fraught with conflict and antipathy for much of its history, though undoubtedly scattered with periods of cooperation. Conflict came to a head in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. In response to the Catholic king's leniency towards Catholicism and limitation of parliamentary powers, the English people deposed King James II, allowing William and Mary to assume the throne. Disruption and change followed this shift in leadership with the creation of laws that prevented the reign of a Catholic monarch and, more significantly, unified Scotland and England under one Parliament in the Act of Union in 1707.⁴ Despite the appearance of unity, many subjects under the newly minted government maintained allegiance to their former king. From

³ Sharma, 122.

the Latin of his name, James' supporters came to be known as the Jacobites. The Jacobites believed the idea of divine rule and that James was the true king of Scotland, one they were willing to establish on a Scottish, if not an English, throne at any cost. In 1715, the Jacobites organized a rebellion to place their king back on the throne. This effort was unsuccessful and led to the exile of their king to Italy for the remainder of his life. Thirty years later, the fervor had still not died and James' son and heir, Charles Edward Stuart, also known as Bonnie Prince Charlie, had grown into a strong, attractive man with magnetic leadership qualities eager to occupy his rightful place.

With a jovial personality that won him many friends, Charles rallied his supporters and instigated a second uprising in 1745. Known as the "Forty-Five," this effort was as unsuccessful as the previous attempt to regain the British throne, but with more impactful consequences. The Forty-Five ended at the Battle of Culloden, where over 2,000 Highlanders were killed, in addition to the many more who had died during the Rebellion. While the slaughter of many of the workingmen of the Highlands was a gruesome outcome of the war, it was only the first of many changes in Scotland.

In response to this attempt to establish a Scottish sovereign and the violence that accompanied it, Parliament passed a number of measures in order to ensure that such an uprising would never again be possible. They forbid the wearing of the plaid, a symbol of clan unity and


6. For a more detailed summary of this revolutionary period in Scottish history, see Meyer, 1-17.

7. Walter Macleod and Archibald Philip Primrose Rosebery, A List of Persons Concerned in the Rebellion: Transmitted to the Commissioners of Excise by the Several Supervisors in Scotland in Obedience to a General Letter of the 7th May, 1746, and a Supplementary List with Evidences to Prove the Same (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the President of the Scottish History Society, 1890), xvii.
mark of Scottish heritage. Perhaps one of the most significant changes, Parliament took heritable land out of possession of the lairds of the Highland clans, a land system that served as the foundation of clan society. Previously, the English government granted ownership of the land to the laird of the clan. The laird then leased the land to a tacksman who in turn leased it to members of the clan. In essence, Highland clan culture functioned much like a feudal society. This society, however, was one often led by a benevolent laird who opened his home to the people on his land, counseled them, kept the peace, and defended them. Though many Highlanders lived in relative poverty, this reciprocal system functioned for many years. The elimination of this land structure, removal of fealty to lairds and the increased rents imposed by new landowners slowly began to dismantle the hierarchical clan structure. Lairds could no longer provide lower rents without the reciprocal clan relationships, or new landowners supplanted them altogether with their increased rents. As a result, tenants could not turn to the laird for aid, because he did not have the land or capital to support them.

As result of rising rents, the expulsion of many Jacobites as punishment for the rebellion, and incentives to life in a new land, Highlanders immigrated to the American colonies. While it is difficult to give the precise number of those who emigrated, contemporary estimates from two visitors to the Highlands hint at the size of the migration. In 1784, John Knox estimated that between 1763 and 1773, 20,000 Highlanders ventured across the sea. In 1800, Thomas Garnett

9. Ibid., 32-33, 42.
10. Ibid., 48.
reported 30,000 had emigrated between 1773 and 1775. In a population of less than 300,000, these numbers are significant.

When they arrived to new shores, Highlanders received a mixed welcome upon their arrival to America. From scorn to warm community welcome, Highlanders typically made their home in already established communities of their kinsmen throughout the colonies. They were often extended incentives to live in a specific region, which facilitated the formation of those communities. North Carolina's governor, Scotchman Gabriel Johnson, promised that immigrating Highlanders should pay no taxes for 10 years after their arrival and one thousand pounds would be distributed amongst arriving families. Highlanders settled into American life as merchants, indentured servants, farmers, and politicians, finding a place in their new world.

In the midst of this resettlement, the rumblings of revolution began to transform the lives of all those in America, and Highlanders were no exception. With a population of around 20,000 in the entirety of the American colonies, Highlanders amounted to just about 0.08% of what would soon become the United States' population. This small but hearty cohort largely turned supported British forces, forming as much as ten percent of the Loyalist army in America. While Loyalism in early America and its motivations is a frequent subject of study, historians have explored Highlander Loyalism specifically to a lesser extent.

12. Ibid., 49.
**Historiography**

As a small, but memorable ethnic group, the Highlanders of Scotland have been the subject of extensive scholarly attention. The cultures of the clans, the rebellious Jacobites, emigration patterns, and the actions of the Highlander diaspora constitute the bulk of this scholarship. Amongst that work, some attention has also been paid to Highlander participation in the American Revolution, but not in nearly as comprehensive a fashion as that of those from the Lowlands. Because Highlanders have been treated in a piecemeal fashion by historians, it is necessary to examine a wide range of sources to form adequately the foundation of a larger, cultural analysis. In pursuit of the establishment of their identity, it will be necessary to engage with contemporary immigration, Highlanders as agents within the British empire as well as the empire itself, and loyalism, both specifically Highlander and otherwise. Structured following these thematic threads, this historiography demonstrates the absence of a cohesive, consistent narrative about the Highland experience and motivations in the American Revolution. Without this comprehensive view, the Highland-American identity remains unidentified, demonstrating how this thesis contributes to the scholarship.

Before delving into the Highlanders specifically, the landscape of the eighteenth century migrations is essential to understanding Highlanders in America. Bernard Bailyn, a prominent U.S. colonial and American Revolution historian, won the 1987 Pulitzer Prize for History for his sweeping work, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution*. Using the Register of Emigration generated by the British crown, letterbooks, papers, and a seemingly exhaustive list of sources, Bailyn identifies two distinct phenomena of immigration to America: individual men from southern England coming to the established colonies as indentured servants and family groups from Northern England and Scotland.
emigrating as farmers to the peripheral regions of the colonies. He emphasizes that the latter stream was seeking to leave the culture of Britain for a more fluid, rural life in the colonies.\textsuperscript{15} This second stream describes the familial migrations of Scottish Highlanders. Bailyn recounts the unsuccessful journey of Scottish Lowlander, James Hogg, who moved 200 Highlanders to rural North Carolina only to meet with strife. Since Hogg is the focus of the study, the exploration of Hogg’s character and motivations supersedes work on Highlander motivations. Bailyn engages with what inspired emigration to the Highlands, how it was accomplished, and acknowledges the strong Highland community that persisted in America, but largely focuses on the exploits of Hogg.

This emigration stream is important to understand the kind of environment Highlanders established upon their arrival to America. Marianne McLean moves within this migration framework in her 1991 book, \textit{The People of Glengarry: Highlanders in Transition, 1745-1820}. This work provides a study of the emigration of Highlanders from Glengarry county in Scotland to the location of the same name in Ontario, Canada. In seeking to identify whether Highlanders were forced from their land by economic and cultural circumstances or enticed by the same in America, McLean utilizes both published and unpublished materials from the Scottish Records Office and a number of Canadian archives. She paints a vivid picture of the lives of Highlanders who made their way to Canada, tracing their voyage from Scotland, their time in America, and their settlement in Glengarry. Her focus is primarily to craft a picture of emigrants and their experience in settling in Canada and, as a result, does not give much page space to Highlanders in America. In making her argument, however, McLean does touch upon Highlander

\textsuperscript{15} Bernard Bailyn, \textit{Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution} (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1987), 503. This concept is negated by the work done by Marianne McLean and J.M. Bumsted, and is crucial in determining how and why American Highland communities were established. This tension will be discussed further later in this thesis.
involvement in the Revolution, but she treats Loyalism among Highlanders as something that would occur “naturally,” without discussion as to why. Ultimately, McLean argues that Highlander emigration and success was a testament of the strength of the movement from the old world to the new, that it was not a desire to retreat from the past that led to their movement, but a desire to move towards new opportunities. In making this argument, she contests prior historians like Eric Richards.

As an expert in the area of British migration, historian Eric Richards has produced many works on the subject and, in particular, the Highland clearances. Most of his work centers on clearances after the revolutionary period, but he does work with Highland immigration in the mid to late eighteenth century as well. In his *A History of the Highland Clearances*, first published in 1982, Richards analyzes the clearances from an economic perspective and a close reading of the individual's experiences, and it is the first comprehensive work of its kind in the field. An extensive study leads Richards to the conclusion that the Highland economy was incapable of supporting the population growth sustained in the area, and as a result, was the largest factor in the emigration of Highlanders. Richards makes similar claims about the Highlander's passivity in the emigration decision in his contribution to the 1991 anthology *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire* titled “Scotland and

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17. Ibid., 5.

18. The Highland clearances were the evictions of thousands of Highland families from their homes and land beginning in the eighteenth century and lasting for over one hundred years. They resulted in a steep decline in the population of the Highlands.

the Uses of the Atlantic Empire. "

In this work, Richards dismisses the Highlanders’ abilities to make decisions for themselves, arguing that they merely emulated larger British ideologies in order to fit into wider imperial culture. Richards states that Highlanders recognized their own inferiority, and this was evident in their "aping of English ways" in order to find their place in society. This demeaning description of the Highlanders’ motivations for emigration removes their decision-making abilities and fails to take into account the enticements of America as well as the fact that many Highlanders still remained. Richards reduces Highlanders to passive actors in history, which is a reductionist way of viewing a powerful, thoughtful people.

Historian J.M. Bumsted provides an alternative view of the clearances. His 1982 book, The People’s Clearance: Highland Emigration to British North America, 1770-1815, is a revisionist account of Highlander emigration from the perspectives of Highlanders themselves. Earlier works told the story of emigration from the point of view of landlords and Englishmen, who left more accessible and more systematically preserved sources. Working with just these sources, Highlanders appeared to emigrate in response to the landlords’ desires. Bumsted argues alternatively that emigrations from Scotland to America from 1770 to 1815 were not the result of clearances to create sheep farms and mindless transitioning by Highlanders, but rather a rational attempt by the clansmen to avoid change and to preserve traditional, Highland life. McLean quibbles with Bumsted’s dismissal of the clearances, arguing that in his focus on leaders of

20. This entire anthology is a thoughtful work in the exploration of peripheral imperial societies, however many of the contributions are outside of the purview of this study.


22. Ibid., 85.

emigrations and not the communities that produced those emigrants resulted in an underestimation of the effects of the clearances on emigrations. Ultimately, however, they both conclude that the decision to emigrate was, in fact, a decision made by Highlander immigrants.

While seemingly distant to motivations for Loyalism in the American Revolution, engaging with scholarship of Highland emigration is crucial to understand the mindset in which Highlanders arrived to the colonies. Emigration, its motivations and outcomes, certainly contributed to the communities built in the colonies and was indicative of the empire within which Highlanders moved. Though they were leaving their homeland and the seat of the crown, Highlanders remained very much subjects within a powerful and nearly global imperial culture.

Historian Geoffrey Plank’s work, *Rebellion and Savagery: The Jacobite Rising of 1745 and the British Empire*, recounts the political and military response to the Jacobite rising within Scotland, largely by following the history of Lord Cumberland and his armies throughout the British empire. Plank asserts that the the events of 1745 marked a turning point for the empire, one that created new interest in aggressive imperialism and in the promotion of market-based economic relations. The migration of British people, such as the Highlanders, to the colonies initiated a change in attitude towards imperial and peripheral communities. Plank depicts the intricacies of the Highland mentality as it related to the work being done by the British government through an analysis of their interactions with Cumberland's men. Ultimately, he locates a place for Scottishness within the empire.24 This work is crucial to understanding the foundation of Loyalist proclivities for the Highlanders and their descendants.

Evidence of the influence of the British empire in inspiring Loyalism is a large area of scholarship. These works, however, tend to focus on the broader image of Loyalists rather than

Highlanders specifically. Allan Blackstock and Frank O’Gorman compiled a sweeping anthology in their *Loyalism and the Formation of the British World 1775-1914*. The work as a whole seeks to demonstrate that loyalty was an “essential part of multiple patriotisms,” that it often operated as a powerful component of local loyal communities, and that it was both broad and adaptable to multiple locations. While the anthology often only engages with Highlanders tangentially, this adaptable loyalty existed in Highland communities before the outset of the war.

At the conclusion of the American Revolution, loyalty demonstrated during the war often resulted in exile either in the midst of or directly following the patriot victory, affecting Highlanders loyalists. Historian Christopher Moore gives voice to those Loyalists and their experience directly from their papers in his work *The Loyalists: Revolution, Exile, Settlement*. While the bulk of Moore’s book deals with a varied cast of loyalists, he does engage with Highlander material. He establishes that Highlanders retained their cultural identity after the Union of 1707 and the aftermath of the Rising, and that it continued in America, oftentimes manifesting itself through loyalist tendencies. Though Moore’s analysis is more broadly about loyalists and the presentation of Highlanders sources is at times sparse or lacking, as when he


26. For more on Scots in the British empire, Ned C. Landsman’s article, “Nation, Migration, and the Province in the First British Empire: Scotland and the Americas, 1600-1800,” and his book, *Nation and Province in the First British Empire*, provide an insightful look. Landsman suggests that experience of Lowland Scots emigration to America was unique and represented an integration into imperial American/British life. They were later to emigrate than their other imperial brothers and sisters because they had already toed the emigration waters in other British colonies and were reluctant to jump headlong in the American project. This places Highland migration into a larger Scottish context.

suggests all Anglicans were Loyalists, but he provides context to a Highland American voice within his narrative structure that is valuable in the pursuit of Highland identity.\textsuperscript{28}

With Highland emigration and the British empire’s influence in place, the Highlander in America is ready to be considered. One fundamental work on Highlanders in the United States is Duane Meyer’s \textit{The Highland Scots of North Carolina} published in 1961. Before McLean’s work in Canada, Meyer provided a microcosm of the culture, economic, and political life of the Highlander in their concentrated North Carolina communities, which necessarily included their participation as Loyalists in the American Revolution. Meyer attributes Highlander Loyalism largely to a blind following of England motivated by known social structures and a fear of reprisal if they should revolt in America.\textsuperscript{29} Meyer also acknowledges the economic reasons and the unpromising situation in Scotland for Highlander support that may have factored into Loyalism, but he suggests that any other impetuses pale before the memories of past Highlander suffering under the British forces.\textsuperscript{30} This work provided a foundation upon which later work on Highlanders in America could build. In focusing on more than the numbers that contributed to loyalty, Meyer provided a new framework within which to view this complex community.

Robert DeMond followed in Meyer's footsteps with his work \textit{The Loyalists in North Carolina During the Revolution}. DeMond gave Highlanders a similarly simple motivation for

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\textsuperscript{28} For more on loyalism generally, see Maya Jasanoff’s \textit{Liberty’s Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World}. Jasanoff deals more with the Loyalist diaspora after the war, featuring voices not normally heard like those of women and black soldiers, but still does not give voice to the Highlander. For a statistical analysis of Loyalist claimants, see Wallace Brown’s \textit{The King’s Friends: The Composition and Motives of the American Loyalist Claimants}. Brown’s work with Highlander claimants is almost strictly statistical, but what analysis he does do for loyalty motivations is out of touch with evidence outside of the Loyalist claims.

\textsuperscript{29} Meyer, 151. For additional sources to this point see David Dobson’s \textit{Scottish Emigration to Colonial America, 1607-1785} and T.M. Devine’s \textit{Scotland's Empire and the Shaping of the Americas, 1600-1815}.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 152.
\end{flushright}
Loyalism. He asserts that the Highlanders were averse to participation in a democratic society because they had never known such a thing before.\textsuperscript{31} He makes such an argument in the face of mass Highlander emigration to lands and circumstances unknown prior to the American Revolution and their widespread willingness to support an uncertain revolt in 1745. This suggests that DeMond has overlooked crucial social components attributed to Highlanders that suggest a willingness to embrace and conquer the unknown.

In seeking to identify specific motivations for loyalism, Matthew P. Dziennik comes close to a comprehensive explanation in his 2011 article, “Through an Imperial Prism: Land, Liberty, and Highland Loyalism in the War of American Independence.” Dziennik rejects the view of Highlanders as inept, simplistic, and passive actors in their own history, which he claims has led to an inadequate study of their motivations. Using a variety of sources, including poetry, official records, and personal papers, Dziennik argues that loyalism was a political action that reflected positive views of the Empire and its ability to safeguard the Highland way of life.\textsuperscript{32} He goes so far as to say that the imperial integration of Highlander views of liberty within the empire's attempts to subdue the Jacobite rebellion was the most important factor in the formation of loyalism.\textsuperscript{33} While his exposition and use of sources is remarkable, Dziennik's situation of political opportunities in America as politicized interest does not fully explain the move towards loyalism as a political and not merely economic choice.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{32} Dziennik, 334.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 335.
\textsuperscript{34} For more on Scots in America generally, see R.A. Cage’s \textit{The Scots Abroad: Labour, Capital, Enterprise, 1750-1914} and \textit{Enlightenment and Change: Scotland 1746-1832} by Bruce P. Lenman.
affiliations for loyalism also removes a crucial component to understanding Highlanders as community members.\textsuperscript{35}

Dziennik is one of the first scholars to build off the crucial work of Michael Newton on contemporary Gaelic poetry. Often, the perspective of the Highlander is translated through government documents or the papers of the elite, Newton’s groundbreaking work in “Jacobite Past, Loyalist Present” and \textit{We’re Indians Sure Enough: The Legacy of the Scottish Highlanders in the United States} goes directly to the source of Highland spirit and culture by engaging with Gaelic poetry from the Revolutionary era. In the former, Newton seeks to demonstrate the continuity of Gaelic poetry from the Jacobite Rising to the American Revolution, suggesting that loyalism had its roots early in Gaelic verse.\textsuperscript{36} In the latter work, Newton places the identity and legacy of Highlanders in the larger history of the United States. Newton does excellent work with the primary sources, but they are limited in number and scope since many were never saved for posterity. It is necessary to include these poetic works alongside more traditional sources as a means of generating a more comprehensive depiction of the Highlander.\textsuperscript{37}

There has been extensive work on the motivation of Highlanders for various decisions in their lives, be it emigration or loyalism. What work has been done often attributes their loyalism to economic opportunity, an inability to conceive of any other than their accustomed leadership system than what they are used to, or simply as inevitable without the historical work to support that claim. While these examined studies have created a historical foundation for the study of

\textsuperscript{35} Dziennik, 335.


\textsuperscript{37} An important anthology of Gaelic verse is \textit{An Lasair: Anthology of 18th Century Scottish Gaelic Verse} edited by Ronald Black. This collection, however is more dedicated to poetry in Scotland and deals little with the American Revolution.
Highlanders in the Revolution and make contributions to the wider picture of their motivations, these conclusions fall short of a thorough depiction of motivations that consider the entirety of the Highlander experience. Past Highlander clan structure and hierarchy coupled with established allegiance to the king undoubtedly played a role in Loyalist support. The reception of Highland immigrants in America, seen as members of a barbaric and primitive ethnic group, would have affected where Highlanders would place their loyalty and invest patriotism. Economic opportunities, contrary to Meyer, also deserve proper consideration for its important role in the Revolutionary decisions of Highlanders. Consideration of these notions collectively reveals that the realities of Highland American life resulted in the creation of a distinct Highland-American identity that tethered Highlanders to the crown while rooting their patriotism in America. While fealty to king and the lack of full integration into American society nudged Highlanders to Loyalism, economic opportunities located that Loyalty in America.

The absence of the identification of a Highlander-American identity that located Highlanders as active loyal agents within the British Empire is notable. The examined scholarship provides a necessary foundation for the work done in this thesis. It is through the incorporation of many of these established ideas as well as a new reading of primary sources through the lens of identity formation that allows for the emergence of a Highland-American identity.

In order to do so, this thesis will consider a variety of sources including personal sources, like Gaelic poetry, diaries and letters, and letter books, as well as official published sources such as proclamations and broadsides. The sources come from across North America, as well as Scotland, from both men and women representing a diversity of backgrounds. They were chosen in order to provide a broad view of the Highlander experience and identity formation. As a result
of using these sources individually, this thesis appears to treat instances of this identity formation as happening at distinct periods of time. It should be noted that identity, however, that is a fluid concept, and the same can be said of cultural identity. Sharma writes that, "All cultures are dynamic. They are ever changing and, non-static." The construction of the Highlander-American identity began with Highlanders who immigrated to America in the 1740s and continued up to and after the American Revolution, changing throughout. In working with the chosen sources, all quotations will use the syntax and language as used in the original text unless specified otherwise.

This thesis will be structured to identify the three pillars of the Highland American identity: a sense of continuity, a sense of uniqueness, and a sense of affiliation. This results in chapters demonstrating the Highlander culture and community, the reception of Highlanders in America, and economic opportunities for Highlanders that were rooted in the imperial system.

38. Sharma, 122.
A Sense of Continuity: Highlander Community and Fealty in America

Though they had left their homeland, the seat of their lairds, and clan society behind, the essence of clan and Highland culture pervaded American Highland society. It is a strong culture that brings Scottishness wherever it ventures. As Atlantic World historian Ned Landsman writes, "Scotsmen were never simply those who lived in Scotland." While they may not have been established as thoroughly as the New English or New Netherlands settlements, there existed a "New Scotland" in America. The experience of the Highlander differed from the Lowland Scot when immigrating to America, because of that strong sense of community. Lowland Scots immigrated individually and assimilated into American society while Highlanders immigrated as cohorts and families, often joining relatives or friends who had already established themselves in America. This kind of movement facilitated communal living and replicated the social systems from the Highlands, encouraging the formation of a distinct identity. Traditional hierarchical clan structure and dedication to concentration of power in an established figurehead solidified this community and provided a sense of continuity from their previous life in Scotland.

Seen in Gaelic songs and poetry of the day, a fealty to power, be it laird or king, was fundamental to Scottish culture. Loyalty to seats of power reared its head in the most natural of places where leadership is key, in war. The Seven Years' War, fought between the British and the French required troops from Great Britain. In an effort to harness the energies of the warrior Highlanders who had a reputation for being fierce soldiers, many were pressed into service for


40. Ibid., 468.

41. Ibid., 465.
the king.\textsuperscript{42} William Pitt, British cabinet leader and Lord of the Privy Seal, raised a regiment of Highland soldiers and commented on their loyalty noting, "[I]n the mountains of the North; I there found a hearty race of men, able to do the country service, but laboring under a proscription: I called them forth to her aid and sent them forth to fight her battles. They did not disappoint my expectations, for their fidelity was equal to their valour."\textsuperscript{43} Not only British officials noted this loyalty to the crown, Highlander people wrote it into the historical record in their poetry and songs.

Poetry is an important source of Gaelic history and, as the literary voice of a people, adds to the historic narrative of Highlanders. Poetry provides a perspective on events not often considered and gives insight into the collective Highland mind.\textsuperscript{44} Their composition in Gaelic, the language of Highlanders, upfront connotes a connection to the broader Highlander society. As mentioned previously, little work has been done on Gaelic poetry and the American Revolution outside of the contributions of Michael Newton. The historic record of Gaelic poetry in America is incomplete, and Newton included what he was able to locate and translated them as accurately as he was able. This chapter utilizes relevant poems from his compilations and translations.

As Pitt noted, Highlanders responded to British call for troops to fight in the Seven Years' War. One of the more widely known groups was the 78th Regiment of Foot, Fraser's Highlanders. Led by Simon Fraser of Lovat, the son of beheaded Jacobite sympathizer Simon "The Fox" Fraser, the regiment was distinguished by its leader with an infamous familial past.

\textsuperscript{42} Meyer., 149.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 149.

\textsuperscript{44} For more on use of Gaelic poetry see William Gillies, "Gaelic Songs of the Forty-Five," \textit{Scottish Gaelic Studies} 19 (1999), 93-94.
and its traditional Highland warrior uniforms. After the 1759 Quebec campaign, one soldier from this regiment writes, "O lads, make ready, with death-/ dealing weapons,/ Strong, intrepid, in honor of the/ King,/ This country will be ours before too long,/ And we will return to Britain again…" The soldier gives an impassioned plea to his peers to pick up their weapons in strong, punctuated language that denotes action in service and in "honor" of the king. He seeks to obtain what the king desires, which is the honor-bound duty of him and his fellow Highlander soldiers. At this point, honor to the king is still strictly bound to the Motherland, as his intent to return home is clear. His localization of home to Britain, however, is significant. When referencing home, earlier poetry would mention specific places in Scotland, locating home away from the king. This young man speaks to a shift in the conception of home and strengthened ties to the crown. This change was significant as the soldier was not just in any regiment, but one led by the Frasers, a clan that supported the Jacobite cause in great numbers. As many as 400 Fraser clansmen met English soldiers in the front lines of the Battle of Culloden.

After the success of the Quebec assault, which effectively secured English dominance in Canada, the English crown saw fit to reward the work of the regiments that made it happen. This acknowledgment further ingratiated Highlanders to the king and cemented him as the leader who

45. "At the Siege of Quebec," in We're Indians Sure Enough: The Legacy of the Scottish Highlanders in the United States, ed. and trans. Michael Newton (Auburn, NH: Windhaven Press, 2001), 131. All translations are taken from Newton's text. Newton remarks that he has gathered the most accurate versions of these poems as possible after working with other Gaelic poetry scholars to create his anthology. Newton himself has done the translations, but includes the original Gaelic in his text. Gaelic poems are lengthy and I have selected pertinent sections from within longer works for the purposes of this study. I have made these selections carefully, isolating parts that do not warp or misconstrue the sentiment of the whole.


could provide as the laird once did. While retaining their Scottish heritage, Highlanders claimed the king as their own in a poem that welcomed the warriors home.

The big guns have now fallen silent,  
Blood is not spilt on land or sea,  
The war banners are folded up in a room,  
Rather than the clamor of war,  
there are songs of peace […]
This is the uniform of heroes: the kilt and the shoulder-plaid,  
Folded thickly, a dark blue bonnet and a cockade.  
Your angular muskets reflect light with their shininess  
When the parade was assembled the sight was marvelous […]
We will wish the King who is on the Throne a long life,  
He is of the royal stock of MacAlpine who was in Scotland of old.48

The author notes that peace had descended upon Canada but also brings to mind what was lost in conjuring images of blood and banners. These men have sacrificed for their king, but they did so with pride. This regiment was allowed to wear the plaid and traditional Highland warrior dress, which the author makes sure to describe. What once was an exclusively Scottish symbol has here been untethered from Scotland. In this poem, it is a uniform that represents not just the heroism of Highlander warriors, but also the heroism of an English subject fighting an English war. For the plaid, the symbol of clan and culture, to take on such a connection to the English crown is a visible cultural step towards loyalism. It was a signal not only to those within the Highland community but also to those outside that a transition was occurring and loyalties were cementing in new ways. Most significantly, the king is wished a long future as a child of Scotland.

Connecting the sitting king, and not a Stuart, to Scottish lineage, absorbs King George II into the Scottish fold giving him the leadership of the laird. More than just acceptance of the king, however, Highlanders sought to win back the trust of the leader they had wronged.

Gaelic scholar and chaplain to the Highland regiment, James McLagan, wrote a poem to the troops in 1756 appealing to the Highlanders to unite behind this king as warriors. He writes,

The King's reward and the gratitude
of the land,
And fame will be yours forever,
For protecting your land from the
despoiler's greed
And providing the Gael's great worthiness; [...] 
Your excellent conduct will convince
King George to return our uniform,
The cheerful ancient uniform
Since the age of Adam and Eve;
And if he gives to us our prestige,
weapons, and clothing now as was our custom,
We will be the best arrows in his
quiver,
We will be Scotland's payment to
him.

Britain and Ireland and all of Europe
Will be scrutinizing the Scottish Gaels;
Your land, and myself like a kindly
mother,
Will pray to Heaven that you will succeed... 49

This poem abundantly thanks an already accepted king but calls his fellow Highlanders to do more. Highlanders can bring success and renown to all the lands under the king, including Ireland. Supporting the crown will be "Scotland's payment" to England and will restore them to greatness. In fighting for the king, Highlanders can reclaim their heritage through the plaid and live out that heritage as subjects of the king.

These poems were not written during the American Revolution, but they represent the foundation of thought with which Highlanders entered the Revolutionary War. After the Treaty of Paris in 1763, many Highlanders were granted land and remained in America. McLagan notes their rewards in his poem, and the migration of Scottish immigrants to America demonstrates the appeal of those rewards. Families came and settled in America and brought these notions of loyalty to the king with them. This loyalty is seen in the songs that were created during the Revolution.50

In 1777, General John Burgoyne launched an attempt to isolate New England from the rest of the colonies. Troops from Canada would move down through New York, surprising the American troops. Burgoyne thought that isolating New England from the remainder of the colonies would free up General William Howe to attack Philadelphia. Burgoyne found early success in the campaign with the capture of Fort Ticonderoga, but he overextended his supply chain and eventually surrendered at Saratoga. Before news of this maneuver's failure reached the author, songwriter Duncan Lothian wrote of the anticipated success of the attempt to isolate New England in his poem *A Song About America*. Published in his book of poetry in 1780, he writes, "You will come to see shortly/ That your opinion was foolish/ That you would ever triumph over/ Britain, / However wealthy and strong you may be."51 Like songs of old, the Highlander is


assured of his laird, or king's success and eager to help bring it about. The poem goes on to describe the ancient origin legend of the Gaels in Scotland, writing "The Gaels have long been/ Inhabiting the continent of Europe;/When their swords brought them victory/ The were the topic of much conversation." Lothian draws upon past Highland success as proof that Gaelic troops can help the crown triumph now, even if it is now serving a different leader, success is guaranteed and the Highland community continues.

When the British did not find success in the war, Highlanders were still eager to prove the strength of their king. Donnchadh Ceanaideach, translated as Duncan Kennedy, was a teacher in Kilmelford, Argyll. In addition to his school teaching, Kennedy compiled a collection of Ossianic poetry, between 1174 and 1783, and wrote a book of hymns in 1786. In his poem *A Song After the Revolution*, he places his loyalty in stark contrast to the selfishness of the patriots. Kennedy writes,

The sad, ill-fated war of the Revolution
Began without reason, in order that people might be hurt,
In the year, after the Son of God had come from Heaven,
Seventeen hundred and seventy-four.

Between Great Britain and yonder America,
About some trifling tax or other that Forced the Army to go to preserve peace in every place
And to battle the Indians, to


53. Lothian, 58.

54. Newton, *We're Indians Sure Enough*, 149.
Kennedy dismisses any patriot grievances as trifles, lamenting their choice to separate from their king and English customs, customs he promotes as his own. The king worked for the colonists, but "they could not see that themselves" giving "'grievous injury to King George."56 Highlanders were "At the point where we had no choice/ but to fight or to lose/ The great and prosperous country./ and all that we invested in it."57 This poem presents a lengthy condemnation of the patriots. More than that, however, it lists of grievances of a wronged community, demonstrating a "clan's" need to defend itself to maintain its seat and power. This poem embodies the full adoption of the English throne by Highlanders.

As with any fictional work, the use of poems or songs as evidence for representing Highland sentiment should be done carefully. This analysis certainly does not represent all of Highlander sentiment, but no source would. The words that came from the perspectives of the


57. Kennedy, 151.
Highlander people living and fighting for the crown, give insight into the psychology of this community, one still active and writing in Gaelic in America.

This psychology appears in the more personal writings of Flora MacDonald as well. Flora MacDonald was the most popular heroine of the Jacobite Revolution. Born in 1722 in South Uist, Scotland, she was a part of a strong Highland clan and community from the beginning of her life. As a teenager, MacDonald was instrumental in smuggling Bonnie Prince Charles safely out of Scotland after the failure of his cause at the Battle of Culloden, resulting in her brief imprisonment. An intensely devoted Jacobite, MacDonald relished the opportunity to sacrifice her freedom and safety to see her prince escape. After her early-in-life adventure, MacDonald married, had children, and eventually moved to America on the eve of the Revolution. She and her family eventually return to Scotland, where she died in 1790 at age 69.

At the prompting of her niece, the 65-year-old MacDonald decided to recount the adventures of her life, *The Autobiography of Flora M'Donald Being the Home Life of a Heroine*. This work was originally meant only for the edification of her niece, but throughout the writing of the manuscript, MacDonald distributed sections to friends and family. The work was later edited by her great-granddaughter and published in 1870.

While the autobiography focuses primarily on the Jacobian revels of MacDonald's early life without speaking much to her time in America, she details what it meant to be a Highlander in eighteenth century Scotland. Her upbringing, ideas about Scottish society, and culture would have resembled those around her and provide an interesting insight into what Highlanders took with them to America. MacDonald describes herself as the epitome of a "Highland lass," "tall,

58. I have chosen to use the more traditional spelling of MacDonald that is used in most of the scholarship about Flora. Her name is also written with the spellings "McDonald" and "M'Donald."
large-boned, [has] bright red hair and small grey eyes, with freckled skin.⁵⁹ She grew up exposed to the feelings and lifestyle of a gentleman's family if not a gentleman's education. She was not given a formal girl's education because it was thought that such accomplishments were not necessary for a simple Highland life. The presence of the British in the Highlands and Highlander attitudes towards them are soon apparent within MacDonald's narrative. She describes the arrival of a group of English to the area as ruffling the quiet of Highland life, bringing a "tinge of gravity" upon Highland families.⁶⁰ Sent to ferret out any Jacobite sentiments, the English were seen as the enemy even at Flora's young age. Highland children grew up "inspired with a sense of their country's wrongs, and a burning desire of freedom from the yoke of the Sassenach."⁶¹ Sassenach is the Gaelic word for an English person with derogatory overtones. Highland children were brought up with this wariness and outright disdain for the English. This outlook was not merely the sentiments of Jacobite families, but the response of a people who recognize their worth and know when others do not. Perceptions of the British undoubtedly affected Jacobite followers, creating a foundation for rebellion, but also demonstrated an inherent aversion to British rule.

As with Gaelic poetry, however, the mistrust of British rule does not translate to an aversion to a centralized authority figure. MacDonald adamantly refers to Charles as her Prince,

⁵⁹. Flora MacDonald, *The Autobiography of Flora M'Donald Being the Home Life of a Heroine Vol II*, ed. Margaret M'Donald (Edinburgh: William P. Nimmo, 1870), 43. For readability, I have chose to transcribe MacDonald's text slightly changed from the original. As with many contemporary texts, this work was printed with an "f" representing our modern "s." I have placed an "s" wherever the "f" was written. Additionally, Flora MacDonald will be referred to purely as MacDonald, and her husband will be referred to as such or as Allen MacDonald.

⁶⁰. MacDonald, 54.

⁶¹. Ibid., 55.
or even prematurely, as her king.\textsuperscript{62} She describes the fervor with which the Highlanders supported the rightful wearer of the crown. In response to the notion of Highlanders tipping the British off about those who were Jacobites, she writes, “Indeed, the feeling of devotion to the Prince was so strong, that had a daring hand been stretch out to grasp what was termed by every Highlander “blood-money,” that man and his descendants would have borne the mark of disgrace and ignominy.”\textsuperscript{63} Not only was the connection to the Prince and his rightful office so strong as to prevent followers from accepting money, but also to do so was something that would tarnish your name and those of your descendants for generations.

In so much of her description of the Prince, it might appear that MacDonald was a young, starstruck girl blindly following a popular, regal figure. She describes him as "a well-made man, taller than any in his company," and having an "athletic form, and energetic willingness" to share in the hardships of war life.\textsuperscript{64} She emphasizes that he was unselfish, kind, witty, and charismatic. Her allegiance, however, is tempered with a realistic and, at times, critical eye towards his actions and leadership. When Charles decides to carry on his campaign after the English decided to send more troops to quell the rebellion, MacDonald critiques his decision,

\[\ldots\] It was certainly a daring and impolitic act to proceed to extremities under such unequal forces. And so judged many of his supporters, who endeavoured to persuade him to abandon the project, or at least to defer it until a more favourable opportunity should present itself.\ldots but the Prince shut his eyes to the disadvantages of his position, and firmly expressed his determination to proceed to hostilities. Alas! he should have taken the advice of skillful commanders, twice his age and less impetuous.\textsuperscript{65}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 58.
\item \textsuperscript{63} MacDonald, 61.
\item \textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 63.
\item \textsuperscript{65} Ibid., 70-71.
\end{itemize}
MacDonald recognizes the faults of her beloved Prince, but supports him even in defeat because he was the rightful heir to the throne, which was the "property of the Stuarts." Her devotion was born of the fervent dedication to the rightful inheritance of the Scottish crown and a desire for a Scottish ruler.

After the failure of the Jacobite rebellion, MacDonald was arrested for assisting Charles in his escape from Scotland. She was held for months by the government, spending time in the Tower of London, a ship, and eventually the home of a prominent Scottish family in London to await her trial. Acquitted of her crime, she married Allen MacDonald and eventually moved to America with her husband and most of her children. She and her husband decided to move in 1774, "joining the emigrants who were leaving their native hills, to better their fortunes on the other side of the Atlantic." This decision was the result of "a succession of failures of the crops, and unforeseen family expenses," which "rather cramped" their income.

Arriving in the town of Wilmington, North Carolina, the MacDonalds travelled up the Cape Fear River to the area of Cross Creek in Cumberland County, a well-established Highlander community. Because of her role in Prince Charles' escape, MacDonald enjoyed minor celebrity status among the people of North Carolina. She was known by the community and welcomed with open arms. Within this community the Highlander positions, traditions, and language that MacDonald and her husband had grown up with would continue to be upheld, but in a place of renewed hope and prosperity. They established a life of "tranquility," purchasing

66. Ibid., 68.

67. MacDonald Vol II, 135. MacDonald writes that she moved in the year 1775, but historians date that move as actually occurring in 1774.

68. Ibid., 135.
and settling almost immediately. With five hundred acres for an estate named Killegrey, they raised cattle and engaged in the trade of naval stores.

Soon after settling into their new lives, any newfound comfort came to an abrupt end with the beginning of the American Revolution. Initially, the MacDonalds attempted to remove themselves from any involvement in the conflict. They thought, like many in the colonies, that the upstart rebels championed a doomed cause against an insurmountable foe. Trouble, however, arrived in North Carolina. Local patriots identified MacDonald's "poor husband" as a loyal sympathizer, and was "treated harshly," and "confined for some time in gaol at Halifax." Since Allen MacDonald was "loyally disposed," when he was released from prison, he signed up for a commission with the Loyalist army when Governor Josiah Martin called for the formation of a Highland regiment in North Carolina. In order to receive his commission, Allen MacDonald signed an oath of loyalty to the king, a requirement which proved no hindrance to him or his five sons signing up.

Flora MacDonald accompanied her newly enlisted men on their journey to join the larger cohort of British forces at Campbelton. There were rumors that the British encampment the British contained one thousand troops to defeat their enemy. Upon their arrival, they discovered the story to be false, disheartening those travelling from Cross Creek. Tradition states that MacDonald took it upon herself to inspire the cause. In his biography of MacDonald, John Patterson MacLean writes,

On the public square, near the royal standard, in Gaelic, she made a powerful address, with all her power, exhibiting her genius she dwelt at length upon the

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69. Ibid., 136.

70. MacDonald Vol II, 136-137.

71. Ibid., 136.
loyalty of the Scotch, their bravery, and the sacrifices her people had made. She urged them to duty, and was successful in exciting all to a high military pitch.  

Though this tale persists about MacDonald, it is thought by historians that she more likely spoke words of encouragement to her family members rather than delivering a resounding call to action for the government. However, since she spoke in Gaelic, not all in the crowd could understand her. To those non-speakers, MacDonald presented a fiery representation of a Highlander woman rallying her troops, saying what, they could only imagine. Regardless of its accuracy, this tale provides insight into the strength of the Highlander community and its values. Using a prominent Highlander as a touchstone, this tale emphasizes in Gaelic, the values held dear by the community: loyalty, bravery, and perseverance. By association with MacDonald, these values are localized to the Loyalist cause and to the king in America. This story would have been circulated in Highland communities and used to rally additional troops and support to the noble, Highlander cause.

MacDonald herself wrote nothing of the time between her husband's enlistment and their departure from America, except to say that the country "had involved us in anxiety and trouble almost from the first month of our landing on its shores." This absence in the narrative is curious since she endured much during this time. In the intervening period, the Highland regiment was defeated in February 1776 at the battle of Moore's Creek Bridge. Her husband and one of her sons were imprisoned in North Carolina and then moved to Philadelphia. MacDonald remained at their estate, protecting it from Patriot forces. She was robbed, forced to flee her home, and eventually, she and her husband fled to Nova Scotia away from the conflict. From


73. MacDonald Vol II, 137.
Nova Scotia, MacDonald and her husband returned to Scotland where MacDonald remained until her death in 1790. Despite the hardship of her time there, MacDonald believed America "suited [her] and the young people." In a brief time, MacDonald determined that she and her family as Highlanders had found a place for them. While it would never be the home country, this place had captured the essence of home.

MacDonald's tale, while located primarily in Scotland, still provides insight into the Highland community and how it was not only carried to America but also maintained there. In examining her upbringing and early life, it is evident that from an early age Highlanders were raised to revere the king, to respect the clans and their lairds, and live that fealty out passionately and demonstrably, but not blindly. When brought to America, the influence of that upbringing was evident. Amidst kin of their own that fealty continued, the language continued, the community remained. In America, however, that fealty shifted. With the potential for a Stuart king extinguished, the community attached loyalty to the king that made this new life possible. In fighting for their king, a semblance of the clan structure and the laird's authority persisted. The strength and power of the king filled the absence of a laird and established a sense of the hierarchy that had been lost through the destruction of the clans. That hierarchy was a key component of their way of life as seen in the songs and poems that were sung and repeated constantly amongst their communities and noted in personal accounts. This repositioning of power was key to the development of a Highland sense of duty to the crown across the sea and a necessary component of Scottish identities in America that backed the Loyalist cause. Flora MacDonald's tale and contemporary Gaelic poetry demonstrate the sense of continuity that was a crucial component of identity formation. The rightful ruler and their location may have changed, but the elements of the structure, life and people of the Highlands remained.

74. Ibid., 137.
A Sense of Uniqueness: Highlander Reception in America

While Highlanders came to America with a strong sense of community, a Highlander identity was also solidified out of necessity. When Flora MacDonald was welcomed to America, it was into the arms of her countrymen and women, not established American society. Like many immigrant populations coming to American throughout its history, Highlanders did not always receive the warmest of welcomes. This reception contributed to a sense of being different than other colonists, a sense of uniqueness, that became part of their Highlander-American identity.

After the Jacobite rebellion, the British army and government made strides to assimilate Highlanders into larger British society. By positioning Highlanders as fierce warriors for the crown in conflicts like the Seven Years' War, military service slightly redefined the Highlander reputation in the eyes of British subjects, but old prejudices remained. Just as Flora MacDonald brought her ideals and community to America, so too did the British bring their cultural perceptions. MacDonald recounted the prejudice Highlanders experienced during the rebellion saying English families who encountered Highland troops "were in terror of the wild Highlanders, who they supposed had trained dogs to fight, and that their masters were scarcely human in shape with frightful claws instead of hands! Also, that these wild Highlanders were so savage as to delight in eating little children!"75 Similar stories about Highlanders were common, and British prejudice towards them would not have readily left the minds of those who moved to America.

Highlanders were seen amongst many colonists as a backwards society ignorant of cultural norms, blind followers of power, and ferocious, wild fighters. In a letter written in Philadelphia to a London gentleman, a man wrote that the majority of colonists fought for the

75. MacDonald Vol I, 72.
Patriots, excepting some Highlanders who still supported the king. He writes, "Believe me, Sir, these are the sentiments of all degrees of men in British America, a few tattered Scotch Highlanders excepted, who have lately emigrate, and whose ignorance, feudal notions, and attachment to names, keeps them servile and wholly a the beck of their Chiefs." This disdainful tone and dismissal of Scottish abilities to think for themselves demonstrates the disrespect which met the Highlanders. Charges of ignorance and lack of conviction were serious, especially in such an ideologically charged time, and the fact that these opinions were expressed even in personal writings is significant. Though this letter was written in private correspondence, such prejudices would not long remain silent.

The idea of Highlanders as inferior was not only held by colonists privately, but that prejudice was acted upon as well. When General Howe sought to remove his troops from Boston in 1776, the Americans captured four of the boats attempting to flee, all of which had Highlanders aboard. The prisoners were dispersed throughout the colony. One Highland officer who was forced to travel to his prison wrote to his friend,

As it was thought improper for us to remain at a seaport, we were ordered sixty miles up the country… on our journey no slaves were ever served as we were; through every village, town, and hamlet that we passed, the women and children, and indeed some men among them, came out and loaded us with the most rascally epithets, calling us "rascally cut-throat dogs, murtherers, blood hounds &. &." But what vexed me most was their continual slandering of our country (Scotland), on which they threw the most infamous invectives; to this abuse they added showers of dirt and filth, with now and then a stone.

That the officers received such treatment in Boston and rural Massachusetts was not wholly surprising, since they were well known for their fiery patriotism throughout the war. What is significant is the specific use of Scottish insults, the slandering of an entire people, and the


physical violence that embodied that slander. Highlanders were tethered to the idea of monarchy through the devotion they had shown the king in the Seven Years' War. When the monarchy became the enemy in America, so did Highlanders. This treatment was not unique to rebel colonists either.

“The Scotch Butchery, Boston, 1775”78

The political cartoon, “The Scotch Butchery, Boston 1775,” seen above, depicted Highlanders as pawns within the larger British political machine.79 The circumstances of the broadside's publication are unknown, but it remains a powerful image. The sketch presents


horrified English soldiers on the far left of the scene dropping their arms in the face of “Scottish butchers” on the right. Between the two cohorts stand John Stuart, Earl of Bute, Chief Justice William Murray, Earl of Mansfield, Colonel Simon Fraser, and Alexander Wedderburn, Earl of Rosslyn. The scene takes place on an unidentified shore, with the city of Boston in the background. A war ship sits between the shore and Boston with smoke billowing about it, potentially depicting the attack on Charlestown during Bunker Hill in 1775.

Lord Bute was a notorious figure within British imperial system. Though he was only Prime Minster of Britain for one year, 1762 to 1763, his actions following the Treaty of Paris were seen as having a corrupting influence on the British government. The most prominent of these actions was his taxation of American colonies to pay for the military expenses of the Seven Years' War. Mansfield devotedly followed Bute's lead, Fraser embodied Highland warrior leadership, and Wedderburn was the Solicitor-General who often accompanied Fraser. Mansfield and Fraser were from the Highlands, Bute was from the Highland border island of Bute, and Wedderburn was from the lowlands. The "Scotch Butchery" brings these figures all together to send a powerful message.

In the cartoon, Bute and Mansfield direct the crowd of Highlanders to attack the British soldiers. Bute, with his traditional Highland garb of tartan plaid, broadsword, and plumed hat, is reminiscent of the laird. Behind him, Mansfield is in his lawyer's robes holding a book, suggesting he wields the law to support Bute. Wedderburn appears complacent with the proceedings, his posture is slack and hand casually gestured to the side. Fraser has a paper sticking out of his pocket that reads “Pardon 1745.” This references his former Jacobite associations, already placing him on illegitimate footing. He looks aghast at the procedures but without agency to do anything. He has a spear in hand but with his cocked hip stance seems
unprepared to wield it. His placement behind both Bute and Mansfield indicates that he has no control over the situation. He is tethered to the corrupted influencers of the crown and cannot or will not do anything to stop them.

The group of Highlanders that Bute commands offers a sorry sight. They wear traditional Highlander warrior dress like Bute, but their lank hair and mean expressions make them a fearful lot. Their weapons, both rifles with pointed bayonets and broadswords, are raised in anticipation of executing the orders they have been given. Even within their newly found place in society, Highlanders were still portrayed as brutish and mean.

With the standoff between the two groups of men, there is the potential violence in the foreground, but actual violence occurs in the background. Smoke billows from the Scottish-commanded ships. Small figures appear engaged in ruthless battle along the opposite shore littered with fallen bodies. Darkly shaded skies give the cartoon an ominous feel. Although the cartoon is seemingly meant to lambast Bute, he is not in the foreground. The effect is that the Highlanders alone are the perpetrators of violence, as the title suggests.

This political cartoon presents a nuanced depiction of Highlanders demonstrating the divisions amongst the British government and loyalists. While engaged in this battle against a rebel foe, there is instability within the British government as well. One side, Bute and his Highlanders, engages in corrupt ways of pursuing victory for the crown, and the other pursues a civilized way, represented by the horrified British soldiers. Bute was the hated Scotsman and perpetrator of the Cider tax and the ousting of William Pitt. In using the Highlanders as his agents, they are reduced as actors in the British empire in a few ways. They had no control over the situation and, like mindless followers, do the bidding of those around them. This depiction reinforces the perception of the Highlanders as ruthless warriors, and the audience is taught to
fear them as the previously armed, well-trained English soldiers did. This fear of Highlanders undermines any progress of perception that was gained through Highlander loyalty and military involvement on behalf of the British prior to the Revolution. The cartoon also inherently aligns Highlanders with the corrupt factions of the British government, giving them no legitimate place even within the Loyalist community they have joined.

As Highlanders became aware of this antipathy toward their people, they would have sought refuge within their communities and within the familial and imperial bonds that had provided a safe space in recent years. Both new immigrants coming to the country and established families in America would have been exposed to this sentiment which would inform any decisions about who to support during the war.

Highlanders experienced instances of prejudice on an even larger scale than within the press. In the founding documents of the United States, colonist views of Highlanders reared their ugly heads. In its final copy, the United States' Declaration of Independence accused King George of "transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation, and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & Perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation."80 This revised version of the Declaration, did not denigrate the Scottish people, unlike earlier versions. In a letter to Robert Walsh in 1818, Jefferson reflected on one of the final drafts that went before the Congress stating, "there were two or three unlucky expressions in it which gave offence to some members. The words "Scotch and other foreign auxiliaries" excited the ire of a gentleman or two of that country."81 It is no wonder Scotchmen of the Congress took offense to

these lines. They equated Scottish-ness, and most likely Highlanders in particular, with ruthless killers who followed only money. That one of the educated leaders of the fledgling country could think of including such a line in a document declaring freedom and equality is telling, and Thomas Jefferson was not the only one. Upon hearing of the defeat of a Loyalist militia in North Carolina in 1776, George Washington wrote to Joseph Reed and referred to the Highland troops that made up the militia as "those universal instruments of tyranny, the Scotch." Again, the Scottish were tied to the negative rhetoric of monarchic rule. They are literally caricatured as the tools of a king, ready to do his bidding.

From ordinary citizens to the leaders of America, this negative perception of Scottish Highlanders in America is evident. Highlanders were aware of this sentiment and rebuked it. In a 1776 letter to Revolutionary General James Moore, Loyalist general Donald MacDonald wrote that his fellow Highlanders were, "not that deluded and ungrateful people which you would represent them to be." MacDonald spoke for both Highlanders and his Loyalist position with this statement. Highlanders were grateful to the king who had been a source of aid of which they were highly conscious. This colonial language and the Highlander awareness of it contributed to


82. As they were the only two members of Congress that were born in Scotland, Jefferson was most likely referring to John Witherspoon and James Wilson. Witherspoon, as an outspoken Patriot but newly arrived American, is the more likely candidate.


84. Quoted in Newton, "Jacobite Past, Loyalist Present," 32.
an othering of the Scottish immigrants that resulted in Highlanders turning to family and communities they knew, perpetuating cultural notions and hierarchies.\footnote{85. This sense of being an outsider in America is explored in James Corbett David's \textit{Dunmore's New World}. Lord Dunmore, governor of Virginia served as a page in the court of Bonnie Prince Charlie. He went on to serve the crown with devotion for the rest of his life, but had a hard time assimilating into American life at the outset of his time there.}

Other factors contributed to this cultural isolation as well. Highlanders did come from a different culture and social experience, which would have contributed to an internal sense of difference that was only compounded by more obvious differences. While the majority of Highlanders knew English, many primarily spoke Gaelic within their homes and communities. Especially within North Carolina where Highlander populations were the highest and most concentrated, the creation of Gaelic speaking Highland communities in America must have isolated these people from other established communities and prevented them from forming outside ties.\footnote{86. Meyer, 110.} As sure as Gaelic would have drawn Highlanders to each other, it also identified them to non-Gaelic speaking colonists as outsiders. Gaelic reinforced and made audible Highlanders as other and became a target of prejudice. Historian Geoffrey Plank wrote that, "While colonists were willing to accept Highlanders as bound laborers, the idea of receiving entire communities of Gaelic speakers generated fear."\footnote{87. Plank, 79.} Highlanders were viewed as a people that needed to be contained not only culturally but physically. Entire Gaelic communities presented a distinct threat because of the inaccessibility of the language to outsiders.

In addition to language, many Highland immigrants were either Catholic or Presbyterian. Catholic Highlanders would have received harsh treatment within any realm of the Anglican empire. Distrust of "Papists" had been prevalent in England and Scotland for some time, while
Presbyterianism had long been associated with loyalty to the king.\textsuperscript{88} Colonist perception of Highlanders and how that impacted the reality of Highlander life and society would certainly have affected what side of the war Highlanders would support. This othering of Highlanders within America created an environment where they could find refuge and comfort within their English heritage and ties to their homeland. Though such an outlook towards Highlanders was present in England as well as America, this prejudice born by those removed from the home of the history of this conflict would still have affected this newly arrived population. Feeling a sense of uniqueness from others, Highlanders could cling to their roots for comfort and identity.

A Sense of Affiliation: Highlander Imperial Opportunities in America

Highlander culture and immigrant reception in America, while undoubtedly contributing to their eventual loyalism during the American Revolution, were only a part of the equation that represented the Highland experience and identity. In addition to these influences, the opportunities of Highlanders as British imperial subjects in America under the English crown provided much of the impetus for Highlander loyalism. After the Jacobite Revolution, the British government recognized there was a Highlander problem that needed solving beyond the Jacobite defeat. A new idea of British nationality was necessary to incorporate the disparate peoples within British empire and to remove the threat of revolt not just in the Highlands, but in the outer reaches of the empire. Historian Linda Colley's work, *Britons: Fording the Nation 1707-1837*, described this now imperial perspective,

In Great Britain, the initial stimulus [towards nationalistic tendencies] was the shock administered by the Jacobite revolt. For an island power, accustomed for a century to fighting its battles at sea, abroad or at the very last on its own distant peripheries, it was profoundly unnerving that a hostile army, drawn from its own population, had been able to penetrate so close to its pampered centre. Particularly as the army in question had been small, badly equipped and composed largely of Highlanders, an essentially backward people in the eyes of Lowland Scottish, Welsh, and English loyalists.89

Scottish people in general and Highlanders specifically were now to be actively encouraged to consider themselves as British. The British undertook numerous efforts in order for that integration to occur.

The Jacobite Revolution and the subsequent reactions of the British government were a turning point for Highlanders and their place in the empire. The dismantling of the clan structure and the criminalization of Highlander traditions aimed to reduce Highland autonomy and

increase the British monopoly on the economy and use of force. In taking away these aspects of Highland life, however, the British supplied new ways for Highlanders to become a part of the larger British community. The most prominent were through military reforms. John Campbell, Earl of Loudon and leader of the Highland regiment against the Jacobites during the Rebellion, was instrumental in enacting these reforms. Seeking to establish a new legal order in the Highlands, Loudon formed strong ties with existing clans, seeking advice on who to appoint from local leaders. He also set up Highland companies to police the Highlands after the Jacobites' defeat. Though these companies were met with resistance by some, it created a tie economically and politically to the larger British Empire. Many of these reform tactics worked resulting in more conversions to Presbyterianism, a militarily secure land, tourism generated by a romanticized notion of Highland life, and leadership that adjusted to the new political reality. Efforts like these paved the way for more Highlanders to feel kinship to the crown and to be recruited to fight on behalf of the British in the Seven Years' War.

What brought a significant contingent of Highlanders to America was the established presence of men who had been sent there for the Seven Years' War and subsequently formed communities. The decision of British military leaders to recruit Highlanders for service in America was political. It continued the work of aligning Highlanders and clan leaders with the crown and capitalized on the militaristic traditions of the clans because the soldiers were enlisted

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91. Ibid., 55.
92. Ibid., 19.
93. Ibid., 125.
through patronage networks already established after the Jacobite Rebellion.\textsuperscript{94} With their presence in both the Americas and the Caribbean, Plank argues that the Highlanders became agents of empire, forming significant parts of the British forces sent to maintain order, to fight the French, and to suppress Native American insurrections.\textsuperscript{95} These contributions to British achievements would have located Highlander connections within the British framework that they now occupied.

In addition to military opportunities, economic opportunities through trade reached a level never seen before for most Highland merchants, especially in the Chesapeake region. Tobacco became a large source of revenue for Scots, both in Scotland and America. Partnerships between planters in Virginia and sellers in Scotland sprung up, with both dealing directly with representatives of the British.\textsuperscript{96} This partnership rooted the financial success of these merchants within British rule. When British rule was upset, it affected Scottish holdings and financial futures.\textsuperscript{97} Investment in trade and the economic sovereignty of the king was a necessary concern for many of the merchant class Highlanders. Especially for the lower levels of Highlander society that immigrated to America, the true enticement for support of England was the opportunity to own land.

Prior to the Forty-Five when the clan structure prevailed, the laird owned the land that he and his tenants occupied. Ordinary Highlanders merely worked and lived on that land, but never had the opportunity to own, since this privilege was reserved to the ruling clan leaders. In

\textsuperscript{94} Plank, 175.

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 175.


\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 27.
America, however, Highland immigrants pursued this previously unthinkable privilege of owning the land to which they devoted so much time and energy. Owning lands gave Highlanders a sense of security and a hope for prosperity for their families for present and future generations. This security and hope was a direct result of the way many Highlanders were forced to leave Scotland. As historian Michael Dziennik writes,

Rural Highlanders conceptualized North America as a land of liberty because it was associated with freedom from the arbitrary power of landowners [...] The deterioration of political and economic conditions in the Highlands led Gaels to understand liberty primarily in terms of the ownership of property.98

Whereas patriots pursued imagined liberties, Highlanders in America fought for liberty that they had within their grasp. The opportunities were present for Flora MacDonald and her family. Flora and Allen McDonald moved their family to America after falling on hard times in Scotland, and immediately acquired and settled into land and prosperity in America on their estate in Killegrey.99 Gaelic poets made note of the opportunities in America as well. Ian mac Fhearchair, or John MacCodrum, wrote the poem A Song to the People of the Western Isles Who left for the Carolinas likely after 1769, when the tacksman of one of the Highland estates bought 100,000 acres in South Carolina on which Highland immigrants could live.100 MacCondrum wrote of voyage to America as a trip

To the land of milk
To the land of honey
To the land in which you can buy
Land as you desire.

98. Dziennik, 347.


To the land without cruelty,
Without meanness of stint,
To where you can accumulate more
Than you will need all your lives.

It is the wise and manly soldier,
Who would flee with his life
When he saw its excellence
Rather than stay on these contested
grounds.\textsuperscript{101}

MacCondrum emphasizes the plenty, and the opportunities and comfort made possible through the ownership of land. Such abundance was theirs for the taking only in America, and only under the current government. Under British rule, Highlanders had finally reached a point of success and were loath to jeopardize that position. They took up arms to defend the government which allowed them to flourish. This loyalty is apparent when examining the reparations appeals sent by displaced or disadvantaged Loyalists in the wake of defeat.

One reparations appeal that sheds light on the Highlander experience is that of John McAlpine. John McAlpine was a native-born Highlander who immigrated to America in 1773. From the outset of the war, he was a devoted Loyalist, but like many others, he suffered for his support. Submission of claims to the British government for reparations was common among Loyalists following the war. This typically included a short narrative explaining a family's holdings along with an amount request or list of lost property. John McAlpine went above and beyond this construct when he wrote his 68-page account of his service to the British, including a three-page itemized list of property lost.\textsuperscript{102} McAlpine was a colorful writer who unabashedly

\textsuperscript{101} MacCodrum, 92.

\textsuperscript{102} John McAlpine, \textit{Genuine Narratives and Concise Memoirs of Some of the Most Interesting Exploits and Singular Adventures of J. M'Alpine, a Native Highlander: From the Time of His Emigration from Scotland to America, 1773 ... till December, 1779, to Complain of His Neglected Services, and Humbly to Request Government for Reparation of His Losses in the Royal Cause} (Greenock: Printed and Sold by W. M'Alpine, Bookseller, at his shop, Catheart Street, 1780), 3-4.
extolled his contributions to the British. In the first ten pages of the narrative, he described being abducted five times by rebel mobs for no other reason than "the well-grounded persuasions of my being a determined friend to the British Legislature, and an avowed enemy to their American independence." This undoubtedly would have given McAlpine a sense of exclusion from his community as well. McAlpine wrote of repeated setbacks through an unflagging loyalty to the king, but that loyalty is very clearly motivated by one thing: his ownership of land and property.

McAlpine went to great lengths to describe how dedicated he was to the British cause. From having to send his family away to safety in Canada because he was serving in the army, to contributing countless supplies with no mention of the cost to himself, McAlpine paints a picture of the devoted servant who asks for nothing in return. He cloaks his time with the army in repeated assertions of loyalty, that he would "cheerfully contribute my utmost power of exertion for his Majesty's service" and set "aside all view to my own interest and concerns at home, sacrificing these and my personal safety to his Majesty's important urgent services." One of his bolder statements lauds his devotion to the king in the face of rebel temptation and opportunity. He writes,

[...] were I inclined to connect myself with the rebel Americans, I had many favourable opportunities and interesting offers before that day, and was quite certain they would still give me a welcome reception; but my principles were as loyal, and my heart as true to my gracious Sovereign and his cause, as any other man in the British service [...]
His words fall easily on the ears of a clerk who would be granting any reparation funds, so McAlpine had reason to embellish his loyalist tendencies. However, McAlpine does not mask his true reasons for staying loyal to the British. More than devotion to the crown, McAlpine explicitly states that his "sacrifice" for the king was done "having always a view of reward—public or private—suitable to my deserts and endeavours, namely, handsome pay to myself and suitable provision made for supporting my family in my absence, and finally, securing me and my successors in perpetual property of some valuable portion of crown lands." Just as he witnessed land given to those who had fought valiantly in the Seven Years War, McAlpine expected the same reward for his own loyalty. Land in America meant "securing" his family, land meant becoming a man of wealth and means. He was a loyal subject, but subjects remain loyal because opportunity is certain and futures seem secure.

Security as an impetus for loyalty was never more evident than with Captain Alexander McDonald. Alexander McDonald was born in the Scottish Highlands. In contrast to many of the Highlanders encountered thus far, McDonald was neither neutral nor a Jacobite during the rebellion. McDonald received his first commission with the British army to join the Earl of Loudon's Loyal Highlanders regiment in 1745. From the outset, he remained loyal to the Hanoverian crown, and so his motivations for loyalty during the American Revolution were less opaque than other Highlanders who emigrated. McDonald's involvement in the army as a Highlander provides insight into the position one could occupy within the British Empire. After the Rebellion was quashed, McDonald toured the world in service to the crown in Montgomery's

107. McAlpine, 22.

108. Alexander's last name enjoys a number of iterations similar to that of Flora MacDonald. They include MacDonald and M'Donald. I have chose to use the McDonald spelling since this is how his name appears in his letter book and distinguishes between Flora and her husband in this thesis.
77th Regiment of Foot. He ventured to America, Dominica, Martinique, and Havana to battle the power of New France. McDonald and his regiment came back to North America to quiet a rising of Native Americans in Pennsylvania. When combat finally ended, the British disbanded McDonald's regiment and let him go in 1763.

Despite having the ability to return to his Highland home, McDonald chose to remain in America to enjoy the spoils of the wars that he had helped to win. He married into a prosperous family and settled into farm life on Staten Island in New York. Because Highland communities were well-established, McDonald maintained his Highland contacts after the wars, especially those who emigrated to the Highland community in the Mohawk Valley area led by Sir William Johnson. McDonald communicated with his kinsmen in North Carolina as well, notably Allen MacDonald, Flora's husband. McDonald was a member of an extensive Highland network in America that allowed him to establish a place in this new society.

However, McDonald's peaceful time in New York was short-lived. With Revolution imminently approaching, Alexander McDonald did much more than merely sign up for military duty. He had already dedicated more than his fair share of his life to the British with over twenty years of military service, and still he went above and beyond the call of action when he set out in 1774 to recruit settlers in the Mohawk Valley for the loyalist cause. He proposed to General Gage a regiment of American Highlanders who would serve the crown to great effect. In the description of the men he sought, McDonald explicitly demonstrated a new cultural phenomenon. While Highlanders, wherever they were, retained the influence of their mother country, they found a home in America as active agents for the British government.109

Once he had one hundred men enlisted in his regiment, McDonald traveled to Boston to be officially subsumed within the British army. Though army leaders initially declined

109. Plank, 175.
McDonald's suggestion, he continued to make recruitment proposals for up to 500 Highland men in secret. Eventually, McDonald received news from the army "to Collect all the Highlanders who had Emigrated to America Into one place and to give every man two hundred Acres of Land and if need required to give Arms to as many men as were Capable of bearing them for His Majestys Service."¹¹⁰ Like the opportunities provided to soldiers during the Seven Years' War, involvement in the American Revolution promised to reward young Highland men as well. The ability of the British government to offer such compensation and the promise of land would have tapped into the hopeful dreams of better life in America for many Highlanders.

McDonald and his regiment remained in Boston until they fled to Halifax with General Howe in 1776 to Halifax. From here, McDonald began a correspondence with his acquaintances across the colonies, including Major John Small, his cousin Allen MacDonald, General Gage, and many others. These letters are contained in the Letter-Book of Captain Alexander McDonald, of the Royal Highland Emigrant, 1775-1779 published by the New York Historical Society in 1883. This account, presents a detailed, albeit one-sided, description of the inner workings of a British army regiment and the captain leading them. McDonald encountered great hardship just to feed and clothe his regiment, saying to General Massey in December of 1775, "I think its my duty to inform you of the state of our men, we are without Cloathing of any kind, nor Necessaries no Knapsacks, no haversacks, shirts, shoes, stockings, in short every thing that a Soldier ought to have, except the rags they had on when they inListed."¹¹¹ Captain MacDonald bore this hardship along with the Highland men he enlisted.

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¹¹¹ Ibid., 228.
In cold weather and ill-equipped, McDonald not only retained his regiment but continued to gain additional recruits. He did so even whilst begrudging the army his continued captaincy rank. A recurrent theme throughout his letters is a description of McDonald's military service and his disappointment that he remained only a captain to many of his superiors.\textsuperscript{112} He sees man after man promoted above him, while he remains a lowly captain after 30 years of service. Writing to General Howe in October of 1775, McDonald gave a vivid account punctuating the extent of his service writing, "I have Served My King & country now going on thirty one Years and have been in the most active Services during the Last war both on the Continent of America and in the west indies and was Severely wounded."\textsuperscript{113} When a Major Dunbar who served less time than McDonald was promoted, he wrote to Howe, "I think it hard that he should now be put over my head after all my Services, and the trouble I have taken from first to Last about this Regiment. I am now going on to fifty Years of Age and if my Loyalty and Long Services are to be rewarded In this Manner I have but a poor chance of dying a field officer."\textsuperscript{114} He may have been the oldest captain in the regiment, an indication that he was not promoted when possible, but he remained steadfast to the cause. What motivated him was his connection to the larger goals of the war. McDonald writes that, "I wish to god a Mode of reconciliation between Great Britain & her Colonies consistent with the dignity and Grandeur of Great Britain as well as the intrest and happiness of America."\textsuperscript{115} McDonald recognized the importance of the British Empire and invested in the dignity he believes it was due. He also recognized America's place within that

\textsuperscript{112} McDonald, 223.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 223.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 225.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 217.
empire, and he was invested in its future. As someone with land and family situated in the colonies, Great Britain's success meant success for America and himself in turn.

At this point, McDonald could appear merely to be a fully integrated British citizen. Aligning Highlanders seamlessly with the British to explain their loyalism, however, is an outmoded approach. Michael Dziennik argues that this "generalized interpretation" renders Highlanders "falsely understood as a dispossessed minority" who become "uniform and simplistic characters" unaware of their social and ideological surroundings.116 McDonald, an engaged and thoughtful man defies such a characterization. He retained his Highland roots, that continuity of community, but within a larger British context. He called on Highland connections to form his regiment and continued social correspondence with Highlanders throughout the colonies during the tumultuous war. He was invested in the perception of Highlanders as a reflection of himself, which is evident in his exchange with two disorderly Highland recruits. McDonald describes Sergeants SinClair and McArthur as the most "unruly drunken rascals I have in the whole recruits."117 The two men engaged in a fight and were confined by the military personnel for their behavior. As punishment for the altercation, some leaders demanded a court martial and corporal punishment. McDonald hurried to promote peace and reconciliation between the men because of how it would make them appear to the larger army audience. Two Highlanders without the ability to restrain themselves from an altercation came too close to the perception of Highlander barbaric ways. Speaking to the two, he says, "what A pretty figure two highland Serjeants would shew to all the rascals in this place stripped at the whipping post after

117. McDonald, 220.
being broke. McDonald explicitly highlighted their Highland identity and exhorted them to represent it well. He encouraged the men to settle the matter between themselves without such public measures, which the men did. MacDonald provides an example of the Highlander who has maintained the vestiges of Highland community and life, but is made new as a loyal British subject through the opportunities in America.

This loyalty through opportunity appeared in other Highland immigrants as well. Alexander McGillivray, a leader within the Creek nation and the son of a Highland indentured servant, became a fruitful ally with the British. He served as the go-between for the British with the Native American tribes of the American South, because the crown could "protect Creek dependence against encroaching colonists and provide economic opportunities to ambitious Scotsmen." Such was the case for the ambitious leader of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, as well. Dunmore was a Highlander whose family had sided with the Jacobites in the Forty Five, but had smoothly transitioned into the king's good graces in the years after. Dunmore moved throughout the colonies from New York to Virginia to the Bahamas during the Revolution acting on behalf of the king. In somewhat dubiously attempting to claim land grants for himself, Dunmore applied to the king saying that he asked only "to provide something for my younger children." Even after the war was lost, Dunmore attempted to regain British strength in the American South by allying with McGillivray and the Indians to oust the Spanish in an effort to gain the land and

118. Ibid., 220.


prosperity he thought was possible under the crown. Ultimately, the actions of these men were futile and their dreams of land security shattered.

Though not all Highland dreams were made possible in America, the economic opportunities available in America to a loyal Highlander British subject existed. The success Highlanders found in America was as a direct result of many of the institutions and policies put in place by the British government, institutions like the military, with which many Highlanders became wholly intertwined. To join the patriots and support the downfall of the empire in which they had finally found success jeopardized all that Highlanders had worked to establish in this new land. From Gaelic poetry and to the experiences of John McAlpine and Alexander MacDonald, it is evident that Highlanders valued their new place in the empire and the opportunities it afforded them. In inhabiting a tangible place for Highlanders to occupy British society in a meaningful way, Highlanders cultivated not only an affiliation to the monarchy, but loyalty to it.

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121. Ibid., 167-169.
Conclusion

Despite a long history of confrontation with the British crown and the virtual extinction of Highland clan life, Highlanders supported the British government as Loyalists in the American Revolution. This was not the result of ignorance, of an inability to embrace change, or of purely economics. It was not as passive actors accepting a fate handed to them. Highlanders in America made conscious decisions that brought them to America and actively situated themselves into life in America. Throughout this process, over the course of many years, Highlanders managed to maintain vestiges of their strong culture, one that relied heavily upon a hierarchical structure and powerful leader. The maintenance of this community and culture, along with perpetuated prejudices from England itself, often led Highlanders to experience that prejudice in the day to day life. This, however, served to make communities stronger and to encourage them to rely on established loyalties and relationships. These communities flourished in America as a result of the economic opportunities made available to Highlanders by the British government. From land grants to military contributions, Highlanders finally secured a firm place of the own in British society. Working from the conception of identity as a sense of continuity, a sense of uniqueness, and a sense of affiliation, this lived Highland experience, when considered altogether, represent the formation of a new, Highland-American identity for Highlanders in America.

Each component of this identity is intertwined with notions of loyalty to the British government, both newly imagined and carried down through tradition. This identity was forged through actions of Highlanders made within the British imperial context within which they lived. That is not to say that their actions were taken with an eye towards fashioning this identity, but their actions within the context of their environment led to its formation. This identity allowed
Highlanders to establish a distinct community with the ability to prosper. It provided Highlanders with a motivation for loyalism that encapsulates a broader view of their American experiences and gives them power as a realized people.

Where Highlander clan structure and American sentiment towards the Scottish provided personal reasons for loyalism, opportunities to British subjects to secure land and trade anchored that loyalism to America. These opportunities provided a new path for Highlanders in a new world. The influences considered here provide only a small part of the complex narrative of Highlanders in America. Working from sources available through online archives, this thesis does not include the voices of those unpublished. It also only touches upon the vast subjects related to the larger Highland experience of class, religion, and gender. Further study of a variety of sources, including cultural works like Gaelic poetry, is necessary to provide a more complete picture that this thesis only begins to sketch out.

Though Loyalism was ultimately the route taken by the majority of Scottish Highlanders during the revolution and that Loyalism was justified, it was not undertaken quickly or lightly. Highlanders displayed both patriot and loyalist tendencies in the early days of the war. Some even joined the patriot effort. Torn between affinity towards their crown and the promise of a world with promised freedoms and opportunities, Highlanders weighed their options carefully. The identification of a new Highland-American identity provides a motivation for the loyalism Highlanders exhibited that acknowledges Highlanders as the actors in history that they were. The decision to participate in Loyalist activity was not an ignorant one or one they blindly took. It was motivated by an identity with a sense of devotion to the king that found its roots in the clan structure, a sense of uniqueness that bound communities together, and a sense of belonging within the British empire inspired by opportunities. These factors helped to cultivate a new
Scottish identity in a new place in British society, one that they fought to protect as Loyalists in the American Revolution.
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