

LOYALISTS

The Settlement of the
Eastern Townships by the
Loyalists: Myth or Reality?

Documentary Record
For Highschool



Techniques for the Analysis of Primary Sources

Primary and Secondary Sources

- / Primary sources are any document that was created at the time that an event occurred. For example, diaries, letters, photographs, interviews, newspapers or memoirs are considered primary sources. The archives housed at the Eastern Townships Resource Centre are primary sources.
- / Secondary sources are any document that was created after the primary sources. For example: history manuals, history books, historical texts, biographies, movies that relate historical events are all secondary sources. Several secondary sources have been added to the documentary records.

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Fact:

Verifiable information

Opinion:

Personal point of view, often arbitrary and volatile

Critical Analysis of Primary Sources

Step 1: Read (Observe and identify important information):

- / Who? What? When? Where?

Step 2: Interrogate the document:

- / External analysis (bearing on the context in which the document was produced)

// *With regards to the author (origins, intentions, religion, sex, etc.) and the source.*

// *Questions that must be answered:*

/// *Who is the author? Is the author an actor in the events that occurred, or merely a witness to them?*

/// *To whom was this document destined? Why was it written?*

/// *What are the origins of this document? Where does it come from? When was it produced?*

/// *Is this document an original document or a translation?*

/// *Does this document contain only an excerpt of the original document, or it is a reproduction of the original in its entirety?*

- / Internal Analysis (bearing on the content of the document)

// *Questions that must be answered:*

/// *What are the main themes discussed within this document? What is the main message?*

/// *Is the content of the document plausible? Does it correspond to what we already know about this period and its context?*

/// *Does the document offer facts or opinions?*

Step 3: Interpretation

- / Give meaning to the content of the text and to the themes that you have identified:

// *What do you think was the purpose of this document and of the message it contains? What questions does it answer? To what other documents is it related?*

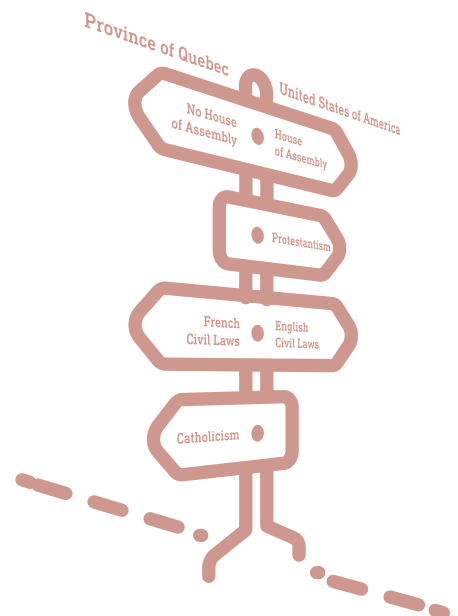
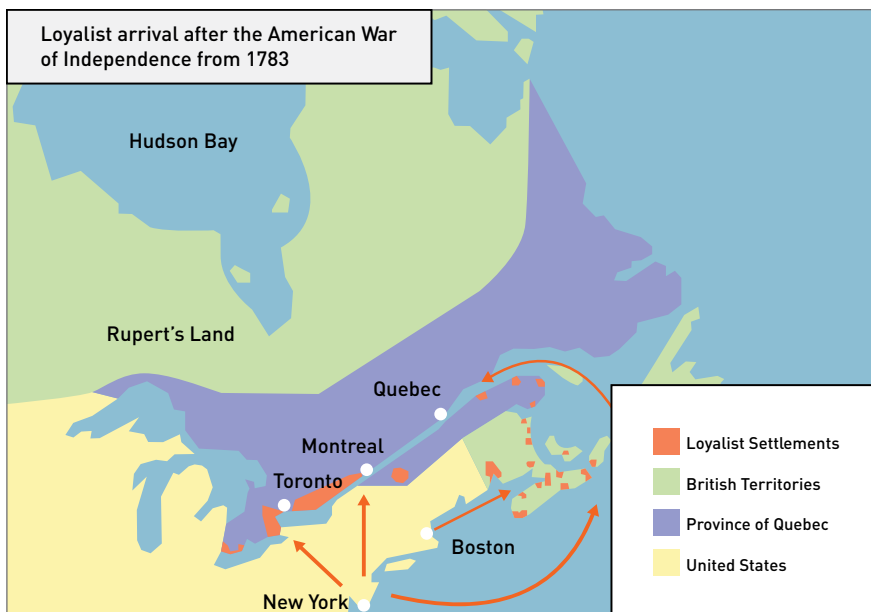
ACTIVITY 1

The Loyalists

The Death of General Montgomery in the Attack on Quebec, December 31, 1775



John Trumbull / Wikimedia Commons / Creative Commons (by-nc-sa)



ACTIVITY 2

Loyalists or Yankees?

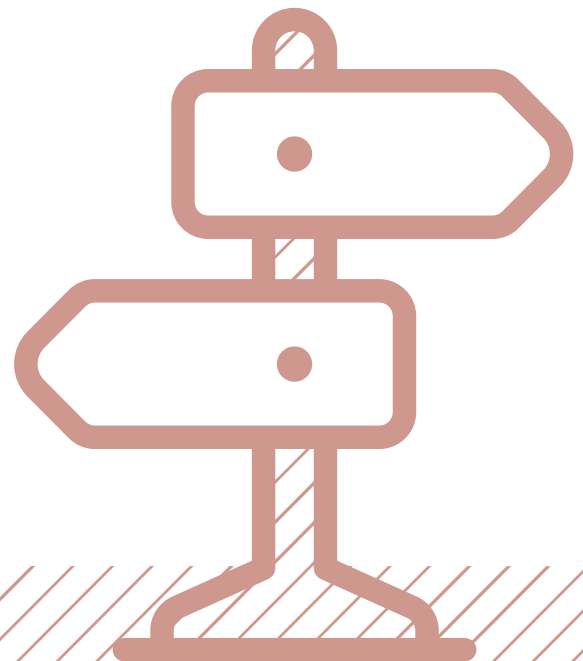
The Eastern Townships are known to have been settled by Loyalists of American origin. Is this really the case? Is this a myth or reality? What role did these individuals really play in Eastern Townships history? Were they really Loyalists or simple Yankees?

During the American Revolution, several volunteer combatants fought for the forces that remained loyal to the British Crown. When the treaty that effectively ended the War of Independence was signed in 1783, certain Loyalist refugees emigrated to the Upper Richelieu Valley, at the heart of the unoccupied seigneuries of Noyan, Foucault and St. Armand. These lands were good for clearing and their geographic location was a great asset for commerce with the United States. Roughly one hundred Loyalist families (for a total of 500-600 inhabitants) settled these lands illegally, as the governor of Lower-Canada was unwilling to cede them.

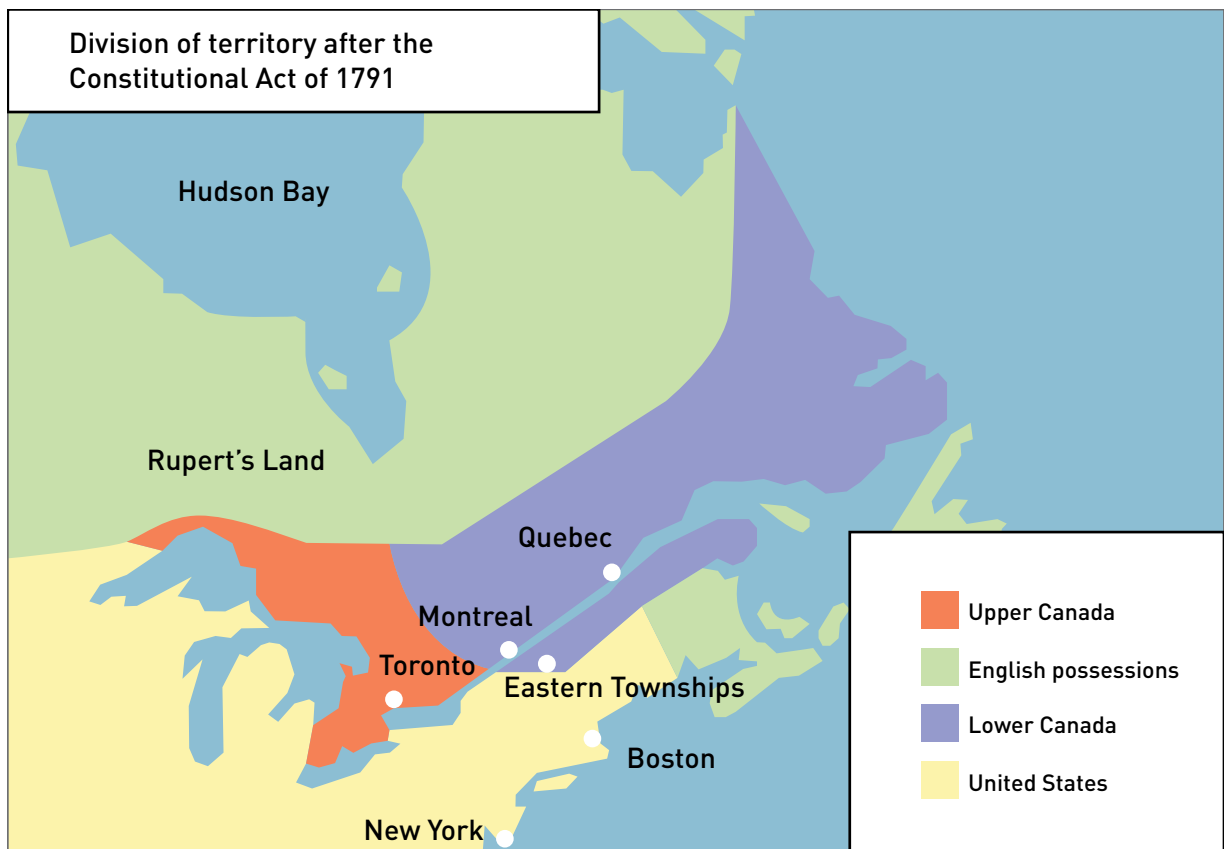
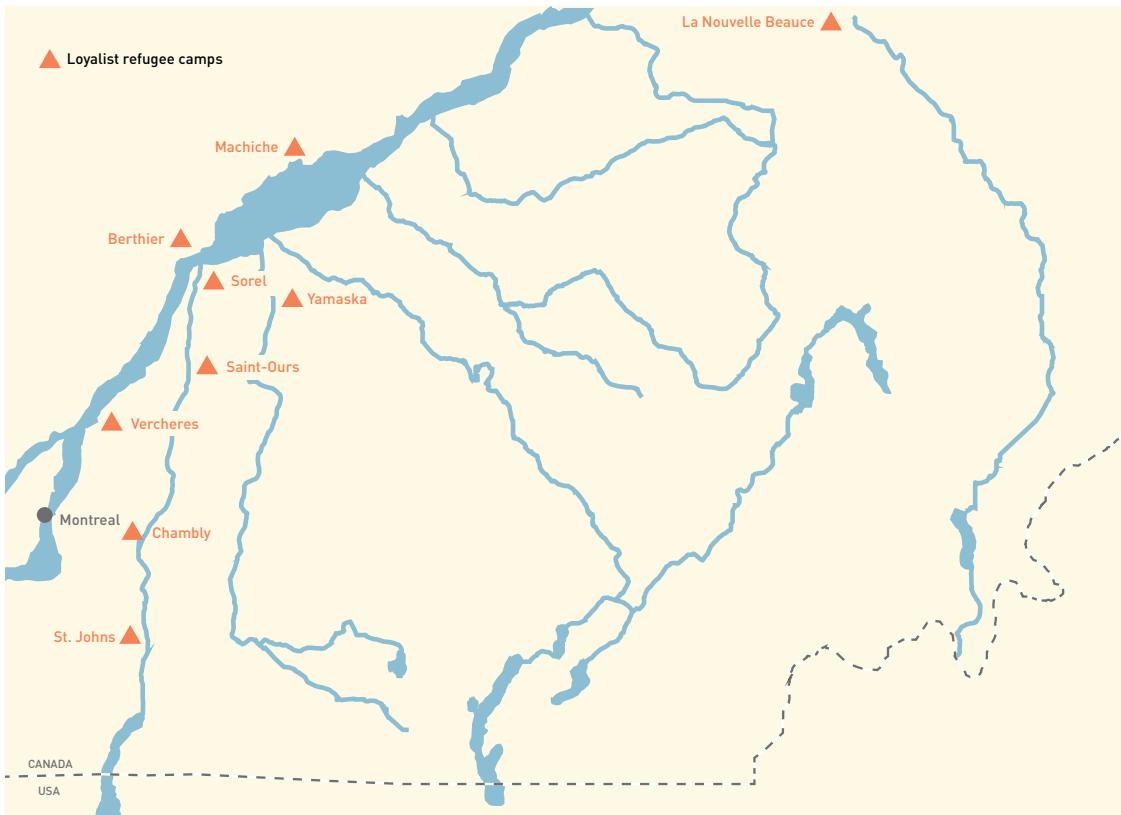
In 1791, these families are given new hope. The Constitutional Act stipulates that Crown lands can be ceded according to the township model. The province is subsequently divided in two: Upper and Lower-Canada. Lands in Upper-Canada are set aside for Loyalists so that they may live in accordance with their laws and their religion. From this moment on, Loyalists have the right to formally request Crown lands. In order to be entitled to land, an individual must demonstrate that he has suffered losses as a result of his loyalty to the British Crown. Moreover, he must pledge allegiance to the Crown and promise to settle the lands and establish a mill and build roads at his own expense.

In spite of the conditions outlined in the Constitutional Act, obtaining land in Lower-Canada is not so simple. General Haldimand, Governor of Lower-Canada, was reluctant to cede Crown lands to Loyalists. The State of Vermont was not yet part of the United States, and the governor wished to keep the Eastern Townships region as a buffer zone between Lower-Canada and the United States. Consequently, several American who had immigrated from New England illegally settled lands in the Eastern Townships region. Others, nicknamed Yankees by the British, would go on to pretend that they were Loyalists only to have the right to request land. As border control did not yet exist at the time, some Americans arrived in the area without even knowing that they were in Canada, noting only the abundance of lands that were good for clearing. Between 1792 and 1812, some twenty thousand individuals crossed the border and arrived in the Eastern Townships. How many of these were really Loyalists?

Yankee: A Yankee is a native or inhabitant of the United States. For the Americans, a Yankee is an inhabitant of New England, a region that corresponds to the following American states: Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

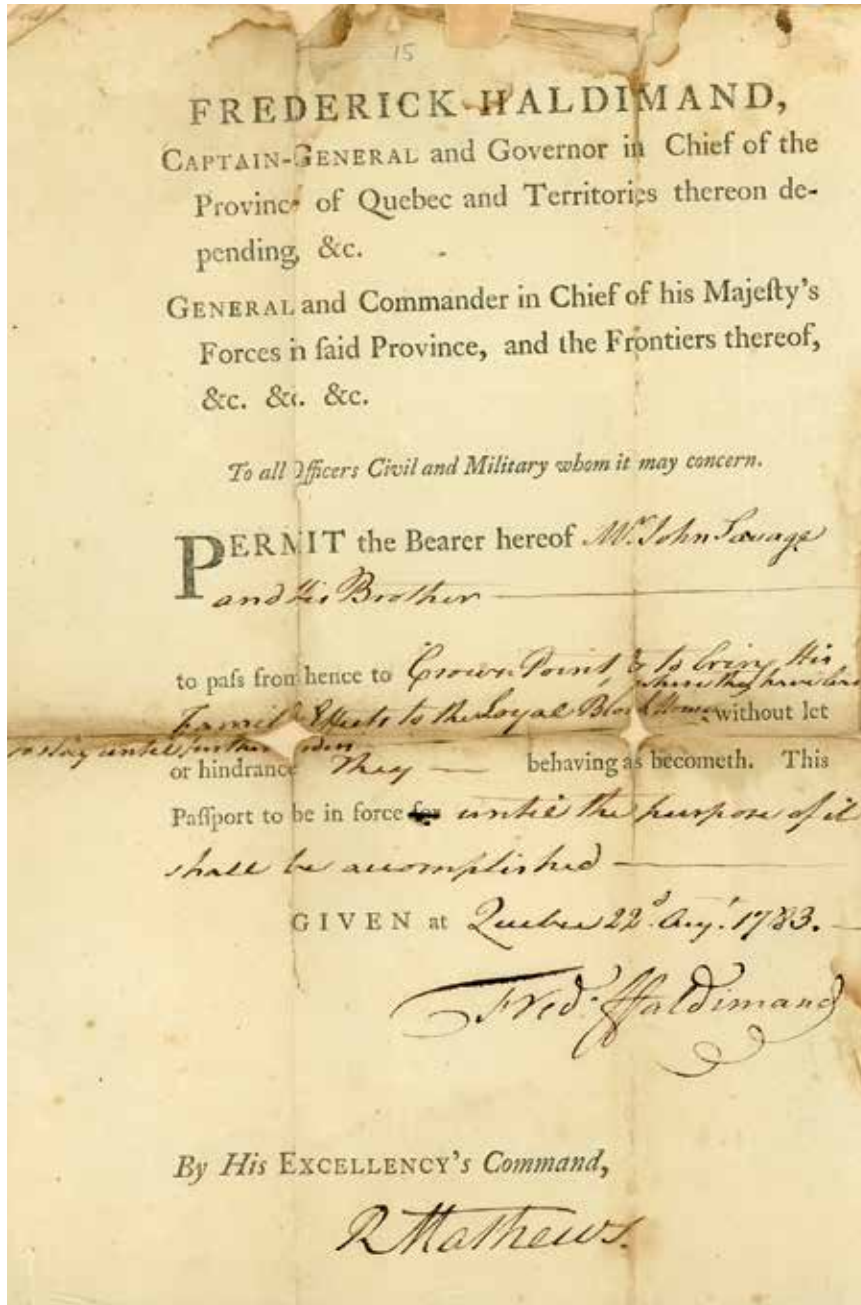


Loyalist Refugee Camps Close to the Eastern Townships



ACTIVITY 3

Letter From Governor Frederick Haldimand

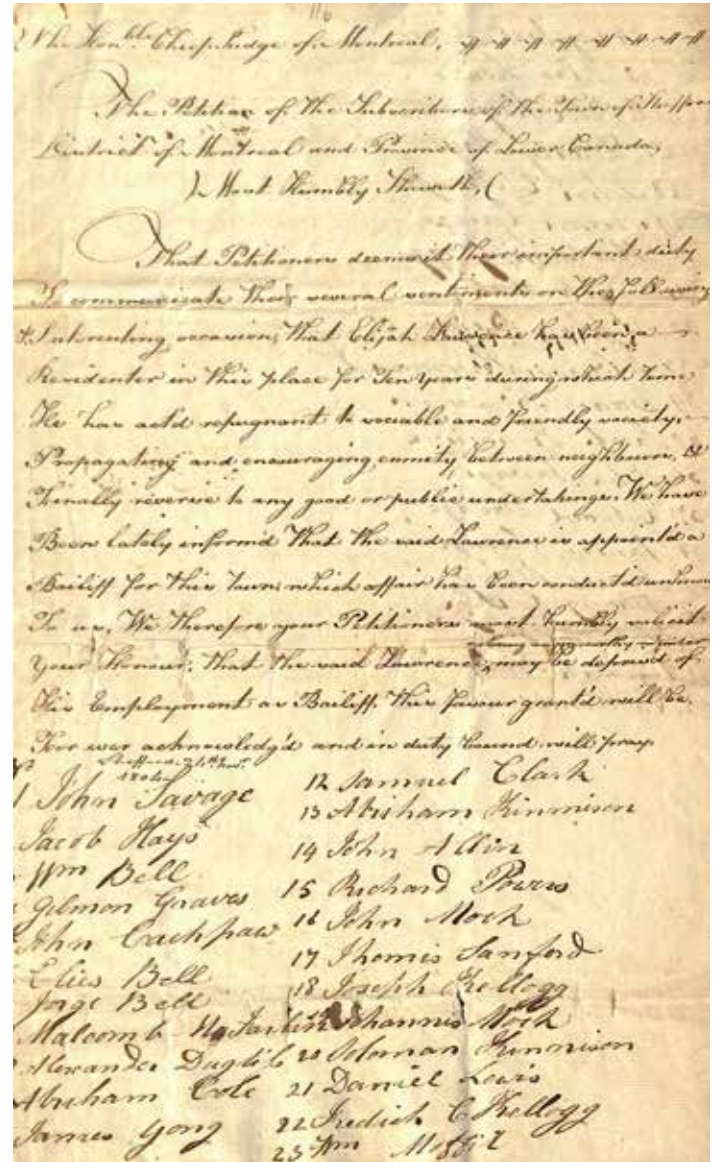
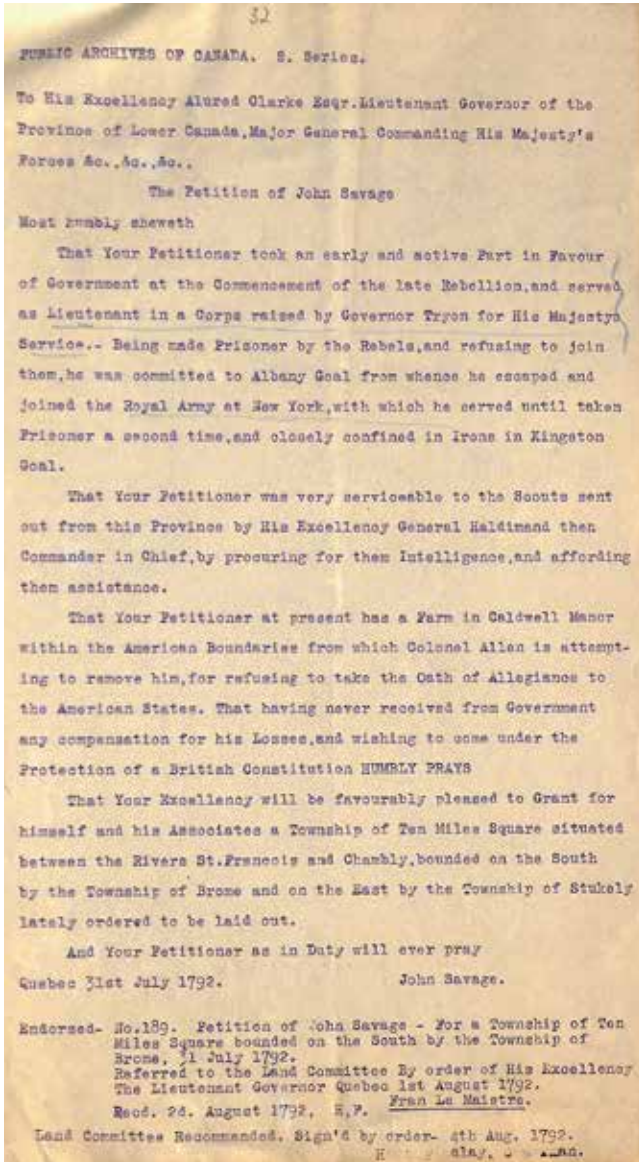


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Permission given to John Savage and to his brothers to pass through *Crown Point* and to bring their families and belongings to the *local block house* unheeded.

The *local block house* was a military refugee camp located in St. John's

Petition submitted by John Savage and Associates to Obtain the Right to Settle Land in the Shefford Township



Eastern Townships Resource Centre / John Savage fonds / P028-002_032 & P028-003_116

"That your petitioner took an early and active part in favor of Government at the Commencement of the late Rebellion"

"Being made prisoner by the Rebels"

"That having never received from Government any compensation for this Losses, and wishing to come under the Protection of a British Constitution Humbly PRAYS"

"That your Excellency will be favorably pleased to Grant for himself and his Associates a Township of ten miles square situated between the Rivers St. Francois and Chambly, bounded on the South by the Township of Brome and on the East by the Township of Stukely"

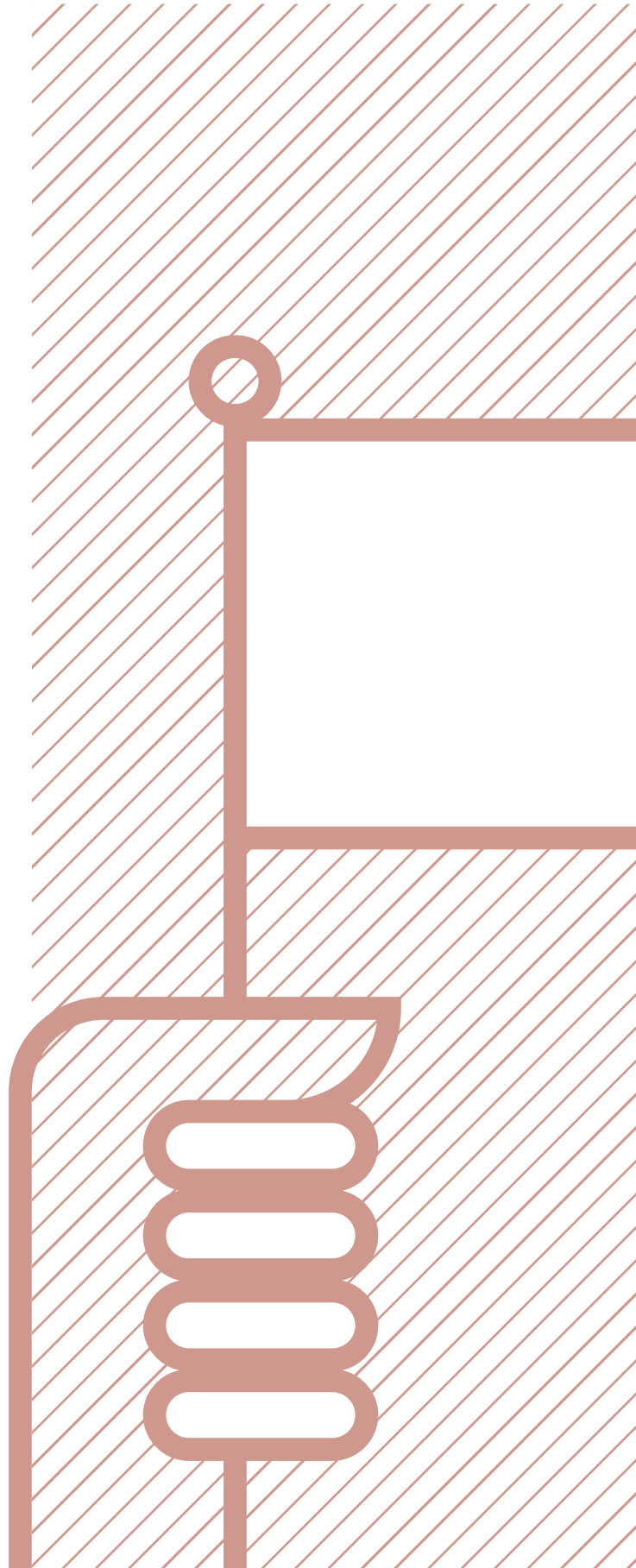
A Sketch of the Life of Captain John Savage: Excerpt

This text was published in 1921 in commemoration of the one hundredth anniversary of St. John's Church in Shefford.

"Captain Savage was obliged, hurriedly, one night in early winter 1792 to leave his farm in that part of Caldwell Manor, which was newly claimed by the Americans and make his way to Shefford with his family on a ox sled, in order to be within British lines and safety. Necessity compelled him to locate in Shefford before the Letters Patent were issued. Thus it occurred that he and his family were the only white people isolated and alone that first winter in the unbroken forests of Shefford".

"Beside the stream near the village of West Shefford may be seen a pile of stones that marks the spot where he built the "Dutch" back of his first cabin made of rough logs with a roof of hemlock bark".

"Captain Savage brought with him thirty head of cattle, but on account of the intense cold and lack of fodder all died except three. The story of that first dreadful winter was repeated about the fireside for many years. It is a pity that no written record was kept" (p. 8).



ACTIVITY 4

Loyalists John Savage and Gilbert Hyatt: Two Pioneers Who Contributed to the Settlement of the Eastern Townships

John Savage

During the American Revolution, John Savage was a volunteer fighter with the Loyalist forces. Captured during the conflict, he was released in 1783 and obliged to emigrate to Canada. He went on to settle at Caldwell's Manor (Noyan) after a stay in a military refugee camps in St. John's. Loyalist refugees who had settled at Caldwell's Manor (Noyan) were subject to pressure to vacate the land because they refused to pledge allegiance to the United States and because this territory was claimed by inhabitants of Vermont who wished to join the American federation.

With the Constitutional Act of 1791, Loyalist obtained the right to formally request Crown lands. Before even having obtained authorization from the Crown, John Savage left Caldwell's Manor in 1792 and headed towards West Shefford. He would only officially be given the charter to the Shefford Township by Lower-Canada's Lieutenant-Governor in 1801. However, during the years in which these lands had not yet been ceded, Savage travelled the territory and built roads.

The first years were very difficult. During the first winter, Savage lost nearly all of his livestock. During the pioneer years, several dangers awaited families who attempted to settle the Shefford Township. On top of flies and mosquitos, several problems were caused by wolves and bears that were also present on this territory. Before 1810, the Shefford Township was settled mainly by Loyalist farmers. After 1810, however, several Americans crossed the border to settle in the township, and henceforth the proportion of Loyalists and their descendants in the region went steadily down. During the War of 1812 that opposed Great Britain to the United States, more than 4 000 Americans returned to the United States.

Gilbert Hyatt

In 1783, Gilbert Hyatt left the United States to settle own on the banks of the Mississquoi Bay. Several petitions were sent to Governor Haldimand of the Province of Quebec requesting Crown lands. Because he did not wish to allow Americans to settle near the province's border, Haldimand turned down these petitions. Instead, the governor ordered the Hyatt family to turn towards Sorel, Saint Jean or Quinte Bay, and forbade them to stay at Missisquoi Bay. Gilbert Hyatt, his family and several associates left the region and headed for the Ascot Township.

Even though he had not acquired the rights to any land, Gilbert Hyatt, along with his wife and ten children, headed 40 miles through the forest to the Ascot Township. With 204 associates by his side, Hyatt formally requested ownership of the lands of Ascot Township. Located at the intersection of the Magog and St-Francis Rivers, the network of waterways was favourable to the presence of a mill and to the development of a village. After significant investments in the development and roads and in the construction of a mill, Hyatt's requests for land were turned down by the governor.

After several years, part of the Ascot Township was finally ceded to Gilbert Hyatt and to 30 of his associates. The numerous refusals that they had encountered caused the original number of associates to decrease. Moreover, the portion of lands ceded to Hyatt was considerably less than what he had originally requested. In spite of this, Hyatt continued to work in order to develop his lots. Businesses were created, and Hyatt's Mill, later to become Sherbrooke, was created in 1818.

Loyalists Heading Towards Upper Canada



Image of Loyalists travelling to a township / ANC, C.W. Jefferies, The Picture Gallery of Canada, vol II, p. 23

Loyalist Encampment, 1784



Image of Loyalists travelling to a township / ANC, C.W. Jefferies, The Picture Gallery of Canada, vol II, p. 23



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