

The Loyalist Program

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IT is a particular pleasure to report on the progress of the Program For Loyalist Studies and Publications, since the Antiquarian Society is one of the four international sponsors. This report should give encouragement to all who believe the Program to be a worthwhile activity for the Society, particularly in view of the approaching Bicentennial celebration of our American Revolution.

The origins of the project may be traced back to the prospectus issued by James E. Mooney, AAS Editor of Publications, and me in April 1968, and printed through the interest and generosity of one of our fellow members, Alden Johnson of Barre Publishers. This prospectus (or broadside, as Isaiah Thomas might have called it) outlined some of the philosophy of the undertaking.

As it stated, 'Historical scholarship increasingly and dramatically emphasizes the complex character of the years between 1760 and 1783, and even the modern letterpress editions of the papers of American Whig leaders point up the need for further documentation in support of the Loyalist case'; and that while the American Revolution 'was admittedly no cataclysmic French Revolution it would be folly to deny its great contribution to the shaping of the modern world. The nationalism it fostered continues its way unmolested in the twentieth century and a broader look at the problem in its eighteenth-century context would do Americans some good on the philosophical side, at least.'

Together with the help of the American Council of Learned Societies, and in particular of its Executive Associate, Thomas J. Condon, an international meeting of about two dozen distinguished scholars, archivists, and administrators was held at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York in November 1968. Interest in the Program grew, but did not result in immediate support. Happily in July 1970, following an earlier interview by Messrs. Condon, Mooney, and me in Washington, D.C., we heard from the National Endowment for the Humanities of its support, of about half of the original request. Thus what we have been able to accomplish to date has been due directly to financial assistance from Washington, D.C.—assistance, be it noted, from an agency of a government which was itself created by the American Revolution. I can think of no finer tribute to that government.

The keen interest of scholars may be seen in the names of the distinguished members of our United States Advisory Committee (who met in this very room together with Mr. McCorison just eight months ago), a roster of names still intact save for the recent death of Lawrence Gipson. This interest was also evident in the well-attended session on the Loyalists of the American Revolution which I chaired two years ago at a convention of the American Historical Association. Of the two distinguished papers given there, one was by Wallace Brown of the University of New Brunswick, 'The View at Two Hundred Years' (subsequently published in our *Proceedings*), the other was by Mr. Mooney, 'The Prospects for Historical Redress, the Loyalist Papers.' Commentators included Clifford K. Shipton, Director-Emeritus of this Society, and Professor Esmond Wright of the University of London, then a member of the House of Commons.

Our activities include the development of finding-guides for the location of Loyalist materials both here and abroad, securing microfilm of these records, and publishing highly selected portions in letterpress. We have been largely concerned

up to now with the first of these activities, i.e. the development of finding-guides. Loyalist Research Report cards have been employed by sixteen researchers in this country and in England, very similar to the cards being used in Canada, where the Project is being financed by the Canada Council (with Program headquarters at the University of New Brunswick). Thousands of research cards have been received here at the Antiquarian Society, where they are xeroxed and sent to me for study, either in Ogunquit, Maine, where I summer and have an office, or at my office on West 42nd Street in New York City at the Graduate Center of the City University.

These cards give the rough material which has been gathered by a host of researchers from Maine to Florida, from a researcher in the Public Record Office in London, under the direction of Professor Wright, and from staff members who are doing our survey work at the Clements and Huntington Libraries, in Michigan and California, respectively.

Perhaps the most important single operation in 1971 was the six-week Western trip undertaken by Mr. Mooney beginning last June. He visited repositories and archives from Ohio to Washington, and in California, Utah, Iowa, Illinois, Kentucky, and points along the way, and made supervisory check-ups in Ann Arbor and San Marino. In addition to his earlier trips last year to Fredericton, New Brunswick, and to London, England, this recent trip has given Mr. Mooney a remarkable grasp of the problems involved in this giant undertaking.

I should like to close on that word, 'giant.' You understand that this is an undertaking involving the story of tens of thousands of Americans. If we can even come close to the editorial standards set in recent years by editors of the papers of individual Whig leaders in the American Revolution, we shall have reason to be proud, indeed.

It is also well to remember that this enterprise encompasses the history of our friends to the north and of those across the

Atlantic. It is all too frequently forgotten that much of English-speaking Canada was in origin an off-shoot of the American Revolution, and that much of the history of our Revolution is likewise an unhappy page in the history of the United Kingdom.

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