

Loyalist, Patriot, Neutral

- 1 It is impossible to know the exact number of American colonists who favored and wanted independence from the British and those who opposed, or were against independence from the British.
- 2 For years people believed that one third of the people wanted the Revolution (Patriots), one third opposed it, (loyalists) and one third were undecided (Neutral). However, that was difficult to measure.
- 3 Recent studies show that about 20 percent of the colonists were **LOYALISTS** — those whose remained loyal to England and King George. These Loyalists wanted to be controlled by Britain. Another small group in terms of percentage were the dedicated **PATRIOTS**. For these people, there was no alternative but independence. They did not want to be controlled by the Britain.
- 4 Often overlooked are the neutral group of individuals who actually made up the largest group of colonists. These would be colonists who remained neutral. When one remains neutral they do not belong to one side or the other. There were so many Americans who were undecided as to which side to take. They wanted to remain loyal to the King, but at the same time they were afraid if they did not support the Patriots, there would be negative consequences.
- 5 The British (Loyalists) needed to attract support from the colonists for the homeland. Some colonists joined the British for personal gain or military glory. Some joined out of loyalty to King George. Others believed that without England the colonies would not be able to survive because the colonies profited from selling goods to England. There were also many American farmers willing to sell their goods to the British for profit. Money was a factor and a motivator. Perhaps, in the end, they still believed themselves loyal British citizens.
- 6 On the other hand, the Patriots were much more successful in attracting support. Writings such as Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" created a sense of nationalism for the colonies. The ideas in Common Sense brought a feeling of "we are all in this together" for the colonists. Many Patriots also felt that people had rights that England should not have the ability to take away, like their property. Other Patriots believed that they had already done their part for the French and Indian War when they enlisted and fought. They didn't feel like they had to pay for the war by owing taxes. A final reason that the Patriots were in favor of Revolution was because the British soldiers were causing violence, riots, and death (Boston Massacre & Boston Tea Party)
- 7 The American Revolution not only separated neighbors and friends, it destroyed many families, including the Franklins. William Franklin, son of Benjamin Franklin, a Loyalist, rarely, if ever, spoke to his Patriot father, Ben, after the war.
- 8 Patriots often humiliated the Loyalists in public. The Patriots would embarrass the Loyalists. Many Loyalists found their property was burned or vandalized.
- 9 In the end, many Loyalists simply left America. About 80,000 of them fled to Canada or England during or just after the war. Because Loyalists were often wealthy, educated, and older, the look of American society was changed. American history brands them as traitors, but most were just trying to maintain the lifestyles to which they had become accustomed.