

In the month of August 1784, several hundred refugees from the State of New York, brought by British ships, landed at Sorel and were provided with temporary lodgings until lots of land could be given them. (1)

A census, taken in 1784, of the Loyalists definitively settled within the limits of the Province of Quebec, gives the following figures: 316 at Sorel; 207 at Lachine; 66 at Chambly; 375 at St. Johns; 617 at Montreal and in its vicinity. (2)

Mention must also be made of a colony of about 450 fugitives who took refuge in the Gaspé peninsula and on the north shore of the Baie des Chaleurs. Several of them came from Machiche which they left in the spring of 1784, being dissatisfied with the settlement conditions imposed on them.

The Loyalists would have liked to settle on the north side of lake Champlain, on Missisquoi bay, but Haldimand objected. On the 27th November, 1783, he wrote to Lord North (3) in answer to a question by the latter as to the advantages that might be derived by settling American Loyalists on lands east of the St. Lawrence and on the border of the revolted colonies. He said that it would be better to leave those lands unsettled as long as possible and, for that reason, he had refused the repeated requests of many people of Vermont who claimed to be our friends, and of some loyalists. Another reason was that the Canadian population would increase and, in a few years, they would find no land to settle on. It seemed therefore good policy to have the border settled by people of a different religion, speaking another language and accustomed to other laws than those of the enterprising neighbours of New England.

On the whole, notwithstanding Haldimand's efforts, very few loyalists finally settled in the already inhabited portion of the Province of Quebec.

They who had first come to Sorel, Chambly and St. Johns soon left to join their countrymen who already formed large colonies scattered along the river St. Lawrence, in that part of Ontario now extending from lake St. Francis to Kingston and beyond, to the bay of Quinté.

Notwithstanding the Governor's opposition, some emigrants from New England had been settled after 1784 on the east and west sides of Missisquoi bay, in the seigniory of Foucault and even in the seigniory of Noyan. When, in 1791, settlers were allowed to take lands in that region, those refugees already formed an important group and gradually peopled the district afterwards call the Eastern Townships. This was the first planting of a solid English-speaking population in the French part of Canada.

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(1) The American Loyalists in the Eastern seigniories and townships of the Province of Quebec, by W. E. Siebert. M. R. S. C., 1913, Sec. II, p. 3.

(2) Reports on the Archives of Canada, (1891), p. 17.

(3) Can. Arch., Haldimand Collection. B. 56, fol. 199.