

The Revolutionary War and Native Americans

By Jeannette Holland Austin



General Lachlan McIntosh

During the Revolutionary War, the British convinced the tribes in the northern colonies to attack and kill white settlers. The British wore the red uniform; therefore, enemies of that uniform were easily spotted. Some Cherokee warriors, frustrated by losing land to white people, defied the authority of older chiefs and attacked frontier settlements, but were soundly defeated by expeditions of the militia from Virginia, Georgia and the Carolinas.

However, in the Northern colonies, the New England Indians volunteered as minutemen for the patriots before the fighting began and joined the Army of George Washington at the siege of Boston, thereafter serving in New York, New Jersey, and Canada. The Mohawk Indians, led by Joseph Brant split the confederacy by fighting for the British troops and were eventually joined by the Cayugas, Onondagas and Senecas.

The Presbyterian missionary, Samuel Kirkland, was persuasive in convincing the Oneidas and Tuscaroras to side with the Americans. Ultimately, the American Revolution became a civil war for the Iroquois, as Oneidas

clashed with Senecas at the Battle of Oriskany in 1777.

Two years later, General John Sullivan burned forty Iroquois towns and crops. I have often wondered about the British persuaded Native Americans to fight. But like the Scots, who supported the Stuart kings against England and later fled to America, most of them fought on the side of the British. Especially in Moore County, North Carolina where the Scots had acquired large land grants. The settlers in North Carolina and Georgia knew the identify of those who sided with the British. They lived amongst them. The same drama existed in Savannah and Darien where the Scottish Highlanders took the side of the British. Some Scots married native american women and became tribal.

A list of confiscated estates is available to members of Georgia Pioneers. Meanwhile, the Loyalists (on the traitor's list) evacuated into Florida, Nova Scotia and Barbados where some of them owned plantations. There are records kept in Barbados which can be researched.