

HISTORIC ROOTS

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LOST TO HISTORY

History favors winners—in sports, war, and politics. Many good people are forgotten because they were on the losing side of a game, a battle, or an election. How many people today remember Wendell Wilkie, who lost the presidential election of 1944 to Franklin Roosevelt? How long will you remember who lost the World Series last year?

Among the forgotten in American history are the men and women who supported Great Britain during the American Revolution. Because they stayed loyal to the British government, instead of fighting on the winning side for American independence, they are called Loyalists. (Another name for them is Tories.) Most of the Loyalists were brave and honest men and women, who were proud of the British Empire to which the American colonies belonged.

One such Loyalist was a Vermonter named Jehiel Hawley. Until the Revolution, he was a leading citizen of Arlington, Vermont. The only reason Arlington is not proud of him today is that he refused to fight against a king who, he insisted, had done him no wrong.

Hawley was one of the first settlers of Arlington. Born in Stratford, Connecticut in 1712, he came north with his family in 1764 and settled on land in the New Hampshire



Russell Collection of the Martha Canfield Library, Arlington, Vermont

This profile of Jehiel Hawley is taken from a portrait done after his death.



Russell Collection of the Martha Canfield Library, Arlington, Vermont

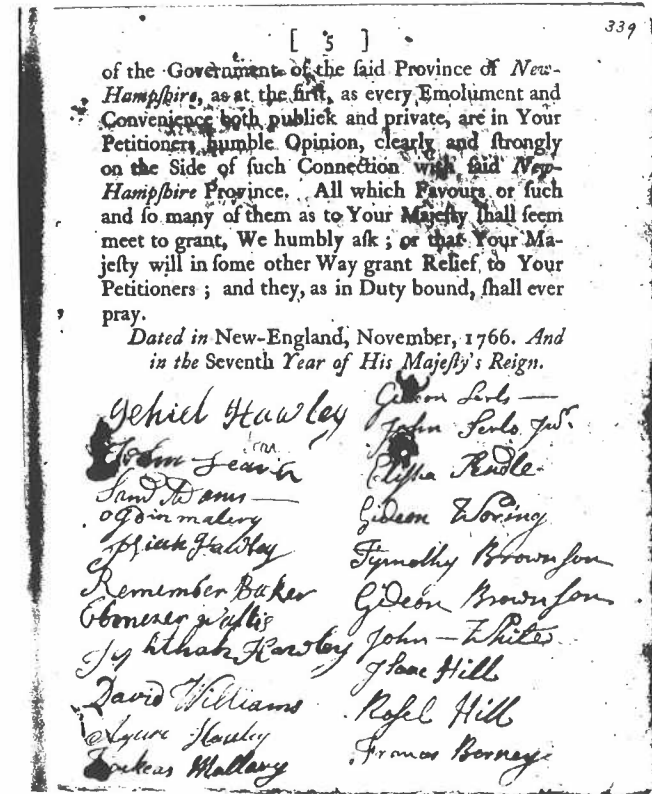
A picture, taken in 1900, of Jebiel Hawley's house.

Grants, as Vermont was then known.

Hawley did well in Arlington. He built the first frame house in town and soon owned one of the largest farms. He was a founder of the Episcopal Church in Vermont. He was chosen again and again for important town offices.

In 1772, there was a dispute over who held the rights to certain lands in town, those who had titles from New Hampshire or those whose titles were from New York. Hawley was chosen to go to London to try to settle the dispute.

Hawley sided with the British in the war for independence because he did not believe that the Patriots (as the rebelling colonists called themselves) could win the war or govern properly. He admitted that Vermont settlers had suffered much harm from land grabbers from New York. But he did not see how the English king had harmed them or that there was any need for rebellion.



Collection of Henry Steven

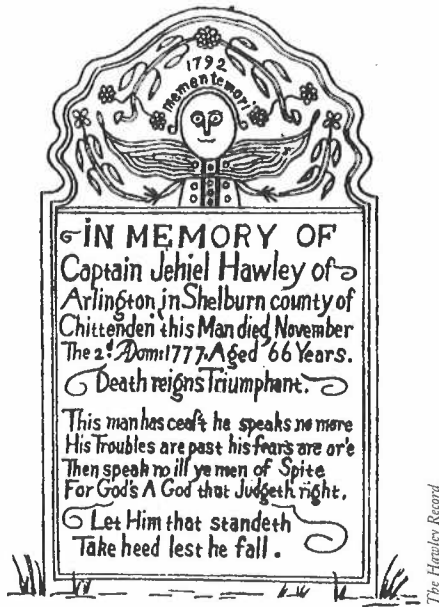
The last page of a 1766 petition over land rights to King George III of England. Hawley's signature is at the top of the list. Remember Baker also signed this petition. He was a cousin of Ethan Allen and a Green Mountain Boy. He was killed during the Revolution.

Although Arlington had many Loyalist citizens, there were as many people in town who supported the Revolution. Some of these gave the Tories a hard time. Hawley even received death threats.

Hawley joined the British and fought with them against the colonists at the Battle of Bennington, in August 1777. He was arrested in Arlington and jailed in Connecticut. He was released, but he knew of no place where he would be safe from recapture. So he joined the British troops under General Burgoyne on the west side of Lake Champlain.

After Burgoyne's surrender in mid-October, Hawley was invited to return to Arlington. He chose, however, to go to Canada, where many family members had gone. Before he could get there, on November 2, 1777, he died of dysentery. He is buried in Shelburne, Vermont, but the exact location of his grave is unknown.

Two years after his death, in 1779, his lands were taken and sold to Thomas Chittenden, later Vermont's first governor.



A drawing of a memorial to Jehiel Hawley. Although he died and is buried in Shelburne, the memorial is in the cemetery in Arlington.

Jehiel Hawley died six years before the end of the Revolutionary War. He died believing that the differences between Great Britain and the American colonies would be settled. He also believed that people on both sides had the right to think as they pleased about the war. If he had lived longer, Hawley might have changed his mind about the Revolution. But he died a Tory.

One Arlington historian has said "had he not been tainted with devotion to his king, he would have ranked among the honored of our history." We Americans are proud of our right to speak our minds, even if what we say is unpopular. Jehiel Hawley was a brave man and a good public servant, and he spoke his mind. We should honor him, even if he did choose the losing side.

DEBORAH P. CLIFFORD *ASSOCIATE EDITOR*

Rooting Around

People do not necessarily agree about what makes a person good or bad. During his lifetime, many people in Arlington agreed with Jehiel Hawley and thought he was brave to support the English king. How do you suppose these people felt about Ethan Allen?

Tories have generally been left out of American history books, or they have been treated as traitors. Can you think of other groups historians have ignored or neglected? Why do you think they have been treated this way?