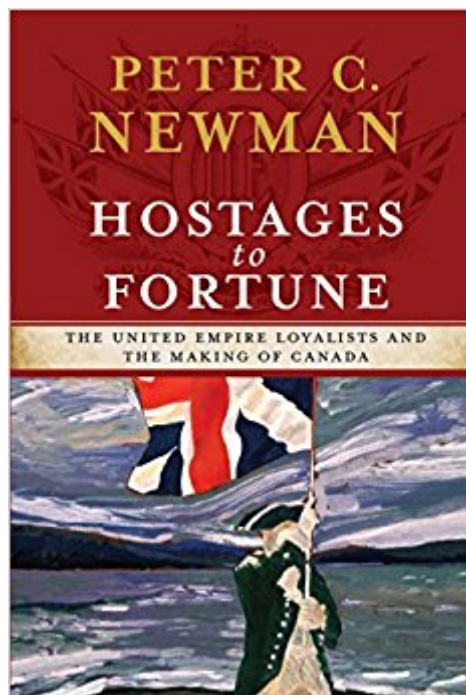




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Hostages To Fortune: The United Empire Loyalists And The Making Of Canada



Synopsis

Esteemed Canadian author Peter C. Newman recounts the dramatic journey of the United Empire Loyalists—•their exodus from America, their resettlement in the wilds of British North America, and their defense of what would prove to be the social and moral foundation of Canada. In 1776, tensions in the British colonies were reaching a fever pitch. The citizenry was divided between those who wished to establish a new republic and those who remained steadfast in their dedication to the British Empire. As the tensions inevitably boiled over into violence, fault lines were exposed as every person was forced to choose a side. Neighbours turned against each other. Families divided. Borders were redrawn. The conflict was long and bloody, and no side emerged unscathed. But there is one story that is often overlooked in the American Revolutionary canon. When the smoke from the battles had settled, tens of thousands of individuals who had remained loyal to the crown in the conflict found themselves without a home to return to. Destitute, distraught, and ostracized—•or downright terrorized—•by their former citizens, these Loyalists turned to the only place they had left to go: north. The open land of British North America presented the Loyalists with an opportunity to establish a new community distinct from the new American republic. But the journey to their new homes was far from easy. Beset by dangers at every turn—•from starvation to natural disaster to armed conflict—•the Loyalists migrated towards the promise of a new future. Their sacrifices set the groundwork for a country that would be completely unlike any other. Neither fully American nor truly British, the Loyalists established a worldview entirely of their own making, one that valued steady, peaceful, and pragmatic change over radical revolution. The Loyalists toiled tirelessly to make their dream a reality. And as the War of 1812 dawned, they proved they were willing to defend it with their very lives. In *Hostages to Fortune*, Peter C. Newman recounts the expulsion and migration of these brave Loyalists. In his inimitable style, Newman shines a light on the people, places, and events that set the stage for modern Canada.

Book Information

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: Touchstone; Canadian Origin edition (November 1, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1451686099

ISBN-13: 978-1451686098

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,053,803 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #15 in [Books > History > Americas > Canada > War of 1812](#) #102 in [Books > History > Americas > Canada > Pre-Confederation](#) #115 in [Books > History > Americas > Canada > 20th Century](#)

Customer Reviews

Throughout his long and stellar career, Peter Newman has always had an excellent nose for a great story. Hostages to Fortune is yet another example of his unerring gift. Fascinating in its own right, Newman graphically demonstrates how the exodus of United Empire Loyalists from the U.S. to Canada during the Revolutionary War shaped both countries. (Allison Griffiths & David Cruise, bestselling authors of Vancouver) "The Loyalist history does well in the hands of one of Canada's best-known historians, whose experience shows in academic diligence and artful restraint...Newman's retelling of the United Empire Loyalists' history evokes a nostalgia for Canada's humble beginnings never more timely than today." (National Post) "The finest journalist of his generation. . . . The only certainty of Canada, now and forever, is that the tireless Peter C. Newman will be there to tell our story." (The Globe and Mail) "Canada made Newman and in some ways Newman made Canada." (Winnipeg Free Press) "Of all the literary lions who roamed the Canadian landscape, Newman is the fiercest." (Toronto Star)

Peter C. Newman has been writing about Canadian history and politics for half a century. His previous works include the bestselling history of the Hudson's Bay Company, Company of Adventurers, as well as books on prime ministers John Diefenbaker, Lester B. Pearson, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, and Brian Mulroney. A former editor-in-chief of the Toronto Star and Maclean's, Newman has won a half dozen of the country's most illustrious literary awards, including the Drainie-Taylor Biography Prize for his memoir, Here Be Dragons: Telling Tales of People, Passion and Power. He is a Companion of the Order of Canada. Newman lives in Belleville, Ontario.

Definable well worth a gander. Objective American history - from the non-Republican perspective - ought to be made more aware.

Good

The American Revolution produced not one, but two countries. The United States and Canada. This book tells of the American Revolution, the settling of Canada, and the subsequent War of 1812 from the Loyalist point of view. The author, Peter Newman, descended from American Loyalists who fled to Canada to build what became a new nation loyal to the British Crown, and as he wrote this book, he has a British Union Flag, pre-1801 (before the cross of St. Patrick was added to it) proudly hanging up in his study.

“Hostages to Fortune” mostly explains the history of Canada’s beginnings from the American Revolution onward, but also briefly focuses on one family in different stages of the book; the Jarvises from Plainville, Connecticut, and in a few instances, General Simcoe of the Rangers, a Loyalist segment of the British Army, though he himself was British. General Simcoe is worthy of mention here because, although the Revolutionary Wars was literally a bloodbath, Simcoe himself did not tolerate any disobedience or transgressions from his soldiers. Plundering and abusing any civilians, loyal to the Crown or not, was strictly forbidden, and he sentenced two of his own soldiers to death for raping an American woman. Although the book tells the Loyalist point of view, the author, Peter Newman, does give justice to the American patriots in both wars (the revolution and the War of 1812).

Britain and the Colonies’ victory over the French and Indian War in 1763 landed them all the lands in North America formerly belonging to the French. Because of this, Britain had an enormous war debt that had to be paid, and they expected the American colonists to pay their share, in the form of taxation. This included the Stamp Act, the Sugar Act, the Currency Act (restricting the printing of money), and many colonists were forced to quarter British soldiers against their will. The climax was the infamous Boston Tea Party. Grievances were expressed, but the British government refused to hear them. Colonists wanted representatives in Parliament, but the British refused. There were British statesmen like William Pitt (not mentioned in this book) and others willing to redress the grievances of the colonists, but they were in the minority, and were pushed aside by King George III and Parliament. Had they been listened to, the colonists never would have rebelled. But they did rebel, in 1775, to preserve their rights as Englishmen. It was only a year later that they declared their independence. This is where the war itself goes into great detail. It was fierce and bloody, with Americans turning on Americans, depending on what side they chose. If one just simply voiced their opinion for the Crown, they were considered traitors and were persecuted. They were lynched, their homes were burned, looted, and sometimes even the women were mutilated. There were no limits to what humans did to one another, and there were times when the Loyalist reacted in the same manner. This was literally America’s first Civil War. There is one fact the book omits. The author states that America was divided into two groups, but there were really three; one

third were Patriots, one third were Loyalists, and one third didn't give a damn. The Loyalist formed regiments trained by the British, and they fought just as fiercely as the Patriots. They also had help from the Indians, especially the Iroquois. The Patriots fared badly at first, and it is mentioned here that General George Washington lost far more battles than he won. The war could have been won for the British had it not been for the blunder of a few British generals. Also, France stepped in, increasing the Brits disadvantage even more. Fast forward to Yorktown, and the Patriots got their country, and the Loyalists were driven into Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Upper Canada, forming a settlement up there called York, now Toronto. The next few chapters focus on the hardships of the Loyalist up in Canada. They did not live in shame and retained their allegiance to the British Crown. The settling of this new land was harsh. They built log cabins, but the winters were cold and bitter, and there was a lack of food, and many did not survive. The one who did grew stronger, and homesteaded their land, digging in their heels determined never again to be driven off of it. Their test would come in 1812. Again, the author does justice for the Americans in the War of 1812. There were three main reasons for the war, two of them were justifiable for the Americans. One, American ships at sea were being impressed by the British Navy, forcing American crewmen onto their ships to serve in the British forces. Two, there were British forts in the American Northwest Territories, supplying Indians with guns and denying American pioneers settlement in the frontier of their own country. Three, the Americans wanted to annex Canada, not so justifiable for the Americans. Focusing on Canada, in almost every attack on Canadian soil, the Americans were beaten off in defeat by the Loyalists. This is because the Loyalist, due to the climate and the Canadian frontier, were hard core, fierce, and determined never to lose their land to the Americans again. This is Canada's point of view, and from the way they see it, they won the war, with help from the British, by not being conquered or losing an inch of their territory. From the American viewpoint, the U.S. eventually gained complete freedom of the seas and got the British off of U.S. soil, and this became the Second War for Independence. The U.S. succeeded in two out of their three endeavors. Canada was granted independence in 1867 and they have maintained their pride in British-Canadian history. What this book is pointing out is that there was no shame in being a Loyalist for the British in the American Revolution. They were not traitors, and when the U.S. broke away from Britain, they migrated north to form their own separate country. Beginning in 1830, there was massive immigration from the British Isles and later Europe, eventually diluting the American Loyalist pedigree in Canada. Immigration continues to this day, but from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The original British-Canadians were Americans. It can be said that had it not been for the American Revolution, Canada today would not have existed.

Even with an understanding that this supposedly is written from a Loyalist point of view, the one-sided slant was a bit much for me. Sorry. And I am one who understands that the Revolution was an extremely complicated conflict, with about 1/3 of the colonists who were for independence, 1/3 for remaining loyal to the Crown and about 1/3 who just didn't care and wanted to try to get through life. And, yes, I fully agree and understand that the "Patriots" committed many atrocities in what is about as close as you can get to a civil war here. However, the author merrily skips over some of the horrendous atrocities committed by the British as well, and his presentation fails to take these into account. That balance needs to be pointed out or this book just leaves one thinking that the American colonists were nothing but an evil bunch of hypocrites. Now, I did enjoy his mocking sense of the Declaration of Independence, by pointing out that some of the most famous words about freedom were written by a man who owned over 200 slaves. And that the father of the country, Washington, was also a huge slave owner, despite his glorious words of freedom. These are facts that are hard to get over for Americans but they do show the imperfections of our society. I have no problem with criticisms of our history, but what I do not like is blatantly ignoring the other side. To ignore what the Loyalists were doing to the Patriots in the south, for example, does not give one the full picture of what was going on. Overall, I find the author's mocking tone a bit much and one definitely gets an anti-American feeling from this author. Again, that is fine but full history must be presented, not picking and choosing.

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