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Loyalists and Layabouts: The Rapid Rise and Faster Fall of Shelburne, Nova Scotia, 1783-1792

Stephen Kimber

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Marking the 225th anniversary of loyalist landings in Canada, this important and comprehensive history is essential reading on the shaping of our country.

The few hundred loyalists who gathered at Roubalet's Tavern in New York on the night of Saturday, November 16, 1782, shared a vision of the future intended to sustain them through the nightmare of the present. Abandoned by the king to whom they had promised their loyalty, unwelcome in the land that had so recently been theirs, they had no choice but to flee. But to where? And for what?

Their dream was to build a new and improved New York City. They would do this on the rocky shores of Roseway Bay, on the south coast of Nova Scotia, beside one of the best harbours in the world. The city would be cosmopolitan, but more refined, more royal, more loyal, and certainly more exclusive than the one they were now preparing to leave behind forever. At first, it seemed as if their dream would come true. Within the decade, however, Shelburne was a wasteland of abandoned homes and shops.

What happened? Plagued by drought, fires, and poor land quality, Shelburne's fortunes quickly fell. Vividly told through the intertwined narratives of an eclectic collection of its early settlers, **Loyalists and Layabouts** is the fascinating story of Shelburne's "rapid rise and faster fall."

From the Hardcover edition.

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