

Colonel Zacharias Gibbs, Loyalist

From Zacharias Gibbs' departure from Charleston, SC to the present day, his descendants have tried to bring a final chapter to his colorful and tragic story.

He was born to **John Gibbs XI** in circa 1740 in Middlesex, Co. VA. He moved with his father and mother, **Susanne Philipe**, to the Carolinas in the 1760's. John Gibbs had received large land grants from the Gov. of N. Carolina. Like many other settlers of that "Up Country" area, the survey of the boundary between the Carolinas (1764-1771) altered the land description from Tryon Co. to Old 96 District of S. Carolina. This required a petition to the Gov. of SC, filed and granted in 1771. The main portion of their extensive land appeared to be in what is now Spartanburg Co. SC.

Zacharias prospered well. By 1775 he had obtained some 1,000 acres, including land inherited from his father. He had married **Frances Coleman**, daughter of Robert Coleman and Ann Hinton, Amelia Co. VA settlers whose original land grant of 600 acres had the same need to "re-petition" as did the Gibbs. The Coleman's were located some 12 miles north of present day Union, S. Carolina. In the Coleman party was their son-in-law, **Thomas Draper** (b.1735 in N.Farnham Parish, Richmond Co., VA) and his wife, **Lucy Coleman**. Other marriages figuring into the life of Zacharias were 2 more of the Coleman sisters. **Faithful** married **Randolph Hames**, and **Mary** married **William Meek**.

Several accounts exist which give an account of his extraordinary efforts on behalf of the Loyalist cause. He recruited men, he fought in numerous battles, captured twice, marched 400 miles from the Battle of Kettle Creek to Old 96 Fort (in chains, by his own account), sentenced to hang but released in April 1779, having signed promissory notes for 15,000 LBS and a written declaration that he would not take up arms again against the Patriots.

This was a promise he did not keep. He had witnessed the death of his brother-in-law, **Randolph Hames**, killed as a "traitor" by the Patriots. He recruited men again, was in the final battle at Camden, and eventually was a refugee officer in Charleston. Frances died of small pox in December 1781. Two little Gibbs girls survived her: Susanne (named for her grandmother Gibbs) and Martha. The children were sent to live with relatives. Zacharias remarried apparently in 1782. His second wife was also a Charleston refugee, Irish born Jane Downes, the twice widowed wife of 2 British officers, and the mother of seven children from the previous marriages.

When the British evacuated Charleston in late 1782, some 4,000 people needed to find a new home. Zacharias, Jane, and her family went to East Florida and then on to Jamaica.

This proved a most undesirable move. From letters retained in that period, we have pieced together that Gibbs *very possibly* took his wife and her family to Ireland, from whence he petitioned the British Parliament for redress of his huge losses in S. Carolina, wrote testimonials for fellow Loyalist petitioners, and befriended a Carolina family who had failed to meet deadlines for filing.

November 2004 Addendum: From the Alexander Chesney Journal : The letters of petitions are dated Nov.20 and Nov 21 of 1783 and carry Gibbs' signature and the following address: 32 Charles Street, Westminster, England, documenting that Gibbs was in the UK.

By October 1784, he landed in Nova Scotia. Jane stayed in Springfield, County Downe, Ireland. At this point there was a promise of land in Nova Scotia, but no reality...nor had Gibbs seen the land, which had been surveyed and "granted" on August 3, 1784.

Gibbs was eventually granted 1,000 acres in Hants Co., Nova Scotia. Its location is east of Newport and some 40 miles out of Halifax. His grant was part of what was called the "Bond Grant" of 23,000 acres for 55

Loyalists. This group was much later in arrival than other Loyalists, and the granted property was predominantly virgin forest. A petition was made in May 1785 in which the land was referred to as "Rawdon". Boyd's petition indicates that they were still waiting for action on the part of the Nova Scotia government, although the families involved were trying to establish homes in the area.