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Flora McDonald

Lead: One of the heroines of the American Revolution was no patriot at all.

Intro: A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts.

Content: In 1745, the Highlands of Scotland rose against the English. The rebellion was called the Forty-five and, for a few months, the throne of King George II seemed threatened. Charles Edward Stuart, handsome, magnetic, and charming and rival heir to England's crown, landed on the coast of Scotland. Charles Stuart marched

south with a Highlander army, but his hesitation at the town of Derby, 100 miles from London, marked the high point of the rising. Stuart's retreat turned into a rout and in April 1746, the English destroyed the Highlander army at the Battle of Culloden. Its leader, with a bounty of £30,000 on his head, wandered around the Highlands of Scotland for months. He eventually got away, but only after receiving the aid of Flora McDonald. She disguised him as her maid and helped him escape to the Isle of Skye and from there to Europe.

For her part in Charles' escape Flora was imprisoned in the Tower of London, but under popular pressure she was released. Her prospects for

success in Scotland limited she, with her husband Allen McDonald and their six children, joined the colony of Highland Scots who were settling southeastern North Carolina. When the American Revolution came, because of the oath they had sworn to the English crown after the Battle of Culloden, many of the Scots were required to fight against the American patriots.

Flora McDonald helped raise support for the Tories, but her work was dealt a deadly blow at the battle of Moore's Creek Bridge in February, 1776. There 1,600 kilted and plaided Scotsmen were dispersed by a Patriot Army in a matter of minutes. Flora's husband was captured, their estates confiscated,

and they were forced to return to Scotland. Flora McDonald continued a lifelong devotion to her lost causes until her death years later. Ultimately, she was shrouded in a sheet used by Charles Stuart during his escape.

The Producer of A Moment in Time is Steve Clark. At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.

Resources

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