

Wando River Brickyard Operations, Land Confiscations, and British Archival Records of Exile ~

Through research by friends from Daniel Island and Cainhoy/Wando, I thought it might be interesting to give a sampling of what happened to so many of the early landowners as the Revolutionary War came to a close. These three friends learning, along with me, one of the difficulties in determining “Patriots/Whigs” or “Loyalists/Tories”, while building a list for present-day Berkeley County; some, who participated, on both sides, during this War for Independence.

This particular “example” is about a gentleman named Samuel Martin. This “Cainhoy-Wando connection” places him directly in the crosshairs of the bitter partisan warfare that ravaged the Lowcountry and resulted in the absolute “confiscation of his land” by the victorious state government.

Unraveling his specific footprint through our South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH) and post-war legislative acts reveals how a prominent local merchant and industrialist lost everything to the Patriot cause.

Unlike the agricultural planters of St. Thomas & St. Denis Parish, Samuel Martin capitalized on the physical geography of the Wando River to build an industrial enterprise.

The “Wando Brickyard”, owned and operated by Martin, provided a highly lucrative ‘Brickyard’ situated along the tidal clay banks of the Wando River basin. Bricks were a vital commodity for construction and chimney building in nearby Charles Town, making riverfront brick kilns exceptional generators of wealth.

Martin’s brickyard location and adjoining tracts of land were highly strategic, sitting directly adjacent to Addison’s Ferry. This placed his commercial hub right along the primary military intelligence and transit corridor that connected the Cainhoy Peninsula, Daniel Island, and the northern parish networks.

When Charlestown fell to the British in May 1780, the Wando River zone was heavily garrisoned to secure supply lines into the interior. Local business owners were faced with an ultimatum: align with the occupying royal forces or, face the destruction of their livelihoods.

Samuel Martin chose to align with the British Crown. One should consider the alternative choice he had at this point: abandoning his enterprise, which at this

time and point, I am sure, was tremendously lucrative, and flee into the swamps to join Francis Marion's partisans.

Martin was able to keep his kilns and operations active under British protection. His proximity to the Wando River and Addison's Ferry made him an ideal logistical asset for the British military bureaucracy. By openly operating under British authority and actively trading with the garrisoned forces in Charles Town, Martin solidified his status as an active Loyalist (Tory) in the eyes of his watching Patriot (Whig) neighbors – including the Addisons, Lesesnes, and Bonneaus.

The retribution for Martin's alignment was swift and legally devastating. As the War drew to a close, the revolutionary South Carolina General Assembly met in exile at the Jacksonborough Assembly in January 1782, to punish those who had aided the enemy.

Samuel Martin was formally named on the state's infamous "Jacksonborough Confiscation List (under the Confiscation Act of 1782). Under this sweeping act, Martin's entire estate – including his prized Wando River brickyard, his kilns, his personal property, and any enslaved laborers used to run the industrial works – all was declared forfeiture to the State of South Carolina.

Commissioners for Forfeited Estates seized the property and put it up for public auction. The proceeds of these sales were used directly to pay off the state's massive wartime debts, as well as funding of the "Stub Indents" owed to local Patriot suppliers like his neighbors, who had furnished beef and pork, corn and grain, to Marion and Maham.

In this particular person's case, Samuel Martin followed the formal evacuation of the British Army from Charlestown in December 1782, permanently banished from South Carolina under pain of death if he returned.

Martin fled the Lowcountry under British naval escort, left completely destitute by the seizure of his Wando assets, joining thousands of other displaced Loyalists in England.

The "Audit Office Papers, AO 12 & AO 13" now take over. To verify his exact property lines, the capacity of his brickyard, and his total financial losses, researchers bypass standard South Carolina records and look at the British National Archives in Kew, England. Under the Audit Office series, Martin filed detailed accounts with the "Loyalist Claims Commission" in London, desperately petitioning

the British government for financial compensation for the lucrative Wando River infrastructure he had been forced to leave behind.

A sad end to this story, we look at a classic case of a “Class I or Class II Confiscation target” . . . while on the other side, his “used-to-be” neighbors used the SCDAH Series S108092 (Accounts Audited) in effort to get paid by the new government. Samuel Martin’s records in South Carolina existed primarily as “state seizure charts and auction tallies”, mapping out the liquidation of his brickyard.

End . . .

My many thanks, especially to Suzannah Smith Miles, Elizabeth Bush, and Tory Sullivan, (and to SCDAH), for this research, and giving me an opportunity to compile a brief story of this particular gentleman and his ‘situation’ . . . an example of what happened to so many at the close of the War. Hope you enjoyed!

Keith Gourdin, 2026