On The Backs of Communities

Culture, Politics and War On The Maine Frontier

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This essay began as a history of Captain Thomas Fletcher and the provincial soldiers that served under him during the French and Indian War. It soon became clear that what appeared to be a simple history of soldiers serving on the Maine frontier in 1755 could only be understood by more thoroughly exploring the people and events that made up their world. What came to light was a story much richer, more dynamic and more interesting than was readily apparent. It is a largely unknown and forgotten part of Maine's past.

Maine has not always been a vacation land. From 1676 to 1759 Maine witnessed a series of wars that pitted fledgling colonies, European powers and indigenous people against one another. In many cases these conflicts were ancillary to the struggles of Britain and France over the balance of power in Europe. Culminating in what has become known as the French and Indian War, these conflicts and the French and Indian War in particular, shaped the trajectory of American history. Although considerable attention has been given to the war in its broader narrative, the story of the war on the eastern frontier has largely been ignored.

Most people vaguely recall the French and Indian War from the narrative of American history presented in elementary and high school. In this narrative, the war is presented as a precursor to the American Revolution as it led Great Britain to exact taxes from and tighten controls over her North American colonies. The war was however a watershed event in its own right that deserves to be seen as more than an historic way station between the Pilgrims and the American Revolution.

Conflict between the European powers was certainly not a new phenomenon. However, the establishment of colonial empires and the strengthening of nation states created an environment in which conflicts between powers in Europe could spill over to their peripheral colonies and vice versa. From the mid seventeenth to the early nineteenth century virtually all the European powers were embroiled in conflicts over the internal balance of power in Europe and overseas expansion. By the end of this century long series of conflicts, England and France had emerged as the dominant colonial and European powers.

Europeans were not the only people caught up in the tide of geopolitical conflict during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In North America, the continents indigenous people engaged in their own struggle for political, economic, social and territorial equilibrium. Seeking to promote their own best interest, native societies engaged in war, trade and diplomacy with the French, the English and other native societies. It is important to see the various native societies as active participants in the struggle for North America and not as by-standers caught between two competing European powers. The calculations and actions of native political and social entities are no less important in the history of North America than those of their English and French rivals.

Sparks in North America ignited the world wide conflict that has become known as the Seven Years War in Europe and the French and Indian War in North America. By the time the war was concluded in 1763, fighting had raged across Europe, North America, the Caribbean and had reached Africa, India and the Philippines. Although the war did not materially change the political structure of Europe, it substantially weakened the colonial holdings of France and Spain in favor of Great Britain. Most significantly for the residents of Northern New England, France was forced to cede Canada to Great Britain, eliminating the long standing threat to their communities by the French and their native allies.

The outbreak of hostilities in 1755 marked the sixth war in only eighty years to be waged on Maine soil. Although several of the conflicts occurred within the broader framework of the century long struggle between Britain and France, it was the animosity between the native people and the encroaching English population that shaped and defined the nature of these wars. Civilians were the primary targets for both sides. Countless men, women and children were killed or taken into captivity to be absorbed into native tribes, sold into servitude or held for ransom. The dead were often stripped of their scalps which were sold as gruesome trophies for exorbitant amounts of money. Crops, livestock and property were destroyed in an effort to deny the populace shelter and sustenance over the harsh winters and entire communities were destroyed or entirely abandoned out of fear and the inability to support and defend themselves.

For native people, each successive conflict incrementally reduced the strength and vitality of their societies and many native family bands chose to seek at least temporary refuge in the French sponsored missionary villages of Becancour, Sillery and St. Francis. The conflicts were equally disruptive to the white settlements that dotted the coast from Kittery to Pemaquid. By the end of the seventeenth century, English settlements had been pushed back as far south as Wells and attempts to reclaim the settlements to the eastward were abandoned for nearly twenty five years. It was not until 1719 that white settlements again began to appear on the coast and rivers east of Wells.

Resettlement of the Maine coast was largely the result of speculative real estate ventures. Vast tracts of territory had been awarded to corporations and individuals by the English Crown during the seventeenth century. While attempts were made to capitalize on these grants during the 1600's, it was not until the eighteenth century that these entities truly began to exploit their holdings. The area around the Saint George River was included in what became known as the Muscongus Patent which had been granted to Thomas Leveret in 1630. The deed lay fallow until it was reinvigorated by the heirs of Thomas Leveret and 30 other investors in 1719.

The effort to establish a community on the banks of the Saint George River at this time was short lived but had lasting consequences for the area's future. To promote the development of their proposed town of Lincoln, Leveret and his associates built mills, provided frames for houses and constructed a fort on the west side of the river in what is now Thomaston. As the easternmost settlement and fortified site, Lincoln became a nexus of native aggression when war broke out again in 1722. By the end of the conflict that has become known as Dummer's War, the mills and settlement had been reduced to ashes. Despite three attacks including a thirty day siege, the fort remained and would play a pivotal role in the negotiations concluded in 1727.

The presence of Fort Saint George and of Fort Richmond on the Kennebec River were particular concerning to the native people as their locations violated the limits of English territorial claims that had been established during previous peace conferences. Native representatives to the peace talks following Dummer's War asserted that should the two forts be removed, there would be no further reason for conflict in the region. The government of Massachusetts refused to consider the abandonment of the sites but conceded that no further settlements would be established above Fort Richmond on the Kennebec or above the lower falls of the Saint George River. Additionally, it was decided that the two forts would serve as truck houses to facilitate trade and diplomatic relations between Massachusetts and the tribes of the eastern frontier.

Trade played a pivotal role in shaping and defining the relationship between native people and Europeans since the two cultures made contact in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. For the Europeans, trade with the native population gave them access to land and luxury commodities, namely fur. In return, the continents indigenous people gained access to European technology that profoundly changed their way of life. By the eighteenth century, European manufactured goods such as kettles, axes, textiles, firearms and alcohol had been so thoroughly incorporated into the cultural fabric of native societies that they had become dependent upon continued access to these goods. This dependency had left the native people vulnerable to unscrupulous traders prepared to capitalize on their need and desire for these goods and helped fuel the climate of distrust and injustice that propelled the native people toward conflict with their white neighbors.

The truck house system, of which Fort Saint George was a part, was implemented by Massachusetts in an attempt to regulate trade and promote diplomatic efforts aimed at maintaining peaceful relationships with the eastern tribes. Under this system, individuals were prohibited from conducting trade with native people and all transactions were to be conducted at government run truck houses and handled by the truck masters who were duly authorized agents of the government of Massachusetts. In exchange for furs, hides, quills and feathers,

the native people were guaranteed a ready source of trade goods including firearms and ammunition. In addition to ongoing trade, the truck houses dispersed the annual gifts Massachusetts promised the eastern tribes and were often the sites for negotiation and diplomatic intercourse between the native Sachems and the government of Massachusetts. Through the truck-house system and the ready supply of goods, it was hoped that the eastern tribes would increasingly associate themselves as trading partners with the English and would therefore be less susceptible to the political and economic influence of the French. As the easternmost truck house, Fort Saint George played an increasingly important role in the diplomatic relations between the English world and the eastern tribes.

Dummer's War also brought about a shift in the power dynamics within the region's native political structure. Prior to the War, the Norridgewock's of the Kennebec Valley had been viewed by the English as the most powerful and influential of the area's native tribes. The destruction of their village at Norridgewock in 1725 and the subsequent emigration of most of their people to the French mission villages in Canada thrust the Penobscots to the forefront of the native political structure in Maine. It was the Penobscots who stepped forward to initiate talks to end the conflict, claiming to represent themselves and four other tribes. Although the Norridgewock's were still viewed as politically important and would be included in future negotiations, the Penobscots were clearly becoming an important regional power broker. When the final treaty was signed at Falmouth in 1727 the only native totems affixed to it were those of Penobscot sachems.

The peace treaty which concluded Dummer's War had profound consequences for the future of Anglo-Penobscot relations for the next twenty eight years. From the outset there was divergence over the precise meaning of the treaty. From the perspective of the English, the Penobscots had surrendered their sovereignty and become subjects of the English Crown. However, the Penobscots understood that they had expressed solidarity with the English and accepted them as brethren. This fundamental misunderstanding would contribute to continual frustration on both sides over the next two and a half decades. Although both sides viewed the treaty differently, there were some expectations for future relations that both sides clearly understood. Massachusetts vowed to curb exploitive trade and land acquisition as well as prevent the settlement of lands beyond that already agreed upon. The Penobscots for their part would assist Massachusetts in any future conflict with the eastern tribes and or the French by providing intelligence and warriors who would receive pay and sustenance as Massachusetts provincial soldiers. Additionally, those Penobscots not serving as military auxiliaries were to receive food and protection from Massachusetts provided they sought refuge within the English frontier settlements. In practice this amounted to the Penobscots surrendering their sovereignty and autonomy to Massachusetts in the event of war.

By the mid 1730's Samuel Waldo had emerged as the leading proprietor of the Muscongus patent and it was under his initiative and entrepreneurial encouragement that permanent settlements were established at Broad Bay and along the shores of the Saint George River. Given the regions turbulent history and the prospect of future instability, few people from the already well established communities of Massachusetts were willing to respond to the call of cheap and abundant land in the province of Maine. Those who did respond to Waldo's call were outsiders who were generally unwelcome in the puritan social milieu of Massachusetts proper. Broad Bay, currently Waldoboro, was settled predominantly by Palatinate Germans who had been recruited directly from their homeland to found a new community amidst the coastal forests of Maine. To the area of the Saint George River, today's Thomaston, Warren and Cushing, flocked the Scots-Irish who had recently emigrated from Northern Ireland.

Although sharing a common language and similar religion, the Scots-Irish were culturally distinct from their English brethren. Originating in the lowlands of Scotland and the northern fringes of England, these people had engaged in centuries of conflict with their neighbors and the English crown. Authority in the region was fragmented and vested locally through family ties to a particular clan. Rivalries between competing clans and attempts by the English to subjugate them had produced generations of people suspicious of and resistant to outside authority.

During the seventeenth century many of these people took part in the English colonization of Ulster in Northern Ireland. Inexpensive leases of land from English landlords enticed many people from the border regions of England and the Scottish lowlands to take up residency in Ulster. Life in Ulster proved to be as insecure as life in the lowlands as the newly arrived immigrants waged war on a native Irish population not willing to give up their ancestral lands to these newcomers from across the North Sea.

By the end of the seventeenth century these immigrants had established themselves in Ulster to the point where they did not consider themselves Scots or North Britons, but as Irish. Families had improved the land on which they lived as tenants, the population was secure in its Presbyterian faith and a flourishing linen industry was established. By the early 18th century things were beginning to change in Ulster. To protect its own linen manufacturing and trade the British Crown began to implement trade restrictions which dramatically curtailed the profitability and future success of Ulster linen production. The Crown also began to dismantle the Presbyterian faith in Ulster and establish the Church of England as the official faith of the region. At the same time, the long term leases that had allowed the tenant farmers to prosper began to expire. Under the new leases offered by English landlords, rents and requirements were increased to an extent that many felt they would be reduced to impoverished peasants.

To further compound issues, the region experienced several waves of crop failure. The net result was a series of emigrations from the region to North America.

These Scots-Irish immigrants brought with them a cultural heritage that would shape their relationships with their Native American neighbors, the provincial government of Massachusetts and the representatives of that government who lived in their midst. Accustomed to violence in defense of their property and distrustful of outside authority, the Scots-Irish were thought to be combative, unruly and hard to govern. Over time, these attributes would do much to unravel the fragile peace between the Penobscots and the government of Massachusetts.

In 1744, war between the European powers once more spilled over to their North American colonies. During the spring and summer of 1745, New England with the support of the Royal Navy, mounted an expedition against the fortified French town of Louisburg at the northern end of Cape Breton. The scale of the undertaking exceeded any efforts yet mounted in the colonial conflicts of North America. Nearly four thousand men were raised with many of the men being drawn from the communities of Maine including those in the area of Saint George. With many of the region's men of military age engaged in the effort to take Louisburg and with memories of prior conflicts, fear and uncertainty was pervasive. Many inhabitants of the eastern frontier abandoned their property and sought refuge in the more secure communities around Boston and New Hampshire. In other cases, entire families removed themselves to Louisburg to be closer to loved ones serving in the army during the fort's occupation. In most cases those who remained left their homes and took up habitation within the nearby forts and garrison houses.

Attacks against the eastern communities commenced in July of 1745 when siege was laid to Fort Saint George by a force of Saint Johns, Sable Island and Saint Francis Indians.[1] With the outbreak of hostilities, and according to the treaty that concluded Dummer's War, Massachusetts called upon the Penobscots to join in the war effort against the French and their native allies. Caught in a diplomatic dilemma, the Penobscots attempted, at least initially, to steer a course of neutrality. Should the Penobscots fulfill their treaty obligations to Massachusetts, they would invite the retribution of the native tribes allied to the French and have to yield much of their sovereignty to an ally with whom there was a history of deep seeded distrust. Alternatively, if they refused the demands of Massachusetts, they would lose

[1] 18th Century New Englanders typically referred to native tribal groups by their place of residence. Saint Johns Indians resided in the area of the Saint Johns River and today would be recognized as the Passamaquady and Malicites. The Sable Island Indians or Micmacs today came from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. The Saint Francis Indians or those often referred to as Canadian Indians represented an amalgamated group of native people representing any number of Easter Abenaki cultural/political entities who sought refuge in the French Missionary villages along the St. Lawrence River.

access to the trade goods on which they had become dependent and face inevitable war with the English world.

An incident that occurred in September of 1745 is illustrative of the attitudes and fears of both sides during this and the subsequent Anglo-Indian conflict in Maine. Sometime on September 5, 1745, nineteen volunteers lead by Captain Benjamin Burton and Lieutenant Proctor fell on a group of Penobscots, killing and scalping two tribal leaders and taking a third captive who was sent to Boston where he died in confinement. The facts concerning this affair are sparse and the motives behind it will never truly be recovered but it is possible to conjecture based on the circumstances.

After months of reiterating demands to uphold the treaty obligations set forth at the end of Dummer's War, Massachusetts declared war against the Penobscots on August 23, 1745. Likely, the Penobscot party came into Fort Saint George for diplomatic purposes or to conduct trade unaware that they were now considered enemy combatants. At the fort they met with Captain Bradbury who sent them away peacefully with the warning that a state of war now existed and that he could not protect them from the actions of the area's inhabitants. With this information, the Penobscot party departed and headed eastward. Not far from the fort, at the Mill River they stopped and encamped.

Fear, hatred and greed may have fueled the actions of Benjamin Burton, Lieutenant Proctor and their men. With the siege of Fort Saint George and sporadic attacks in the Brunswick area already having taken place, it is likely that the soldiers and civilians of the area lived in a state of nervous vigilance. The presence of any native groups, regardless of their identity or intentions, must have aroused fear amongst the inhabitants for the safety of their families and property. Under the circumstances, the drive to protect what they held most dear likely propelled them toward violent action. The promise of monetary gain may also have contributed to the men's actions. With the declaration of war, Massachusetts resorted to the familiar custom of issuing cash bounties for enemy scalps and captives. As volunteers, receiving neither pay nor provisions as soldiers, the group would have been entitled to a reward of £250 for each scalp and £278 for each captive taken. Considering that a typical wage laborer did not earn in excess of £50 annually this represented a considerable sum of money for each participant in the attack. Interestingly, the General Court of Massachusetts later refused to pay the bounty in this case as they judged the group's actions imprudent and unjust.

War on the Maine frontier continued for several more years. Across the region, crops, livestock and homes were destroyed while men, women and children were killed, scalped or taken captive. Broadbay (now Waldoboro) was completely destroyed in 1746 and Fort Saint George was besieged again in 1747. Developments in Europe brought an end to the conflict in 1748. Materially nothing changed on the frontiers of North America as a result of the war.

Louisburg, the only colonial conquest of the war, was returned to France according to the treaty of Aix la Chapel to the chagrin of the people and governments of New England. With peace restored between Britain and France, the eastern tribes sought to bring an end to the hostilities in Maine. Peace between Massachusetts and the eastern tribes was formally declared in 1749 with the signing of treaties at Falmouth. Like the war, the treaty brought about little change for the native and white populations on the Maine frontier. Both sides exchanged platitudes about peace and reconfirmed the understandings and obligations set forth at the end of Dummer's War.

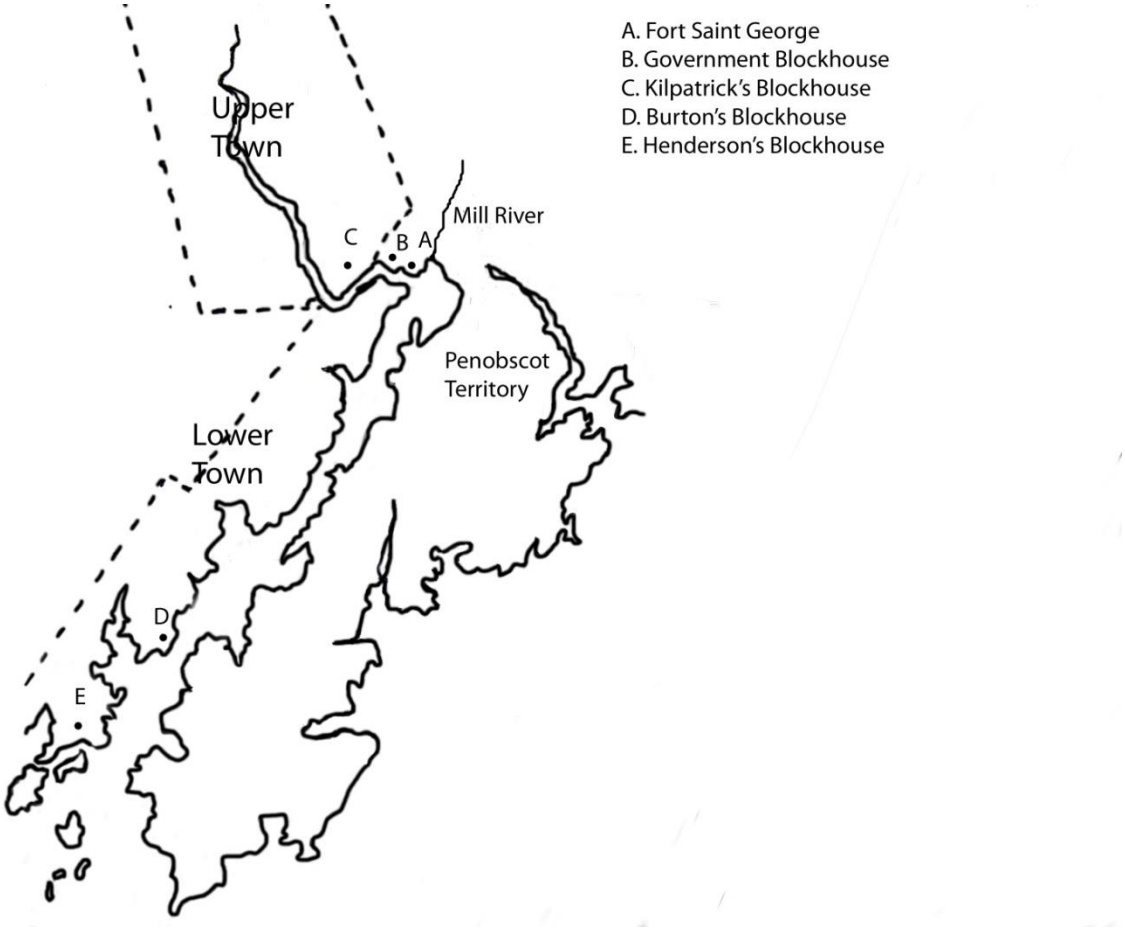
Families returning to Saint George at the conclusion of the war were confronted with rebuilding their community and former lives. Lying abandoned for upwards of three years, many settlers found their homes destroyed by fire or consumed by the elements. Refugees found that the meeting house, the spiritual and social center of the community, had been stripped of its windows to obtain lead for ammunition leaving the interior of the building exposed to the ravages of driving rain and snow. The inhabitants of Saint George had spent years improving land, building homes, establishing crops and livestock, acquiring personal property and building lives for themselves and their families. War erased many of these efforts forcing the inhabitants at Saint George to begin anew.

In the wake of King George's War the community at Saint George developed three distinct focal points, each with a distinct community leader. The area in proximity to the fort emerged as the areas conduit to the outside world. The wharves that accommodated ships carrying goods, news and government dispatches were located in this area as were the areas mills, and developing lime industry. The fort, truck-house and government blockhouse which dominated the human landscape in this part of the town were the physical manifestations of the policies and authority of the Massachusetts government. Jabez Bradbury arrived in the Saint George region in 1742 when he was appointed the Truck Master and commander of the fort's garrison. Originally from the North Shore of Boston, he could trace his heritage to the Mayflower pilgrims. Although from "away", Bradbury had spent much of his life on the Maine frontier, serving as a soldier during Dummer's War and then serving as Truck Master at Fort Richmond. As the Truck Master and fort commander at Saint George, Bradbury was the representative and embodiment of the Massachusetts government in the region. Although well respected by many, Bradbury seems to have been looked upon with suspicion by some members of the community. As an outsider of English descent and representative of the distant Massachusetts government, Bradbury was an automatic target for the resentment of his Scots-Irish neighbors. To complicate matters, Bradbury was held in high esteem by the Penobscots who generally felt that he had conducted trade and diplomacy with them in a fair and just manner. Many of the local inhabitants interpreted this as complicity toward their bitter enemy and frequently accused Bradbury of unlawfully trading with the Penobscots to his own benefit.

Caught between the conflicting interests of the government of Massachusetts, the local inhabitants and the Penobscot people, Bradbury spent many years walking a political tightrope that prompted him to ask to be relieved of his responsibilities on several occasions.

Further up the river and straddling both sides of the river in what is today Thomaston and Warren was the "upper town". The majority of the area's population resided in this area and Thomas Kilpatrick seems to have worn the mantle of community leader. Kilpatrick had refused to abandon his holdings in the area for the safety of Massachusetts during King George's War and was appointed Captain of the towns' militia by the end of the 1740's. At his own expense, Kilpatrick constructed a blockhouse at the narrows of the river as a refuge for the inhabitants of the upper town during times of war. As a private blockhouse, this fortified position was under the command of Kilpatrick alone and would have been defended by volunteers from the community who did not receive pay or food allowances from the Province of Massachusetts. Unlike Bradbury, Kilpatrick was known to harbor hawkish attitudes toward relations with the Penobscots and would later be nicknamed "Tom Kill the Devil Patrick" by Governor Thomas Pownall.

Map of the Saint George Region 1755



South of the fort, along the western side of the river in what is now Cushing, was the third focal point of the community and what was termed the "lower town". By 1753 Benjamin Burton had become the recognized leader of this area. Like Kilpatrick, Burton constructed a private blockhouse, this one built of stone. Because of his participation in the 1745 attack on the Penobscot party leaving Fort Saint George, Burton was the focus of particular anger among elements of the Penobscots.

Burton and Bradbury seem to have had a contentious relationship for reasons that can only be surmised. Perhaps some of their animosity developed as a result of the 1745 attack on the native party encamped at the Mill Creek. Massachusetts' refusal to pay the scalp and captive bounties submitted as a result of the attack seems to imply that there was some inquiry into the event and Bradbury being the Fort Commander and Truck Master surely would have been involved in such an inquiry. Both men clearly held different views as to the proper way to deal with their native neighbors. This is evident in Bradbury's willingness to let the party go with a warning for their safety and Burton's resolution to put together a posse to assault them. Although attempting to understand the root of their animosity is purely speculative, a 1756 letter from Bradbury to Lt. Governor Phips in which Bradbury maligns Burton's character is clearly indicative of the nature of their relationship.

An uneasy peace followed King George's War that was punctuated with acts of violence by both sides and near continuous alarm for the safety of the eastern settlements. Much of the intelligence fueling the state of alarm was delivered to Captain Bradbury in accordance with the expectations laid out in the treaty that followed the end of the war. The Penobscots frequently reported on the presence of Canadian Indians with hostile intent. Sporadic attacks did occur across the region, the most significant of which occurred in September 1750. On the morning of September 8, 1750 several parties of Canadian Indians descended on the settlements of the Sheepscot and Kennebec Rivers. Along the Sheepscot they set fire to several houses and took two captives. On Swan Island in the Kennebec River they took thirteen members of the Nobel/Whiddon family captive and laid siege to Fort Richmond several miles up the river killing at least one person and destroying livestock before withdrawing. The attack was in response to an assault on a band of natives in Wiscasset eighteen months earlier who were returning from a peace conference in Falmouth. In letters from Bradbury to the government of Massachusetts it is clear that the Penobscots had provided some advanced warning of the attack and continued to keep him abreast of the sentiments of the native people following the incident.

Intelligence concerning French activities was also reported to Bradbury at Fort Saint George and Captain Lithgow at Fort Richmond. During the early 1750's the French initiated a program of fort construction along the rivers that bordered New France and British North America. The construction of these forts raised the ire of both the colonial governments as well

as the home government in London. Not only was the construction of these forts militarily provocative, they were in many cases sighted on territory claimed by the English colonies. In 1753 the British government advised the colonial Governors to take action to prevent the encroachment of the French on their territory. In response, Massachusetts and Virginia seized the opportunity to launch military expeditions to dislodge the French.

Within weeks of obtaining intelligence that the French were building a fort at the "great carrying place" on the Kennebec, Massachusetts began preparations to send a force of 800 men up the Kennebec River to counter the French and construct a fort of their own at the confluence of the Kennebec and Sebasticook rivers. In advance of the provincial army's move up the river, several small scouting parties were dispatched to gather intelligence, map the route and ascertain the exact location of the so called "great carrying place". Thomas Fletcher of Fort Saint George and John North from Fort Fredrick at Pemaquid were chosen to lead one of these parties. A surveyor by training, North appears to be a logical choice to partake in this endeavor as his mapping skills and ability to read the lay of the land would be instrumental. The choice of Fletcher is somewhat more perplexing. Perhaps Fletcher had obtained some level of proficiency with the native language by this time as he is listed as the interpreter at Fort Pownall in the 1760's. It is also possible that Fletcher had been recommended by his mentor Jabez Bradbury who had traveled up the Kennebec to Norridgewock with Chief Hendrick of the Mohawks as a soldier-diplomat during Dummer's War.

Although Fletcher and North were unable to find any evidence of French activity along the upper reaches of the Kennebec, Massachusetts proceeded with plans to establish a military presence in the heart of what was once Norridgewock territory. In July of 1754 a 400 man expedition under the command of Jonathan Winslow departed from Falmouth (Portland) and proceeded up the Kennebec River to its junction with the Sebasticook River (Winslow). Here they began construction of the considerable fortification to be named Fort Halifax. Not only did the location of the fort violate previous understandings regarding the limit of Massachusetts' encroachments on the river, but it severed the primary route by which the eastern tribes were able to reach French Canada. Interpreting this as a clear intention of hostile and expansionist designs, remaining Norrigewocks and the people of the amalgamated mission villages along the Saint Lawrence were roused to action. In November 1754 a war party of Canadian Indians descended on Fort Halifax killing and scalping one soldier and taking four others captive.

Attacks resumed against Fort Halifax and the exposed eastern communities in the spring of 1755. In May and early June, raids were conducted against Saint Georges (Thomaston/Warren), Broad Bay (Waldoboro), Pleasant Point (Cushing), Sheepscot, (Newcastle) and Frankfort (Dresden). In the vicinity of Fort Halifax one soldier was shot and killed while another was taken captive. Further to the west, settlers were killed and captured at North

Yarmouth (Yarmouth/Freeport) and New Glouster. War had clearly come again to the eastern settlements.

Massachusetts responded to these aggressions by declaring war against all of the eastern tribes, exclusive of the Penobscots on June 10, 1755. Pursuant to the declaration of war, Massachusetts invoked upon the Penobscots the demands put in place at the conclusion of Dummer's War and again at the end of King George's War. Specifically, Massachusetts asserted that all able bodied Penobscot men were to enter into Massachusetts service, receiving pay and rations as Massachusetts soldiers in the war against the other eastern tribes. Additionally, Massachusetts agreed to care for and support all Penobscot invalids, women and children who would leave their homelands and live among and under the protection of the white settlements. Essentially the declaration of war demanded that the Penobscot nation surrender all autonomy to the government of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

With the declaration of war Massachusetts strengthened the garrisons of the region's forts and authorized the establishment of a "marching army" of 300 men for the defense of the eastern frontier. As the easternmost settlement and fort, Saint George's became a hub of military activity. Only a year before, the fort had undergone repairs and its armament strengthened to include 12 pieces of artillery. Now the garrison was increased to 43 men and as part of the marching army, 49 men from the local community were enlisted as provincial soldiers under the command of Captain Thomas Fletcher.

In addition to the soldiers raised by the government, bands of men organized themselves into quasi military groups intent on protecting their families and property while also seeking to capitalize on the scalp and captive bounties offered by Massachusetts. Comprised of local citizenry, the actions of some of these "companies" probably reflect the prevailing attitudes among many of the regions inhabitants. Like the posse lead by Benjamin Burton and Lt. Proctor in 1745, these men were driven to action out of fear, hatred, and bitter memories of past conflict. Suspecting Penobscot participation in the recent spate of hostilities, the men in these bands seem disdainful of Massachusetts' proclaimed peace with the Penobscots and resentful of the government's military and political representatives in the area. Loath to discriminate between hostile and non-hostile Native Americans, these men were inclined to see all Indians as enemies and prosecute the war on their own terms.

The most shocking incident involving one of these volunteer parties occurred in the first few days of July 1755. Marching eastward from Newcastle, a company of volunteers under the command of James Cargill set off in search of native scalps. As Cargill made his way eastward he recruited additional volunteers including some of the men who had enlisted as provincial soldiers in Captain Alexander Nichol's Company and from Thomas Fletcher's Company as well. Upon reaching the Saint George region, Cargill decided to steer clear of the fort knowing the

disposition of Jabez Bradbury and the government of Massachusetts regarding conflict with the Penobscots. Instead, Cargill set a course for Benjamin Burton's blockhouse further down the river. From Burton's blockhouse Cargill and his men crossed the St. George River and soon set upon a well known and respected Penobscot woman, Margaret Moxa, her husband and infant son. All three were killed and scalped. The group then proceeded to Owl's Head where they encountered another band of Penobscots, nine of whom were killed and scalped.

The next day, Cargill and his men paraded their scalps into Fort Saint George. Outraged by the atrocity, Bradbury lodged a formal complaint against Cargill that lead to his arrest, imprisonment and subsequent adjudication two years later. In response, Cargill leveled charges against Bradbury alleging that he had engaged in trade with the natives for his own financial gain and had illegally traded arms and ammunition to the Indians. Cargill's accusations were nothing new to Bradbury but merely an official restatement of the rumors that had surrounded Bradbury as an Englishman, an outsider and representative of the government since King George's War. In the end, both men were found not guilty. Bradbury's innocence was proven by the merit of the evidence, while the verdict in Cargill's case was based on the sentiment of a jury during time of war.

The attitudes that fueled Cargill and his men seem to have been common in the communities of the eastern frontier. Just days prior to the Cargill incident, a party of nine Penobscot tribal leaders arrived at Fort Saint George to conduct trade and hold discussions with Captain Bradbury. Aroused by the native's presence, a group of local citizens, soldiers from the garrison and members of Captain Fletcher's marching company assembled with arms, demanding satisfaction for the recent attacks against the settlements. Although the nine Penobscot men were tribal leaders, they were in no position to make good on any of the mob's demands and could not satisfy their captor's anger. Faced with an insurrection among the inhabitants and an armed mutiny among his own men, Bradbury was able to negotiate a compromise in which some of the tribal leaders would be retained as hostages while three of their party would be allowed to proceed to Boston to conduct negotiations with Governor Shirley. Although this incident was resolved peacefully, the weight of this incident and the Cargill atrocity effectively derailed any possibility of peace between the Penobscots and Massachusetts.

Over the next several months, Massachusetts continued to press the Penobscots to abide by their treaty obligations. To help assuage feelings occasioned by the Cargill incident, Massachusetts presented the Penobscots with gifts and made assurances that Cargill and those involved would be tried according to Massachusetts law. The Penobscots, however, continued to withhold their support for Massachusetts over the summer and into the fall of 1755. In dispatches from Jabez Bradbury to the Government of Massachusetts, Bradbury states that

while he believed the Penobscots were generally disposed toward peace, he had some reservations about the sincerity of their peaceful remonstrances. As in previous conflicts, the Penobscots found themselves in a difficult diplomatic situation.

Part of the Penobscots' diplomatic difficulties stemmed from the very nature of their political and social organization. The English belief that the Penobscots could act with any sort of political unity was conceptually flawed. The tribe, unlike a European nation state was not vested with any centralized political organization, leadership or authority. Rather the "tribe" consisted of related family bands each with their own recognized leader or Sachem who derived their mantle of leadership through the trust, respect and consent of their family band members. Governance in the case of the Penobscots and all Algonquin societies was therefore based on influence rather than decree at a very local level. If the members of the family band felt that their needs and views were not represented by their Sachem they were free to seek another Sachem who better encompassed their views and promoted their well being. From time to time, various family bands would come together and place their combined faith in one particular Sachem, but this allegiance was often circumstantial and temporary. It is of little surprise in this environment of fractured political authority and shifting allegiance that the Penobscots were never able to reach a consensus and deliver a diplomatic resolve that satisfied the demands of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

Undoubtedly there were factions among Penobscots that harbored belligerent attitudes toward their white neighbors and advocated the use of violence to address past and present grievances. It is also clear that there were those who wished to ride out the current crisis and avoid conflict with the English as well as the other neighboring eastern tribes. Divisions of opinion seem to have led to physical divisions within the tribe as some of the more militant Penobscots moved to Canada and participated not only in raids against the Maine frontier but in French military activities along the Champlain Valley including the siege and massacre at Fort William Henry in 1757.

While prospects for peace seemed to slip further away every day, the prospect of war meant certain hardship for the Penobscot people. Deprived of the trade on which they had become dependent, the Penobscots would find it difficult to sustain themselves over the course of any conflict with the English. Additionally, war would disrupt their access to traditional sources of sustenance as the English were known to target sites along the coast used to procure food during the summer months. Aware of these concerns, and in accordance with prior treaties, Massachusetts reiterated its pledge to support the Penobscot people should they come to live among the English. Not only were the Penobscots unwilling to surrender their autonomy, but in a letter to the Governor of Massachusetts, they expressed the realization that the two people could not peacefully coexist in the same communities. With no good options,

the Penobscots resorted to the same diplomatic strategy of non committal as they had during King George's War. Realizing that the Penobscots had no intentions of offering overt support, Massachusetts formally declared war on the Penobscots in November of 1755.

While Massachusetts and the Penobscots engaged in a diplomatic tug of war, the recently raised provincial scouting companies maintained a defensive vigilance over the communities of the eastern frontier. In the vicinity of Saint George, Thomas Fletcher, who had previously acted as the second in command at the fort, assumed command of the scouting company. Although enlisted as Massachusetts soldiers and receiving pay and provisions as such, the composition of Fletcher's company differed little from the volunteer companies such as the one lead by Cargill. Being raised predominantly from the community at Saint George, the men shared the same general attitudes and cultural beliefs as those who assaulted the unsuspecting Penobscot bands in early July. Aside from the financial inducements offered by Massachusetts these men were likely motivated to serve as full time soldiers by the prospect of protecting their families, homes and neighbors.

Service for the men of Fletcher's Company consisted of "marching the backs" of the communities between the Saint George and Kennebec Rivers. For thirty days out of each month the company was expected to be on continual march, searching the woods and rivers for signs of native war parties. In addition to near constant patrol, the company frequently lay in wait at ambush sites along likely approaches to the settlements and routinely provided armed guard for inhabitants cutting and retrieving wood or tending to crops and livestock. Throughout the summer, and for the next four years, reports abounded of small native bands lurking in the woods and on the fringes of the settlements, observing the activities of the civilian population. Periodic attacks against the regions inhabitants lent credence to the fear occasioned by these sightings and a general sense of uneasiness prevailed along the frontier. The men serving in the scouting companies, including Fletcher's, must have experienced considerable frustration as attacks against their communities continued despite their efforts.

Over the course of 1755, peoples' fears and frustrations found a target in Thomas Fletcher. In early 1756, fifty nine of the region's inhabitants signed a petition addressed to Governor Shirley and his council accusing Thomas Fletcher of dereliction of duty by not actively and aggressively prosecuting the war against the eastern tribes. If the support shown for the exploits of James Cargill and his band of volunteers is any measure of the region's attitudes toward war with the native people it is not surprising that Fletcher became the scapegoat for the intense emotions occasioned by the onset of war.

Like Jabez Bradbury, who was also subject to the invectives and indictments of the local population, Thomas Fletcher embodied many of the Scots-Irish cultural suspicions. Fletcher's relationship with Bradbury may have contributed to his disfavor as he seems to have been a

protégé of Bradbury. Like Bradbury, Fletcher was an outsider; an Englishman amongst the Scots-Irish of the Saint George. Fletcher's name first appeared in the Saint George region in 1748 as a Centinal, the lowest military rank, in the fort's garrison. By the end of 1748, Fletcher had been promoted to the rank of Ensign, a junior grade officer. Such rapid advancement in rank was often the result of familial wealth and influence, political patronage or the recognition of an individual's abilities by a provincial officer such as Jabez Bradbury. It seems likely that the latter accounted for Fletcher's ascendance since little points to familial connections socially, economically or politically. Perhaps significantly, Fletcher was promoted to this position over many men from the local community who had already served in the ranks and who continued to do so through the mid 1750's. By 1752, Fletcher is listed on the muster rolls as a Lieutenant, the second in command at the fort, and from all appearances Jabez Bradbury's right hand man.

As an officer in the provincial army, Fletcher was duty bound to faithfully execute the orders of the Massachusetts General Court and Governor William Shirley. It was precisely Fletcher's concern for following orders and his awareness of the diplomatic situation unfolding along the frontier that brought about his censure by the local population. To people living in fear, believing, perhaps correctly, that the Penobscots were involved in the recent outbreak of hostilities and who desired vengeance for past and present grievances, the restraint Thomas Fletcher demanded of the men in his command seemingly fostered bitter frustration. What the inhabitants failed to understand or chose to overlook was that the state of peace and ongoing negotiations between Massachusetts and the Penobscots put tremendous constraints on Fletcher's range of action.

Critical review of an incident that occurred in September of 1755 helps illuminate the perspectives of both Fletcher and the region's disgruntled inhabitants. Here are the facts surrounding the event, albeit largely through the report that Fletcher submitted to Lt. Governor Phips regarding the incident. At about noon, September 24, two men were attacked by a party of Indians a short distance from the fort. One of the men was able to make his way safely back to the garrison. The fate of the other man is uncertain as Fletcher lists the man as missing. Fletcher does not provide an estimate of how large the raiding party was but does indicate that there seemed to be a "great body of them". At the time of the attack, Fletcher relates that 30 of his men were out on a march under the command of his lieutenant Alexander Lermond. With the sounding of the alarm guns, the community's inhabitants would have taken refuge within the fort, the government blockhouse, Thomas Kilpatrick's blockhouse or one of the areas improvised garrison houses. Aside from issuing the local alarm, Fletcher states that he dispatched expresses to the surrounding communities with word of the attack. In his report, Fletcher indicates that the attack continued until about nightfall with the natives firing on the

inhabitants' livestock. When Lieutenant Lermond returned with the scouting company later in the evening, Fletcher marched to the west with his men in an effort to engage the enemy.[2]

The incident has the potential to be seen very differently when considered from the perspective of the settlers at Saint George. Huddled together in a fortified garrison or alone in an isolated cabin, the families of Saint George must have endured the attack in anxious anticipation. Memories of recent atrocities surely filled worried minds. Survivors of the last war certainly remembered those killed, scalped or taken captive during native raids and vividly recalled the attack on Broadbay that had committed most of that community to ashes only nine years before. Uncertain of exactly what was transpiring around them and aware that the scouting company was elsewhere, people must have felt vulnerable, helpless and frightened. Individuals likely asked countless questions to themselves and perhaps those around them. Would they fall victim to the native war party and be killed or taken back to Canada as war prizes? Would their homes, crops and livestock be destroyed? If so, how would they support themselves over the fast approaching winter? Would their husbands, sons, and brothers in the scouting company return safely or fall prey to the war party before reaching home? Would the scouting company be able to come to their aid before it was too late? Why wasn't Fletcher sending out the fort's garrison to repel the native attack?

The scouting company did return safely to Saint George later in the evening. The statement that they returned "later in the evening" seems to imply that they returned sometime after the native raiding party had retired around nightfall. The sense of frustration in not being able to defend their homes and families from attack must have been overwhelming. Likely, feelings of anger and vengeance filled the minds of many of these men. Surely the war party had not put enough distance between themselves and Saint George to make pursuit impossible. However, it is clear from the documentary evidence that when Fletcher ordered these men back out, they marched off to the west, away from Indian territory and the war party's probable route of retreat.

With emotions running high, the actions of Thomas Fletcher during this incident clearly provoked the ire of the community that he was sworn to protect. As an outsider, a representative of Massachusetts, its unpopular policies and a close ally of Bradbury, Fletcher was already viewed by many with suspicion and resentment. Undoubtedly the occurrences of September 24th solidified these latent feelings.

Despite the unpopularity of Fletcher's actions, it appears that he acted with prudence given the constraints placed on him by the government of Massachusetts. During the attack Fletcher stated that he was unsure of the size of the war party but felt that there seemed to be

[2] A copy of Fletcher's report in its entirety is included as a supplement.

"a great body of them". As the easternmost English outpost, Fort Saint George was of prime strategic significance in maintaining the security of the eastern frontier. Fletcher had to have been cognizant of this and realized that the loss of this post would likely bring about the abandonment of the Maine communities and the collapse of the eastern frontier. With a garrison of 43 men, Fletcher likely did not feel that he had the strength to engage a war party of unknown proportions. Fletcher may have surmised that the attack was a ruse designed to encourage him to sally forth and fall into an ambush. Already, the fort had been attacked five times in its thirty-six year history. Each time, the fort withstood the attack with the defenders using the protection of the palisades and overwhelming firepower of its cannon to good effect. Fletcher also likely anticipated that the return of his scouting company would alter the balance of the situation and provide relief to the fort and community.

Unfortunately the community suffered as a result of the attack with many of the cattle on which the inhabitants depended for winter sustenance and future economic security destroyed. Fortunately it does not appear that any of the inhabitants were killed or taken captive during the attack although the fate of the one man whom Fletcher recounts as missing remains uncertain. Perhaps the greatest effect of the attack was psychological. War had come again to Saint George bringing with it intense fear, frustration and uncertainty.

When Fletcher later dispatched the returning scouting company in pursuit of the native marauders he sent them off to the west, in the direction of Sheepscot. The exact nature of the march is still unclear more than 250 years later. Perhaps the company set off in hopes of catching up with and engaging the native war party. More likely, the intent of their march was to provide defense for the communities to the west in the event that the war party decided to strike other communities in the wake of their assault on Saint George. To the inhabitants of Saint George, who burned for vengeance and could, by looking to the east, literally look beyond the limits of English territory in New England and see the lands of the Penobscots, Fletcher's deployment of the scouting company to the west not only appeared senseless but treacherous.

Fletcher had little choice in his course of action however. The exemption of the Penobscot nation from Massachusetts' declaration of war against the eastern tribes created some ambiguity regarding the sanctity of Penobscot lands. The Cargill incident in early July brought this ambiguity to light as Cargill claimed that he did not realize the people he had killed were Penobscots and that he believed he was merely pursuing hostile Indians in Penobscot territory. Lieutenant Governor Spencer Phips sought to clarify this issue on July 12th with a proclamation which read:

> "I do hereby strictly forbid all officers and soldiers scouting and all persons whatsoever, acting offensively against the Indians within thirty miles from St. George's Fort, except to the westward of said

fort, or within twenty miles of any part of the river Penobscot, on any pretense whatsoever."

Hoping that The Penobscots would fulfill their treaty obligations and contribute to Massachusetts' war effort against the other eastern tribes, Massachusetts was not willing to risk any further incidents that might derail ongoing diplomatic efforts. As the presiding commander of the fort at the time of the attack and officer responsible for the subsequent response, Fletcher was constrained in his range of action and the pursuit of the native war party was superseded by political considerations. Marching off to the west was the only option open to Fletcher as any action to the eastward violated the rules of engagement under which he had to operate. With no good options, Fletcher attempted to make the most of a bad situation. For the inhabitants of St. George, this was not acceptable and Thomas Fletcher and his reputation would be pilloried by public opinion for his actions during the attack of September 24, 1755.

Fletcher's restraint in not provoking hostilities with the Penobscots proved to be futile. In little more than a month following the attack on Saint George, Massachusetts formally declared war on the Penobscots. On November 1, 1755 the General Court of the Bay Colony resolved that a state of war existed between Massachusetts and the Penobscots due to their refusal to take up arms against other native tribes as stipulated by the treaty established at the end of King George's War. No native in Maine was now exempt from the English scalping knife and war on the eastern frontier expanded allowing offensive operations to be conducted east of Fort Saint George.

On November 25th Fletcher addressed a letter to Lt. Governor Phips stating that he had dismissed the men of the scouting company in accordance with the General Court's provision authorizing the scouting companies to serve an enlistment term of six months. In his letter to Phips, Fletcher indicated that he did not anticipate that the enemy would mount any attacks over the winter. What Fletcher did not know was that the inhabitants of the region would mount an offensive against him in the form of a formal complaint addressed to Governor William Shirley.

Over the winter of 1756 a cadre of the region's inhabitants drafted a letter of complaint against Thomas Fletcher to Governor Shirley and the General Court of Massachusetts.[3] The rather lengthy and bitter petition asserted that Fletcher was guilty of "weakness, cowardice and treatury" in the conduct of his duty. Fletcher's actions during the September assault on the community were called into question as the petition claims that "Captain Fletcher and his

[3] A copy of the original petition is included as a supplement. Portions of the text are very difficult to read and a transcription of the petition is also included

Company were spectators to the Indians killing cattle in view of the Fort" and that Fletcher refused to allow the numerous volunteers who assembled during the attack to engage the enemy. In a more general sense, the petition asserted that Fletcher did not provide adequate protection to the regions inhabitants claiming that because of his inaction "our Enemies met with no opposition or Discouragement last year". The greatest indictment of Fletcher in the petition was not for his particular actions or lack thereof but against his character in general. [4]

Allegations of fraud and deception permeated the complaint against Fletcher. From the beginning, the petitioners implied that Fletcher misrepresented himself and his orders to those enlisting in the scouting company who soon discovered that "words were only words" and that they would have their "hopes quashed" and "expectations disappointed". The petitioners went on to claim that Fletcher maligned their characters by presenting them as "mutineers, lyars, rouge fools and madmen". Additionally, the petitioners accused Fletcher of submitting falsified reports to government in regard to the attack on Saint George and in the journal of his company's activities that he was required to keep and submit to the Governor at the close of their enlistment.

Resentment of Fletcher as an outsider also seeped into the petition. Fletcher's arrival as part of the fort's garrison is described in the following statement; "for he came here a hireling for a sum of money instead of some impressed man". This is a significant statement that's true meaning may be lost to the observer more than 250 years later. There was a certain stigma attached to the "hired" soldier who did not virtuously volunteer to serve but instead was a paid substitute for another man unwilling to serve. To this point, the petitioners went on to describe Fletcher "he yet retains that mercenary disposition of coveting the pay without regard to office or duty". The petitioners further claimed that Fletcher soon gained the favor of Captain Bradbury and thereafter had "with two or three others" undue influence over the fort's commander who was also an outsider in the eyes of the community. The conspiratorial tone found in parts of the petition highlight the nature of the inhabitants' attitudes toward Fletcher and Bradbury and is indicative of the repeated and unfounded accusations leveled against them during their tenure as officers in the Saint George region.

Ultimately, in their petition to Governor Shirley, the inhabitants in the region of Saint George asked that Thomas Fletcher be removed from his command and another more capable officer be appointed in his place. The petitioners succinctly expressed this desire in the

[4] Interestingly four of the subscribers to the petition, (Hans Robinson, Moses Robinson, David Patterson and John McCarter) seem to have been participants in Cargill's atrocities in July as they are later summonsed during the Cargill's trial. At least Hans Robinson went on to serve with Cargill on later scalp hunting ventures as he and his brother Archibald Robinson (also a petitioner) were involved in an accident during one of these ventures in 1757. Many of the petitioners came from a small group of select families which testifies to the nature of clan/family social relationships in Scotch-Irish communities.

following statement “we beg your Excellency may withdraw and never cloath him with the same or any commanding power relating to his Majesty’s Service or province interest in promoting and protecting these infant Settlements”. The inhabitants of Saint George would have to wait for satisfaction as Governor Shirley became preoccupied with his duties as the newly appointed Commander in Chief of all British and Provincial forces in North America as well as inquiries into his own conduct in that capacity.

In their own ways, the assessments of both Fletcher and the inhabitants of Saint George concerning the intentions of their native enemies were correct. As Fletcher had indicated to Lieutenant Governor Phips in the letter explaining the dismissal of his Company, the war parties of the eastern tribes and their Canadian counterparts remained inactive over the winter of 1756. Just as prescient, the inhabitants of Saint George predicted to Governor Shirley that they would be paid an early spring visit by an emboldened foe.

At the end of March 1756 Fletcher reported to Lt. Governor Phips that several men from the garrison had been attacked while catching smelts in a steam near the fort. Fletcher reported that two of the men were killed and one wounded and scalped. From May to the end of September native war parties sporadically attacked the English settlements of Maine. In the Saint George region there were no fewer than seven attacks in which people were killed, scalped or taken captive. In what was likely an act of retribution for his participation in the 1745 attack on native Sachems leaving Saint Georges Fort, Benjamin Burton’s block house in the lower town was assaulted, leaving two of the garrison’s six soldiers dead and another scalped and left for dead. Despite the best efforts of the scouting companies charged with the protection of the eastern settlements, sporadic native attacks continued to occur across the Maine frontier leaving fear, disruption and frustration in their wake.

As in 1755, Massachusetts provided for the protection of the eastern frontier by garrisoning the region’s forts and raising a marching army to provide defensive patrols. To the chagrin of the Saint George petitioners, Thomas Fletcher was again given a commission to raise a company as part of the one hundred men authorized to march from the Kennebec to Saint George. In addition to the company raised by Thomas Fletcher, Joshua Freeman of Falmouth also raised a company in the Saint George area among those disaffected with Fletcher. Although Governor Shirley did not respond to the Saint George petition, the General Court of Massachusetts voted on June 4th 1756:

> “That his Honour the Lt. Governor & Commander and Chief be desired to appoint some suitable person or persons in the County of York to see that the several Captains of the marching Forces in the Eastern Parts of the Province are faithful in their Duty, and remit him Advice from Time to Time of their Conduct.”

Conscious of and not willing to interfere with the Governor's prerogative to make appointments, issue commissions and otherwise direct military affairs, it seems that the General Court was taking what action it could to address the grievances of the settlers on the eastern frontier.[5]

Several developments over the spring and summer of 1756 would significantly impact the future course of events for Thomas Fletcher, Jabez Bradbury and the inhabitants of Saint George. On June 9th Great Britain formally declared war on France. Although fighting between Britain and France had already taken place in North America prior to the declaration of war, the formal declaration set in motion a chain of events that would propel most of Europe's powers toward what would truly become the First World War. The conflict that was being waged in Maine as the sixth Anglo-Abenaki war was now subsumed into the greater global conflict known as the Seven Years War.

Perhaps of more immediate importance to Fletcher, Bradbury and the inhabitants of Maine in general, was London's recall of William Shirley as Governor of Massachusetts and Commander in Chief of all North America. Shirley's recall was occasioned by his lackluster military performance during the campaigns of 1755 and 1756 against the French in what is now upstate New York and questionable financial responsibility with Crown and Provincial funds. The removal of Shirley as the Governor of Massachusetts also seems to have removed some of the personal and political protection that Bradbury and Fletcher enjoyed under his patronage.

Evidence of the government's change of favor came to light in the fall of 1756 when a commission was issued to Benjamin Burton to serve as the fort's Lieutenant and blockhouse commander. Fletcher had previously held this post since the late 1740's and by the testimony of Bradbury, was promised this position by Governor Shirley upon dismissing his scouting company. Likely this was not an oversight by now acting Governor Spencer Phips but a deliberate decision to appease the inhabitants of St. George. Rekindling old animosities and exciting new provocations, Bradbury came to his protégé's defense and launched an attack on Phips's decision and Burton's character in the following letter to the Province Secretary Josiah Willard:

Honner[d] Sir

> It was suprising to me that Jest at the Governors going of, perhaps after he was gon, (by filling up a blank) there should a Commission be Sent here to one M[r] Burton to be my Lieu[t] when the Governor has so freely told Mr. Fletcher he Should Sertainly return to his post as L[t] when his marching Company were

[5] Interestingly, no such recommendation was made for a corresponding appointment to the marching army on the Western Frontier.

dismist, and he realy did so; otherwise he wou^{d} not have taken a Commission for marching in the woods. he is a Sober Sencable man, one that can may be Confided in, (has bin the L^{t} here almost Seven year,) I wish I Could Say as much of M^{r} Burton but,-------

I should take it as a very great favor if your honor would prevail with the L^{t} Governor to give Mr. Fletcher a Commission for this Garrison as formerly, and if Mr. Burton must be again helpt by the Govr^{t} that it may be at som other place & not here, for I shall not think, my own affairs here, safe if at any time I should Leave the Fort, as I shall be oblig^{d} to do, if I Live till the Spring, my business then Calling me to Boston. I must now intreet your Honnors excuse for troubleing you with this, and subscribe my self your Honnors

Most Obedient Humble Serv^{t}

Jabez Brabury

S^{t} Georges Nov^{r} 23^{d} 1756

P.S. for Every Day mr Burton has Serv^{d} Government, I am Suer Mr. Fletcher has Serv^{d} them Ten.

Bradbury's remonstrance seems to have resonated with Lt. Governor Phips, as Fletcher was reinstated as the fort's Lieutenant. How this was resolved and reconciled with Benjamin Burton and the anti-Fletcher faction among the region's inhabitants is unclear but likely it only added to the atmosphere of resentment and distrust that had been growing for more than a decade.

War had been hard on the English settlers in the Eastern Province of Maine but it had been harder still for the Penobscot people. On several occasions during 1757 members of the tribe came in to the fort and truck house at Saint George seeking peace and resumption of the trade on which they had become so dependent. Reports that small pox had devastated the eastern tribes were confirmed by one of these peace seeking delegations when they met with Jabez Bradbury in February of 1757. Bradbury learned the extent of the devastation caused by the disease when he asked of approximately twenty tribal leaders by name. Of the twenty or so Sachems that Bradbury inquired about, fourteen of them had succumbed to the illness. Despite pleas for the resumption of trade and peaceful relations, Massachusetts remained steadfast in it expectations that the Penobscots fulfill their treaty obligations. Rebuffed by Massachusetts, the Penobscots would endure several more years of war while continuing efforts to reconcile their differences with the English.

Raids against the Maine frontier commenced again beginning in May of 1757. Saint George was spared from native attacks this time around but nearby Broadbay and Pemaquid experienced a spate of attacks against isolated homesteads and individuals going about their daily labor. As usual, Massachusetts authorized the creation of scouting companies for the defense of the eastern communities. Thomas Fletcher did not receive a commission to raise a company in 1757 and instead Joshua Freeman who had led a company in the area the previous year assumed command of the local scouting force. Fletcher, however, retained his position as the Lieutenant of the fort and served as Bradbury's second in command. Unfailingly however, controversy continued to plague both Bradbury and Fletcher through 1757.

On May 16th, 1757 a party of fourteen Penobscot and St. John's (Passamaquoddy) Sachems approached Fort Saint George under a flag of truce. A party of negotiators including Bradbury, Fletcher, and the fort's interpreter sallied from the fort under their own flag of truce and met with the native delegation on a hill 40 or 50 rods to the north of the fort.

During the diplomatic exchange, the natives again expressed a desire for trade and a resumption of peaceful relations with the English. Bradbury stood fast to the orders he had recently received from the government in anticipation of such overtures by the eastern tribes and declared that no trade could take place so long as the two peoples were at war with one another. Bradbury went on to reiterate the expectations Massachusetts laid out for the resumption of peaceful relations; that the Penobscots surrender their autonomy and come live amongst the English. Bradbury went on to advise that he could not assure the safety of any natives who ventured into English territory and that they would be ill advised to return to the fort with or without a flag of truce. With this, the Sachems departed and asked Bradbury to relay their request through official channels.

Controversy begins to seep into this encounter as Captain Freeman would later claim that he heard Bradbury relate to this group of natives that the scouting company was out on patrol toward the Kennebec. Freeman also stated Fletcher went on to tell the natives of a schooner in the area that had been outfitted in Falmouth to cruise the coast for scalps. According to Freeman this informed the Sachems of the regions vulnerability. Freeman's implication was that in relaying this information Bradbury and Fletcher had acted in an irresponsible and even treacherous manner. Capitalizing on the tarnished reputations of Bradbury and Fletcher, Freeman may have been attempting to deflect responsibility for what appears to be a loss of control over some of his own men.

At the same time that the Sachems were meeting with Bradbury and Fletcher on a hill north of the fort, another group of natives was to be found behind Limestone Hill with a considerable number of beaver pelts. While one group was being denied official trade at the truck house, it seems that the group near Limestone Hill successfully engaged in illicit trade

with some on the community's inhabitants. Likely the natives were not able to gain access to the trade items that had become necessary to their well being such as gun powder, textiles and metal goods, but rum probably flowed freely as Bradbury, according to Freeman, later accused some of Freeman's men of getting the natives drunk and one inhabitant reported to Bradbury that the natives traded furs for rum.

Not long after the Sachems departed, and probably shortly after the natives parted with their furs behind Limestone Hill, some of the regions inhabitants burst into the Fort with one of the natives who had come in for trade bound as a prisoner. Looking to cash in on the captive bounty of £320 offered by the Government of Massachusetts, the posse presented this native as a prize. Bradbury refused to accept this native as a lawful captive and the captors only reluctantly relinquished their claim by the intervention of Captain Freeman who was able to convince them of the impropriety of their actions.[6]

Soon another Sachem, possibly going by the name Neptune, came into the fort under a flag of truce presumably to retrieve the captive that the inhabitants had seized. Asking again for trade and again being refused, the Sachem became enraged, destroyed his flag of truce and stated that there was a sizable body of Canadian Indians at Penobscot ready to wreak vengeance on the English communities. Following this belligerent display the two natives departed from the fort.

Several hours later, Thomas Kilpatrick came into the fort claiming that he had spoken with Neptune who reported being with a party of twenty-six Penobscot and St. John's Indians and that they expected to rendezvous with another larger party also bound for Saint George. Given the natives indulgence in illicit rum, the denial of trade for desperately needed items, the seizure of one of their party by the inhabitants and Neptune's hostile behavior, concerns were raised that the Indians' previous requests for peace and trade might turn to war cries.

In light of the recent developments, Bradbury and Freeman determined to send out a party of scouts the next morning. Unbeknownst to Bradbury and perhaps Freeman, a scouting party led by David Kelloch (formerly a member of Fletcher's Company) set off in pursuit of the native party at around ten o'clock that evening. Within a mile of the blockhouse, Kelloch's scouts came across a bag on the trail and two natives sleeping nearby. A fire fight ensued in which one native was killed and Kelloch's gun was struck by a musket ball. Stripping the Native of his scalp the scouting party returned to the fort with their prize.

[6] At the very least these individuals would not have been entitled to the captive bounty since by law as a group of non-soldiers they would have had to register with a local military commander of at least Captain's rank as a group of volunteer bounty hunters prior to taking their captive. Some of these individuals may have belonged to Freeman's scouting company as he refers to them at one point as "my people".

There were no immediate repercussions following the incident of May 16th. Apparently Neptune's threat of Canadian Indians waiting to descend on St. George was little more than bluster. It does appear, however, that the divide between Bradbury, Fletcher and the community only deepened as a result of the incident. Bradbury and Freeman held widely divergent opinions about the propriety of each other's actions during the affair. Freeman later made a point of informing Bradbury that he expressed his concerns about Bradbury and Fletcher and their disclosure of the scouting company's and ranging schooner's whereabouts in his formal report of the incident. According to Freeman's own correspondence Bradbury continued to blame Freeman's men, i.e. members of the community, for their role in the incident stating that "they had made the Indians drunk and then like a parcel of Stout fellows went out and kill'd one". By the close of 1757 it had become clear that little trust existed between the community at Saint George and the men who were sworn to protect them.

The usual pattern of spring attacks against the communities of Maine resumed in 1758. It also heralded the departure of both Jabez Bradbury and Thomas Fletcher from the Saint George region. Their absence, however, did not alleviate the plight of the eastern most settlement. By summer's end the Fort and community would endure the largest attack against the Maine settlements during this conflict.

It does not appear that a particular event occasioned the resignation of Bradbury and Fletcher in the summer of 1758. Bradbury had in fact asked to be relieved of his command several times during his tenure at Saint George. In each of the other instances the government had either refused to accept his resignation or Bradbury had been convinced to withdraw his request. It seems Governor Shirley had held Bradbury in high esteem and Shirley's patronage likely provided him with some degree of protection from the incessant accusations thrown at him by the region's inhabitants. With Shirley's recall to England and the assumption of the Governor's office by Thomas Pownall, Bradbury and by extension Fletcher may have become more politically vulnerable. Just before their resignations, Massachusetts convened a committee to investigate war time trade with the enemy and the incident that occurred in May of 1757 was being examined by that committee. Given the political climate, Bradbury and Fletcher may have decided to quietly extricate themselves from the crucible at Saint George.

In Bradbury's place Governor Pownall appointed Captain John North as the Fort Commander and Truck Master at Saint George. North had seen service on the Maine frontier since the 1740's, first as a surveyor and later as the commander of Fort Fredrick at Pemaquid. It was North who had accompanied Fletcher up the Kennebec River in 1754 searching for a rumored French fort at the river's head waters. Like Fletcher and Bradbury, North had run afoul of some of the Scots-Irish settlers of Pemaquid while serving as commander of the fort in that area. In 1756, several Pemaquid area residents filed a petition alleging that North had

neglected the security concerns of the region by using the garrison's soldiers to cut wood on surrounding islands for his own personal gain and plying the soldiers with immoderate amounts of liquor. Despite this controversy, North retained the faith of the government and received his commission to Saint Georges on August 14, 1758.

At roughly the same time that North was receiving his new commission, Charles Deschamps Boishebert was organizing an expedition against Fort Saint George from the Miramichi region of New Brunswick. Boishebert had seen considerable service as an officer in the French Troupes d' La Marine during King George's War, Father Loutre's War, as part of the Acadien resistance and now during this most recent conflict. Leading a force of approximately 50 French Acadiens and 250 native allies, Boishebert set out in mid August to take the fort at Saint George.

News of Boishebert's expedition reached Governor Pownall in Boston via Lt. Colonel Robert Monckton who was leading the British effort to eliminate the Acadien resistance in New Brunswick. Gathering troops from Boston's Castle William and embarking them aboard the Province Man of War *King George* and the armed province sloop *Massachusetts*, Pownall set sail for the Saint George River. After reinforcing Fort Saint George, the *Massachusetts* and *King George* headed eastward into Penobscot Bay in search of the enemy. Just west of Mount Desert Island, the two Massachusetts vessels encountered Boishebert's expedition. Due to unfavorable winds the *King George* and *Massachusetts,* both square rigged vessels, became wind bound while the French and Indian flotilla of canoes and Battoes was able to slip down the bay and proceed with their attack on Fort Saint George.

For several days at the end of August, Boishebert's Force laid siege to Fort Saint George while burning homes and killing cattle across the community. After finally gaining a favorable wind, the *Massachusetts* made her way up the Saint George River to relieve the fort. Realizing that they would not be able to take the garrison, the French and Indian war party gave up the siege, broke up into small raiding parties and struck at targets to the westward. At nearby Meduncook (now Friendship) one of the raiding parties was able to take several captives and kill eight members of the community's garrison. Boston's newspapers heralded the achievements of Governor Pownall upon return from his foray to the eastward. Little consideration was given, however, to the suffering of the local communities as a result of the attack.

Beginning in January of 1759, Governor Pownall began preparations to push the eastern frontier beyond the community at Saint George. The idea was nothing new. Governor Shirley had floated the possibility on several occasions in the past, most notably in 1748 and again in 1756. Just as Governor Shirley had done, Thomas Pownall proposed the construction of a new fort and truck house to be located near the mouth of the Penobscot River some thirty miles

beyond the fort at Saint George. Such a move was tantamount to seizing much of the Penobscots' territory by force of arms. Whereas Massachusetts had been unable to muster the political and military resolve for such an undertaking during Shirley's time, the weakening of the eastern tribes and the looming collapse of French Canada portended a new era of geopolitical considerations.

Assembling men and supplies at Fort Saint George, Governor Pownall along with his second in command Samuel Waldo[7], set off to establish the new post at Penobscot in early May of 1759. With a force of 400 provincial soldiers, some of whom were drawn from the Saint George region, Pownall seized the mouth of the Penobscot River thus sealing off the last water route to the Maine coast for the region's native people. Weary of war and politically fragmented, the Penobscots offered no armed resistance to Massachusetts' invasion of their homeland. After establishing a fort and truck house at Wasaumkeag Point (present Cape Jellison, Stockton Springs) which he aptly name Fort Pownall, the Governor returned to Boston proclaiming this seizure of land as a "right of conquest".

There were no more native attacks against the eastern frontier following Pownall's acquisition of Penobscot lands and the establishment of Fort Pownall. The absence of bloodshed did not necessarily mean that peace had been restored on the Maine Frontier. Unlike the other Anglo-Abenaki wars which were concluded by the signing of formal treaties, t no treaty concluded this sixth war. For years following the cessation of hostilities, Massachusetts and factions within the Penobscot tribe would continue to hold peace talks at Fort Pownall. Massachusetts never wavered in it demands that the Penobscots come and live amongst the English as a condition of peace. Unwilling to surrender their autonomy and aware of the incompatibility of the native and white lifestyles, beliefs and interests, the Penobscots continually avoided the demands of Massachusetts.

Tension over trade and land continued to exist between the Penobscots and their ever growing number of English neighbors. Sporadic threats of violence continued to plague the eastern frontier, in fact the last generalized Indian alarm was issued during the summer of 1766. However, the political stage of North America was fundamentally altered shortly after the establishment of Fort Pownall. In little more than a year, French Canada would be conquered by the military might of Great Britain. Although the war would continue until 1763, the war in North America effectively ended with the fall of Montreal in 1760. From this point forward,

[7] Samuel Waldo it should be remembered was the leading proprietor of the Muscongus Patent, the speculative land venture, on whose land the settlement at Saint George was founded. Waldo did not survive this military expedition as he died of what appears to be a heart attack or stroke while leading a scouting expedition up the Penobscot to present day Brewer. The seizure of Penobscot lands greatly expanded Waldo's land holdings which reverted to his heirs upon his death. Through marriage to Lucy Flucker, one of Waldo's heirs, Henry Knox was able to gain possession of Waldo's former holdings following the American Revolution.

native societies could no longer play the middle ground between two competing European powers. Unable to secure trade, or military support from France and with little or no political cohesion amongst themselves, many native societies including the Penobscots found themselves politically and militarily impotent.

Unable to effectively negotiate on their own behalf or forcefully promote their interests, the Penobscots, as well as other native people in Maine, continued to live quietly as independent family bands in the forests and along the waterways of interior Maine. Never ceding autonomy in their way of life, recognition of the Crown's authority over them came in an address to Governor Francis Bernard in 1769 in which the Penobscots stated:

> "We acknowledge that we have sided with your Enemies and that they and we have been conquered, and that we are become the Subjects of that great King George. We do now in the name of our whole Tribe recognize it, and do declare that we are now and always will be ready to obey his call upon any duty whatever. "

In only a few years time, the Penobscot's loyalty would be tested again with the outbreak of the American Revolution. Both the rebel Americans and the Crown would seek their support over the course of the war. Once again, the Penobscots would to their best to steer a course of protective neutrality.

For the inhabitants of Saint George, the establishment of Fort Pownall and the end of the war brought an end to the uncertainty occasioned by sporadic warfare. With the movement of the frontier thirty miles to the East, the fort and truck house became obsolete and both were decommissioned in 1760. After resigning his commission, Jabez Bradbury retired to Newburyport, Massachusetts where he died in 1781 with an estate valued at a substantial £15,000. Thomas Fletcher seems to have followed the frontier and moved to the vicinity of Fort Pownall. His name briefly appears as the fort interpreter and in the account book of the truck house where he conducted business until 1777.

The defeat of France and the diminished threat of frontier violence brought about explosive growth in the Province of Maine. No longer deemed a desolate and foreboding frontier primarily suitable for marginalized social groups like the Scots-Irish and Palatinate Germans, Maine became viewed as an oasis of opportunity for a burgeoning Massachusetts population hungry for affordable land. In the ten year span from 1765 to 1775 Maine's population grew from approximately 23,000 to 47,000 while the number of townships grew from 21 in 1750 to more than 140 by the eve of the American Revolution. The expansive growth in Maine following the French and Indian War both created and exacerbated existing social, economic and political tensions. Questions of land title and ownership, disparities of wealth

and influence, taxation and relations with the government in Massachusetts would plague the communities of Maine through the Revolution and propel the movement for Statehood.

Free from constant concerns for security caused by decades of war, the community at Saint George would share the experiences of Maine in general. In 1771 the settlement was incorporated as the town of Thomaston. With an economy based on the export of timber and lime, the town was beholden to Boston for trade and capital. Like many of the towns in the eastern province of Maine, Thomaston would have difficulty meeting its tax obligations to Massachusetts and could not afford to send representatives to the General Court as advocates for their needs. The arrival of Henry Knox and his claim to the remnants of the Muscongus Patent compounded questions of rightful land possession and issues of economic inequality and social justice.

Vestiges of people and events long forgotten dot the Maine landscape today. In a city park in Winslow you may stumble across a solitary wooden block house where Fort Halifax once stood. Buried beneath the bridge spanning the Kennebec River between Richmond and Dresden are the remains of Fort Richmond. Atop a bluff overlooking the Saint George River in Thomaston, Fort St. George lies entombed under a boatyard. In the middle of a field in Cushing sits a rock outcropping from which native raiders attacked Burton Blockhouse only several yards away. At the end of a dirt road beside the Saint George River in Warren you will discover the site of the meeting house which served as the spiritual and social center of the upper town at St. Georges and the final resting place of many of the men from Fletcher's Company. These are but a few of the silent monuments to Maine's forgotten past.

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Appendix

Following is a transcription of the petition filed against Thomas Fletcher by the inhabitants of Saint George. The blanks represent illegible words in the document. The asterisks following the names of the signers indicate men who had served as part of Captain Fletcher's Scouting Company in 1755. A copy of the original petition is also included. Many portions of the original document are very difficult to read and in places are illegible. Original spelling, capitalization and punctuation have been preserved for the integrity of the document despite the challenges that they pose to the modern reader.

To his Excellency William Shirley Esq. Captain General and Governor in Chief in and over his Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England and the select _____ the Members of the most Honorable Council and Honorable _____ _____. The humble address and petition of us the distressed settlers and inhabitants adjacent to the River St. Georges humbly showeth that we his Majesty's most loyal and dutiful Subjects _____ great _____ and _____ your _____ _____ _____ _____providing for our protection and Encouragement in commissioning Captain Thomas Fletcher for the purpose to raise and enlist a company of fifty effective men by whose _____ words of his former Carriage, Conduct and Experience of the Indian method of war _____ engaged the minds of many to fill up his Company with Spirit and Resolution to follow their Captain through all dangers, hoping thereby to have their _____ ____ _____ Loyalty to his sacred Majesty declared _____ _____ _____ the province Interest by the venture of Life and fortune _____.

But soon after enlisting they found that words were only words and _____ that the government's _____ Care and _____ _____ _____the _____ _____ of affairs would be defeated and our _____hopes quashed and _____ expectations disappointed, (the unhappy fate of many well laid schemes) by the weakness, Cowardice and treatury of Instruments entrusted with the Execution; Some or all of those too visably appeared when the only opportunity the Company had of answering the Designs and End of their Inlsitment when Captain Fletcher and Company were spectators to the Indians killing

Cattle in their view at the Fort to the surprise of the men their valiant and cautious Captain would not allow _____ _____ _____ make any show of resistance altho ready in arms and willing in mind to scare those butchers from their prey altho his men and many volunteers out of the Fort by their Commanders leave and approbation _____ to go and would have gone without their Captain's consent, but for fear of being represented as Mutineers, as paint to cover the canvas of cowardice. The next day, Captain Fletcher refusing to go himself, Ensign _____ with a number of volunteers from the Fort and Captain Fletcher's Lieutenant and Company got leave with _____ to go and pick up the fragments the Indians had left, not willing to let it rot on the ground , which was a great loss to poor people, but found no such marks or signals of a great number of Indians as appeared to Captain Fletcher in his imaginary prospect, which he magnifies to amuse Strangers with, but proves all varnish to all acquainted with his behavior and the discharge of the trust your Excellency and Honours reposed in him, which we beg your Excellency may withdraw and never cloath him with the same or any commanding power relating to his Majesty's Service or province interest in promoting and protecting these Infant Settlements, for as he came here a Hireling for a sum of money instead of some impressed man he yet retains that mercenary disposition of coveting the pay without regard to office or duty who soon after coming to the Fort gained such Interest in Captain Bradbury's favor, that Fletcher's word _____ to y two or three favorites _____ in the _____ of iniquity counter balances the joint Testimony of many witnesses who are willing and desirous _____ the truth of that assertion upon Oath before any proper officer impowered by your Excellency and Honours to inquire into the Facts alledged who we beg for, being unwilling to bear the names of Lyars, Rouge Fools, Madmen which are the common terms Captain Fletcher and select _____ under the _____ of Captain Bradbury's Interest and authority_____ all gain sayers of his painted representations of Facts: we beg your Honours may excuse our resentment of such usage, while his Majesty's Glory and Interest of this province are Dastardly betrayed by such.

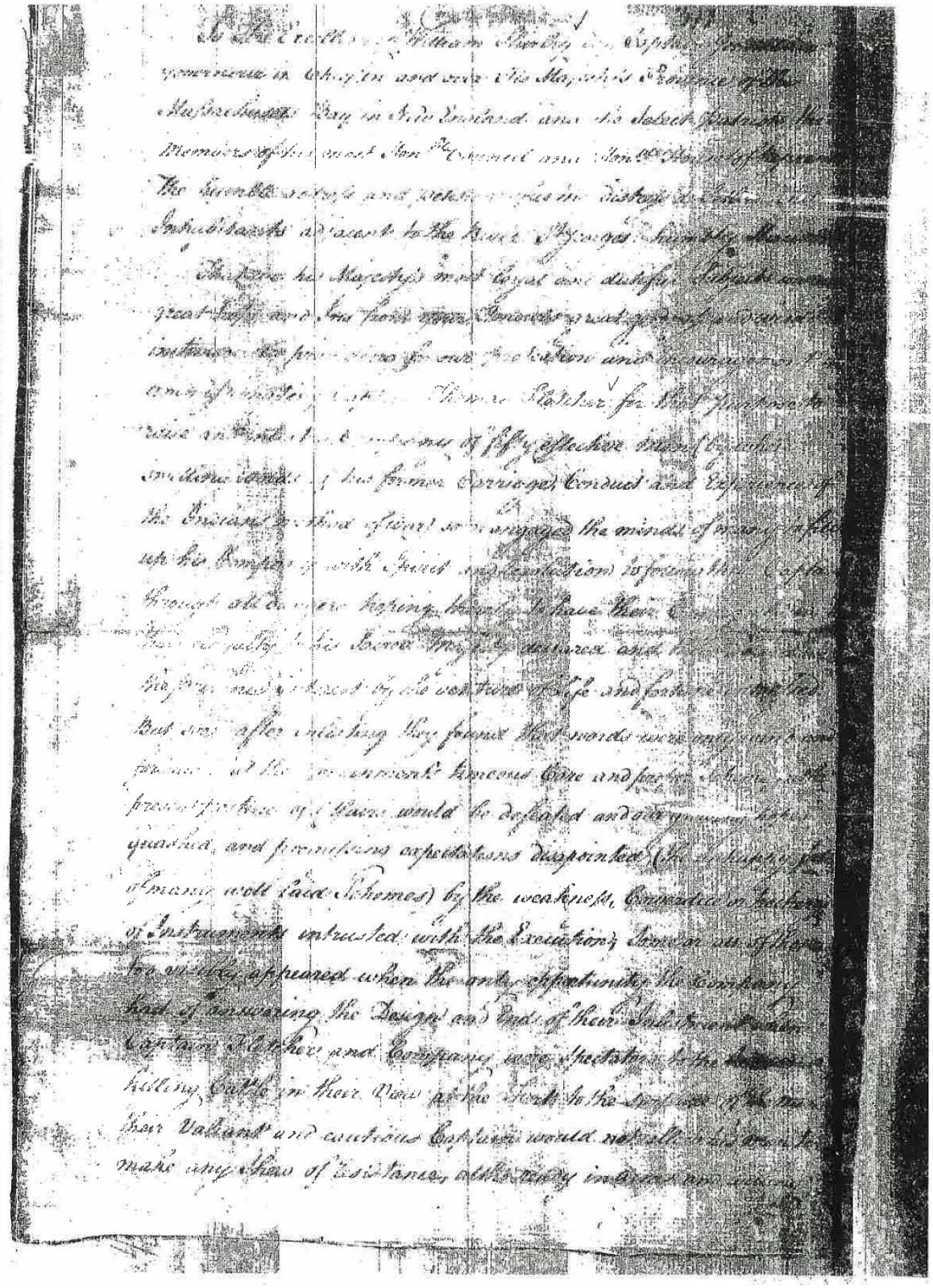
As regards only the pay and _____, sure we are that had the Commission happen'd in the hands of a man of honest Conscience and fidelity our present address had been to congradulate your Honours on the Success of the good _____ Endeavors for our protection and defense. but we beg our just sense of failure of the intended end by the Injuries Of the instrument employed may not be esteemed a _____ of the sincere and gratefull Impressions we have, and shall always acknowledge and express of your Honours care and regard for the protection and encouragement for our infant settlements. but we humbly intreat and beg for the continuance of your Honours favor and Countenance; without which these infant Settlments must soon dwindle, and many Settlers reduced to the Charity of the province, and become the Care and province of the Inspectors of the poor, which we _____ not may be effectually prevented by continuing your Honours

Goodness but changing the Current into a more proper Channel where it may have free course without stop or constraint, for which End we pretend not to direct but leave it to Your Honours greater wisdom and deeper penetration, but beg leave to offer it as our humble petition; that some interest with us, who will equally adhear to our common Interest may be impowered in the place; had any Courage, Care and Interest with us been in Captain Fletcher's place the Summer past the poor Settlers had enjoyed more of their labor and Your Honours a more consistant Journal and undisguised account of our Enemies who were by captain Fletcher rather _____ than pursued under the _____ of a _____ and limited rout to the Sheepscot, without regard to us poor Setlers, refusing to guard us in the fields to the great loss and disappointment of may when winter Stores depended on such assistance a few select favorites excepted, and this Colored with a _____ pretention of his regard of the _____Safety of his Soldiers which we do believe was great accompanied with such a gripping panic as produces natural and sensible effects upon the least Suspicion or whisper of Danger and therefore as our Enemies met with no opposition or Discouragement last year we expect an early visit from them this spring but our _____ disappointment has rather raised than abated our Courage and resolution being spirited and willing to see them _____ if your Honours see fit to continue your favor unto us and appointed such officers as being jointly interested with us may not sacrifice our all to their _____ fear and mercenary view. And your petitioners as is duty bound shall ever pray.

Joseph Robinson *
Gregory Young
_____
Moses Robinson*
Joseph Rivers *
Owen Madin*
High Roos*
William Smith*
Thomas Holden*
Christian Power
Michael Rawley*
Richard Fornis
James Parsons
Thomas Carney*
William Hawthorn
Andrew Bird*
Samuel Boggs Jr. *
Nathaniel Bartlet*
William Young*
William Boggs

George B___more
William Davis Jr.
Timothy Smith
Samuel Jameson *
Zachariah Davis
John _____more
John Davis
William Davis
Samuel Davis
Joseph Andres
--------- Wadsworth (crossed out)
Thomas Wadsworth
John Densmore
Jesse Thomas
Samuel Jameson
Enoch Thomas
Alexander Jameson
Robert Carver

Samuel Boggs
Moses Robinson*
David Peterson
Thomas Greag*
John Greag
Davis Patterson Jr *
Archibald Robinson*
John Robinson*
William Watson
John Watson
William Watson
William Davis
John McCarter*
John Miller*
John L_____
Archibald Gamble*
_____
James Floyd
Simon _____
Haunse Robinson*



312

in mind to scare those Butchers from their Prey, altho his Men and many Volunteers out of the Fort by their Commander's leave and approbation offered to go and would have gone without their Captain's consent, but for fear of being represented Mutineers, as paint to cover the Canvass of Cowardice. The next day, Captain [illegible] refusing to go himself, Ensign [illegible] with a number of Volunteers out of the Fort, and Captain Fletcher's Lieutenant and Company got leave with long persuasion to go and pick up the fragments the Indians had left, not willing to have it rot on the Ground, which was a great [illegible] to poor People, but found no such marks or Signs of a great number of Indians as appeared to Captain Fletcher in his immaginary prospect, which he magnifies to amuse Strangers with, but proves all varnish to all acquainted with his Behaviour and the discharge of the trust Your Excellency and Honours reposed in him; which we beg your Excellency may withdraw and never cloath him with the same or any commanding power relating to his Majesty's Service, or province Interest in promoting and protecting these Infant Settlements, for as he came here a Hireling for a Sum of money instead of some impressed man he yet retains that mercenary disposition of coveting the pay without regard to Office or duty, who soon after coming to the Fort gained such Interest in Captain Bradbury's favor, that Fletcher's word assorted to by two or three favourites, partisans in the mistery of iniquity counter ballances the joint Testimony of many witnesses, who are willing and desirous to vindicate the truth of their assertion upon Oath before any proper Officer impowred by your Excellency and Honours to inquire into the Facts alledged which we beg for, being unwilling to bear the ignominious names of Lyars, Rogues Fools, madmen, which are the common terms Captain Fletcher and [illegible] ~~[illegible]~~ under the Covert of Captain Bradbury's Interest and Authority treat all gain sayers of his painted representations of Facts: We beg your Honours may excuse our resentment of such usage, while his Majesty's Glory and Interest of this Province are dastardly betrayed by such

an

as regard only the pay and Perquisites. Sure we are that had that Commission happen'd in the Hands of a man of honest Conscience and fidelity our present address had been to congratulate your Honours on the Success of the good timeous Endeavours for our protection and Defence. but we beg our just Sense of failure of the intended end or the unfitness of the Instrument employed may not be esteemed a Lessning of the Sincere and gratefull Impressions we have, and shall always acknowledge and express of Your Honours Care & Regard for the Protection and encouragement of our infant Settlements. but we humbly intreat and beg for the continuation of your Honours favor and Countenance, without which these infant Settlements must soon dwindle, and many Setlers reduced to the Charity of the province, and become the Care and Province of the Inspectors of the poor, which we trust not may be especially prevented by continuing Your Honours Goodness but changing the Current into a more Proper Channel where it may have free course without Stop or restraint, for which End we pretend not to direct but leave it to Your Honours greater wisdom and deeper penetration, but beg leave to offer it as our humble petition, that some interest with us, who will equally adhear to our common Interest may be impowered in the place; had any of Courage, Care and Interest with us been in Captain Fletchers place the Summer past the poor Setlers had enjoyed more of their Labor, and Your Honours amore consistant Journal and undisguised account of our Enemies who were by Captain Fletcher rather shunned than pursued under the Covert of a fat and limited Tour to Sheepscut, without regard to us poor Setlers, refusing to guard

us

us in the [illegible] to the great Loss and disappointment of many [illegible] Winter Stores depended on such assistance, a few Select [illegible] accepted, and their Colours with a [illegible] protention of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Soldiers, which we do believe [illegible] accompanied with such a griping pannic as produces natural and sensible Effects upon the least Suspicion or whisper of Danger, and therefore as our Enemies met with no opposition or discouragement [illegible] Year we expect an early Visit from them this Spring, but our [illegible] disappointment has rather raised than abated our Courage and [illegible] being Spirited and willing to see them out if your Honours see fit to continue your favour unto us, and appoint such Officers as being jointly interested with us may not Sacrifice our all to their Slavish fear and mercenary View. And Your Petitioners as in duty bound shall ever pray.

Joseph Robinson
[illegible]
[illegible]
William Young
Moses Robinson jun
Joseph [illegible]
[illegible] Martin
Hugh Ross
William Smith
Thomas Holden
Christian Brower
Michael Hawley
Richard [illegible]
James Parsons
Thomas [illegible]
William Hawthorn
Andrew Bird
Samuel Boggs Jun
William Boggs
Nathaniel Bartlet

George Wadmore
William Davis [illegible]
Timothy Smith
Samuel Jameson
William King
Zachariah Davis
John Wadmore
John Davis
William Davis
Samuel Davis
Joseph Andres
[illegible] Wadsworth
Thomas Wadsworth
John Demorse
[illegible] Thomas
Samuel Jameson
[illegible] Thomas
Alexander Jameson
Robert [illegible]

Samuel Boggs
Moses Robinson
David [illegible]
Thomas [illegible]
John [illegible]
[illegible]
David [illegible]
Archibald [illegible]
John Robinson
William [illegible]
John Watson
William [illegible]
William [illegible]
John M[illegible]
John Miller
John [illegible]
Archibald [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

Copy

Included below is a copy and transcription of the letter Thomas Fletcher's wrote to Lieutenant Governor Phips concerning the September 24′ 1755 attack on the community at Saint George. It is offered as a counter point to the petition filed by the regions inhabitants against Fletcher in which they offer their appraisal of the attack. As in the transcription of the petition all original spelling and punctuation have been preserved. Additionally, the line structure of the document was preserved because it was readily apparent that every line began with a capital letter. In this regard the use of capitalization seems less random.

These are To Inform, Your Hon^{r} that This Day,
The Indians fell on us, Two Men were out a small
Distance from the Garrison, the Indians fired Upon
Them, one Escaped & the other is missing, They began
About Twelve of the clock & continued fireing on
The cattle Till About Night. I immediately, Dispatch^{t}
An Express To the Neighouring Settlements, I judge
There is a great Body of them By their Appearance
My Leu^{t} was on a March with Thirty Men, But
Happily this Evening Return^{d}, This Night I Design
To Go out & Try to meet with them ----------
Being All at Present, I Beg Leave to subscribe My Self Your Honrd, Most Obedient Humb^{ld} Ser^{t}

T Fletcher

S^{t} Georges Fort 24 Sept^{r}, 1755

148

These are To Inform, Your Hon.r That This Day,
The Indians fell on us, Two Men were out At Small
Distance from the Garrison, the Indians fired Upon
Them, one Escaped, & the other is missing, They began
About Twelve of the Clock, & Continued firing on
The Cattle Till Almost Night, I imediately Dispatch
An Express To the Neighbouring Settlements, I judge
There is a great Body of them – By their Appearance
My Lieut was on a March with thirty Men, but
Happily this Evening Return'd, This Night I Design
To Go out, & Try to meet with them –
Being All at Present, I Beg Leave To Subscribe
My Self Your Hon.rs Most Obedient Humble Serv.t

J. Fletcher

St Georges Fort 24 Sept.r 1755