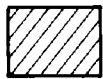


LEGEND



AREA CONQUERED
BY BRITISH - 1814

WINTER ROUTE

----- BETWEEN ST. JOHN
AND CANADIAN FRONT

NORTHERN BOUND-

..... ARY OF MAINE
UNDEFINED



THE THEATER
OF
OPERATIONS
1812 - 1814

A NEW LOOK AT THE INVASION OF EASTERN MAINE, 1814

By
Barry J. Lohnes

During the last year of the War of 1812 the British launched an invasion of the Maine District of Massachusetts, capturing a large salient between the Penobscot River and the New Brunswick border. Few historians have appraised adequately the inability of the national and state governments to defend the region of eastern New England, nor have they researched carefully the British motivations behind the assault. Only through a closer look at the defensive errors of the Americans is it possible to realize that the British victory, though a tactical success, was a strategic failure. The capture of Portland, Portsmouth, and points southward were in the grasp of the British; it was one of the most costly mistakes of the war to settle for so little.

From geographical and strategic standpoints Maine was very dangerously located. The District was enveloped by British North American provinces on two sides and its coastal area lay in the shadow of the huge British naval base at Halifax. Even though the District's vulnerability had been established with a British invasion of the Penobscot region during the Revolution, in 1812 most of the seaports east of Boston were without defenses.

Problems regarding the defense of Maine became acute when President Jefferson put the Embargo Act into effect in December of 1807, in retaliation for the impressment of American seamen. The Embargo, which forbade American merchant ships to participate in foreign trade, caused economic stagnation in Northern New England and prompted a revival of the Federalist party in Massachusetts and the District of Maine.¹ With the Embargo, war with Great Britain became imminent, but it

appears that political patronage, rather than military expediency, dictated the means for defending the region. Federal government funds were spent for fortifications in the areas under Republican control while the regions of Federalist domination were generally neglected.² To illustrate, three major rivers in Maine, the Penobscot, the Androscoggin, and the Kennebec should have been defended because they offered the only means of commercial transportation in the District; the north-south flow of the rivers tended to tie the agricultural, timber, and shipbuilding industries to the Boston market. But only the Androscoggin and Kennebec areas were defended. Both happened to be Jeffersonian-Republican strongholds. In the Kennebec Valley Major General Henry Dearborn had established a strong party machine while in Lincoln County, at the confluence of the Kennebec and Androscoggin rivers, William King had created a stronghold of Jeffersonian Republicanism.³ In eastern Maine, where the Federalists were in power, the region was left without even rudimentary defenses.⁴ Outside of a small redoubt at Eastport, the 38,000 citizens living between the Penobscot River and Passamaquoddy Bay were left without any type of land fortifications.⁵

Naval defense was non-existent east of Portland, and there were no American blue-water warships east of the naval shipyard at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. At Portland were stationed nine Federal gunboats of an "utterly inferior" class, part of a gunboat fleet constructed by the Jefferson Administration as a money-saving scheme.⁶ Ironically, the nine gunboats at Portland were withdrawn shortly after the war began.⁷ Interestingly enough, the commander of the Portland gunboat squadron prior to the War of 1812 was Lieutenant Charles Morris, who was destined to play a leading role in the American defeat in eastern Maine.⁸

When war was declared in 1812 after four years of economic decline in the east, the people of Massachusetts and the District of Maine demonstrated only lukewarm support for the war effort. In some areas the defeatism had reached traitorous proportions. Shortly after the outbreak of war, residents of Eastport, in the prime smuggling area of Passamaquoddy, voted unanimously to

preserve a “good understanding” with the New Brunswick people; apparently their economic well-being was more important than their patriotism.⁹

A clash between the Federal government and Massachusetts occurred only four days after the declaration of war. The senior General of the United States Army, Henry Dearborn, wrote to Caleb Strong, Governor of Massachusetts, requesting that forty-one companies of militia be activated for the defense of the coast east of Connecticut. Strong refused adamantly, complaining that the request was in violation of the Act of 1795 which authorized the Federal government to activate the state militia forces only in time of national emergency.¹⁰ In retaliation to Strong’s recalcitrance, the Federal government withdrew its regular detachments from coastal garrisons in Massachusetts and Maine, leaving only one regiment for the defense of the coast between Easport and Cape Cod.¹¹ Eventually Strong ordered three companies of Penobscot militia to take up positions near the New Brunswick border to alleviate the anxiety in that quarter. As it turned out, the motley group of irregulars behaved so badly that the citizens sent them home.¹²

The militia in Massachusetts and the District of Maine during the War of 1812 numbered 3,000 men but the number was deceiving because it was purely a paper organization, lacking arms, training, and qualified officers. Only about 2,000 of the militia were activated for short periods before the invasion of 1814.¹³ Frequently the men were ordered out to muster simply to get their names on the roster; after this was done they went home.¹⁴ At a court martial after the war it was found that some officers recruited militia candidates and dismissed them after collecting the bounty money.¹⁵ In regard to armament, one battalion of Norridgewock militia reported only sixty-five men enrolled and absolutely no artillery. Similar shortages were found throughout the District.¹⁶ Indeed, the lack of state support for the militia caused William King, commander of the 11th Division of Militia, to comment that “no reliance can be placed on the militia, none ought to be.”¹⁷

To worsen matters the Federal government hoped to embarrass Massachusetts by letting the state fend for itself in defending the land from the British. Government policy was summarized adequately in a letter written by the Secretary of the Navy which read in part: "If a people of a populous place with such powerful means of defense . . . will not defend themselves, I see nothing to prevent the [British] force from burning everything. . . ." ¹⁸ Some of the political leaders in Maine realized that the District was being sacrificed because of partisan interests, but they did not know how to rectify the situation. ¹⁹

What is more, the Maine people suffered from the dearth of naval defense. Some of the more wealthy merchants were able to absorb the business decline but the poorer classes had to struggle for existence. Nova Scotian and New Brunswick privateers added to the problem by harrassing coastal vessels left defenseless by the paucity of United States naval protection. Joseph Leavitt, a barely literate Bangor trader, described the situation:

For ten days back we have heard of a great number of coasters—belonging to this river [Penobscot] , being taken by the privateers
Corn & all provisions very scarce & in short, none to be had; people
are in a suffering state. Fishing is now over & there have not been but
very few caught. ²⁰

Crop failures added to the problems of farmers transporting their produce to the Boston market. Benjamin Robbins, who farmed in the Winthrop area, noted that "many have been in want of food and necessities of life on account of the poor crops the year last." ²¹ *Niles' Register* described the residents of Maine as the "starving inhabitants of the eastward." ²²

The inability of the Maine residents to make a living left many in a condition of apathy and dejection. As a result, more than a few turned to smuggling. Besides the tons of goods exchanged in Passamaquoddy Bay, there is evidence that a vigorous overland trade existed between Fredericton, New Brunswick, and Bangor, where a bountiful assortment of goods was transported in canoes over a system of portages. Joseph Leavitt, the unlucky Bangor

trader, noted that the smuggling was controlled by customs officials, whom he considered to be "custom house pimps" and a "hungry set of wolves."²³

During the first two years of war the British welcomed the produce that was smuggled into British North America and the British Isles. Poor harvests in Great Britain and the Maritime Provinces had forced the British to authorize the granting of licenses to American merchants.²⁴ But in the spring of 1814 the situation changed drastically. With the defeat of Napoleon and an increased food supply in Europe, Britain turned its attentions to the war in North America. An aggressive naval officer, Admiral Alexander Cochrane, was sent to the American Station with strong reinforcements of ships and seamen.²⁵

Shortly after Cochrane took command, he extended the naval blockade to include New England, which had been exempted from the blockade because of the need for foodstuffs in Britain and the Maritime Provinces. At this time there were no specific targets selected for assault by the reinforced naval command. The War Office and the Admiralty debated whether to attack the Navy Yard at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, or Rhode Island. Cochrane speculated on first destroying the seventy-four-gun ship under construction at Portsmouth, then marching overland to join General Prevost near Lake Champlain, thereby dismembering a part of New England. Cochrane then considered the occupation of Rhode Island and from there striking at points in southern New England.²⁶ Both of these plans had merit and if implemented, would have forced New England out of the war and Britain would have had an overpowering edge at the conference table.

Instead, the British adapted a strategy which was much less decisive. Cochrane was to operate against Baltimore or Washington while Prevost was ordered to advance into New York with naval support from Lake Champlain, with the expectation of defeating the Americans in a major battle.²⁷ The third assault was to take place in eastern Maine where the plans were to "occupy . . . that part of the District of Maine which at present intercepts the communication between Halifax and Quebec."²⁸

The communications network in British North America depended on the overland route between Quebec and Halifax because the St. Lawrence River was frozen over from late November to mid-April. General Prevost, the commander in chief in the Canadian provinces, sent vital dispatches to Halifax and London from Quebec during the winter months. Of equal importance was the march of the 104th Regiment of Infantry along the portage route to reinforce the endangered British army in Canada during February of 1813.²⁹ The value of the portage route was realized again in December of 1813 when over 200 seamen were marched overland to supplement the undermanned Royal Navy on the Great Lakes.³⁰

Actually, there was no military reason for occupying eastern Maine to protect this route. The boundary in 1814 was ill-defined and except for the passage through Madawaska, the route did not touch the present-day boundary of Maine. Furthermore, the nearest American troops were over two hundred miles distant. Nevertheless, a historian of Madawaska has written that "marauders, poachers, and skirmishers infested the forests of Temiscouata Lake," causing the British to use armed guards to protect the dispatch carriers.³¹ Apparently the British thought that the renegades were American troops or militia, but there is no evidence to support this assumption.

From an economic standpoint, the merchants and officials of the Maritime Provinces desired British occupation of eastern Maine because American smugglers were gaining about 95 percent of the carrying trade along the coast, thus depriving the Provinces of the customs duties.³² Also, they believed that eastern Maine had been shamefully ceded to the United States after the Revolution as a gesture of appeasement at the conference table. Emotions ran so high that both the New Brunswick Council and the Halifax Committee of Trade petitioned the British government for the occupation of eastern Maine; as it turned out, the petitions were important in the government's decision to invade the District of Maine.³³

On June 19, 1814, Admiral Cochrane received orders from the

Admiralty to dispatch an amphibious force to capture the island in Passamaquoddy Bay. Subsequently, on July 11, the combined force secured the surrender of Fort Sullivan at Eastport, without a shot being fired. The British commander, Captain Thomas Masterman Hardy, suggested to Admiral Cochrane that Eastport would serve as an excellent base for "further annoyance of the enemy."⁴³ In the meantime Cochrane had decided that sterner measures were necessary in order to bring the war to a close; he ordered his commanders to "destroy and lay waste" all government stores and merchant shipping and to "threaten private property."³⁵

Little had been accomplished regarding the defense of the District, although sporadic raids had occurred along the coast prior to the capture of Eastport.³⁶ Two days before the capture of Eastport, the Adjutant General of Massachusetts had somehow deduced that the Penobscot region was about to be attacked in force. In spite of his apprehension, he ordered only one brigade to be put in readiness to muster "in consequence that the enemies [*sic*] cruisers threaten to attack Castine and other towns in its neighborhood."³⁷ But by the time the order was received, Eastport had fallen to the British.

Upon hearing that the Passamaquoddy Bay area had been captured, Strong allowed General Dearborn to place 1,100 militia under Federal command to serve at points along the coast for a period of three months. Ironically, once activated, the militia were marched off to Lake Champlain, giving credence to Strong's mistrust of Dearborn and the Secretary of War.³⁸ Although there were but few remaining Federal troops in Maine, Dearborn appointed one of his political friends, Major General John Chandler, as their commander. Chandler, who had been a hired hand on Dearborn's farm in Monmouth, may have been skilled in elocution but he had few military successes to his credit.³⁹ As events would prove, Chandler had no authority to issue orders to the militia in the District of Maine.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, a large British force had been gathering at Halifax for the invasion of additional Maine territory. Secretary Bathurst

amended his previous order for conquest to include territory “more calculated to feel the pressure of war.”⁴¹ The commanders of the expedition, Governor John Coape Sherbrooke of Nova Scotia and Admiral Edward Griffith, were given ample flexibility by Bathurst’s order. But the lack of more direction from the War Secretary caused the British to make an onerous error in the invasion plans; the commanders overestimated the defenses of Maine and thus western Maine was saved from invasion. Griffith’s summary of the strategy reveals the error:

The only part of the Coast that could be attacked with any prospect of success, is that which lies between the Penobscot River and Passamaquoddy Bay; the ports southward and westward of the Penobscot River, being situated in a populous country; *and from all the information we have been able to collect, the defenses are too formidable to be attacked with so small a force* it has been decided upon that the expedition should go against Penobscot. The troops amounting to two thousand five hundred.⁴²

Accordingly, the British commanders settled for an objective with no actual strategic value.

On August 26 an armada of sixteen ships left Halifax for the invasion of American territory. The commanders first intended to occupy Machias but a brig which had been sent out in advance sighted the American corvette *Adams* which was heading toward the mouth of the Penobscot. Subsequently, Sherbrooke made sail for Castine with hopes of capturing a United States warship. Upon arriving at Castine, the British found that the *Adams* had sailed up the Penobscot. After dispersing the few American soldiers who held an artillery position at Castine, the commanders dispatched six hundred soldiers and marines in sloops and barges to search for the *Adams*.⁴³

The *Adams*, commanded by Captain Charles Morris, had recently returned from an unsuccessful commerce raiding cruise in European waters. While heading toward Portsmouth with a scurvy-ridden crew, the *Adams* struck a ledge in Penobscot Bay, making the ship unseaworthy. After disembarking the sick crew members, Morris maneuvered the ship up the Penobscot, realizing

he had been sighted by one of Griffith's reconnaissance brigs. At Hampden, twenty-seven miles north of Castine, Morris ordered the *Adams* dismantled, so that the ship's damage could be assessed. On September 1, Morris conferred with Brigadier General John Blake of Brewer, commander of the First Brigade of 10th Division, Massachusetts Militia, regarding the defense of Hampden. Though the local militia were summoned to Hampden, there was little cooperation between Morris and Blake. Morris resented having to arm the militia with muskets from the *Adams*, and Blake displayed his arrogance by refusing to dig earthworks at the most favorable position, between Hampden Academy and the Penobscot.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Morris refrained from assuming command of the land defenses, perhaps because he scented a disaster in the making.

In any case, Morris was the only man who could have saved the situation at Hampden. For some reason he failed to demonstrate the aggressive spirit that had highlighted his career. He made no plans for the integration of his seasoned seamen and marines with the raw militia to bolster their flagging morale. In short, he seemed content to allow the untried militia to stand or fall on their own merits, without taking into consideration the futility of the *Adams*' defense if the militia line was broken.⁴⁵

On the cold, foggy morning of September 3, 1814, over 550 of Blake's militia stood unprotected on a sloping bluff stretching from the church across the Bangor Road to the banks of the Penobscot, just behind the Academy. Three hundred yards north, on a high bank of the river, fourteen cannon from the *Adams* had been stationed to protect the corvette, which was in a careened position a few feet below Crosby's Wharf.⁴⁶ The British force, which had landed three miles south of Hampden the night before, attacked by land and river; the soldiers and marines forced the bluff while barges in the river kept out of cannon range and fired Congreve rockets in the direction of the bluff. According to one member of the militia, the Americans on the bluff "gave way and fled in great disorder" before the British bayonet charge.⁴⁷ One regimental commander of the militia "withdrew himself from the

shot behind a building” and then “fled from the scene of the action.”⁴⁸

When the militia line was broken, Morris found that his position was outflanked; his crew had to set fire to the *Adams* and flee across the narrow Souadabscock River to save themselves. Morris and his men then fled overland to the Kennebec Valley and onward to Portsmouth.⁴⁹

The skirmish was over in less than a half hour. The capture of the Penobscot had cost the British one man killed, eight wounded, and one missing. Blake’s losses were one killed, eleven wounded, and about eighty captured on the field of battle. Losses to the crew of the *Adams* were one marine killed and one seaman captured.⁵⁰ The British continued their advance to Bangor where they engaged in plundering. Joseph Leavitt wrote that “scarcely was there a house or store but that suffered more or less—many stripped of all.”⁵¹ The British withdrew from Bangor and Hampden on September 5, after burning shipping and extracting bonds to the value of \$42,000 from the citizens, to guarantee the delivery of ships to the British at Castine. Eleven of the ships which were not burned were confiscated by the British and taken to Castine.⁵²

The occupation of eastern Maine was completed with the capture of Machias a few days later. Sherbrooke and Griffith returned to Halifax on September 18, taking half of the armed forces personnel with them. In general, the invasion of eastern Maine had been undertaken with an excellent command relationship between the army and navy. But it was unfortunate for the British that such a substantial force was not used to attack deeper into New England.

The remainder of Maine, west of the Penobscot, was equally defenseless. A discouraged Bangor resident named Joseph Williamson described the potential of the British invasion force:

Nothing hinders their ascending your river [Kennebec] in the same manner, completely conquering every town. After they have done this, they can with equal ease conquer all of the District of Maine and New Hampshire, for the enemy have [*sic*] troops and a navy for all these conquests.⁵³

Williamson implied that the lethargy of the Maine people in defending themselves contributed to the British success. Even Governor Sherbrooke noted that the "more wealthy of the inhabitants are really desirous of changing their present form of government."⁵⁴

Confusion was the order of the day in western Maine and Massachusetts. Rumors mushroomed into predictions that the British had ordered 15,000 German mercenaries to subdue Cape Cod and Cape Ann, with Boston as the eventual objective.⁵⁵ Despite the anticipated danger, Governor Strong refused the request of General Dearborn to mobilize the militia. He informed Dearborn that the Massachusetts General Court had to be consulted before funds could be spent on the activation of the militia. Other than calling for a General Court Session for October 5 and ordering work done on Boston's fortifications, he did nothing.⁵⁶

Even though Strong refused to call out the militia, many of the units responded to mobilization orders from their regimental commanders. According to one newspaper, nearly 5,000 militia were gathered at Portland by September 12.⁵⁷ From available accounts, the militia were low in morale and poorly led. In August, one regiment resisted an order to take up defensive positions in Portland which had been manned previously by Federal troops.⁵⁸ Another crisis was precipitated by a brigade commander who refused to activate his unit when ordered to do so by his superior officer.⁵⁹ The shortage of arms and ammunition was another problem; a year earlier the Secretary of War had cancelled the scheduled weapons shipments to the Massachusetts militia.⁶⁰ The disorder was duly noted by William Sumner, Strong's special agent during the emergency:

The accounts which Adjutant General Brooks received from the District of Maine were so confused and contradictory, that he could not deduce from them the true state of affairs in any threatened position, nor advise the governor what means were to be adopted, or what number of troops should be stationed in any such locality.⁶¹

Sumner was the only person able to create some semblance of order in the District of Maine. Traveling up the coast from Boston, Sumner organized 400 militia for the defense of the Portsmouth Navy Yard. Noting that the York County militia were in utter confusion, he proceeded to Portland, where he placed 1,100 militia under Federal command at Fort Burroughs. At Wiscasset he was helpful in settling a slight disagreement between Dearborn and William King, the commander of the 11th Division of Militia. A compromise was negotiated and King allowed two battallions of militia to serve under Federal command, but only if they were organized in militia fashion.⁶² Although Sumner was moderately successful in calming some of the discord in the District, the situation had deteriorated to such an extent that no single individual could have solved the many-faceted problems involving coastal defense.

By mid September requests began pouring in from townships to send the militia home, resulting in a general deactivation later in the month. At this time desertions exceeded enlistments. One militia officer was so desperate for recruits that he enlisted deserters from the British garrison at Castine, whom he considered to be "good lively fellows."⁶³ By the first of October an adequate defense of the coast was impossible if the British landed in force or chose to bombard the seaports.

Not only were Governor Strong and other prominent Federalists disposed to allow the British occupation of eastern Maine, they were ready to concede parts of the conquered salient to British annexation.⁶⁴ The Federalists were more concerned about organizing the Hartford Convention in an effort to humiliate the Federal government than they were about defending the District of Maine from invasion.

The defenseless situation of Maine and the unwillingness of Governor Strong to mobilize forces to recapture eastern Maine caused bitter indignation among a large number of the District's politicians. In mid-October a group of Republicans from Maine asked the Massachusetts General Court to look into the potentiality of driving the British out of Maine. The General Court neglected to

take action, much to the anger of the Republican faction in the District. Naturally, this refusal of the General Court to look after the interests of Maine caused many of the District's people to feel increasingly alienated from Massachusetts.⁶⁵

The Federal government made the next move in considering an expedition to force the British out of Maine territory. In November, Acting Secretary of War James Monroe let it be known that troops could be found by forcing the militia to serve under Federal command. Though Monroe thought the expedition an "object of greatest importance," General Dearborn was pessimistic. "Against regular troops, strongly posted," Dearborn wrote, "we cannot confide in the militia, unless their numbers are very superior to that of the enemy. We remember the unfortunate Penobscot expedition of the Revolution."⁶⁶

Nevertheless, William King, proposed commander of the expedition, met with Governor Strong in late November to plan for the campaign. Strong put a damper on the proposal and the expedition never reached the advanced planning stage. Worse still, the plan was leaked to a Boston newspaper and the British soon learned of the scheme.⁶⁷

The refusal of Strong to act on King's behalf was a blessing in that the proposed expedition had little chance for success. A year earlier the contract system for supply had broken down in New England, meaning that a large military force operating in Maine could not have subsisted unless supplied by sea from areas of agricultural surplus.⁶⁸ Loss of command of the sea ruled out the possibility of logistical support along the Atlantic sea lanes. Moreover, William King had little actual military experience.

In the meantime, the British chose to consolidate rather than to expand their conquests in eastern Maine. Having interpreted the situation poorly from across the Atlantic, the British government believed that the Americans had the strength to recapture eastern Maine whenever they wished. Surprisingly unaware of the military impotency of the Americans in New England, the British agreed to return the conquered region at the conference table at Ghent,

where negotiations were in progress. Even the Duke of Wellington thought the conquest “only temporary,” and Henry Gouldburn, one of the British negotiators, believed that the Americans would “fight hard” to get possession of the islands in Passamaquoddy Bay.⁶⁹ Apparently neither the Duke nor Gouldburn knew that the Americans had no naval and military forces to recapture the lost territory.

Fortunately for New England, the British suffered setbacks at Baltimore and Plattsburg. Failure to occupy important portions of American territory, compounded with domestic difficulties and a Russian threat from the east, caused Britain to compromise at the conference table. After tedious negotiations, a *status quo antebellum* peace was signed and eastern Maine was returned to the United States.

The loss of eastern Maine during the War of 1812 is a sad chapter in the State’s history. It is regrettable that it was American military and naval successes outside of the District which brought about the restoration of eastern Maine rather than the people of Massachusetts and the District of Maine who did next to nothing to gain back the lost territory. On the other hand, British strategic blunders spared the District of Maine from a much more damaging invasion which could have encompassed all of Maine had the British used the military and naval power at their disposal. Furthermore, the Maine people came to realize that the union with Massachusetts was impractical and undesirable, and the move toward statehood began in earnest.

NOTES

¹ See Henry Adams, *History of the United States* (9 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1891-96), VI, 413-415.

² Benson J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book of the War of 1812* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1868), pp. 235-236. In Republican Rhode Island, for instance, five forts were constructed between 1800-1812 while in Fed-

eralist Connecticut, there was no construction. There is no evidence of an actual conspiracy against the New England Federalists; Federal money flowed into areas of Administration support in the same fashion as it does in present-day politics.

³ For a listing of the Republican strongholds, see Paul Goodman, *The Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 120-124. Another region of Republican ascendancy was York County, where millionaire Thomas Cutts took the party leadership. See also Ronald F. Banks, *Maine Becomes a State: The Movement to Seperate Maine from Massachusette, 1785-1820* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1970), pp. 44-45. For a listing of the fortress construction, see Henry E. Dunnack, *Maine Forts* (Augusta: Charles E. Nash, 1924), pp. 83-96. Four forts were built in Lincoln County at Edgecomb, Popham, Fort Island, and south of Thomaston. In York County Fort McClary was built on Kittery Point. Forts Scammell and Preble were built in Portland Harbor, supervised by Alexander Scammel Dearborn, the son of Henry Dearborn.

⁴ Banks, *Maine Becomes a State*, pp. 43, 97, 229-232. According to Banks, Congressman Samuel Thatcher of Warren was instrumental in keeping the eastern counties under Federalist control. For population figures see Moses Greenleaf, *A Statistical View of the District of Maine* (Boston: Cummings and Hilliard, 1816), p. 50.

⁵ Fort Sullivan is described in Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book*, p. 890.

⁶ John Trumbull, *Autobiography: Reminiscences and Letters from 1746 to 1841* (New Haven: B.L. Hamlen, 1841), pp. 246-253, citing his own article printed in the *New York Evening Post*, December 12, 1807. For an accurate British description of the gunboat force in New England, see Admiral Sawyer to Croker [Secretary of the Admiralty], April 7, 1812, Adm. 1/502, pp. 88-89. The Admiralty papers used in this article were found in the Public Archives of Canada (microfilm reels B-1447 to B-1453, and B-3434 to B-3435).

⁷ Secretary of the Navy to Commodore Isaac Hull, Feb. 26, 1813, quoted in George H. Preble, *History of the United States Navy Yard, Portsmouth, New Hampshire* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1892), pp. 29-31.

⁸ Charles Morris, *The Autobiography of Commodore Charles Morris, U.S. Navy* (Boston: A. Williams and Co., 1880), pp. 42-43.

⁹ Major Drumond to Governor Sherbrooke of Nova Scotia, June 27, 1812, in William Wood, ed., *Select Documents of the War of 1812* (4 vols.; Toronto: Champlain Society, 1920), I, 203, [enclosure written by Henry Smith of Eastport].

¹⁰ Strong's Speech to the Massachusetts Legislature, August 14, 1812, reprinted in *Niles' Register*, October 24, 1812, III, 116-118. See also Robert Leckie, *The Wars of America*, (2 vols.; New York: Harper and Row, 1968), I, 236. Strong refused a request from President Madison in April to send the militia to invade Canada. Strong feared that the militia would be sent out of State.

¹¹ Adams, *History of the United States*, VII, 282.

¹² Strong's Speech, *op. cit.*, III, 116-118. See also William H. Kilby, *Eastport and Passamaquoddy* (Eastport: Edward E. Shead, 1888), p. 161.

¹³ Brig. General Gardner W. Pearson, ed., *Records of the Massachusetts Militia Called Out by the Governor of Massachusetts to Suppress a Threatened Invasion During the War of 1812* (Boston: Wright and Potter Printing Co., 1913), *passim*.

¹⁴ Adams, *History of the United States*, VII, 219.

¹⁵ Orderly Book, Cobb Light Infantry, 1812-1823, in possession of the Maine State Archives, Augusta. Court martial dated Boston, May 23, 1816. The Cobb Light Infantry was recruited in Ellsworth and Trenton.

¹⁶ Annual Return of the Battalion of Artillery in the Second Brigade, Eighth Division, July 21, 1810, in possession of the Maine State Archives.

¹⁷ William King to General Dearborn, Oct. 6, 1814, William King MSS., Maine Historical Society, Box 12.

¹⁸ Secretary of the Navy to Isaac Hull, May 11, 1814, in Gardner W. Allen, ed., *Papers of Isaac Hull, Commodore, United States Navy* (Boston: The Boston Athenaeum, 1929), pp. 32-33.

¹⁹ King to Dearborn, Oct. 6, 1814, King MSS., Box 12.

²⁰ Journal of Joseph Leavitt, September 28, 1810-November 28, 1828, Containing Events of Life in Bangor for the Whole of the Period. Copy in Bangor Public Library. Original owned by Mrs. Ripley Hitchcock Greenwich, Connecticut. Hereafter referred to as Leavitt's Journal.

²¹ Diary of Benjamin F. Robbins, 1813-1816, Maine Historical Society.

²² *Niles' Register*, May 29, 1813, IV, 209.

²³ Leavitt's Journal, p. 19. For a description of the smuggling in the Passamaquoddy region, see Harold A. Davis, *An International Community on the St. Croix, 1604-1930* (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1950), p. 107.

²⁴ Admiral Sawyer to Secretary Croker, July 18, 1812, Adm. 1/502, p. 195. See also Mancur Olson Jr., *The Economics of Warfare Shortage: A History of British Food Supplies in the Napoleonic War and in World Wars I and II* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1963), p. 63.

²⁵ Barrows [Assistant Secretary of the Admiralty] to Cochrane, April 30, 1814, Adm. 2/933, pp. 139-141. For an accurate description of Cochrane, see C.S. Forester, *The Age of Fighting Sail* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1956), p. 201.

²⁶ Cochrane to Croker, July 23, 1814, Adm. 1/506, pp. 443-444. See also Walter Lord, *The Dawn's Early Light* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1972), pp. 43, 222, 247. Cochrane was uncertain as to whether Rhode Island would be simply destroyed or occupied permanently.

²⁷ Prime Minister Liverpool to War Secretary Bathurst, September 11, 1814, in Duke of Wellington, ed., *Supplementary Dispatches of the Duke of Wellington* (London: John Murray, 1862), IX, 240. See also *London Times*, September 21, 1814, p. 2.

²⁸ Bathurst to Governor Sherbrooke, June 6, 1814, Public Archives of Nova Scotia, vol. 62, doc. 120, hereafter cited as P.A.N.S. See also Foreign Secretary Castlereagh to Liverpool, August 28, 1814, in Wellington, ed., *op. cit.*, IX, 192.

²⁹ W. Austin Squires, *The 104th Regiment of Foot, 1803-1817* (Fredericton: Brunswick Press, 1962), pp. 128-162.

³⁰ Captain Yeo to Admiral Warren, December 6, 1813, Adm. 1/505, pp. 221-22; see also H.F. Pullen, *The March of the Seamen* (Halifax: Maritime Museum of Canada, 1961), pp. 5-17, and Barry J. Lohnes, "British Naval Problems at Halifax During the War of 1812," *Mariner's Mirror* [London], September, 1973, pp. 326-327.

³¹ Father Thomas Albert, *History of Madawaska* (Quebec: Imprimerie Franciscaine Missionnaire, 1920), pp. 159-161.

³² Memorial of the Halifax Committee of Trade to Bathurst, October 8, 1813, P.A.N.S., vol. 304, doc. 6, no. 166. See also W. Austin Squires, "War in the Bay of Fundy, 1812," *Atlantic Advocate*, March 7, 1963, pp. 69-72.

³³ Memorial of the Halifax Committee of Trade, *op. cit.* See also Gerald S. Graham, "The Gypsum Trade of the Maritime Provinces," *Agricultural History*, July, 1938, pp. 214-216.

³⁴ Hardy to Cochrane, July 12, 1814, Adm. 1/506, p. 382. Nearly two-thirds of the residents took the British oath of allegiance. The best secondary source on the fall of Eastport is Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book*, p. 889. See also, David Howarth, *Trafalgar: The Nelson Touch* (New York: Atheneum, 1969), p. 208. Hardy was Lord Nelson's dear friend and captain of the *Victory* at Trafalgar, where Nelson lost his life.

³⁵ Proclamation of Cochrane, July 18, 1814, Adm. 1/506, pp. 466-470.

³⁶ During the month of June, British raiding parties from H.M.S. *Bulwark* struck at Biddeford, Edgecomb, and Pemaquid. See William Hutchinson Rowe, *The Maritime History of Maine* (New York: W.W. Norton Co., 1948), pp. 92-93. See also Dunnack, *Maine Forts*, pp. 83-84, and *Nova Scotia Gazette* [Halifax], July 6, 1814, p. 3.

³⁷ Regimental Order, July 9, 1814, Cobb Light Infantry, *op. cit.*

³⁸ General Order, *ibid.* See also *Eastern Argus* [Portland], August 11, 18, 25, Sept. 1, 1814. The militia serving under Federal command began their march to Lake Champlain in late July, leaving a trail of deserters enroute.

³⁹ Dearborn to Secretary of War Armstrong, June 19, 1814, cited in H.A.S. Dearborn, "The Life of Major General Henry Dearborn," (7 vols.; unpublished biography, Maine Historical Society, 1815-30), VI, [313]. See also, Leckie, *The Wars of America*, I, 259, and Banks, *Maine Becomes a State*, p. 47.

⁴⁰ Chandler to William King, Sept. 4, 1814, William King MSS, Box 12.

⁴¹ Bathurst to Sherbrooke, July 15, 1814, P.A.N.S., vol. 62, doc. 121.

⁴² Griffith to Croker, August 26, 1814, Adm. 1/506, p. 539 [italics added]. Little is known of the early career of Admiral Griffith, but it is known that Sir John Coape Sherbrooke had served in Nova Scotia for a brief period after the American Revolution. Later he had served with distinction in India, Sicily, and Egypt. During the Portuguese campaign of 1809 he had been decorated for heroism while serving as second-in-command under Lord Wellington; see Ernest Lloyd Marsh, "Sir John Coape Sherbrooke," *Dictionary of National Biography* (1922 ed.), 70-71. See also, D.C. Harvey, "The Halifax-Castine Expedition," *Dalhousie Review* (July, 1938), p. 211. Harvey thought the objective of the force was Machias with "three to four thousand men." He was wrong on both counts.

⁴³ For a more complete account of the expedition, see Barry J. Lohnes, "The War of 1812 at Sea: The British Navy, New England, and the Maritime Provinces Of Canada," (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Maine, 1971), pp. 198-256, citing the following sources: Adm. 1/506, pp. 375-450, Adm. 1/507, pp. 125-138; Harry J. Chapman, "The Battle of Hampden," *Sprague's Journal of Maine History* (October, 1914), pp. 184-193; Lossing *Pictorial Field Book*, pp. 887-891; William James, *Military Occurrences of the Late War between Great Britain and the United States* (2 vols.; London: Joyce Gold, 1818), II, 475-485; William D. Williamson, *History of the State of Maine* (2 vols.; Hallowell: Glazier, Masters and Co., 1832), II, 641-648; George F.G. Stanley, "British Operations on the Penobscot in 1814," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* (Sept., 1940), pp. 168-178.

⁴⁴ Lohnes, *op. cit.*, pp. 198-256. See also Morris, *Autobiography*, p. 70.

⁴⁵ Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-71. Morris simply blamed the "failure of the militia to make any resistance. . . ." as the reason for the disaster.

⁴⁶ Lohnes, *op. cit.*, map, p. 230. See also, Chapman, "Battle of Hampden," pp. 186-187.

⁴⁷ Leavitt's Journal, p. 19. See also Captain Barrie to Griffith, Sept. 3, 1814, Adm. 1/507, p. 136, and Lieutenant-Colonel Henry John to Sherbrooke, Sept. 3, 1814, in James, *Military Occurrences*, II, 480. Captain Barrie wrote that the "rockets were generally well-directed and evidently threw the enemy into confusion."

⁴⁸ Court Martial of Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew Grant of 3rd Regiment, First Brigade, 10th Division, March 23, 1816, Orderly Book, Cobb Light Infantry.

- ⁴⁹ Morris, *Autobiography*, pp. 71-72.
- ⁵⁰ James, *Military Occurrences*, II, 452; Morris to Secretary of the Navy Jones, September 20, 1814; *Niles' Register*, VI, 63; Chapman, "Battle of Hampden," p. 191.
- ⁵¹ Leavitt's Journal, pp. 19-21; see also Lohnes, "The War of 1812 at Sea," pp. 233-239, and Williamson, *History of Maine*, II, 646.
- ⁵² Sherbrooke to Bathurst, September 18, 1814, in James, *op. cit.*, p. 477, and Lohnes, *op. cit.*, pp. 238-239.
- ⁵³ Joseph Williamson to George Williamson, September 7, 1814. Letter on file in the Maine State Museum, Augusta.
- ⁵⁴ Sherbrooke to Bathurst, October 9, 1814 [confidential], Public Archives of Canada, series. A, doc. 151, cited in Stanley, "British Operations on the Penobscot in 1814," p. 177.
- ⁵⁵ *Niles' Register*, October 6, 1814, VII, 52.
- ⁵⁶ Dearborn to Strong, September 4, 1814, and Dearborn to Adjutant General Brooks, September 5, 1814, in Dearborn, "The Life of Major General Henry Dearborn," VI, [330-338]. See also Message of Governor Strong to the Massachusetts Legislature, October 5, 1814, in *Boston Gazette*, October 6, 1814, and Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book*, pp. 891-892.
- ⁵⁷ *Eastern Argus*, September 12, 1814.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid*, August 11, 1814.
- ⁵⁹ Lyndon Oak, *Sketch of the Life of General James Irish of Gorham, Maine* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1898), p. 25.
- ⁶⁰ Secretary of War Armstrong to Strong, March 15, 1813, in *Niles' Register*, June 12, 1813, IV, 236.
- ⁶¹ William H. Sumner, *A History of East Boston* (Boston: J.E. Tilton and Company, 1858), p. 734.
- ⁶² Sumner, *op. cit.*, pp. 740-743.
- ⁶³ Lieutenant Stephen Bean to Colonel Isaac Lane, September 22,

1814, and Lieutenant H. Hayes to Isaac Lane, September 15, 1814, in Isaac Lane Papers, Collection 108, Box 1/13, Maine Historical Society. See also Division Orders, September 28, 1814, in William King MSS, Box 12.

⁶⁴ Timothy Pickering to Strong, October 12, 1814, Strong to Pickering, October 17, 1814, in Henry Adams, ed., *Documents Relating to New England Federalism, 1800-1815* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1877), pp. 394, 398. Senator Pickering wrote: "A road from . . . the Bay of Fundy . . . to Quebec would appear to take off but a small portion of Maine." Strong replied: "As to Eastport, I believe it is generally acknowledged . . . that we have no just claim to it."

⁶⁵ Banks, *Maine Becomes a State*, p. 61, citing Mark Langdon Hill to King, William King MSS, Packet 25, and *Eastern Argus*, October 27, 1814.

⁶⁶ Acting Secretary of War Monroe to Dearborn, December 1, 1814, and Dearborn to Monroe, November 25, 1814, in H.A.S. Dearborn, "The Life of Major General Henry Dearborn," VI, pp. [384], [386]. See also Banks, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁶⁷ Banks, *op. cit.*, p. 61, citing Sherbrooke to Bathurst, December 19, 1814, Colonial Office 217/93. As Banks pointed out, the borrowing power of the Federal government for such an expedition was practically nil in New England.

⁶⁸ James A. Huston, *The Sinews of War: Army Logistics, 1775-1953* (Washington: Army Historical Series, 1966), pp. 104-109.

⁶⁹ Wellington to Prime Minister Liverpool, November 13, 1814, and Goulburn to Bathurst, November 25, 1814, in Wellington, ed., *Supplementary Dispatches*, IX, 424, 453. See also Alfred Thayer Mahan, *Sea Power in Its Relations to the War of 1812* (2 vols.; London: Sampson, Low, Marston, and Co., 1905), II, 430-431.

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A NEW LOOK AT THE INVASION OF EASTERN MAINE, 1814

A COMMENT

BY RONALD F. BANKS

I would like to begin my remarks by commending Barry for his continuing fine work on this subject. His paper is well written and meets the high standards he set earlier in his M.A. thesis. In preparing for my assignment, I reviewed my own extensive collection of notes on this subject. After doing so, I concluded that Barry's paper stands up well in respect to its factual content. There are additional sources he might profitably check out before his paper is published. But even so, I find his paper accurate in its essential data.

I will therefore devote my comments to his main thesis, which is, as I read it, that England made a strategic blunder in the summer and fall of 1814, by not occupying more of Maine, indeed, more of New England than it actually did. He contends that the military unpreparedness of New England generally, and of Massachusetts, and Maine in particular, made the area easy prey to British invasion and occupation. Had England not over-estimated both the means and will to resist of New Englanders, she could have occupied a great deal more than eastern Maine and thereby knocked New England out of the war. Moreover, she would have placed herself in a much stronger position at Ghent to extract accession of eastern Maine as part of the peace settlement. Failure to take full advantage of her military superiority in this part of the country was, Barry contends, a strategic error.

Comment on this thesis or any thesis for that matter has its difficulties. One finds himself considering "iffy" questions which involve one in what is now called counter-history. In such an exercise, one is called upon to defend the historical validity of what might have been. This can be a valuable exercise, but one must always keep in mind that it is an essentially speculative exercise.

Nevertheless, in respect to Barry's thesis, I offer the following observations:

First, I will concede that the British could have taken some additional territory with relative ease, but probably not beyond the Kennebec River. They could have bombarded Portland, Portsmouth, and Boston, but had they tried to invade the territory west and south of the Kennebec, I believe they would have faced much stiffer resistance than they did in eastern Maine, and that ultimately they would have failed to achieve an occupation. I say this because south of the Kennebec River the population was much larger with far greater resources at hand than in eastern Maine. There were, also, far greater numbers who would have fought to preserve their independence. The forces the British assembled to occupy eastern Maine were small in number—at most 2,500 as I recall—and many of them were mercenaries, certainly not a force large enough to conquer areas where strenuous resistance could be expected. After all, in August and September 1814, in excess of 5,000 militia were mobilized to guard the Maine coast west of the Kennebec River, and in October 1814, the Massachusetts General Court made available \$1,000,000 to provide for further defense of the Massachusetts coastline. Despite the opposition to the war in Massachusetts, the people drew the line well before the thought of permitting a British occupation without fierce resistance.

Even so, to have *successfully* occupied much more of New England than they did would have required a greatly augmented force. Such additions would have had to come from manpower in both the Chesapeake Bay and upper New York theatres of the war, thus jeopardizing their campaigns in those areas, campaigns which, were they successful, would have resulted in far more important strategic results than would have occurred had a greater part of New England fallen to occupation.

Second, if an important object of occupying a larger portion of Maine and points south was to take New England out of the war, then the strategy should have been the one Cochrane recommended: i.e., to cut New England and northern New York off from the middle and southern states. Certainly, the risks of adopting a strategy of occupation to achieve this objective far outweighed the advantages to be gained. For, in reality, New

England had never been in the war. She had followed three years of denying the Madison administration both her manpower and treasure, and it is clear she meant to persist in this stance. Therefore, the best strategy toward her was one of salutary neglect. As one Mainer put it to General Sherbrooke, "New England can be conquered by kindness."

In addition, to have advanced beyond the Penobscot or perhaps the Kennebec in 1814 would have produced a change in the attitude of New Englanders. As I suggested earlier, they may have hated the war, but they hated the thought of an occupation even more. They were willing to withhold their men and treasure from the cause as long as the war did not impose great hardships on them, but they would have fought to defend their homes and their families from an occupation.

My point is that England might have been able to occupy more territory, but in so doing it is difficult to see how her strategic position would have been improved. Indeed, I should think it would have been worsened considerably by producing quite a different military situation in New England than had developed otherwise.

Third, you may ask, why do I feel so strongly that Mainers and others in New England would have put up such a resistance. They seemed indifferent to the fate of eastern Maine. How do we know that they would have reacted differently to a greater British occupation? I have given some reasons which I believe are valid, but you must also remember that eastern Maine was unique, in that from the earlier days of our history it was a disputed territory. In 1783 the British only reluctantly surrendered sovereignty over it, much to the consternation of New Brunswickians. Besides, Barry is correct when he says it was an area difficult to defend due to its closeness to Canada and nearly impossible to recapture due to British superiority on the water. It was not only Governor Strong who felt the proposed expeditionary force to drive the British from Castine was folly, but Henry Dearborn himself. The same could not be said for the rest of Maine south of the Kennebec, or of New England generally.

Finally, I think Barry and I differ on the conclusion that the occupation of eastern Maine made sense to the British. I believe what they took was about all they could have taken without creating additional serious problems for themselves. He believes they should have taken much more to strengthen their hand at Ghent. Obviously, I feel that a more ambitious strategy of occupation would not have changed the outcome at Ghent. England's decision to accept the *status quo ante bellum* had to do with problems she was encountering at home and on the continent in addition to her inability to control the Great Lakes here in America. A bolder strategy in New England would not have changed this larger reality.

And, of course, the overriding reality was that with the defeat of Napoleon any compelling reasons for further conflict were lifted. A continuation of the war, in the hope of such marginal gains as would be represented in a possible cession of eastern Maine, would have bordered on the chimerical if not the irrational.

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