Making Nations: The Northeastern Borderlands in an Age of Revolution, 1760-1820

John Davis Morton

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ABSTRACT

Making Nations: The Northeastern Borderlands in an Age of Revolution, 1760-1820 examines migration within northeastern North America, and the gradual formation of a meaningful border between the District of Maine and the Province of New Brunswick. The American Revolution, though it divided the northeast between New England and British North America, did not fundamentally change attitudes toward the borderland. For decades, the region had been a special sort of frontier – a more connected frontier, offering migrants from southern New England better access to Atlantic trade. The post-revolutionary era rapidly reverted to pre-war patterns, as settlers crossed a largely meaningless border looking for fertile land and economic connectivity. These settlers, I argue, were not late loyalists, choosing British territory, or early republicans, choosing the U.S. This was one migration, to the borderland and the similar opportunities on both sides.

So how did migration within a shared borderland become immigration across a meaningful border? Post-revolution, both Congregationalists and Catholics began to build networks in Maine that stopped at the border. A Congregational missionary society, the Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America, realized it could secure state funding from Massachusetts by advertising itself as a tool
for managing the growing settlements in Maine. State money helped the society grow rapidly, and as similar groups formed they chose to join the pioneer society as partners rather than compete with it. Meanwhile, Congregational women created institutions called “ladies cent societies,” which provided a massive infusion of funding into the system. The resulting Congregational network grew to encompass almost the entire American half of the borderland. At the same time, a Catholic network also grew in Maine, connecting the Catholic Passamaquoddy and Penobscot people to Boston, as well as to Irish Catholics along Maine’s coast. As these networks grew they changed eastern Maine from a place that was attractive because of its connections with British North America, to a place that was attractive because of its connections with New England. These networks made the border meaningful – and immovable. Though politicians on both sides persisted for years in believing they could still adjust the border, they were wrong. It had already taken root.
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I built this dissertation over a long period of time, with the assistance of a great many kind and thoughtful people. First, I was incredibly fortunate in my committee. When Owen Stanwood agreed to serve as my advisor on my arrival at Boston College, I had an idea about exploring the northeastern borderland and the people who lived there, but not much else. Prof. Stanwood has been of great assistance over the years, both in shaping the broad arc of the study and in providing detailed feedback as I finally began producing chapter drafts. He also came up with the title, for which I am very grateful. Penelope Ismay went above and beyond the call of the second reader, inviting me to send drafts whenever they were available, and responding with thorough analysis of my work. She also made time for several long one-on-one meetings, which gave us a chance to get into the big ideas of the dissertation. I came out of those meetings with much clearer ideas about what I wanted to say, and how I could say it more clearly. Kevin Kenny similarly went beyond the typical contribution for a third reader, as he taught the dissertation seminar that led to this particular project. Prof. Kenny was relentless in the seminar, guiding my cohort as we honed our arguments and mapped out our research plans. My project has evolved over time, but it is not too distant from the proposal that I crafted that semester. When I have needed to clear my thinking and get back to basics, the comments I received and drafts I produced in Prof. Kenny’s seminar have been invaluable.

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Introduction

In the years after the American Revolution, Simeon Perkins and the other residents of Liverpool, Nova Scotia, found themselves living in a borderland. This was a new development. Nova Scotia had not been a borderland in the 1760s, when Perkins moved there from Connecticut. Before the revolution, it was as if the Liverpool settlers were simply relocating from one part of New England to another. Most of them came from small farming and fishing villages around southeastern Massachusetts, and Liverpool also was a small fishing village, located about ninety miles southwest of Halifax. After settling there, many remained connected with their former homes. Ships crisscrossed the Gulf of Maine, bringing trade goods and newspapers, as well as letters from family and friends spread over the colonies. Perkins was a merchant and trader, dealing in fish and lumber. He had friends and business connections in Boston. When New England ships arrived in Liverpool, Perkins socialized with mariners he knew, and they often provided him with Connecticut newspapers so he could keep up with events at home.¹

After the war, things should have been different. There was now a political boundary in place, dividing Nova Scotia, which the British retained, from New England, which they lost. Perkins and his fellow Liverpool residents were still British subjects, while their friends and family to the west were American citizens. In reality, however, life hardly changed at all. Communication and trade appear to have continued on in the same manner as in the pre-war years. Perkins’ diary of the mid 1780s is filled with references to New England ships. Mariners

¹ The history of Liverpool, Nova Scotia and Simeon Perkins can be found in the many volumes of his diary: Simeon Perkins, The Diary of Simeon Perkins ed. D.C. Harvey (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1948); also Elizabeth Manecke, The Fault Lines of Empire: Political Differentiation in Massachusetts and Nova Scotia, 1760-1830 (New York: Routledge, 2005.)
from Connecticut still brought him letters and newspapers, he maintained his business
connections in Boston and Penobscot Bay, and friends and family frequently traveled back and
forth between the two countries.\(^2\)

In some ways, there were even more contacts between Nova Scotia and New England
after the war. The peace saw an exodus of loyalist refugees from the newly independent colonies
to Nova Scotia. Tens of thousands of new settlers flooded into the region; there were so many
that the northern part of Nova Scotia was set off as its own separate colony of New Brunswick.
British authorities knew that the only way to feed all of these people was with food from the
United States, so they issued a proclamation allowing “all…species of live Stock, and…species
of Grain” to be imported, so long as they were carried on British-owned ships. It would have
been obvious to anyone reading newspapers in New Brunswick or Nova Scotia in those years
that the result was constant contact with the northeastern states. Papers advertised pork from
Connecticut, and flour from New York and Philadelphia. The shipping news listed ship after ship
from New York and New England: in Shelburne, just down the coast from Liverpool, almost half
of the shipping traffic was coming from or going to the states. Even the news itself came from
Americans. Almost all the ships entering the harbor of Saint John, New Brunswick, for example
– even those originally from Britain – arrived by way of Boston or New York. The most recent
newspapers they carried, therefore, were U.S. papers. As a result, the *Saint John Royal Gazette*
tended to reprint news from the republic.\(^3\)

Though goods were supposed to travel only on British ships, many people carried on
trading just as they had in the pre-Revolution days. Simeon Perkins was one of these people,

28 May 1785; 28 April, 3 May, 22 June, 28 June, 9 October, 12 October 1786.

\(^3\) *The Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser*, 27 July 1786; *Port Roseway Gazeteer and Shelburne Advertiser*,
9 June 1785; 19 May 1785; 21 July 1785; *Nova Scotia Packet and General Advertiser*, 6 July 1786; 17 August
1786; 24 August 1786; *St. John Royal Gazette*, 11 October 1785.
which led to a bit of trouble. In summer and early fall of 1789, officials from Halifax began to make surprise visits to Liverpool harbor in an attempt to catch locals who were skirting the trade restrictions. They witnessed the arrival of several New England ships, and in September discovered some smuggled American manufactures. Perkins described in his diary a confrontation between himself and a Captain Browell over these goods, during which Browell “made indecent expressions to me, signifying that I was a rebel.” This whole series of events resulted in the confiscation of several ships, followed by a trial in Halifax during which Perkins and other men attempted to reclaim their property. Even after this, though, little changed. Perkins does not appear to have cared about being accused of rebel sympathies. He continued his business dealings with New England even after the trial.4

The newly created border in this borderland, in short, did not seem to matter all that much to many people in New England and British North America. But there was one area in which it did matter. Congregational churches had expanded into Nova Scotia with the New England settlers of the 1760s. For twenty years, the church was just another way in which the colony seemed part of a greater New England. After the revolution, though, that particular connection disappeared. Though they were still connected to New England in many ways, Simeon Perkins and his fellow Nova Scotians found themselves abruptly cut off from their fellow Congregationalists.

The Liverpool settlers had established a Congregational Church when they founded their community. The Reverend Israel Cheever, a Harvard graduate from New England, became the settled minister. Many other communities around Nova Scotia did the same; by 1770 there were

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4 Perkins, Diary 1780-1789, 4 July through 22 September 1789.
at least seven settled Congregational ministers from New England in the colony. During the war years, however, people in Liverpool became dissatisfied with Cheever. He apparently had a drinking problem, and he lost the support of many of his congregants and was dismissed in 1782. This dismissal happened to coincide with a time of religious fervor in the colony. Independent itinerant preachers, who called themselves “New Lights,” as well as a number of Methodists, were travelling throughout Nova Scotia preaching any place they could find an audience. Simeon Perkins and others in Liverpool were dismayed by all these competing voices, and they wanted a new, trained minister to be sent from New England.

And so Perkins, and a few other locals, began sending letters to Massachusetts asking for a new preacher. The letters went out for years. The people of Liverpool felt strongly enough that at one point they paid a local man, Deacon Samuel Hunt, to hand deliver a letter to Plymouth, Massachusetts, to ensure that their request was heard. And yet it took seven years before a candidate arrived. John Turner, a twenty-one year old newly minted minister, arrived in Nova Scotia in November of 1789. Turner received a pleasant welcome from many of the Congregationalists in town, including Perkins, and seemed content with his new appointment. And then he left, just six months later and apparently without warning. Simeon Perkins was caught entirely off guard, and wrote immediately to Massachusetts demanding an explanation. There is no indication that he received one, or that another minister was ever sent. The church in Liverpool would receive no more help from their Congregational brethren in New England. In the following years, they would receive a plethora of visiting ministers – by one count, twenty-six different itinerant preachers. Eight were New Lights, fifteen were Methodists, two were

Quakers, and one was Presbyterian. Not one was Congregationalist. By 1795, the “former Congregationalists” of Liverpool “had nearly all gone over to the New Lights and Methodists.”

Congregationalists in Massachusetts were well aware of what was happening to their sister churches in the British provinces. Liverpool was not alone in asking for help. In Sheffield, New Brunswick, the mainline Congregational Church also attempted to resist New Lights and other itinerants. Most local people, even among the loyalist refugees who arrived in the 1780s, supported it. But by the 1790s that church too lost its regular preacher, and like Liverpool could not secure a replacement. Gradually, the Sheffield Church faded away. In 1792, Congregationalists received news of another loss, this time from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. The Reverend Jonathan Scott reported that after twenty years, he had been dismissed from his position as the minister of Yarmouth. The New Lights were ascendant in that community, Scott wrote, and he needed guidance: “I am now waiting the call of Divine Providence, and looking for a door to open in some other place; and I pray you to give me word …of any place, where I might be useful in the ministry.”

These appeals from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were arriving in Massachusetts at a time when it would seem the Congregational Church was perfectly positioned to address them. The church had just embarked on what would evolve into a massive program of missionary outreach, specifically designed to serve the needs of settlers in the northeastern borderland. Congregationalists from Massachusetts prioritized the most distant Maine settlements, investing a great deal of money in reaching communities that bordered on British territory. The letter from

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9 James Lyon to Peter Thatcher, 31 May 1792, MSS 48, Box 3, Folder 6, Society For Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America papers (hereafter SPGNA), Philips Library (hereafter PL), Rowley, Massachusetts.
Jonathan Scott, for example, reached Boston through missionary James Lyon, who spent months ministering to the Passamaquoddy Bay area in 1791. Other itinerants followed, part of an effort to build a network that could reach every corner of Maine.

The work of these first Maine missionaries led to greater fundraising efforts in Boston, and the rapid growth of the Congregational network. Soon multiple missionary societies, all linked together, were raising thousands of dollars. Much of the money came from an innovative institution: the ladies cent society. Women around Boston began giving a penny a week for missionary work, and the idea quickly spread to the rest of Massachusetts and beyond. Finding themselves with more than enough money to pay itinerant ministers, missionary societies invested in books and other printed material, and worked to open schools in the newest settlements. Working together, they funneled thousands of books and pamphlets into Maine – not just religious books like Bibles, testaments, and hymn books, but also secular books like primers and spelling books for children. Missionary society funding allowed schools to reach small villages in remote parts of central and eastern Maine that could never have afforded them independently.

All of these developments in the American section of the borderland were happening just as the Congregational Church was in steep decline in the British section. New England Congregationalists, through their missionary societies, had the resources to stop that decline. Their brethren in the British provinces were asking for help. And as noted, the region was still knit together in many ways. There was constant communication and trade. Even political officials, as we will see, tended to keep the border permeable as a way of building settlements and developing the region. Practically everybody, in short, was ignoring the boundary. And yet

10 These were sometimes referred to as female cent institutions as well, but ladies cent society was the more popular and widespread term.
the missionaries paid attention to it. When ministers in Boston received Jonathan Scott’s letter from Yarmouth, asking what he might do to be useful, they did not choose to do anything for Liverpool, Nova Scotia or Sheffield, New Brunswick. Scott ended up relocating to the Maine frontier, becoming the pastor of the tiny community of Bakersfield. Congregationalists had decided their mission was now limited to their fellow citizens, and they used their resources to build a network circumscribed by where they understood the border to be.

This study considers the area shared by northern New England and the British North American colonies, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as a borderland. My definition of what, exactly, constitutes a “borderland” is drawn primarily from two different sources: one a broad exploration of borderlands and how they can be distinguished from frontiers, and the other a more narrow study of the evolution of the U.S./Canada boundary. In the former study, Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron identify borderlands as “the contested boundaries between colonial domains,” in which competition between rival states allows the inhabitants “room to maneuver and preserve some element of autonomy.”  

In the latter study, Lauren McKinsey and Victor Konrad define a borderland as a shared region that “houses people with common social characteristics in spite of the political boundary between them.” These characteristics set the area in question apart, as residents have “more in common with each other than with members of their respective dominant cultures.”

Applying a borderlands perspective to the post-revolutionary northeast is essential to a better understanding of the region’s history. First, it offers a new interpretation of expansion in

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both the early United States and the colonies that would become Canada. The processes of expansion in these two areas are usually treated as distinct, and sometimes even as totally divergent. We are told that, on a grand scale, after the revolution the American Empire looked to expand west, while the British Empire looked to the east.\(^{13}\) Even on a smaller, North American scale, we still receive two stories – one of republican citizens moving west, and one of “late loyalists” moving north.\(^{14}\) A borderlands perspective demonstrates that those two streams of expansion were remarkably similar, and in many ways early American and British North American expansion should be seen one unified phenomenon.

Second, this study illuminates one of the ways a borderland can become a “bordered land.” In the case of part of the northeast – the zone shared by Maine and New Brunswick – the border became meaningful not through political negotiations, but through the work of church networks.\(^{15}\) Congregationalists and Catholics serving the District of Maine from Boston decided to impose border restrictions on themselves. Though they were not prohibited from crossing the border, and there was even some justification for doing so, these networks chose to limit their reach to U.S. territory. This was less a top-down “shift from inter-imperial struggle to international coexistence,” and more a bottom-up process of distributing resources and linking

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\(^{13}\) This is stated explicitly in the closing pages of Stephen Hornsby, *British Atlantic, American Frontier: Spaces of Power in Early Modern British America* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2005), 237-238.


\(^{15}\) The easternmost counties of Massachusetts were known as the District of Maine until 1820, when they became the State of Maine. I alternate between the terms Maine and District of Maine, but it should be noted that the region was a part of Massachusetts throughout the era under study.
networks on the ground gradually made the two sides of the borderland distinct, and gave substance to what had been an inconsequential border. In the case of this particular corner of North America, when the two sides of the “imperial struggle” finally attempted to use politics and war to fix the boundary, they discovered it had already been fixed.

Though borderland studies have proliferated in recent decades, New England and the easternmost colonies of British North America have been largely ignored. Much of the work on American borderlands has dealt with the southwest, and the few studies of British/American borderlands have tended to focus on the Great Lakes region or beyond. The border in the west is regarded as having been contingent and contested in the early national period, while the border in the east is dismissed as basically settled by the American Revolution. In general, the literature has promoted the idea that border formation was, like the frontier, a westward moving phenomenon – northern New England became a “bordered land” first, then later New York, and the rest of the Great Lakes country followed suit.

I argue that the development of a meaningful border in the northeast was a longer process, which stretched into the early nineteenth century. For the first few decades of American independence, northern New England, Lower Canada (Quebec), and New Brunswick continued to be a borderland. Moreover, though they would not have used the term, the people living in the

16 The idea that borderlands become bordered lands through this kind of shift from imperial struggle to coexistence comes from Adelman and Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders.”


region at the time understood it to be a borderland. It clearly had characteristics that set it apart as a distinct place, and contained people with much in common in spite of the political boundary that ostensibly divided them. Both American and British landowners highlighted those distinct characteristics and downplayed political differences in soliciting settlers for the region. It also remained a zone where contested boundaries allowed both indigenous people and white settlers room to maneuver, “play off rivalries,” and otherwise take advantage of weak state controls. Until at least 1815, for example, the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot people in Maine were able to take advantage of contested boundaries in the borderland. White settlers in eastern Maine took advantage too, as did the Allen family in Vermont, John Jacob Astor in Lower Canada, and many others.

The few studies that do exist on the northeasternmost section of the borderland tend to offer a different interpretation of border formation than my own. In general, they conform to a common theme in borderlands literature: the creation of an artificial line of division, followed by the efforts of people on the ground to adapt to it. The result is a conception of the border as a structure imposed from above on a resistant populace. One study of Maine and Nova Scotia traces the imposition of this structure to political changes within the British Empire as far back as the seventeenth century. Others argue that after the American Revolution both British and

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19 McKinsey and Konrad, _Borderlands Reflections_, 4. McKinsey and Conrad take a much broader view of borderlands than Adelman and Aron. Their study examines several discrete borderland regions across the entire continent-wide U.S./Canadian border. They also differentiate between a “border region” and a “borderland,” with a border region simply being a zone of exchange between two neighboring states with a stable boundary. A borderland, by contrast, is a shared zone, containing people that have characteristics in common.


21 In one of the best studies in this vein, Rachel St. John explores how the US/Mexico border became a magnet, drawing people like the Apache, who learned to use the boundary as a refuge. Similarly, Michel Hogue argues that the Metis people in the upper plains adapted to take advantage of the 49th parallel. Rachel St. John, _Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border_ (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Michel Hogue, _Metis and the Medicine Line_.

American authorities attempted to create and enforce a meaningful border in the northeast, while non-state actors like privateers and smugglers pushed back and maintained the borderland quality of the region.²³ My study proposes the inverse. In Maine and New Brunswick, I argue, it was the non-state actors – Congregational missionaries, with some assistance from Catholic priests – who built a meaningful border, as the dueling states collaborated to preserve the open borderland.

Examining how Congregational missionaries ended up as border builders provides insight into both the religious history of early republic New England, and the history of the American Protestant missionary movement. Surprisingly, politics appears to have played little role in the Congregational effort in Maine. Though the revolution was barely over, few missionary societies or individual ministers found in this study appear to have been motivated by revolutionary patriotism or incipient religious nationalism. Surely at least a few saw their missions as a way to build the republic and counter the empire. But for the most part, the Congregationalist mission in the borderland was independent of revolutionary ideology.²⁴ Before the war, New Englanders

²³ Edward J. Martin, “The Prize Game in the Borderlands: Privateering in New England and the Maritime Provinces, 1775-1815,” (PhD diss., University of Maine, 2014); Joshua Smith, Borderland Smuggling: Patriots, Loyalists, and Illicit Trade in the Northeast, 1783-1820 (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006). Smith’s study is closest to my own in that he focuses on the Passamaquoddy Bay region between Maine and New Brunswick, and he argues that the boundary was still quite flexible in the early national period. We differ in that Smith’s non-state actors, smugglers, were working to maintain the borderland, while my non-state actors, ministers, were dividing it.

²⁴ This represents a break from a number of studies that claim a strong connection between New England Congregationalism and revolutionary ideology. In Religion and the American Mind, Alan Heimert argued that the New Light Congregationalists born in the First Great Awakening were the immediate precursors to the revolutionaries: Heimert, Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966). Nathan Hatch goes even further, arguing that New England Congregationalists achieved a pro-revolution consensus. They combined millennialism with republicanism, and “projected a common vision of a Christian republic.” The New England ministers who made up the membership of missionary societies should, according to Hatch, have been intent on using these societies to promote and spread republican liberty: Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). Sam Haselby similarly argues that the New England elite created a missionary movement built around a religious nationalism that sacralized the revolution: Sam Haselby, The Origins of American Religious Nationalism (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). My interpretation is closer to those of Jon Butler and Carly Pestana, who see important
spoke of sending missionaries to any and all new settlements where they might find "brethren...emigrants from this colony." After the war most of the first missionary societies similarly set broad goals, to serve destitute settlements wherever they might be, in North America or beyond. Early in the period, many missionaries in Maine were willing to cross the border; some did choose to cross briefly, while others chose not to. This crossing faded as time went on, but relations across the border remained friendly. In large part, New England Congregationalists seem to have regarded Anglicans and Methodists in British North America less as rivals and more as friendly cousins, engaged in a similar struggle to civilize the wilderness.

The decision to limit the Congregational mission field in northern New England – particularly in Maine – was an adaptation to the postwar borderland rather than a continuation of the revolution. After the war, New England Congregationalists were ready to project their power into the new settlements. An Anglican organization, the Society for the Propagation of the


26 This is more or less in line with Emily Conroy-Krutz, who argues that early 19th century Americans built their foreign missionary network by maintaining connections with British missionaries, rather than distancing themselves from them. See Emily Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

27 This study proposes that the Congregational establishment in early republic New England was actually quite strong and assertive in building its network and moving resources into the borderland. Shelby Balik makes a similar argument, noting that the Congregationalists enthusiastically adopted itinerancy and competed strongly against Baptists and Methodists in northern New England. She does not examine the implications for the border, however: Shelby Balik, *Rally the Scattered Believers: Northern New England's Religious Geography* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014). Previous studies tended to portray the established Congregationalists as weak and ineffectual in this period. See Stephen Marini, *Radical Sects of Revolutionary New England* (Cambridge, MA:
Gospel in Foreign Parts, ceded the field after American independence and was limited to the remaining British North American colonies. The American half of the borderland now belonged to the Congregationalists, and people were flooding into it. The District of Maine became a natural focal point. It was the largest part of northern New England, it was receiving the most settlers, and it was technically still part of Massachusetts. That state was looking for a partner that might help it bring “good order and…civil government” to the Maine frontier. The first Congregational missionary society, the Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America (SPGNA), realized it could secure state funding by advertising itself as a tool for managing the Maine settlements. State money helped the SPGNA grow rapidly, and as new missionary societies formed, they chose to join the pioneer society as partners rather than try to compete with it. The resulting Congregational network grew to encompass almost the entire American half of the borderland. As it did so, it fundamentally changed eastern Maine – from a place that was attractive because of its connections with British North America, to a place that was attractive because of its connections with New England. Though it had not been their explicit design, the Congregationalists helped create this reorientation, and thus a meaningful border in one part of the borderland.

Harvard University Press, 1982) and Nathan Hatch, The Democratization of American Christianity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). One factor in this could be that these authors omit the SPGNA entirely from their studies. Marini, for example, identifies the Connecticut Missionary Society as the first Congregational missionary effort, when actually the SPGNA was established almost a decade earlier.


29 Though I argue in this study that the entire region east of the Great Lakes – including parts of New York, Upper and Lower Canada, northern New England, and the Maritimes – should be examined as a borderland, my analysis of church networks and their influence on border formation is limited to the part of that borderland shared by Maine and New Brunswick. This focus is mainly due to the wealth of sources on Congregationalists and Catholics in early Maine. Catholics in Massachusetts directed their efforts almost entirely toward the northeast. Similarly, four Congregational missionary societies focused on settlers in Maine: the SPGNA, Massachusetts Missionary Society, Evangelical Missionary Society, and Maine Missionary Society. Others spent at least some resources there. Only the Connecticut Missionary Society appears to have focused exclusively on Vermont and points west. There is some evidence that the Connecticut society shared the same attitude toward the border that took hold in Maine: that the
Studying the interaction between missionaries and the border also brings to light under-examined elements of the Protestant missionary movement in the early republic United States. Much of the recent work on missionaries examines the foreign missions, in the early nineteenth century, which served the American west and places further afield like Hawaii and India. These studies skip over the earlier period, from 1790 to 1810, when missionary societies first began to appear all around the northeast. These early organizations focused their efforts domestically, on the borderland of northern New England and the settler families who were rapidly filling it. The work that does exist on these domestic missions tends to examine each society individually, while largely ignoring the fact that they worked together. The role of women in these societies is also ignored, even though they became the most important donors and drove the expansion of the network. And finally, these studies typically ignore the border and religious life in the British colonies completely. This is a reflection of the larger historiography of religion in the

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British were responsible for Canada and Congregational missionaries should focus on American settlements. See Goodykoontz, *Home Missions*, 130; Conroy-Krutz, *Christian Imperialism*, 21.


32 The aforementioned books on the individual missionary societies barely mention the contribution of ladies cent societies at all. Meanwhile, histories of women’s activism tend to focus on the groups that were unambiguously controlled by women. This means they too ignore the cent societies. The result is an odd gap in the record: one study leaps from the Female Society for Missionary Purposes, formed in Boston in 1800, directly to the Female Auxiliary Bible Society more than a decade later. There appears to have been a decade-long lull in organizing, but in reality, women all over New England were assembling themselves into cent societies. See Ann Boylan, *The Origin of Women’s Activism: New York and Boston, 1797-1840* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); also R. Pierce Beaver, *All Loves Excelling: American Protestant Women in World Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968).
northeast, which almost always examines developments in either New England or British North America, rather than the region as a whole.\textsuperscript{33}

It is clear from the records of the early Congregational missionary societies that these groups understood themselves to be a collective. As each new group formed, it advertised its desire to join forces with its fellow societies to grow the missionary network together. The increasing importance of women to the network is also well recorded in year after year of treasurer’s reports. And there is no doubt that the missionary societies understood their field of operations to be a borderland. One way they promoted themselves, in fact, was by calling attention to the proximity of British North America. Missionary services, they pledged, would draw settlers to Maine who might otherwise choose to settle across the border.

My study consists of two parts. I first explain how the booming borderland drew people north, and then I trace the way those people attracted the church networks that changed the borderland. I begin, in chapter one, by exploring the evolution of the region that would become northern New England and Eastern Canada, from the early eighteenth century to the American Revolution. New Englanders, I argue, came to understand the region as special sort of frontier. They saw it, in the first place, as a natural extension of New England, and the nearest and easiest possibility for relocation. But even more importantly, the northeastern frontier offered more connectivity, not less – this was not simply cheap and abundant land, as might be found in the west, but cheap and abundant land in close proximity to urban markets and Atlantic trade.

Beginning in the 1760s, New England families began to move northeast. Many simply moved a short distance up the coast, building new settlements in the region that would eventually be split between Maine and New Brunswick, and maintaining connections with their former homes. When war broke out in 1775, both British and Americans attempted to assume control over the entire northeast, only to end up dividing it in two. Developments during the war years, however – including a warming of relations between Protestant New Englanders and the Catholic French, and efforts to placate northeastern Indians by providing them with priests – would impact the region for many years to come.

At the end of the war, the Treaty of Paris divided the northeast in two. The creation of a boundary, though, did not fundamentally change the dynamics of settlement. Chapter two explains how both the British and the Americans kept the boundary permeable, and encouraged trade and migration across it. Both sides wanted to fill their settlements, regardless of political distinctions, and so the marketing of the borderland to New Englanders and other Americans actually increased. The connectivity of the borderland increased as well. The end of the war resulted in a great deal of British investment in what remained of British North America. Cities like Saint John, New Brunswick, arose almost overnight. Montreal became even more of a metropolis, as settlements grew around the St Lawrence River and Lake Ontario. Americans who wished to move over the border did so easily, receiving land grants in Upper or Lower Canada or New Brunswick in exchange for a quick oath of allegiance. British trade networks spilled over the unenforced border, and some Americans found they did not need to leave the new republic to take advantage. Promoters of Vermont and New York land began to advertise access to Montreal using the same language as promoters of Canadian land. The people who responded to these

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34 Upper Canada is today Ontario, Lower Canada is Quebec.
advertisements did not comprise two distinct groups: early republicans who moved to American territory, and “late loyalists” who moved to British territory. They were one group of borderland opportunists, who chose the borderland because it promised both cheap land and greater connectivity.

After examining the ways the border was permeable in the post-revolution decades, I then explain how one part of that boundary – between Maine and New Brunswick – began to solidify. This particular corner of the borderland was unusual in a few ways. In the first place, even though there was a great deal of Christian missionary activity everywhere in northern New England, the District of Maine was exceptional. Congregational missionary societies poured more resources into Maine than anywhere else, targeting eastern Maine in particular. At the same time, the Catholic Church in Boston adopted a similar focus because of the Catholic Penobscot and Passamaquoddy communities of eastern Maine. Maine was also one of the few places where the solidity of the border would be directly tested. Between 1814 and 1818, the British attempted to shift the border westward and annex part of Maine, only to find that such a shift was no longer feasible. The northeasternmost corner of the borderland turns out to be an excellent case study in how church networks can gradually give weight and stability to a politically and economically porous boundary.

Chapters three and four describe this process of border formation, beginning with the birth of what quickly became an extensive Congregational missionary movement in northern New England. First, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, anxious to develop its Maine settlements, decided to provide state funding to its pioneer Congregational missionary society, the SPGNA. This stimulated a fateful shift in strategy. Finding itself with more than enough money to pay its ministers, the SPGNA decided to devote more resources to distributing books
and opening schools. These changes led to increased success on the ground. Communities and families that had been cold to the preaching of Congregational missionaries warmed up quickly once they were offered a more secular package of books and schools. At the same time, the state sponsorship encouraged the SPGNA to ignore existing Congregational communities located in British North America. In his address in support of the funding, Governor John Hancock specifically mentioned the need to “disseminate the principles of religion and morality amongst our fellow Citizens” in the District of Maine.\textsuperscript{35} Providing services to British subjects, even Congregationalists who were specifically requesting those services, would now mean spending state money outside the bounds of the state. Moreover, as time went on, and the SPGNA sought the regular renewal of its grant, it began to make an argument based explicitly on state building. Maine settlers, the society noted, were uncomfortably close to people of a “foreign province.” They might be tempted to relocate to British North America, unless Massachusetts, through the SPGNA, provided them with the books and schools to make their communities respectable. This was not even two decades after independence, and already people living in British territory – even if they were originally from New England and fellow Congregationalists – were being dismissed as “foreign.”\textsuperscript{36}

In 1798 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts embarked on an unlikely expansion of its strategy in Maine, by extending a grant to the Catholic Church as well.\textsuperscript{37} The Congregational

\textsuperscript{35} Acts and Resolves of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts 1791-1792 (Boston: Wright & Potter, 1897), 563.
\textsuperscript{36} Petition, 30 January 1804, Secretary’s Incoming Correspondence, MSS 48, Box 6, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL.
\textsuperscript{37} This may seem surprising, as the conventional wisdom is that Massachusetts was strongly anti-Catholic from the colonial period through the revolutionary era and into the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century. I argue in chapter one that this was actually not the case, and there was change in popular sentiment toward French-Canadian Catholics during the American Revolution. Along similar lines, Francis Cogliano has argued that anti-Catholic feeling in Massachusetts faded during and after the war, partly because of the wartime alliance with France: Francis Cogliano, No King, No Popery: Anti-Catholicism in Revolutionary New England (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995). There seems to have been a resurgence of anti-Catholicism in the 1820s and beyond. See Jenny Franchot, Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994); and Scott
network, though extensive, was not reaching one group of Maine people: Indians. Those communities, most notably the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy, were Catholic, and had flatly rejected all outreach from Protestant missionaries for generations. Furthermore, these two communities were located almost directly on the border. Massachusetts did not want these communities looking to British North America for religious assistance. It wanted the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy to be served by Boston-based priests. And so in 1798, the state approved an annual salary for a priest, Father James Romagne, who served Maine for the following two decades. Romagne’s placement in Maine clarified the boundary between “British” Indians and “American” Indians. It also allowed Boston-based priests the freedom to cover more ground, visiting not just Indian communities but Irish Catholic communities in Maine as well.38

Meanwhile, the growing success of the SPGNA led to the founding of more missionary societies: the Massachusetts, Maine, and Evangelical Missionary Societies. These groups aimed to help, rather than compete – the goal was to share costs and resources, and broaden the reach of the SPGNA’s existing missionary network. The key factor driving this expansion was the increasing participation of women, both as donors to the network and workers within it. Women had not been able to fully participate in the network when its focus was preaching. But women could both purchase and receive books, and they could serve as teachers. Women began to accept missionary-sponsored teaching jobs throughout northern and eastern Maine, while back in Boston other women organized cent societies to funnel cash and books into the missionary network. The proliferation of these cent societies created a kind of positive feedback loop within the Congregational network: more cent societies led to more money, which led to the founding of

more missionary societies, which stimulated still more organized giving. Within just a few years, thanks in large part to the cent society feedback loop, practically all the settlements in Maine were brought within the reach of a well-funded and organized Congregational network that stopped at the border.

These church networks – primarily the Congregational missionary network, with some contribution from Catholics – were crucial to the creation of a meaningful border in the northeast. In the 1780s and 1790s, the boundary between New England and British North America was porous. Its exact location was still a point of contention, and migrants and money crossed and re-crossed it. Many on the American side of the line were able to participate in British economic networks as if there was no border at all. But as the church networks developed, state sponsorship and the resulting focus on books and schools led them to respect the de facto border. It is not as though ministers never crossed the border. Some occasionally did. But these were spontaneous decisions, made on the ground. Missionary societies never asked ministers to cross the border. Books and pamphlets were only distributed in Maine communities. Schools stopped at the border as well. Most of the teachers staffing these schools were women, and they did not cross into British territory either. Gradually, the de facto border became meaningful. Maine communities were increasingly connected to Boston by money and books and schools, and even if legally the border was flexible, shifting it became increasingly untenable.

It took some time for American and British authorities to understand this. Chapter five details how both sides dealt with what they suddenly realized was a fixed boundary. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, diplomats were still engaged in negotiations designed to adjust the de facto border between Maine and New Brunswick. Both sides continued to present
arguments for why certain islands, and settler populations, should be handed over from one side to the other. The British then tried to shift the border by force. During the War of 1812, British forces invaded and occupied eastern Maine, temporarily moving the border about ninety miles west, to the Penobscot River. None of the attempts to move the border worked, however. They failed, in part, because networks built by Congregationalists and Catholics in the years since 1783 had changed the situation on the ground. Those networks adopted the de facto border, and gave it a weight that made it less flexible than the diplomats believed it to be. The post-War of 1812 years saw a reckoning with the permanence of the border, particularly on the British side. People born in the United States, for the first time, were seen as foreigners. Though earlier they found it easy to receive land grants, now obstacles were placed in their way. The open borderland was finally bordered.

My study concludes with an epilogue examining the impact of Maine’s 1820 separation from Massachusetts on the increasingly inflexible northeastern border. Some of the first affected were the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy. Their church network, built over two decades by the Diocese of Boston, had helped create the solid border between Maine and New Brunswick. It was this strong connection to Boston that helped maintain the territorial integrity of Maine during the war. After the war, however, the British were no longer seen as a threat. What had been borderland was now integral to the state; and so, after separation from Massachusetts, Maine eliminated support for the Indians’ resident priest. The two communities found themselves cut off from Catholic assistance on both sides – trapped between a newly inflexible border in the east, and another separating them from Boston in the west. Meanwhile, Maine’s new government, and newly emboldened Congregationalists, saw an opportunity to step in. The
Penobscot and Passamaquoddy, though they lived directly on the border, no longer lived in a region “shared by two nations.” Their communities were the property of Maine and Maine alone.
Chapter I:

The Lords of all These Coasts: New Englanders and the Eighteenth Century Northeast

In 1763 the British won the French and Indian War, and with it the entire eastern half of North America. Suddenly, a swath of territory north of New England that had been a war zone for over a century was open for settlement. The Canada Company was one of several organizations that arose to seize this moment. It was founded by a group of British officers

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stationed in Montreal after the war: some from the British Isles, some from the colonies. These men had partnered in conquering Quebec, and now they would partner in developing the empire.

The men of the Canada Company aimed to identify the most promising location in the new British possessions, request a large land grant, and then find settlers. They considered both Ile Saint Jean (soon to be renamed Prince Edward Island) and the Cape Sable area of Nova Scotia, before finally choosing the Saint John River in today’s New Brunswick. The company made a formal request to the government in Halifax, which quickly granted 400,000 acres, including both land in the river valley and several “fishing island(s)” in the Bay of Fundy. The Canada Company then renamed itself the Saint John River Society. One of its founders, Captain Beamsley Glasier of Newbury, Massachusetts, departed for the grant to conduct a survey.²

The Society anticipated recruiting settlers in Britain and Ireland. So Captain Glasier was a bit shocked to find, upon his arrival in the valley, that there were already people living on his grant. These were families from the “eastward part of New England,” likely Essex County, Massachusetts or the District of Maine. Their understanding was that a few years earlier, a different group from Essex County had been able to relocate to the Saint John relatively easily. There, they built a settlement called Maugerville, which is close to today’s Fredericton, New Brunswick. Now, these new families presumed “they could settle themselves as [the Maugerville families] had done,” anywhere in the valley, “without having a grant, or any lawful authority for so doing.”³

Captain Glasier announced that the settlers were actually squatting on lands that had been granted to the Saint John River Society. But, he confessed in a letter to his fellow proprietors, he

“prevailed upon [the settlers] to stay by giving them leave.” There was no reason to miss a golden opportunity by putting any obstacles in the way of these New England families. Their misperception of settlement possibilities was an unexpected blessing. If these people returned to their homes they would tell their neighbors of their disappointment, and prospective settlers would avoid the valley. And these were perfect candidates for settlement – clearly preferable to families from overseas. They lived only a couple hundred miles west of the grant, and “with a good wind can [make the trip] in two days.” They were already transporting themselves, at their own expense, and bringing cattle along too. The proprietors would barely have to supply them at all.4

Glasier further informed the society that he visited several coastal towns and villages on his way back to Boston, and what he learned answered his “most sanguine expectations.” There were many positive reports circulating about the Saint John River country. The possibilities for the settlement seemed bright, which was a good thing, for there was no time to waste. There was a wealth of lumber in the valley, just waiting to be milled. Now here were people arriving to provide the labor. It was time to get iron from Boston, build the mills, and get to lumbering. Considering the money the society would save by not having to find and transport settlers, the whole operation could quickly begin to pay for itself.5

Captain Glasier, in 1765, participated in one small part of what was becoming a major phenomenon. Beginning around 1760, thousands of people from southern New England began to move north and east. For a hundred and fifty years, what is today northern New England and eastern Canada had been split between dueling powers: French to the north and English to the

4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
south. A neutral zone lay in the middle, occupied mainly by Native Americans and unsafe for basically everyone. Even settlements that simply touched the edge of this neutral zone – Deerfield in western Massachusetts, York in Maine, and Passamaquoddy Bay in Acadia – had been attacked and destroyed. Though trade crossed the boundary, and warfare occasionally shifted it, colonists knew they would be unwise to settle the borderland. It was too dangerous.

In the eighteenth century, however, this began to change. In 1714, after the War of Spanish Succession, Britain took control of the French Acadian settlements in what is today Nova Scotia. The political boundary between New England and Nova Scotia vanished. Then British victories in the French and Indian War caused the boundary to disappear in today’s New Brunswick, Maine, and further west. Finally the border between New England and New France dissolved completely. French power was gone, and the British North American Empire encompassed the whole region. The region, no longer a borderland, was suddenly thrown wide open.

Though the border was gone and the area nominally unified, the new British North American Empire still contained two distinct parts. The first consisted of the original English colonies of the Atlantic seaboard, stretching from the settlements along the southern coast of Maine all the way to Georgia. The second consisted of the former French possessions: settlements around the St. Lawrence River, its feeder rivers, the Great Lakes, and the colonies surrounding the Gulf of St. Lawrence. This former French empire also included some of what would become northern New England, including much of northern Vermont and eastern Maine.

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This new part of the empire needed settlers. The perpetual problem with French America, and one of the reasons the British were able to take it, was lack of population. There were, of course, Native Americans living there, but their numbers were relatively small. The Passamaquoddy and Penobscot communities in today’s Maine, for example, probably totaled no more than a few thousand people. There were more French settlers, but that population was still tiny compared to New England. By the 1750s, there were only around 70,000 colonists in New France, and no more than 15,000 in the Acadian settlements of Nova Scotia. Massachusetts alone, by contrast, had almost 200,000 people. Population pressure had been building for decades in southern New England, and hundreds of families were ready to find new homes. These people were already quite familiar with the potential of the northeast. News of this potential had been printed in New England newspapers for decades. Soldiers from New England had visited on military expeditions. Merchants built trade networks, both licit and illicit, that brought the region into New England’s economic sphere. Many southern New England families had been waiting for years for just this moment – the opening of the former borderland.

So what Britain had in mid-eighteenth century North America was territory that needed settlers, and a large supply of colonists who were eager to relocate. The obvious solution was to open the door and step out of the way. Still, for a while British authorities resisted. They wanted to maintain a boundary in the northeast. The New England colonies had always been difficult to control, and Britain wanted more influence over its new possessions. It seemed like a bad idea to let New England simply expand into Nova Scotia and Canada, and also unwise to drain one part of the empire to fill another. The pressure from New England, however, was inexorable. As Captain Glazier discovered in 1765, people would move on their own whether they had official sanction or not. It was easy and economical to simply facilitate this movement. And so for about
a generation, until the outbreak of the American Revolution, settlement of the northeast became a collaborative effort between Britain and her New England colonies. It was a partnership mirrored on a small scale by the proprietors of the Saint John River Society: Crown and colonies conquered northeastern North America together, now together they would fill and supply it. And so the boundary vanished as New Englanders moved north and east.7

The most well documented participants in this movement, who have come to serve as exemplars for the event, are the New England Planters.8 These were settlers from Connecticut, Rhode Island, and southeastern Massachusetts who moved to Nova Scotia in the 1760s. In 1755, a combined force of British and colonial troops evicted most of the French Acadian settlers living in Nova Scotia. The Acadians were distributed throughout the other colonies, leaving empty settlements around the Bay of Fundy. Governor of Nova Scotia Charles Lawrence then published a proclamation in New England newspapers, inviting families north “for the peopling and cultivating…[of] the lands vacated by the French.”9 Thousands of men and women responded, traveling northeast in a parade of ships across the Gulf of Maine to found settlements throughout peninsular Nova Scotia. These people were the original Anglo Protestant population

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9 Charles Lawrence, “A Proclamation,” Boston Evening Post, 6 November 1758.
of what would become the Maritime Provinces, until they found themselves swamped by yet another migration in 1783 – loyalist refugees fleeing the newly independent United States.

Historians have tended to rely on the New England Planters to tell the story of pre-revolutionary northeastern migration. Their story is seductive because the planter migration had a clear beginning and end. It began with an unambiguous call for settlers, resulted in a dozen or so permanent communities, and ended a decade later. Nova Scotia then distinguished itself by failing to join its fellow colonies in rebellion. The planters chose neutrality, which alienated them from their cousins in New England and gave them the beginning of a distinct identity. Then the thirteen rebel colonies won their independence, tens of thousands of loyalist refugees arrived in the remaining British colonies, and the northeast became a borderland once more. Migration from southern New England directly to peninsular Nova Scotia stopped. The planters seem to demonstrate that the revolution re-created the northeastern border.

This study takes a step back, examining the planter migration as just one element of a larger and more complicated borderland story. Viewed broadly, the northeastern migration of New Englanders was multifaceted. Most of it was not an organized response to a particular call for settlers, but rather a decentralized, improvisational movement of people toward perceived opportunities. While some planters were relocating from southern New England directly to peninsular Nova Scotia, another, less structured migration was taking place along the coastline north of Boston. These people were inspired less by the specific call from Governor Lawrence, and more by a general sense of the possibilities in the eastern river valleys. They wanted fertile, accessible land that would allow them to stay connected to their old homes and to the broader Atlantic trade. They read optimistic reports in their newspapers, and spoke to friends and neighbors with firsthand experience in the borderland. These are the people who Captain Glasier
discovered on the Saint John River Society’s grant, and who he spoke with on the way back to Boston. They were transporting themselves, a few at a time, based on information from neighbors and friends, and with the reassurance that they would not be traveling far. Their economic networks followed them north – for example, when merchants from Newburyport set up a trading post to move goods between Massachusetts and the mouth of the Saint John River. Settlers also maintained connections with family members who remained behind, allowing them to essentially hedge their bets on relocation. If the new settlements failed to prosper, their former lives were only two days sail away.

The broader view complicates the story of the American Revolution, because after the war much of the northeast continued to see exactly this same sort of migration. Peninsular Nova Scotia, it turns out, was a bit of an outlier. There, the British maintained firm control throughout the war, so settlers were forced into a choice. They could try to push the colony into the rebellion, or remain loyal by essentially doing nothing. They chose the latter. In the rest of the northeast, settlers did not face the same decision. No one knew where the exact boundary between New England and British North America would fall. The British hoped to push it as far west as possible, the Americans to push it to the east. Therefore, both sides attempted to woo the people of the region, without applying enforcement to any particular boundary line. Settlers and Indians within the borderland collaborated in an attack on a British fort, hoping to move the border east; when this attack failed, most of the attackers were able to return to their home communities without repercussions. The British responded by installing a Catholic priest on the

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10 My argument here aligns partially with S. Max Edelson’s in A New Map of Empire. Edelson argues that the British tried to more closely centralize and monitor the Nova Scotia colony, because they wanted to avoid the “volatile trial and error method” of previous colonies, and protect Nova Scotia from “self-interested New Englanders who undermined its long term settlement.” I agree that they attempted this in peninsular Nova Scotia. However, I argue that they failed to extend this strategy to the northern part of Nova Scotia – the region that would become New Brunswick. This hands-off strategy allowed the region to be settled like the older English colonies, and kept boundaries there blurry.
Saint John River, knowing that would attract Catholic Indians from Maine and perhaps move the border west. Americans, in turn, made overtures to Catholic French Canadians, hoping to bring them into the rebellion and do away with the northern border entirely. And ordinary New Englanders continued to filter north and east, even at war’s end, migrating as if there was no boundary at all.

And so, for the most part, the American Revolution failed to create a meaningful division in the northeastern borderland. Because both British and Americans invested in the northeast, because both sides built alliances within it and directed resources to it, what resulted was a paradoxical integration of the region. Even the arrival of the loyalist refugees would contribute to this integration, as their booming communities stimulated the economy of the whole area, which drew still more migrants. The larger story of the northeast before and after the revolution becomes a story of continuity, rather than change. Political distinctions of patriot and loyalist failed to outlast the war, and in many ways the development of the renewed borderland remained collaborative. After the war, both British and Americans maintained similar incentives designed to keep people moving north and east. They still wanted the region settled, and each side remained optimistic that it would eventually get the border it wanted. New England families continued to respond to these incentives, moving to the borderland with little regard for politics. What mattered was the quality of the land, the terms on which it was offered, and its connectivity to markets. Whether, at that present moment, it was technically within the Empire or the Republic was not a concern.

The groundwork for the northeastern migration of the 1760s had been laid generations earlier. Colonial New Englanders never really recognized a firm border to their northeast. From a
very early period New Englanders understood the future Maritime Provinces of Canada as less of a frontier and more an extension of New England. French weakness contributed to this understanding. The French maintained political control over the region for most of a century, but had a very difficult time resisting the growing economic and demographic strength of the New England colonies. The British, as they took over the region in the eighteenth century, found that they had the same problem. They were never comfortable with New England’s influence in the northeast, and tried repeatedly to create a boundary that would protect Nova Scotia and its surrounding areas from becoming a “new” New England. This proved difficult and expensive, however, and by the 1760s British authorities basically gave up, allowing their migrating colonists to negate the border they had always ignored anyway.\(^\text{11}\)

The spread of New England’s influence over the region – which really amounted to Massachusetts’s influence over the region – began almost as soon as the French founded their settlements in the early seventeenth century. This was in 1604, when an expedition guided by Samuel Champlain wintered on an island in the St. Croix River off Passamaquoddy Bay. After suffering horrible mortality that first winter, the remnants of the group moved across the Bay of Fundy to what is now the north shore of Nova Scotia. The settlement they founded lasted less than a decade before being destroyed by a privateer dispatched by the governor of the new English colony at Jamestown. After a few decades of neglect, the French reestablished the settlement in the 1630s. In 1636, a transport from La Rochelle brought the first migrant families from France to what was now known as Acadia, and the colony began to slowly grow.

While the Acadian colony had been dormant, however, the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay Colonies were born. These English colonies grew far more quickly than the French. By

1650 there were around three hundred people in Acadia, while thanks to the Puritan migrations of the 1620s and 1630s there were almost twenty thousand in New England.\(^\text{12}\) Those English colonists quickly came to see tiny French Acadia as a place they could control. In the mid-seventeenth century, as Massachusetts militia officer Robert Sedgwick set out with a small fleet to attack the Dutch settlements at New Amsterdam, word came down that the Dutch and English were again at peace. Thinking quickly, Sedgwick attacked and seized Acadia instead, hoping to increase Massachusetts’s trading and fishing. England ruled Acadia for about fifteen years before another peace treaty returned it to France. While London, during that era, never legally gave Acadia to the colony of Massachusetts Bay, it may as well have. Thomas Temple, appointed Governor of Acadia, chose to live in Boston, where he invested in land and developed relationships with Boston merchants. Even after the colony was returned to French control the new French governor maintained these connections with Boston – by employing craftsmen from New England, for example.\(^\text{13}\)

Bostonians were not content with control over Acadia alone. They were always pushing outward, expanding New England’s sphere as far eastward as the island of Newfoundland. Massachusetts traded with the Newfoundland settlements as early as the 1620s, when the Plymouth colony was barely established. By 1651, New Englanders had “great traffique” with Newfoundland, consisting mainly of exchanging lumber, sugar, molasses, and tobacco for specie, fishing equipment, and European goods. By the end of the century, some Massachusetts traders were even setting up what were essentially branch offices, sending sons or nephews to secure a presence on the island. At the same time, New England began stealing settlers from the


Newfoundland colony. Massachusetts Bay offered a better chance to secure land and high wages, and a far better chance at marriage. According to one Newfoundland ship captain, “New England men constantly carry away…fishermen and seamen, who presently marry and then that is their home.” This kind of double-migration, from the British Isles to Newfoundland and then again to New England, carried on right up until the American Revolution.\(^\text{14}\)

New England’s influence over the northeast continued to grow and become entrenched as the seventeenth century gave way to the eighteenth, frustrating French and British alike. As one French administrator put it, “The English of Boston regard themselves as the lords of all these coasts.”\(^\text{15}\) They especially regarded themselves as the lords of Nova Scotia. France was never able to supply its Acadian settlers as well as Massachusetts could. French fishing was increasingly concentrated around Newfoundland and the northern parts of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Meanwhile the French increasingly prioritized Quebec, and the Nova Scotia peninsula made it absurd for ships to stop in the Bay of Fundy as they came and went between Quebec and France, as such a stop would add hundreds of miles to any voyage. Acadian commerce, then, was “inevitably with Massachusetts, primarily Boston.” British forces finally took Acadia for good in 1710, during the War of Spanish Succession, but this barely changed the dynamics of the region. The Acadian settlers, though French and Catholic, stayed put, and continued to be firmly within Massachusetts’s sphere.\(^\text{16}\)

The attachment of Massachusetts’s traders to their northeastern empire even went so far as to work directly against British imperial strategy. After losing peninsular Nova Scotia to the British, the French began to build a fortress at Louisbourg, on Ile Royale (today Cape Breton


\(^{15}\) Jacques de Meulles, 1686, quoted in Faragher, *Great and Noble Scheme*, 78.

\(^{16}\) Griffiths, *Migrant to Acadian*, 119-120.
Island). New England merchants enriched themselves by supplying that fortress, even as the British attempted to prevent Acadian settlers from doing the same.\textsuperscript{17} The British plan was to place a blockade between the Acadians and Louisbourg, hoping the French fortress would have to rely on the tiny number of settlers willing to relocate to Ile Royale itself. It would seem like a relatively simple operation, since the British controlled traffic in the Bay of Fundy. But New England traders found a way around it. Acadians began to move goods across the isthmus of Chignecto to the shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where New England traders picked up the goods and transported them to the ostensible enemy at Louisbourg for French manufactures, wine, and West Indian molasses.\textsuperscript{18} Then, during King George’s War, the first attempt to take Louisbourg from the French also became a Massachusetts project. Planning for the attack was based in part on intelligence gathered from fisherman in the District of Maine. Governor Shirley and the Massachusetts General Court authorized the operation, and Massachusetts provided most of the necessary ships and over three quarters of the soldiers. When the fortress was returned to the French at the end of the war, in exchange for land in India, New England colonists were frustrated. A move that should have confirmed their power in the region had been thrown out on what seemed to be an imperial whim.\textsuperscript{19}

In 1748, after the return of Louisbourg to the French, the British decided the time had come to build up their Nova Scotia colony. The French had their fortress, so the British would create a competing stronghold centered on the harbor at Halifax. They would then fill their stronghold with Protestant settlers, who would counter Louisbourg and eventually outnumber

\textsuperscript{17} Hodson, \textit{Acadian Diaspora}, 36; MacNutt, \textit{Atlantic Provinces}, 14.
\textsuperscript{18} Faragher, \textit{Great and Noble Scheme}, 149-150.
\textsuperscript{19} Henry Burrage, \textit{Maine at Louisburg in 1745} (Augusta, ME: Burleigh & Flynt, 1910); Phillip Buckner and John Reid, \textit{The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 125-127.
and eclipse the Acadian French. The question was where would these loyal Protestant settlers come from?

Considering the long history detailed above, the settlers would obviously come from New England. British authorities, however, were determined to resist that solution. They did not particularly want settlers from Massachusetts in their new Nova Scotia colony. In the first place, there was frequent concern in the eighteenth century over the problem of losing Protestants in one part of the empire in order to gain Protestants in another. Before the French and Indian War the French still had firm control of Quebec, and there was a feeling that draining the New England colonies of population was unsafe.\(^\text{20}\) There was a similar attitude toward Protestant populations in Ireland. When an attempt was made in the 1760s to recruit Nova Scotia settlers there, the government in London shut it down, noting: “however desirable an object the settling of Nova Scotia may be yet the migration from Ireland of such great numbers of His Majesty’s subjects must be attended with dangerous consequences to that Kingdom.”\(^\text{21}\)

The British also had a long standing, if informal, preference not to allow Nova Scotia to become a “new” New England. The New England colonies, particularly Massachusetts, had always been problematically independent. This was partially due to their being founded in the early seventeenth century, before the Glorious Revolution of 1688 gave Parliament the power to manage the empire. Older colonies also had strong colonial assemblies that often challenged appointed governors. They assumed control of, and took credit for, much of their own foreign policy – as evidenced by Massachusetts’s attack on Louisbourg. Britain wanted to keep tighter control over its newer colonies like Nova Scotia. Officials tried for years to govern that colony

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with only a governor and an executive council, attempting to avoid calling a legislative assembly that might then grow too powerful. They also knew that the absence of a legislative assembly would be a deterrent to New England families looking to migrate. After all, the best way to prevent Nova Scotia from becoming another New England was to avoid importing New Englanders.²²

And so, initially, the British tried to maintain a boundary in the northeast by settling Nova Scotia with disbanded soldiers and German migrants. A proclamation published in London in the spring of 1749 and reprinted in the Boston News-Letter in May offered Nova Scotia land to “officers and private men lately dismissed…[from] his Majesty’s Land and Sea service.” These men were wanted “with or without families.” Each private soldier or seaman could expect fifty acres, plus an additional ten for any family member brought along, and the land grant would increase with one’s rank. Ex-soldiers were asked to respond with their regiment or company, or the name of the ship on which they served. The problem inherent in this extremely limited call for settlers seems to have occurred to the authorities almost immediately: a fledgling colony requires skilled labor, not just recently discharged soldiers. The second-to-last paragraph expanded the call, inviting “carpenters, shipwrights, smiths, masons” and several other categories of artisans to apply on the same basis as common soldiers.²³ A few months later, perhaps due to a lack of applicants, another notice extended the invitation to former soldiers currently living in the colonies.²⁴

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²² As Edelson argues in A New Map of Empire, London wanted a new, more regulated system of colonization in Nova Scotia that “sought to displace settlers as meaningful agents.” New Englanders were exactly the independent, ambitious, chaotic settlers that the Board wanted to avoid. For a detailed explanation of the political differences the developed between seventeenth century colonies and eighteenth century colonies, see Elizabeth Mancke, The Fault Lines of Empire: Political Differentiation in Massachusetts and Nova Scotia, 1760-1830 (New York: Routledge, 2005).

²³ Boston News-Letter, 4 May 1749.

²⁴ Boston News-Letter, 17 August 1749.
Still avoiding an open invitation to New England families, the authorities next directed their attention to German-speaking migrants: the “Palatines.” For decades, there had been a steady flow of settlers departing from Rotterdam, at the mouth of the Rhine, destined for the British colonies. These people were known in Britain as Palatines, which became a shorthand term for German-speaking Protestants from the territory around the upper reaches of the Rhine. Most of these migrants settled in Pennsylvania or the Chesapeake area. From the 1720s through the 1740s Philadelphia averaged around five ships of Palatines each year, and that number was rising just as Nova Scotia began looking for settlers. Redirecting a few ships to Halifax was seen as an effective and cheap way of filling the region with Protestant families, while keeping New England families in New England. And so, from about 1750 to 1752, almost three thousand mostly German immigrants arrived in Nova Scotia. Some stayed around Halifax, while others began a new community at Lunenburg just to the southwest.

The settlement of Palatine families in and around Halifax worked reasonably well. But the idea that New Englanders could be kept out of the Nova Scotia colony was never very logical. It was unlikely that the residents of eastern Massachusetts would forget about opportunities in the northeast, because their newspapers frequently reminded them. As the Palatines were arriving, New Englanders received updates on the growing colony, and on the Boston money invested in the settlement project. In January of 1754, the Boston Evening Post included in its news from London a brief notice that ships were en route from that city to Holland.

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25 Many of these migrants were not actually from the Palatinate, which is a specific region in Germany. But British newspaper readers of the early 18th Century understood the Palatinate to be a war-torn region from which there would be refugees, so they came to refer to a broad variety of German-speaking refugees as “Palatines.” For a recent study of the Palatine refugees, see Philip Otterness, Becoming German: The 1709 Palatine Migration to New York (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004).

26 Bell, Foreign Protestants, 86

to pick up “Protestant Families from the Swiss Cantons, who are going to settle in Nova Scotia.”

A few months later, the *Boston Gazette* reported on several promising settlements in the colony. One, at Jeddore Harbour to the east of Halifax, had the backing of twenty prominent Bostonians. Another, at Mahone Bay along the south shore, was also being built by Boston investors and would soon have a sawmill. Though Nova Scotia wanted to avoid Boston settlers, it was apparently having a hard time avoiding Boston money.

This concern over costs had the effect of maintaining ties between Nova Scotia and New England. It was impossible to avoid the aforementioned Boston investors, because Parliament wished to settle Nova Scotia with as small a financial commitment as possible. Concern over costs came up repeatedly in communications between Halifax and London. In a March 1750 letter to Governor Cornwallis in Halifax, the Board of Trade returned several times to the issue of costs. Parliament, the board wrote, was at that moment in favor of the Nova Scotia project. But this could and would change, if expenses were to exceed what had been estimated. The letter writer attempted to make this point diplomatically. Cornwallis had organized some public works projects, which were not particularly extravagant. Some were as basic as land clearing, as the settlement had only been founded a year or so earlier. But after praising Cornwallis’s initiative, the board made its position clear; it would be preferable to “postpone even the most necessary works, than exceed the estimate.” There were more migrants on the way, including hundreds of laboring men, who would hopefully depress the cost of labor and allow projects to be completed more cheaply.

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28 *Boston Evening Post*, 14 January 1754.
29 *Boston Gazette*, 26 March 1754.
30 Letter, Board of Trade to Cornwallis, 22 March 1750, MS CAN 2, Folder 23, Miscellaneous Canadian documents, Houghton Library, Cambridge, MA.
In a previous letter Cornwallis must have complained about his New England neighbors, because the Board of Trade addressed his concerns. There was, unfortunately, no way to avoid Boston merchants. Realistically, needed supplies could only come from New England. So it was true but irrelevant that, as Cornwallis had noted, they “take advantage of the Province upon every occasion” and “demand exorbitant profit upon every contract.” They would continue to behave this way until Nova Scotia’s credit could be established, which would not happen unless Cornwallis took the board’s advice in regard to saving money. Cornwallis and the Board found themselves in an ironic quandary: attempting to avoid New England settlers resulted in an unavoidable engagement with other New Englanders.

There was simply no way to create a meaningful boundary between Nova Scotia and the New England colonies when those colonies were the only logical source of supplies. This was particularly important in the case of livestock. The Board of Trade and Halifax officials were trapped by geographic reality. The only way for Nova Scotia settlers to become self-sufficient was to provide them with livestock, but the livestock had to come from New England. This was made abundantly clear in the first years of the 1750s, when the Nova Scotia settlements were desperate for animals. Settlers at Lunenburg repeatedly requested livestock with no results, until finally, in 1754, the colonial officials secured a budgetary provision for a shipment. The animals were purchased in New England and arrived in September of that year: 847 sheep, 188 goats, 125 pigs, and 74 cows. Families then drew lots. A lucky seventy-four families received a cow and a sheep. Less fortunate families had to make do with a half-dozen sheep, a pig, and a goat.

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31 Ibid.
32 Letter, Board of Trade to Hopson, 9 July 1753, quoted in Bell, Foreign Protestants, 447-8.
33 Bell, Foreign Protestants, 477-478.
If Nova Scotia were opened to New England settlers, these settlers would bring their own livestock. There would be no need for budgetary provisions, mass purchases, or the drawing of lots. The actual settlers would be more likely to survive as well. Voyages to Halifax were not more dangerous than average, but transatlantic travel in general was risky. The British were transporting settlers free of charge with the caveat that they pay off the debt with public works, but some did not survive long enough to do so. The Ann, for example, in the summer of 1750, took twelve weeks to travel from Rotterdam to Halifax. Out of a little over three hundred passengers, seventeen people died during the voyage. This was apparently one of the lowest mortality rates for the foreign Protestant transports.34 And once these people arrived, it was British funding that would have to keep them alive. By contrast, ten years later the sloop Sally carried nine families from Rhode Island to Nova Scotia, together with their livestock and household goods, in less than half the time, and without any lives lost in the process.35

The move to finally open Nova Scotia to New England migrants was stimulated in part by the decision to round up and deport the entire French Acadian population. The Acadians had proclaimed their neutrality ever since the British takeover in 1710, but when war with the French began yet again in 1754, British and colonial officials decided they were too much of a risk. The only way to permanently secure Nova Scotia was to get rid of them. Massachusetts was intimately involved in the operation, just as it had been in every other aspect of Acadian life. The new Governor of Nova Scotia, Charles Lawrence, worked with Massachusetts Governor William Shirley and other New England officials to plan the removal. Two thousand Massachusetts militiamen made up the brunt of the force, accompanied by three hundred regular British soldiers. In the fall of 1755, they began rounding up Acadian settlers and burning their homes.

34 Bell, Foreign Protestants, 152.
35 Ray Greene Huling, The Rhode Island Emigration to Nova Scotia (Providence: Narragansett Historical Register, 1889), 16-17.
Of the fifteen thousand Acadians, only a few thousand escaped to Quebec and the northern parts of today’s New Brunswick. The vast majority were scattered throughout the British Atlantic colonies.\(^\text{36}\)

In addition to being horrifically cruel, the expulsion of the Acadians turned out to be a terrible self-inflicted blow to the health of the Nova Scotia colony. Hundreds of productive farms were left in ruins. Now there was an even more dire need for settlers, to fill the empty settlements and make the colony productive again. Meanwhile, the government in Halifax had gradually become friendlier toward New England. Men from Great Britain had dominated the executive council under Governor Cornwallis. But a decade later, half of Governor Lawrence’s council was New England-born. So it is not too surprising that in 1758, Lawrence decided to issue a general invitation to New England families. There was still some resistance from the Board of Trade, which had apparently not abandoned the idea of settling the colony with disbanded soldiers. Lawrence pushed back by reminding the Board of how expensive it had been to supply Nova Scotia settlements to that point. Disbanded soldiers were like Palatine settlers: they would have to be provided with everything. New Englanders were ready to move, with livestock, building materials, and all their worldly goods. It was time to welcome them.\(^\text{37}\)

The Governor’s proclamation began appearing in New England newspapers in November 1758. It was a broad invitation. Lawrence did not limit himself to describing the empty Acadian towns around the Bay of Fundy, but rather created a more sweeping image of a pacified and open northeastern borderland. The British, he wrote, had demolished French power not only in the former Acadia, but also in the “Gaspee, Meremichi…on the Gulf of Lawrence, and on St. John’s River.” All the French had been forced to “take refuge in Canada,” and now New Englanders

\(^\text{36}\) Hodson, *Acadian Diaspora*; Faragher, *Great and Noble Scheme*.

were free to settle and cultivate basically the entire region. Furthermore, the expulsion of the Acadians had created an opportunity that might never arise again. A hundred thousand acres of “interval plow-land” was available, which had been “cultivated for more than a hundred years past.” There was a hundred thousand acres of upland as well, fully stocked with “English Grass,” as well as orchards and gardens. Finally, all of this land was located on navigable rivers, which would connect settlers easily to Atlantic trade. It was the best possible scenario for New Englanders looking to resettle.38

The migration began at once. Within just a few months groups in Rhode Island and southeastern Connecticut sent five agents to Halifax to negotiate for settlements. Other agents from Massachusetts and New Hampshire quickly followed. One of the Rhode Islanders represented one hundred families, who were willing to depart more or less immediately. The agents must have felt quite at home in Halifax, as three of the five men who met them to conduct the negotiations were from Massachusetts themselves. Governor Lawrence was thrilled. In April 1759 he wrote the Board of Trade, bragging that “hundreds of associated substantial families” were engaged in choosing land for their townships. By the end of the year, Lawrence reported that thirteen new townships were in the works, and that he expected at least five thousand settlers in the following three years.39

The great appeal of the northeastern borderland for New England families was that it was not a distant, disconnected frontier. This was true whether one was interested in peninsular Nova Scotia, the Saint John River area in today’s New Brunswick, or the far reaches of the District of Maine. Prospective settlers did not have to worry about building new institutions or new

connections with trade networks. They were barely leaving home. Agents could make multiple trips to evaluate the land and ensure that families knew what to expect on arrival. And perhaps most importantly, migrants to the borderland knew that if things did not go well, their relocation was not necessarily permanent. If they were smart, and perhaps speculated a bit with their land grants, a temporary migration northeast might even enrich their family.

Henry Evans was the agent for a group of families from Sudbury, Massachusetts, who all chose to settle in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia. His journal, together with studies of other planter communities in the same area, provides an excellent illustration of how the northeastern migration worked. Communication from one side of the region to the other was constant. The northeastern borderland really was like an extension of New England. And a substantial percentage of settlers attempted to leverage their grants and maintain their connections to home, essentially hedging their bets on migration.

Evans made arrangements to travel from Boston to Halifax with a Captain Watts, in early April of 1760. On April 3\textsuperscript{rd}, however, the appointed day, Evans arrived at the dock to find he’d been left behind. He decided to head overland to Marblehead, hoping to overtake Captain Watts, but missed him there too. There were many opportunities for passage east, however. In Marblehead he found a fishing boat headed to the coast of Nova Scotia, the captain of which offered to take Evans and a companion to Halifax for fifteen dollars and four gallons of rum. They were at sea by April 5\textsuperscript{th}.\textsuperscript{40}

It took about six days to reach Lunenburg, just south of Halifax, where the boat was hung up in a storm. Evans was in Halifax by April 14\textsuperscript{th}, and met the governor on the 16\textsuperscript{th}. He made arrangements for the appropriate vessels to transport emigrants, and wrote letters to people

\textsuperscript{40} Journal of Henry Evans, in W.A. Calnek, \textit{History of the County of Annapolis, including old Port Royal and Acadia} (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1897), 148-151.
already in the Annapolis Valley, preparing them for the arrival of his Sudbury settlers. By Sunday the 20th of April, Evans had all his papers signed and was ready to head home. The very first captain he checked in with was going to Boston, but not directly, so Evans asked around and quickly found a better option. After a day’s delay for bad weather, Evans was en route back to Boston on Tuesday the 22nd – not even three weeks since he had arrived at the dock in Boston for the start of his journey.41

By the first week of May Evans was back in Sudbury, Massachusetts, meeting with the settlers and chartering the boats that would take them east. Captain Grow and the Charming Molly were enlisted as the primary transportation. Captain Grow made at least two round trips. He left for Annapolis with settlers in late May, was back in Boston in early June, and left again June 19th. The several voyages of the Charming Molly brought at least forty-five settlers to Nova Scotia. Most were men, though there were three women and at least eleven children. Another dozen or so people arrived later in the summer. And just as Governor Lawrence envisioned, they brought cattle and supplies. On the Charming Molly were sixteen oxen, eleven cows, ten sheep, two horses, a pig, and a dog, plus a handful of lambs, calves, and piglets. The settlers brought their own carts and plows and wheels. By early July, the Annapolis proprietors were having their meetings in Nova Scotia. Surveyors laid out the first lots in August, and were able to begin on the second set of lots by early October. Henry Evans was building his own house in Annapolis before winter set in.42

At that point, the Annapolis settlers likely turned to land speculation. According to a study of nearby Horton, also on the north shore of Nova Scotia, eighty percent of settlers participated in the land market in the 1760s. The intention was not necessarily to sell one’s grant

41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
and then flee back to Massachusetts. Many used their land to raise capital. There were some settlers looking to amass very large holdings, so others could sell off part of their grant for cash and still keep enough land to settle on. In those first few years tens of thousands of acres were exchanged. And of course, there were some who came to test the possibilities in Nova Scotia, and found them lacking. Around two dozen of the families who arrived in Annapolis in the early 1760s were no longer there by 1770. These sorts of returns happened throughout the region. Among hundreds of settlers from southern New England who settled the town of Sackville was an entire Baptist church from Swansea, Massachusetts. They left Massachusetts as a group, with their pastor, and then most of them turned around and headed back a few years later.\(^{43}\) The northeastern frontier provided a unique opportunity for this kind of experimental migration. Families could try their luck and then return, or some family members could stay and others could pursue another land grant somewhere else.

As one part of this migration took place between southeastern New England and peninsular Nova Scotia, another part was taking shape north of Boston. Families from Essex County and points east were filtering further north and east into Passamaquoddy Bay, the Saint John River valley, and other areas on the northern side of the Bay of Fundy. In the 1760s all of this territory was still part of Nova Scotia; in 1783 it would be set off as the separate colony of New Brunswick. Governor Lawrence’s proclamation had implied that this land was equally as pacified and ready for settlement as the rest of the colony. And that proclamation was not the only report colonists had of the region. There had been other stories in the newspapers over the years, which though not explicit calls for settlers, still tended to paint a picture of promising opportunities. In 1755, a dispatch from Boston printed in the *Pennsylvania Gazette* made

unsubtle overtures to families looking to relocate. An anonymous correspondent in Nova Scotia wrote that “the French being entirely dispossessed of Nova Scotia…we have a prospect of bringing the St. John’s Indians entirely over to our interest.” Everyone on the river, he claimed, had been disarmed. All that was needed for a flourishing settlement was “good New England Husbandmen, who would improve the lands hereabouts.”

A few years later the *Boston Evening Post* assured readers that a strong English fort guarded the Saint John River, and “the French and Indians continue to retire further up” into the backcountry. All the necessities for prospective colonists were in place.

Settlement of the northern reaches of the borderland involved a little more independent spirit than settlement further south. All the New England planter towns, even in peninsular Nova Scotia, could be described as “do-it-yourself” settlements. As described above, they were planned and executed by the colonists themselves through their agents, who went to Halifax, made the appropriate arrangements, and then organized the necessary ships. The governor and his council, however, still exerted a certain amount of control over the new townships on the peninsula. Those settlements had more ongoing communication with Halifax, and once a colonial assembly was created, those towns were more likely to send representatives. Settlement in the other part of the borderland – the vast area that would eventually be split between Maine and New Brunswick – was very different. This was true do-it-yourself migration. Most of the time, authorities in Halifax do not seem to have known what was going on in the region at all, and they did not make much of an effort to change that. Settlers found the land, moved themselves onto it, and only later sought official approval for what they had already done.

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45 *Boston Evening Post*, 30 October 1758.
Already in the 1760s, a policy was taking shape that would continue on through the revolution and into the post-war period. It was unclear exactly where borders were in the region, and development was what really mattered, so British authorities were content to allow settlers to arrive and build communities with little oversight.

The town of Maugerville was the first major New England settlement project in the Saint John River valley. Israel Perley and a dozen other men from the northeast shore of Massachusetts began scouting the area in 1761. They first explored the backcountry via the Machias River, and then the following year traveled up the Saint John and chose a spot a few miles downstream of St. Anne’s point, where the city of Fredericton is today. Perley quickly found two hundred settlers from around his old hometown of Boxford, and the whole group was building the new town by 1763. The Maugerville community did not even make an official request for a grant until 1764, when they had already been settled for a year. Halifax happily signed off on the request, and only intervened by appointing a few of the settlers as justices of the peace. The migrants were basically free to build a brand-new town, just like the ones they had left in Massachusetts. They held town meetings and organized a Congregational Church. Starting in 1765, the Maugerville settlers did elect representatives for the colonial assembly, but those men hardly ever made the journey to Halifax.46

The Maugerville settlement was more connected to Essex County, Massachusetts than it was to Halifax. One of the men who scouted the settlement alongside Perley was a merchant James Simonds. As the first settlers were arriving in Maugerville, Simonds set up a trading post at the mouth of the river and began to put together a firm that would connect his new and former homes. Simonds partnered with merchants in Newburyport and Boston, and within a few years

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the firm of Simonds, Hazen and White was maintaining a constant flow of goods and people between Newburyport and the Saint John River. It is therefore no surprise that when Captain Glasier showed up on the river in 1765 to evaluate his grant, he found settlers already there. The Maugerville community and the possibilities on the Saint John were common knowledge in the towns north of Boston. The families who left had not vanished into a distant frontier. They were still connected to their old networks.

In fact, some of the families were not just in contact with Massachusetts, they were actively maintaining family networks that bridged the borderland. The Bubars were one of these families. They had lived on the Kennebec River in Maine for over a decade when, in 1760, Joseph Bubar began to get involved in settlement projects. First he purchased part of Parker’s Island in the Kennebec from the Plymouth Proprietors, and then within a year had decided to pursue land in the Maugerville settlement as well. Bubar and his wife had at least seven children, and the various land schemes may have been an attempt to spread family landholdings around. Most of the Bubars appear to have stayed in Maugerville until the start of the Revolution, at which point Joseph and some of his children moved back to the Kennebec River. Another son moved to Bangor, on the Penobscot River, and four more Bubar children remained on the Saint John. By the end of the war, the family as a group controlled land in all three major borderland river valleys.

The pre-Revolutionary period saw the founding of a number of settlements like Maugerville. The stories were similar on both sides of what would soon be the border between the District of Maine and the colony of New Brunswick. Just like the Maugerville families, the

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people of Machias, Maine took the land they wanted and sought official approval later. Settlers began to arrive on the Machias River around 1763, and the town grew over the next few years. It was 1767 before the Machias settlers appointed a representative to pursue a grant in Boston. At the same time, just as Captain Glasier had hoped, other New England families chose to move themselves onto the Saint John River Society’s grant. The townships of Gagetown and Burton soon arose near Maugerville. Some earlier Maugerville settlers relocated to those towns too, in search of better land. Through all this, the governments in Halifax and Boston were barely involved. It was clear to New England families that the northeast was open and plenty of land was available. This idea would have a great deal of staying power. Even war, and the re-creation of a border, did little to alter it. After the war was over and the borderland was reborn, New England families would continue to pursue opportunities in the northeast and politicians would continue their laissez faire policies. It was as if nothing had changed.49

The Revolutionary War had a paradoxical effect on much of the borderland. Instead of leading to division, estrangement, and a solid border, it led to a further integration of the region, and after the peace, a blurry border. At the start of the war both British and Americans realized the region was up for grabs, and so both sides solicited support throughout the northeast. Then after the war both sides accepted that a boundary had been drawn, while continuing to believe that its final placement was negotiable. That led them to maintain the remarkably open borderland that is the subject of the next chapter.

49 Mancke, Fault Lines of Empire, 52; Young, “St. John Valley,” 5.
When fighting began in 1775, most of the borderland was still controlled by Indians. The people of the region were, from west to east, the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Maliseet. These were the communities living in the crucial zone between the Penobscot and the Saint John Rivers, a zone that is today divided between the state of Maine and the province of New Brunswick. In the 1770s there were very few European settlers anywhere within this region, with the exception of Machias and the new Saint John River settlements mentioned above. What transpired over the following two decades was a back and forth negotiation—between the British, the Americans, and the three Indian communities—that prevented the formation of a solid northeastern border. The rebel Americans made several attempts to use military alliances with the Indians to win control over the entire northeast. They were unable or unwilling to reliably supply their Indian allies with priests, however, which was the only thing those allies really wanted. The British, for their part, responded to this failure by providing priests to the Maliseet, knowing that this would draw the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy eastward and estrange them from the Americans. These tensions were not resolved until the late 1790s, when the state of Massachusetts finally chose to counter the British by paying a French priest to permanently settle in Maine. At that point, a border finally began to take shape in what had been a borderless zone.

50 There have been several recent studies of these groups that primarily analyze their political interactions with European powers in the Colonial and Early Republic periods. For colonial-era land negotiations between Wabanaki and English, see Ian Saxine, Properties of Empire: Indians, Colonists, and Land Speculators on the New England Frontier (New York: New York University Press, 2019). For Penobscot and Passamaquoddy treaties and petitions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and some analysis of their relationship with the border, see Micah Pawling, “Petitions and the Reconfiguration of Homeland: Persistence and Tradition Among Wabanaki Peoples in the Nineteenth Century,” PhD diss., (University of Maine, 2010); and William Wicken, “Passamaquoddy Identity and the Marshall Decision,” in New England and the Maritime Provinces, 50-58. For negotiations between the British and the Indians of New Brunswick, see John Reid, “Empire, the Maritime Colonies, and the Supplanting of Mi’kma’ki/Wulstukwik,” Acadiensis 18:2 (2009): 78-97. Though the term “Maliseet” is found in the sources used in this study, and is still common, it is gradually being replaced by the term “Wulstukwik.” The Micmac people also have a presence in the eastern part of this zone, but most of the Micmac population is located further east in Nova Scotia. They speak a distinctly different language from the three tribes of the border zone, and mixed with them infrequently. The Micmac were also not particularly interested in negotiating with the rebel Americans, and for all these reasons do not figure into this analysis.
Before, during, and after the war, the three major Indian communities of what became Maine and New Brunswick were on good terms. All three are considered Eastern Abenaki people, part of the larger Wabanaki Confederacy; in the eighteenth century they spoke mutually intelligible languages, frequented each other’s villages, and intermarried. There was a slight divergence between the western and eastern side of the region, however. The Penobscot claim to have been somewhat recent arrivals in central Maine. They seem to have absorbed many people from points south who fled the encroaching English settlements during the colonial period. This made the Penobscot similar to another Abenaki village at the St. Francis River in Quebec, which also consisted of a conglomeration of refugees from around the northeast. By the mid-1700s there was apparently “constant communication” between the Penobscot and the St. Francis groups, and to this day their dialects are virtually identical. The Passamaquoddy and Maliseet, for their part, were basically one people until relatively late in the eighteenth century. The former group lived on the Saint Croix River, and the latter on the Saint John, but the portage between the rivers is only about two miles, and the two communities were constantly mixing. The Passamaquoddy may have simply been the westernmost village of the larger nation – they did not sign treaties as a separate people until the mid-eighteenth century, and in 1764 the English referred to them as “belonging” to the Maliseet.51

Slight differences aside, these three communities were generally aligned both politically and culturally. Their unity was, in part, a product of religion. All three groups converted to Catholicism in the mid-seventeenth century thanks to outreach from the French in Quebec. Then, for the following century, all three were forced to collaborate to secure the services of priests.

Soldiers from the English colonies focused their attacks not just on Indians themselves, but also on their churches. The English burned Indian chapels at least three times in the early eighteenth century, and murdered one priest, Father Sebastian Rale. The Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Maliseet were forced to move around for their religious needs – visiting each other whenever one group had a priest in residence, and occasionally travelling to Quebec City. This kept boundaries in the region blurry, and once the war began it was those blurry boundaries that encouraged both the Americans and British to try and claim as much of the region as they could by cultivating native support.

By the 1760s, both sides knew the most effective way to cultivate that support. After the defeat of the French in Quebec, the three native communities began asking authorities in both Boston and Halifax to supply them with priests. The initial response from Boston was equivocation; the Governor made vague promises to “endeavor” to send “a minister.” Halifax was a bit more receptive. Probably because of concerns for the safety of the burgeoning Saint John River settlements, officials decided to find a priest for the Maliseet in 1767. A request was made to the Bishop of Quebec, who dispatched a Father Bailly to the Saint John River that fall. Providing an official salary to a Catholic priest was still apparently a bridge too far, so Bailly was not officially placed on the colonial payroll. Instead, he was compensated in the form of gifts. His pay was described as a “present of fifty pounds,” and he was informed that he could expect such presents regularly. Bailly almost immediately began to draw Indians eastward from the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy communities. A group of Penobscots visited the Saint John soon after Bailly arrived, and asked him if he would be willing to travel to them in return. Bailly demurred – he was not sure what to do, writing to Quebec that he was “approved only by Nova

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52 Governor Bernard to the Passamaquoddy, June 1763, Indian 1757-1775, Vol. 33, Page 233-234, Massachusetts Archives Collection, Massachusetts Archives (hereafter MA), Boston, Massachusetts.
Scotia.” The Penobscot wrote to Massachusetts complaining that it was “very hard that other Indian Nations in our neighborhood can have a Priest…and we are debarred.” It was difficult, they wrote, to transport their entire families all the way to the Saint John River for baptisms and other rites. At this point, however, Massachusetts was not particularly concerned. The idea that the Penobscot might be served by a priest on the Saint John raised no alarms.⁵³

That attitude changed eight years later. In the summer of 1775 revolution began, George Washington and Benedict Arnold started to plan an attack on Quebec, and the government of Massachusetts reached out to the Penobscot. The tribe was supplied with twenty-five pounds of gunpowder, and three hundred pounds worth of clothes and other goods. Then, when they made the predictable request for a priest, the Americans were ready with a reply. The Penobscot should join the Continental Army. General Arnold would lead them through Maine to Quebec, where they would attack and surely capture the city. Canada would then join the revolution, and there would be a permanent supply of French priests. The tribe agreed, informally, to an alliance, and a handful of Penobscot men joined Arnold’s invasion force.⁵⁴

After the attack on Quebec failed, the Penobscot were almost as disappointed as the Americans. They were still determined, however, to secure a priest. In the summer of 1776, two representatives, Orono and Ausong, traveled to Boston to negotiate. Their proposal was simple. If the Americans gave their approval, Orono and Ausong would go to Quebec City and find a priest themselves. This would benefit everyone: not only would the Penobscot get their priest, they would be able to spy on the British in Quebec and provide updates to Boston. Orono and Ausong also tried to explain that this might reverse the religious dynamics of the region in

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⁵⁴ Conference with the Penobscot Tribes by two of their Chiefs, 20 July 1776, Indian Conferences 1713-1776, Volume 29, Page 530-537, Massachusetts Archives Collection, MA.
Massachusetts’s favor. Father Bailly was no longer on the Saint John. If the Americans allowed a priest to be procured in Quebec, “many of our neighboring tribes…will come to us and pray with us.” On the other hand, with no priest, Penobscot “young people will go to Canada and they might be brought over to act against the Colonies.” Benedict Arnold’s invasion of the northeast may have failed, but here was another, cheaper opportunity for the Americans to assert themselves in the borderland.55

The Massachusetts representatives, however, refused to commit to anything in their negotiations with Orono and Ausong. They made vague promises to pay the Penobscot for their service to General Arnold, and to place the request for a priest before the Massachusetts Legislature. The rebel colonists, it turned out, had not completely abandoned the idea of taking the borderland by force. Soon they tried again, this time on a smaller scale. Two Nova Scotia settlers, Jonathan Eddy and John Allen, had been attempting to organize an attack on Fort Cumberland in that province. General Washington and the Continental Congress decided not to provide official support for the operation, but Massachusetts gave Eddy and Allen guns and ammunition and tacit approval. Eddy and Allen hoped to recruit the entire force from the disputed borderland. To that end, negotiations with the Passamaquoddy and Maliseet proceeded in much the same manner as had negotiations with the Penobscot. In late 1775, representatives of the Maliseet wrote to Massachusetts offering to “heartily join with our brethren the Penobscot Indians…to stand together and oppose the People of Old England.” What they required, though, was first “a Priest that he may pray with us,” and second “Ammunition, Provisions & Goods.”56

The government of Massachusetts appears to have responded to the second part of this request while ignoring the first. Within a few months, they received word that Nova Scotia might

55 Ibid.
offer the Maliseet and Passamaquoddy ammunition and supplies to reverse their allegiance and
take up arms against the Americans. The Americans quickly set up a trading post in Machias,
and made plans for another on the Saint John. General Washington also sent a letter to both
communities entreatting them to maintain their connection to the rebel colonies.\textsuperscript{57} These steps
seem to have worked. Around twenty-five men from the Maliseet and Passamaquoddy
communities joined Eddy and Allen. Meanwhile, a number of settlers at Maugerville held a
meeting in which they pledged allegiance to Massachusetts Bay as well. Around thirty or forty
white soldiers from Machias and the Saint John River settlements signed on to the expedition.
Eddy and Allen found another one to two hundred men in the Nova Scotia towns closer to Fort
Cumberland, and the whole force attacked in November 1776. Like the previous winter’s attempt
on Quebec, the operation was a failure; the British were able to send reinforcements before the
fort fell. Most of the attackers, however – especially the Maliseet, Passamaquoddy, and white
settlers from the Saint John River and further west – fled home safely.

Again, American attempts to take the borderland by force had failed. But again, there
remained an opportunity to counter the British by providing a resident priest. Once the rebel
colonies were officially allied with the French, there was some effort to accomplish this.\textsuperscript{58} When
the French fleet arrived in Newport, Rhode Island in the summer of 1780, the Massachusetts
government managed to locate a volunteer priest. Father Frederic, a chaplain in the fleet, made
his way north and spent the winter with the Passamaquoddy. This was not a permanent solution,
however. Father Frederic was not prepared to stay permanently in North America, and

\textsuperscript{57} Petition of a Number of the Inhabitants of the Eastern Part of the County of Lincoln, 5 February 1776; Council
Orders, 8 February 1776, in Kidder, \textit{Military Operations}, 55-58; H.W. Barker, “The Maugerville Church and the
American Revolution,” \textit{Church History} 7:4 (December 1938).

\textsuperscript{58} This move may also have been partially motivated by the British occupation of Castine, on Penobscot Bay, in
1779. With the British making aggressive moves in eastern Maine, maintaining the support of the Passamaquoddy
community would have been more important than ever.
Massachusetts was not yet willing to pay him to do so. He returned to Newport by the end of summer 1781. The British, meanwhile, had a ready supply of French priests thanks to their retention of Quebec, and they were ready to take bolder steps than the Americans. To prevent any further attacks like the one on Fort Cumberland, officials in Halifax decided the time had come to simply hire a permanent priest. They secured a Father Bourg from Quebec, and allotted him an annual salary of one hundred pounds. Bourg was sent to the Saint John River, where he told the Maliseet to remain neutral or be excommunicated. John Allen, who had become essentially an American ambassador to the northeastern Indians, reported on what happened next. The Maliseet dropped their support for the Americans. The Penobscot and Passamaquoddy, for their part, “resented much that a priest had not been sent” from Boston. Despite Allen’s pleas, they began to cross the border to visit Father Bourg, claiming that they still had “zeal for America” and “friendship & affection,” but “only meant to see the Priest, their souls being heavy & loaded with burthens of sins.” The British had outmaneuvered the Americans in the borderland again.

By then end of the war in 1783 the situation among the Indians of the northeastern borderland was still unsettled. The Penobscot and Passamaquoddy remained generally aligned with the Americans, and the Maliseet with the British, but in the backcountry there was still frequent movement and intermixing among the three groups. And though a northeastern boundary was negotiated between the British and the Americans at Paris, it was more or less theoretical. The treaty called for the boundary to start in the east at the River Saint Croix, and then north of that river’s source, to fall along the “highlands which divide the rivers that fall into

the Atlantic Ocean from those which fall into the river Saint Lawrence.” The trouble was that no one had ever mapped the backcountry. Neither of the negotiating powers agreed on which river flowing into Passamaquoddy Bay was the Saint Croix, and neither had any idea where these all-important “highlands” were. Both sides assumed the line would generally run through the middle of the borderland zone, which was still populated almost exclusively by the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Maliseet. Thus, both British and Americans recognized that the ultimate boundary was still flexible and could be adjusted to their advantage. The British continued into the postwar years their strategy of drawing Maine Indian communities toward their orbit by installing priests on the Saint John River. Massachusetts continued to eye the borderland warily, while holding back from mirroring the British strategy.

There was a feeling in New England, during the first years after the revolution, that such machinations in the borderland might not be necessary anyway. Canada might still join the thirteen colonies in their fledgling republic, negating the northern border entirely. There was even an official invitation included in the Articles of Confederation: according to the eleventh article, Canadians were pre-approved for entry. The proposed admission of any other colony to the union would be subject to a vote, with the agreement of nine states necessary, but for Canada that vote had apparently already taken place: “Canada acceding to this confederation, and adjoining in the measures of the United States, shall be admitted into, and entitled to all the advantages of this Union.” This was a development with important repercussions for the postwar borderland. The war made the boundary between New England and Canada – battled over for generations – seem less distinct. The real enemy was now Great Britain. Canadians

could potentially become fellow republican citizens. It became reasonable to imagine a Catholic French state taking its place in the new United States. And it became similarly reasonable to imagine citizens of the United States moving to Canada.  

The first evidence that attitudes were changing came just before the war, as New England newspapers began to report on Canadian responses to the 1774 Quebec Act. New Englanders were already furious about the act, but its architects expected French Canadians to embrace it. It was designed, after all, to placate them. The act expanded the boundaries of the Province of Quebec, and allowed Canadians “to have, hold, and enjoy, the free Exercise” of the Catholic faith. It also, however, created a distinctly different system to govern the Quebecois than that which governed their English colonial neighbors. The French civil law system would be retained, and there would be no elected assembly or trial by jury. This is what bothered people in New England, where resentment toward the British had been simmering for years. The Quebec Act looked like more tyranny – how could the King or Parliament declare that one British colony would have an entirely different legal system from its sister colonies? If one group of British subjects was denied an assembly, could not the same principle be extended to anyone? Quebec began to look less like the enemy, and more like another oppressed colony.

Accordingly, as New England newspapers published denunciations of the Quebec Act, they began to report that French Canadians disliked it too. In the autumn of 1774, the *Essex Gazette* published an excerpt of a letter supposedly sent from Montreal to New York the month prior. According to the letter, the Canadians were “greatly alarmed” to find themselves placed

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63 Edward Larkin argues that the Canada clause had less to do with a changed perception of Canadians, and more to do with the idea of the US as an empire, which would necessarily include lots of disparate peoples. I see Larkin’s point, but I argue that there is evidence for a real shift in popular attitudes toward Canada and Canadians during the Revolution. See Edward Larkin, *The American School of Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

under their former French laws. This was partially because the “French noblesse and gentry…expect to lord it over the industrious Farmer and Trader, and live upon their Spoils, as they did before the Conquest.” The only reason the farmers were not openly complaining, the letter claimed, was fear of their priests, “who rule and govern this whole Country as they please.”65 The common people of Canada were showing signs of independence and industrious virtue, even if they were not yet completely out from under the thumb of their priests.

Within days of the publication of the letter in the *Essex Gazette*, another letter began to appear in colonial newspapers. It was published first in New England, and within a week was in New York papers as well. This letter was supposedly sent from Canadians themselves to London. It provided the perfect illustration for American colonists that the French Canadians were just like them. “The Canadian Farmers,” the letter began, were “greatly alarmed” about the Quebec Act reintroducing “the ancient Laws of this Country.” Life had been difficult under the French laws, and Canadians were “entirely satisfied” with the imposition of English laws.66 Quebec could not prosper unless the Quebec Act was repealed. Anyone reading a newspaper in late 1774 could see that the Quebecois, though Catholic, were standing up for their rights like other British subjects.

When war actually broke out in the spring of 1775, newspapers described Canadians as sympathetic to the American cause. An article published all over New England just before the fighting claimed that Canadians had already been asked to “arm themselves against the Colonies,” and yet “they rejected the Proposal with Indignation, and declared that if any one Canadian should be deluded so far as to go against their Sister Colonies, they would send ten to

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65 *Essex Gazette*, 22 November 1774.
66 *Massachusetts Gazette*, 24 November 1774.
their Relief.”67 A piece in a Massachusetts paper in June noted that the British were attempting to raise an army in Quebec, but were having a hard time, as “the common people are by no means fond of the service.”68 A letter published in August in the *New Hampshire Gazette* claimed that Canadians “can’t bear to have the old French laws take place again amongst them, as they will be thereby plunged into enormous taxes.” Therefore, they were “determined not to fight against us unless forced by a formidable army.”69 The letter went on to claim that a British officer who had tried to raise recruits had been chased away by an uprising of angry Quebecois. The only people who would willingly fight for the British, according to the American papers, were the wealthy elites who hoped to use the Quebec Act to oppress the poor farmers. By October of 1775, the *Massachusetts Spy* was crowing about the “brave and enlightened Canadians” who would undoubtedly soon join the rebel cause. An intercepted letter from a British official claimed that in the event of an American invasion of Canada, the Catholic French would “lay down their arms, and not fire a shot,” as lately they all “talk of that damn’d abused word liberty.”70

These newspaper reports, as well as intelligence from emissaries and spies, convinced George Washington to authorize the invasion of Canada in the fall of 1775. It was a two-part operation. One army travelled north via Lake Champlain to take Montreal, then continued northeast. The other group was Benedict Arnold’s, which received the aforementioned support from the Penobscot as it traveled through Maine to Quebec City. The two armies were supposed to join forces, attack the city, and thereby win control of the St. Lawrence River and with it the vast interior of North America. As mentioned above, however, the attack was a failure, and the Americans were forced to retreat.

67 *Boston Gazette*, 19 December 1774.
69 *New Hampshire Gazette*, 22 August 1775.
70 *Massachusetts Spy*, 6 October 1775.
This invasion, though ultimately unsuccessful, brought a literal blurring of the border. This was the first time that ordinary Americans experienced sustained contact with ordinary Canadians, and the impressions recorded in soldiers’ journals and letters were overwhelmingly positive. It is easy to see a transformation taking shape in these accounts, which paralleled the changes occurring in contemporary newspapers. French Canadians were surprisingly similar to Protestant Americans. They may have been Catholic, but they ran self-sufficient, orderly households. They were generous and civilized. Canada, it turned out, was a lot like New England. These cheery reports of Canada are still more striking considering that most accounts of the invasion were assembled and published after the war. The Quebecois did not, in the end, send representatives to Philadelphia, and very few of them took up arms against the British. Nevertheless, positive perceptions of Canada appear to have had some staying power in the early American republic. This, again, had an impact on postwar attitudes toward the borderland.

John Henry, who served under Benedict Arnold, was particularly effusive in his descriptions of Catholic Quebec. Recounting the invasion years after the fact, Henry repeatedly mentioned the kindness and civility of Canadians. When he and his fellow soldiers arrived, Henry wrote, they expected nothing but “barbarity.” Instead, they “found civilized men, in a comfortable state, enjoying all the benefits…of civil society.”

Henry describes the country as rich, the homes as cozy, and the people as contented. After developing a fever during the march toward Quebec City, Henry was taken in for several days by a local family, and in his account he takes time to emphasize their comfortable situation. The family of seven had plenty to eat, and were “neatly and warmly clothed in woolen, apparently of their own manufactory.”


72 Henry, *Campaign Against Quebec*, 79.
honest, too – Henry claims to have offered two dollars in payment to the father of the family, only to be turned down. All in all, Henry writes, “Canadians…lived as comfortably…[as] Pennsylvanians did, at that time.”

Henry provided more detail than most of his fellow soldiers, but the portrayal of the French Canadians in all accounts was overwhelmingly positive. Arnold and his men counted on the residents of the villages around Quebec City for support, and were willing to pay for food and supplies. The Canadians were very accommodating. George Morison writes of being “received…very hospitably…[they] administered to our necessities, and loaded us with favors.” Another man wrote of his “joy” at the “politeness and civility” of the Canadians, who provided him butter and freshly baked bread. A day or so later, this soldier and his companions bought eggs, rum, sugar and meat from an old woman, who gave an impromptu performance of “Yankee Doodle” for the men. An American officer reported not only that the Canadians were “very hospitable,” but also that at the encampment outside Quebec they were “constantly coming in to express their satisfaction at our coming into the country.”

The only complaint that American soldiers made about Canadians was that they sometimes drove a hard bargain for supplies. This, though, was just another way Canadians proved identical to Americans. The same soldiers had previously complained about the high prices charged by settlers in Maine. Captain Simeon Thayer wrote a journal entry on September 30, 1775, in which he complained that the inhabitants of a settlement in Maine, though they were friendly and welcoming, offered only “salted Moose and Deer” which “they sell at an exorbitant price.” A little over a month later, Captain Thayer wrote of the first village in Quebec: “the

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73 Henry, Campaign Against Quebec, 99.
74 George Morison, in March to Quebec: Journals of the Members of Arnold’s Expedition, compiled and annotated by Kenneth Roberts (New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc., 1938), 531.
75 Isaac Senter, in March to Quebec, 220-222.
76 Return Jonathan Meigs, in March to Quebec, 181-183.
people were civil, but mighty extravagant with what they have to sell.” Catholic Canadians were akin to Protestant Americans not only in their comfortable lives and hospitality, but also in their bargaining skills.

The warming of relations between French Canadians and Protestant Americans during the Revolutionary War years might be dismissed as not, in the end, all that important. For all the talk of republican potential north of the border, Canada chose not to join the United States. Anti-Catholic prejudice was not permanently eliminated in New England either, and would flare up repeatedly in the early nineteenth century. The wartime changes, however, did have important consequences. They kept the northeastern border blurry, which made the postwar borderland a more comfortable place for all prospective migrants. In Vermont, for example, a series of state constitutions adopted between 1777 and 1793 progressively eliminated restrictions on Catholic citizens. This made Vermont more appealing for French Canadians, and by 1815 there was a sizeable enough Catholic community in the city of Burlington to merit a visit from the leader of the church in Boston. Massachusetts, for its part, finally decided in the 1790s that it was willing to pay for a priest to serve Maine’s Indian communities – an act of great import for Boston Catholics and the borderland in general (and a major topic of chapter three of this study).

Meanwhile, New Englanders no longer saw Canada as foreign, enemy territory. There had been positive reports about French Canadian people in New England papers for years. Accounts of the Arnold expedition described friendly people with republican sympathies. Anyone who read the Articles of Confederation knew that Canada might be welcomed into the union at any time. Who knew where borders would ultimately fall? And so New Englanders

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77 Simeon Thayer, in *March to Quebec*, 250, 262.  
began to regard relocating to Canada as uncontroversial. Like Nova Scotia, it was near enough to be scouted, and would allow settlers to remain reasonably close to their former homes. And like Nova Scotia, it was a connected frontier. Migrants north would stay connected to same Atlantic networks they were used to – in fact, they might even be better connected, since Montreal and the St. Lawrence River had now become the primary artery of British North American trade. And so, as soon as the war ended with a re-creation of the northern border, New England families began to move across it. Ironically, the very war that created the border convinced the people of the borderland that it did not matter.

In peninsular Nova Scotia in the years after the American Revolution, there was at least some effort to enforce the new border produced by the war. In the port of Liverpool, Simeon Perkins was able to recapture most of his prewar trade. But authorities did catch him bending the rules a bit, and there were consequences. In other parts of the borderland, however – like the area split between Maine and New Brunswick – it is remarkable how little the war seems to have mattered. In Maugerville, David Burpee and his brother Edward had likely been involved in the 1775 pledge of support for Massachusetts. Edward Burpee signed on with Jonathan Eddy’s invasion force and attacked Fort Cumberland. But later, like many others similarly situated, the brothers were allowed to carry on with their lives in New Brunswick. Exact numbers are unclear, but it seems that almost half of the men from the Saint John River who took up arms against the British simply stayed in their homes with no consequences. Hugh Quinton had been a captain in Eddy’s army; he not only stayed but also managed, within a year or so, to become a captain in the loyal militia. In 1787, David Burpee was appointed Justice of the Peace for the newly formed
Sunbury County, giving him – with his decidedly non-loyal history – a position of authority over newly arrived loyalist refugees.  

Even settlement projects from New England were allowed to continue. Soon after the Treaty of Paris, as loyalist refugees were being resettled in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, a group called the Cape Ann Association tried to secure a grant of land on the British side of Passamaquoddy Bay. These people were remarkably similar to the groups of two decades earlier, like the Maugerville families, or the settlers who moved themselves to Captain Glasier’s grant. They were from New Hampshire and northeastern Massachusetts, and they wanted to organize a settlement somewhere in the borderland, close enough to maintain connections with home. These people had no history of loyalty during the war, and some of them had even served in the Continental Army. And yet the governor of Nova Scotia went ahead and gave them a grant. After seven years of war, the borderland was still full of opportunity for New Englanders.

Chapter II:

A Place of Future Grandeur: Opportunities in the Open Borderland, 1783-1812

John Jacob Astor is popularly known as the United States’ first multi-millionaire. His story was the classic rags-to-riches tale. Stepping ashore in New York City in 1783, a twenty-year-old from Germany with big dreams, Astor took advantage of the boundless opportunities afforded by the young, expanding republic. He became a fur-trader, businessman, and real-estate speculator – and by the time he died, he was the richest man in America. It is the prototypical American immigrant success story, something that was only possible in the new United States.

Except John Jacob Astor’s success was not limited to the United States. His story was a borderlands success story. From his first years in North America, he split his time between New York and Lower Canada. He was simultaneously American and British North American – a borderlands citizen. He was constantly on the move. Astor traded furs on both sides of the border. He speculated in land on both sides of the border. He and his family became prominent members of social scene in both New York City and Montreal. For his first three decades in America, Astor lived a transnational life. It took the War of 1812 to finally force Astor to limit his business interests in British North America.¹

John Jacob Astor’s story is not often treated as transnational, in part because the history of migration and economic expansion in the northeast has been divided along national lines. Historians have acted as if there were two distinct stories to tell. One involved the people from

New England and New York who moved north into Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, and west into Upstate New York and the Ohio country. This is treated as the normative American stream of expansion – a movement that filled in the unsettled backcountry of the republic. The other story is that of the people who moved north to today’s Canada: to Upper Canada (present-day Ontario), Lower Canada (Quebec), and the Maritimes. This is seen as the normative Canadian expansion, and the migrants are often referred to as loyalists – or after the 1780s, as “late loyalists.” This second group, we are told, faced a choice of republic or empire and chose empire. Because it is hard to classify a twenty-year-old German immigrant as any kind of loyalist, and because his businesses ended up concentrated on the US side of the border, John Jacob Astor is seen as an American.²

It is easier to understand people like Astor, and the era in which he operated, if the supposed two streams of expansion are instead treated as one unified phenomenon. People in this era were not really choosing between British North America and the United States. It was too early to make this decision in any meaningful way. No one could predict how the U.S. or British North America would grow and change, and no one knew exactly where the permanent border would fall, or even if there would be a permanent border. What they were doing was moving to a shared borderland, because that was the avenue of greatest opportunity. The region had already

² Much of the recent scholarship on the so-called “late loyalists” has debunked the notion that these migrants were motivated by residual revolutionary loyalty. These studies, however, still treat late loyalists as a distinct category of people who made a particular choice – Americans who chose to “defect to Upper or Lower Canada” (Garcia), or chose to forsake “the active liberty of republican citizenship…for the passive benefits of British subjects.” (Taylor, “Late Loyalists.”) I argue that this choice would have made little sense at the time. Americans had barely experienced the republican citizenship they were supposedly defecting from. And no one knew how governments would evolve or where borders would ultimately fall. Migrants were choosing to move to a shared borderland, because it was close by, cheap, and well connected. Alan Taylor, “The Late Loyalists: Northern Reflections of the Early American Republic,” Journal of the Early Republic 27:1 (2007): 1-34; John Garcia, “He Hath Ceased to Be a Citizen: Stephen Burroughs, Late Loyalists, Lower Canada,” Early American Literature 52:3 (2017): 591-618. Taylor’s Civil War of 1812 elaborates on the same ideas found in the article: The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies (New York: Vintage Books, 2010). For Lower Canada specifically, but a bit later in the time period, see J.I. Little, Loyalties in Conflict: A Canadian Borderland in War and Rebellion, 1812-1840 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008). Studies of “late loyalists” rarely, if ever, include analysis of American migration to New Brunswick or Nova Scotia.
become a destination in the 1760s, after the British victory in the French and Indian War. Then, ironically, the loss of the thirteen colonies had some positive repercussions for the rest of the British Empire. Britain won key battles during the American Revolution, and at its end it retained a huge swath of northern territory that would become Canada. British resources flooded northward, most importantly people – the original loyalist refugees. Two of the colonies that were preserved – Quebec and Nova Scotia – were quickly subdivided into still more – Upper Canada, Lower Canada, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

These developments resulted in a special kind of frontier – one that was actually better connected to urban centers and Atlantic trade than many of the long-settled areas migrants were departing from. This was a different sort of frontier than the one cemented in the American imagination over a century ago by Frederick Jackson Turner, a frontier detached from the east and the Atlantic seaboard. Turner’s frontier required the building of new institutions and new networks. The borderland frontier, however, was already connected to the old institutions and networks. Available land around the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence and its tributaries, and the Bay of Fundy was well connected to Montreal, Quebec City, Saint John, and Halifax: cities that remained part of the most powerful empire in the world. The borderland frontier was not a place to start anew, but rather a place to reposition oneself economically. The migrants choosing this frontier were well aware of this, because the borderland was marketed to them that way.

This marketing, mostly in newspapers of the 1790s, pulled settlers toward a unified borderland – a region technically split between republic and empire, but with an economic sphere centered on the British Atlantic. Before railroads or canals, everyone was at the mercy of geography. Americans could choose American land on the southern side of the Great Lakes, but

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they had no choice but to ship their goods downriver to Montreal and on out the St. Lawrence. Northern Vermont was in the same position, as Lake Champlain too flows north, into the Richelieu River and on towards Montreal. The eastern half of the District of Maine was closer to the British cities of Halifax and Saint John than it was to Boston. Some Maine settlements lacked any connection with the rest of the District, and could only be reached by traveling through British territory. So regardless of whether settlers were moving to the British or American part of the borderland, they were all relying on the same networks. They would all benefit from the development of the whole region.

The political powers on both sides, British and American, had a strong motivation to promote the idea of a unified borderland. Both sides believed that the actual boundary was not yet set in stone. There was still the possibility of shifting it in the future; either more of British North America would join the United States, or parts of some states would be absorbed into British North America. The U.S., obviously, believed the former was more probable, while Britain was counting on the latter scenario. There was a kind of unlikely partisan optimism shared by both sides in these postwar years. The U.S. believed its growth was inevitable. Thirteen British colonies had joined the union, and soon others would follow suit. For their part, the British believed the breakup of the U.S. was inevitable. The union would fall apart, and the empire would pick up the pieces. In the meantime, however, each side needed to strengthen its settlements by filling them with people, and to do this it was not wise to overemphasize the distinction between subject and citizen. American landowners in the borderland highlighted the proximity of British markets and trade networks. British landowners emphasized these markets too, and also the ease of relocation to their territory. Authorities on both sides worked to keep the border porous when it came to trade, knowing that any restrictions threatened the economic
growth of the whole region. Remarkably, after just fighting a war for control of the continent, republic and empire quickly reverted to the same kind of partnership that had been the rule before the revolution. Development of the region was of paramount importance. Questions of identity and boundary placement would be settled later.  

All of these developments – the partisan optimism, the unlikely collaboration, and the resulting marketing of the borderland – created an enormous zone of opportunity. From the Niagara River in the West to the St. Croix River in the East, the borderland shared by the American Republic and the British Empire threw open its doors to the free mobility of white settlers. White families, especially Protestant white families, became free agents of a sort – courted by newspaper ads and would-be land proprietors, eager to find a place for themselves in the bustling trade networks of the border zone. Political ideology likely played a role for some migrants, and cannot be discounted entirely. But politics is conspicuously absent from the sources. Solicitous proprietors barely mentioned politics in their appeals. Settlers, even Revolutionary War veterans, crossed the border without offering political explanations, or raising many alarm bells. It was opportunity that mattered to them, not the as yet ill-defined

4 Alan Taylor, in two books and an article on the New York/Canada borderlands, sees this era a little differently. While my study highlights continuity between the pre and post-revolutionary eras, Taylor focuses on changes. He argues that, particularly in the New York/Upper Canada region, the United States and British North America engaged in a “cold war” of sorts from 1783-1812. Upper Canada became a “counterrevolutionary regime,” bent on weakening the U.S. by poaching American citizens. Meanwhile, Taylor argues, the Iroquois attempted to maintain the region as a borderland while the U.S. and Canada tried to impose meaningful borders. I argue that, particularly in Lower Canada and New Brunswick, the British were more concerned with encouraging settlement and developing the borderland than they were with building a counterrevolutionary regime. Taylor’s books do not really engage with the Lower Canada/Vermont borderland, and his book on Maine, Liberty Men and Great Proprietors, similarly ignores the Maine/New Brunswick border. Lawrence Hatter’s view of the borderland is similar to mine, though he argues the open borderland of the 1780s moved towards Taylor’s Cold War over time. See Alan Taylor, “The Late Loyalists;” The Civil War of 1812; The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution (New York: Knopf, 2006); and Liberty Men and Great Proprietors: The Revolutionary Settlement on the Maine Frontier, 1760-1820 (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1990). Lawrence Hatter, Citizens of Convenience: The Imperial Origins of American Nationhood on the U.S.-Canadian Border (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2017).
choice between subjecthood and citizenship. They were not late loyalists or patriotic republicans— they were borderland opportunists.

In the post-revolution period, from the mid 1780s to the 1810s, the border was porous, there was available land on both sides, and word of these opportunities was spreading. Both American and British authorities took steps to stimulate migration. Both sides made it clear that the border was open and migrants welcome, whatever their politics or religion. The result was a constant stream of immigrants and emigrants. Political identities were adopted and abandoned at will. It did not matter if one was a new arrival from Europe, a Continental Army veteran, or an exiled loyalist. The war between the thirteen colonies and Britain had not resulted in a solid boundary or a permanent political divide, but rather in an expansion of freedom of movement and opportunity.

Americans in this era learned about land opportunities in the newspapers. There were newspapers everywhere, in all major and minor cities, especially in the northern half of the United States. An examination of the land advertisements in these papers makes several things clear. First, though American papers were advertising a lot of American land, what they tended to publicize about it was its access to the British Empire. People in the eighteenth century did not use the modern term “borderland,” but the fact that the land was, in fact, on or near the border was crucial to its marketing. Land promoters wanted settlers to know that moving to this land meant they would be connected to the British Atlantic system. Second, American newspapers were not shy about promoting British territory as well. British land promoters bought advertisements in U.S. newspapers just as Americans did, and so American citizens often saw articles about the prime settlement opportunities available in Upper and Lower Canada.
Within only a few years of independence, promoters of land in the United States, particularly land in upstate New York, were touting access to the St. Lawrence River system. It was this connection that made settlement there so appealing. This land is not just good land, the message went, it is borderland; settlers will not disappear off into the wilderness, they will stay connected. In February 1789, the *New Haven Gazette and Connecticut Magazine* opened one issue with a lengthy essay on settlement prospects in the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York. This land, a vast tract south of Lake Ontario, had been recently opened to settlement. According to the essay, the land around the Genesee River was “incomparably fine…as fertile as any on the globe…in no way inferior to the lands upon the river Ohio.” It was, in fact, “much better accommodated than any new country opened for settlement between the Allegany Mountains and the Mississippi River.” And what made it so well accommodated? The Genesee River drained north into Lake Ontario, which led to the St. Lawrence River: “Thus from the [territory] is a communication to Niagara, Montreal and Quebec.” The appeal of the settlement came from its connection to British North America.\(^5\)

Other advertisements were even more explicit about the shared nature of the borderland. The benefit of investing in land along the St. Lawrence, in far northern New York, was not only the easy ability to get goods to market, but also the fact that one could draw on prospective settlers from both the United States and British North America. They might even compete with each other to drive prices up. In a February 1790 issue of the *Albany Register*, a notice advertised the impending sale, at a coffee house in New York City, of ten square miles of land bordering on the St. Lawrence River. An attached letter touted the timber on the tract, which could be easily conveyed to Montreal or Quebec City, either as building material or firewood. Firewood, the

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\(^5\) *New Haven Gazette and Connecticut Magazine*, 18 February 1789.
author claimed, “always commands a high price in Montreal.” Perhaps as a way of motivating buyers in New York, he then wrote about how appealing the tract would be for Canadian settlers. As soon as the sale was made public, he asserted, “you cannot fail of obtaining a good price…it’s vicinity to the old parishes above Montreal will doubtless induce many of the old…farmers to provide…for their numerous offspring.” New Yorkers would have to move fast to take advantage of land in their own state.6

Even when newspapers were not explicitly advertising tracts of land, they tended to present a rosy picture of the borderland. A 1791 issue of the United States Chronicle from Providence, Rhode Island, contains an extended digression into the merits of Upper Canada. The editor reported word that the new capital in Canada would be Kingston, on the St. Lawrence. The people settling on the north shore of the river and Lake Ontario, according to the paper, “are an industrious hardy race – excellent farmers.” The whole swath of land was ideal for settlers: “the climate…is better than that of Quebec, and the rivers and lakes abound with fish, particularly trout.” In an ironic juxtaposition, the same page of the newspaper carried a dispatch from another potential settlement zone: Kentucky. A brief report detailed the experiences of a party of nine who claimed to have been attacked by Shawnee and Delaware Indians while en route from Kentucky to Virginia. Volunteer troops had been raised to respond by attacking Indian villages. Prospective migrants reading the Chronicle might well think twice about the Ohio country, when land with a lovely climate, farms, plenty of fish, and no apparent Indian conflicts was waiting just north of New York.7

Even when American newspapers appealed to patriotism in describing these new lands, they still made sure readers were aware of connections to British North America. One 1793 piece

6 Albany Register, 22 February 1790.
7 United States Chronicle (Providence, RI), 18 August 1791.
published in Massachusetts added a bit of nationalist flavor to its promotion of New York land. At the close of a long “Description of the beautiful Niagara Country,” the author included some poetic excitement about the future of the region:

The progress of settlement is so rapid that you and myself will very probably see the day when we can apply these lines to the Genesee country. “Here happy millions their own lands possess, No tyrant awes them, nor no lords oppress.”

Ironically, the author of the piece had earlier mentioned the happy proximity of that tyrant and those lords. Writing of trade possibilities for the region, he bragged that the British were just next door. “Independent of our own settlements,” he claimed, “we can supply the British in the whole of Upper Canada.”

British authorities were well aware of this marketing, and took steps to encourage it. They knew communities near the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, though technically on American soil, would actually be a part of the Canadian economic sphere. In 1798 Robert Hamilton, a member of Upper Canada’s Legislative Council, laid out the situation in a memorandum. The demand for British and Canadian goods, he wrote, would continue to rise as American settlements grew along the southern shore of the river and the lakes: “the natural, we may indeed say the only outlet for all the produce of these settlements is by the river St. Lawrence.” The St. Lawrence could handle the largest rafts of lumber, and on that lumber (“which is itself a valuable article”) the Americans could ship their grain, potash, and other goods. Shipping via Canadian ports was without question more affordable for these American settlers than shipping to any domestic port, as even moving goods to Albany involved an expensive land carriage. Therefore the British should be careful not to impose any “Custom

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8 Federal Spy (Springfield, MA), 12 November 1793. Italics in original.
9 Ibid.
house establishments & restrictions;” that is, they should not do anything that might make shipping American goods to American ports more attractive.  

While the British were keeping Canadian ports cheap and convenient, they also wanted to entice at least some of these settlers into choosing Canadian land. According to the minutes of a meeting of the Executive Council of Upper Canada in July of 1799, the council itself composed and distributed land ads to American newspapers. The final order of business for the meeting in York, Upper Canada, on July 3, 1799, was an order to print and distribute the following message to newspapers in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania:

Notice is hereby given that the Townships of Dereham and Norwich in the Western District of this Province will be sold in blocks of 4000 acres each in the month of ___ next. Further particulars will in due time be published...  

Clearly, the men of the Executive Council were not discriminating. Not only were they willing to accept American immigrants, they were actively soliciting them.

It became official policy in post-revolutionary British North America, especially in Lower Canada and further east, to make migration north as easy and appealing as possible.  

Several acts effectively made the border invisible. British Authorities laid the groundwork in 1790 with an act allowing any person from “territories or countries belonging to the United States of America” to move to “any of the territories belonging to his Majesty in North America.” Each migrant, including children, would be allowed to transport up to fifty pounds worth of property over the border duty free. The head of each family would need to obtain official approval of the move, and transport the goods in British ships if travelling by water; each

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11 Minutes of the Executive Council, 3 July 1799, Correspondence of Peter Russell, 258-259.
12 Marcus Hansen goes into this briefly in The Mingling of the Canadian and American Peoples (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), 69-78.
family member above the age of fourteen was required to give an oath of allegiance as well. These requirements must have been somewhat burdensome, but the act did eliminate what had been a major hurdle for emigrants. In terms of transporting property, migration to Canada or the Atlantic Provinces was now very similar to domestic migration.\(^{13}\)

In 1792 authorities in the Canadas added more incentive for American emigrants by opening up the “waste lands” of the crown to settlement. These actions were a bit more limited. Unlike the 1790 act, they did not affect all of the Crown’s lands in North America, only the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada (Ontario and Quebec). The Lieutenant Governors of those provinces issued simultaneous and nearly identical proclamations in 1792. Crown lands in the provinces were to be granted in whole townships, measuring ten miles square. There was no mention of British subjectionhood or American citizenship. Any petitioner for lands would simply have to take “the usual Oaths,” and make one additional declaration, which was printed in the text: “I do promise and declare that I will maintain and defend to the utmost of my Power the Authority of the King in His Parliament as the supreme Legislature of this Province.”\(^{14}\) This was an open invitation to anyone, citizen or subject, who had the means to organize the settlement of a township. One man or a group could apply, and then they would be responsible for finding settlers in exchange for personal control over a large percentage of the land grant.

\(^{13}\) The Statutes of the Province of Upper Canada (Kingston, Upper Canada: Francis M. Hill, 1831), 12. The act seems to anticipate that the only people of color who might cross the border would be enslaved – a strange assumption, considering the number of free Black Loyalists who were already in the British Provinces. The act notes that this right of migration belongs to any “person or persons,” but goes on to note that “negroes” may be brought over the border free of duty. It further notes that while each white person could bring fifty pounds worth of property, each negro “brought by such white person” would only allow an additional forty shillings worth of property. It also specifies that only white persons over fourteen would be asked to take the oath. It seems that free families of color were not intended to be included in the act.

\(^{14}\) A Proclamation to such as are desirous to settle on the Lands of the Crown in the Province of Lower Canada, A Proclamation to such as are desirous to settle on the Lands of the Crown in the Province of Upper Canada, 7 February 1792, Hathi Trust, accessed May 28, 2019, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=aeu.ark:/13960/t7zk64v88;view=1up;seq=4;size=125 https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=aeu.ark:/13960/t63492b1z;view=1up;seq=4.
This development resulted in a great deal of excitement in New England and the broader northeast. The proclamations seem to have created two kinds of interest in the north, which combined into a small-scale land rush. In the first place, men of means and entrepreneurs – like John Jacob Astor – saw a very appealing opportunity. Amid the land investments of the time period this one was particularly promising, because of the proximity of the St. Lawrence and connections to British trade. These townships were not off in some far-off place like Kentucky or Ohio. The ones in Lower Canada were even closer to Atlantic trade than upstate New York. As these men petitioned for township grants, they then filled American newspapers with calls for settlers, stimulating the other half of the land rush. The various ads in combination created an image of the Canadas as a nearby place where the land was free and the opportunities plentiful.

Aspiring proprietors were everywhere in New England newspapers, competing with each other for prospective migrants. There were no appeals to any lingering loyalist sentiments. The keyword in crown lands was not “crown” but “lands.” One advertisement, which ran in 1794 in several Vermont papers, failed to mention a potential change of political affiliation at all. “There is a good opportunity,” according to the ad, “for any Male Persons, above the age of fourteen, to become proprietors for two hundred acres of Land in…Lower Canada.” There was no better land anywhere in Upper or Lower Canada, the ad promised. It was the “most valuable tract of unlocated Land” available. All that was needed was a certificate from a Justice of the Peace, testifying to the applicant’s honesty and industry, for the land to be granted. “All those persons who wish for a chance” could apply immediately.15

A Massachusetts ad, which ran for weeks in 1793 in both Springfield and Stockbridge papers, made emigration sound simple. Seth Russell of Northampton wrote that he had been to

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15 Rutland Herald, 4 January 1794.
Canada, and that the Governor had assured him “each person who becomes a settler, will be entitled to two hundred acres of land, which is recommended by good judges to be equal to any in America.” Time was of the essence, however, as the ads were running in May, and Russell would be accompanying any would-be settlers in August.\textsuperscript{16} “Attention!” cried another ad, published a year later. “The names of forty well recommended settlers” had to be forwarded to Canada, “that they may be conveyed on to Quebec [City] immediately.” Anyone ready to take an oath and go directly to the lands needed to work fast, because by “the first day of August next said lands will be forfeited.”\textsuperscript{17}

These appeals worked. New Englanders looking for opportunity headed for the border. Many appear to have been responding more to the atmosphere created by the advertisements as a whole than to any one ad in particular. A close look at one busy Quebec border crossing provides a glimpse of this movement. The lakeside village of Philipsburg is just over the border from Vermont, on Missisquoi Bay, the northeasternmost spot on Lake Champlain. Today, as two centuries ago, it is part of the larger municipality of Saint Armand, which was originally the seigneury of Saint Armand. Apparently this was a common disembarkation spot for travellers on the lake, both those who wished to settle nearby and those continuing north by land to Montreal. A partial document has survived which records activity on the border: a \textit{Book of Declaration of Aliens} for the period of September 1794 to June 1795.\textsuperscript{18}

This book appears to have served as something of a border-crossing registry, though not all the names listed signed at the moment of crossing. Some did, but others noted that they had been living in the area for months, or even years, before they showed up to record their names

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Federal Spy} (Springfield, MA), 28 May 1793.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Rutland Herald}, 8 June 1795.

\textsuperscript{18} Book of Declaration of Aliens, MC30 C100, George Montgomery Fonds, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), Ottawa, Ontario.
and their business in the province. Everyone who signed, however, was an American travelling north, either temporarily or permanently. There are fifty-nine entries in the book over the ten-month period, but many entries include multiple names, so the number of people listed runs to over a hundred. They came from all over the northeast. Most were from Vermont, but there were at least three from New Hampshire, seven from Massachusetts, and a few from Connecticut and New York. Some of the travellers were headed to Montreal to do business, like Andrew Auringer and Ira Peck, both twenty-three years old, from Saratoga, New York. They stated in May 1795 that they were hoping to purchase a span of horses in Montreal. At least ten other men on the list were also crossing to buy horses. There were no other big purchases listed besides horses, though a few people noted that they were just “visiting,” or “visiting relations.”

The most common reason the Americans gave for their presence was settlement. In some cases they had already settled in Saint Armand at some point in the recent past, and in other cases they noted that they were hoping to secure land and settle. Over half the entries explicitly list settlement as the reason for entry, and another ten do not list a reason. Some of them must have been settlers too. Ebenezer Rogers’s entry was typical:

I Ebenezer Rogers do hereby declare that I am a native of America in the town of Shaftsbury in the County of Bennington State of Vermont my age is thirty four years and my trade or occupation is that of a house carpenter, that for these six months last passed I have resided in the signory of Saint Armand and came into this Province of Lower Canada by water by way of Lake Champlain on the 5th day of May 1793, as witness my hand at Missiskoui (Missisquoi) Bay this 22nd Day of September 1794.

Several Americans noted, like Rogers, that they had been in Lower Canada for a little while. John Moor of New Hampshire had been resident in the province for a period of months. Isaac and Joshua Gibbs had been there for a couple of years, since 1792. Other signed the book close

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19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
to their day of arrival. Epharaim Story, a twenty-eight year old shoemaker from central Vermont, arrived on January 14th, 1795, and signed on the 15th. He wished “to purchase land [and] if permitted to become an inhabitant of this province.” James Marnier of Kittery, Maine declared an intent to settle too “if approved of.” Benjamin Cummings and Alexander and Isaac Magoon arrived from Massachusetts as a trio with the hope of purchasing land. No entry in the Philipsburg book included any language dealing with British subjecthood or loyalty to the crown. Besides the implication that settlers sometimes needed permission or approval, politics appears to have played little role in the migration.21

The proximity of land opportunities in Lower Canada must have been very appealing for New Englanders in the 1790s. Getting to Saint Armand meant a journey of only a few hundred miles from Massachusetts, and fully one hundred of those miles could be covered by boat on Lake Champlain. Other options were much more distant. Another ad published for weeks in various Massachusetts newspapers in 1795 promoted the Ohio country, which was twice as far away. Moreover, land opportunities there sound poor in comparison with Canada. “All males eighteen years old and upward” who chose to remove to the Ohio Company’s land, “would be entitled to one hundred acres” once the land was surveyed.22 This was a stark difference. A young man could travel six hundred miles for one hundred acres of Ohio land, or half that distance for twice as much Canadian land.

Putting acreage aside, however, the importance of the city of Montreal to this equation cannot be overstated. Acreage, price, and quality of land were certainly very important to settlers. But none of those mattered as much as access to a market. Land opportunities in Lower Canada in particular promised not just a connection to British trade in general, but close

21 Ibid.
22 Massachusetts Spy (Worcester, MA), 29 July 1795.
proximity to a major city. There were no major cities anywhere near Kentucky or the Ohio country. Montreal, on the other hand, was one of the most important cities in North America. Its population in the 1790s was around eighteen thousand people, which made it approximately the same size as Boston. Of Atlantic ports, only New York and Philadelphia were bigger. And there were no new land opportunities opening up in close proximity to those American cities. Furthermore, the aftermath of war had enhanced the city’s position. The movement of loyalist refugees provided a boost to the entire British zone, creating boomtowns both upstream and downstream from Montreal.

Americans had always been bullish about Montreal. Continental forces actually managed to seize the city in 1775, during the revolution, but were forced to relinquish it after losing the battle for Quebec. Later, during the War of 1812, the U.S. made several more attempts to take the city, all of which failed. In an early nineteenth century travel narrative, Benjamin Silliman of Connecticut was effusive about Montreal. It was, he wrote, “The point which connects the ocean, and of course, Europe, and the rest of the world” with the vast interior of the North American continent.

There are few cities in the world, especially of the magnitude and importance of Montreal, which situated more than 580 miles from the ocean, can enjoy the benefit of a direct ship communication with it. Montreal is evidently one of the three great channels by which the trade of North America will be principally carried on. It is obvious that New York and New Orleans are the other two places.

Silliman noted that travel was easy between the US and Canada. He took a steamboat the length of Lake Champlain, and crossing the border barely registered. His baggage was not even examined. Trade on the St. Lawrence impressed him greatly, and he noted that “a good deal” of

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the lumber came from Vermont, while the peaches he enjoyed at dinner came from the Genesee country of New York. The borderland was still booming two decades into the nineteenth century, with Montreal its metropolis.24

Newspaper ads throughout the period promoted lands by touting Montreal and the Montreal market. In February of 1800, the Vergennes Gazette in Vermont carried an ad for land just over the northern border. There were lots in two different regions, one east of Montreal and one west. The township of Farnham was only “20 miles east of St. Johns,” where the Richelieu River flowed north to Montreal. The latter city was only another twenty miles away as the crow flies, and roads were “opening from the premises” to “the Montreal market.” Meanwhile, over six thousand acres were for sale in what is today Ontario, “60 miles west of Montreal, from whence there is water communication to the premises.”25 No matter whether one was upstream or downstream of Montreal, the connections to an urban market and to larger Atlantic trade networks were unparalleled.

Movement over the border and into the connected frontier became such a phenomenon, that it even drew the one category of settlers that would seem least likely to leave – American combat veterans. This seems counterintuitive. The war had been over for barely a decade, and it was long and bloody. Independence was hard won, and many of the emigrant families were prominent, active citizens in their respective states. Why would they wish to return to the British Empire a mere decade after leaving it? Their decision makes more sense if we see Lower Canada

24 Benjamin Silliman, Remarks made on a short tour between Hartford and Quebec, in the autumn of 1819 (New Haven: S. Converse, 1824), 337, 363.
25 Vergennes Gazette, 6 February 1800.
the way they saw it: as a shared borderland. No one knew where the permanent boundaries would ultimately be drawn. The borderland was close by, safe, affordable, and connected.26

Its proximity meant that, unlike most other options for relocation, the borderland could be easily scouted. This had been the case for decades; as detailed in chapter one, it had been a factor in driving migration to Nova Scotia in the 1760s. A prospective migrant could go, look at the land, make inquiries, and return, all in a few weeks. Attempting to scout a similar relocation to Kentucky or Ohio would involve a much more time consuming and dangerous journey. The west, moreover, was plagued with Indian conflicts, as New England newspaper readers were constantly reminded. According to the Salem Mercury in 1789, Indians were “daily committing depredations in Kentucky.” A few weeks later, the Essex Journal described “constant hostilities” between Indians and settlers in the Ohio country. In 1792, the Salem Gazette claimed an army of nearly five thousand Indians was assembling in the Ohio country, ready and “waiting for the Americans to pay them another visit.” The stories were not simply sensationalism. These were years of open warfare in the Ohio country, with the Western Indian Confederacy decisively defeating U.S. forces twice from 1790 to 1791, and U.S. turning the tables three years later during the Battle of Fallen Timbers. In the northeast, conflict like this was a thing of the past. New Englanders knew there was virtually no chance of trouble with Indians in Lower Canada.27

Price was also important. As noted above, American newspaper readers were frequently reminded that they could get two hundred acres of free land in Canada. And British authorities did attempt to ensure that emigrants received their free allotment. Hugh Finley, a member of the Legislative Council of Lower Canada, warned in 1796 that certain unscrupulous proprietors in

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26 Some Revolutionary War veterans were apparently able to cross back annually to collect their US pensions, as if they had never left. See Hansen, Canadian and American Peoples, 76.
27 Salem Mercury, 15 September 1789; Essex Journal, 30 September 1798; Salem Gazette, 16 October 1792. See also Hatter, Citizens of Convenience, 55-65.
Vermont were attempting to extract fees from potential grantees. These people were arriving in British territory believing they had purchased land rights, but this was unacceptable: “the 200 acres is to be a gift…without the expense of a single farthing to the grantee.” Emigrants wishing for more than two hundred acres could also be accommodated. In 1794, John Ruiters was able to arrange the purchase of six hundred and thirty seven acres in Lower Canada for around thirty-eight British pounds. This was the equivalent of less than two hundred American dollars. At around the same time, one emigrant heading north, Peaslee Badger, sold his farm in New Hampshire for over four thousand dollars. No wonder that for many families in increasingly overcrowded New England, even Revolutionary War veterans, Lower Canada began to seem like “the best part of the world.”

The story of the Badger family of New Hampshire provides a good illustration of the relative ease of relocation to Lower Canada. The family lived in Gilmanton, a small community in central New Hampshire about twenty miles north of Concord. They had deep New England roots: the Badgers arrived in Massachusetts in 1643. During the war for independence Peaslee Badger served as a major in the Continental Army, and his father Joseph was even more prominent. He was appointed Brigadier General in 1780, and was also a member of the New Hampshire Provincial Congress and the state Constitutional Convention. The whole Badger clan seem to have been devoted patriots.

And yet by 1801, patriot or not, Peaslee Badger decided his sons required more land than southern New Hampshire could provide. Hearing good reports of opportunities in the north, Major Badger made the hundred and fifty mile trip to the head of the Connecticut River. Impressed, he returned, sold his land in New Hampshire, and purchased eight hundred acres near

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Compton, Quebec. The relatively short journey was a great advantage for the family. Quebec was close enough for Major Badger to make several trips before the family even began to pack. Badger’s eldest son and several hired men stayed behind to begin clearing land after the second trip, and the whole family did not head north until trip number four. With eight sleighs “laden with provisions and furniture,” the entire clan made the journey in nineteen days. They likely traveled up the frozen Connecticut River, which took them within thirty miles of their final destination.\(^{30}\)

Philemon Wright of Woburn, Massachusetts chose Lower Canada as well, although he and his family moved further away. Wright’s party settled the town of Hull, directly across the Ottawa River from what is today the capital city of Canada. Though the settlement was further to the northwest, the appeal was basically the same. The Ottawa River is one of the largest tributaries of the St. Lawrence, meeting it just above the city of Montreal. Pioneer settlements depended on getting lumber to market, and Hull was very well positioned for this. The Ottawa River was also important in the fur trade, as it was the primary route between Montreal and Lake Huron. This was a frontier, but it was not far removed from civilization. Settlers would be well connected to the British Atlantic world.

Wright, like Peaslee Badger, was a Continental Army veteran. He joined the revolutionary cause as a teenager and fought in the Battle of Bunker Hill. Twenty years later, however, he too was looking to relocate. And again, like Badger, Philemon Wright was able to make multiple trips north; he traveled to Montreal to investigate possible lands every year from 1796-1798, before finally settling on the area that became Hull. First Wright attempted to purchase the land from a Vermont speculator, only to find that the man was selling a revoked

grant. Undaunted, Wright simply petitioned the Canadians for the same land himself. This grant was confirmed, and in the winter of 1800 Wright led a party of sixty-three northward from Massachusetts. They reached their settlement in March. Within a few years, Wright was sending multiple rafts of timber downriver each year, into the export trade from Montreal.31

For the most part, Canadian authorities seem to have been perfectly content to provide land to American veterans. The one time they objected was when it was Native Americans, rather than the Canadian government, attempting to make the sale. In the mid-1790s, Joseph Brant – also known as Thayendanega, a leader of the Mohawk – began to operate as a borderland entrepreneur by selling land to Americans. Brant found himself in charge of a very large land grant in Upper Canada after the war and decided to get in on the marketing action. Just like the American veterans, Brant took advantage of the fact that political identity was flexible in the post-war borderland. Brant had taken up arms for the King, and had fought against the very people to whom he was now selling land. He recognized, however, that he could use his mobility within the borderland to enrich himself.32

The Mohawk supported the crown in the American Revolution. The British commissioned Brant as a captain, and he and his men fought alongside white loyalists in engagements in what would become upstate New York and northern Pennsylvania. At the end of the war, Governor of Quebec Frederick Haldimand granted a large tract of land to the loyalist Mohawks, “in consideration of the early attachment to [the King’s] cause…and of the loss of their settlement [in the US].” The grant was quite generous. Haldimand purchased from other

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32 For a detailed life of Joseph Brant, see Isabel Kelsay, Joseph Brant, 1743-1807, Man of Two Worlds (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1984). There is also a great deal about Brant in Alan Taylor, The Divided Ground.
native groups and gave to the Mohawk basically the entire Grand River in what is today southern Ontario. The Grand River is one hundred and seventy miles long, and has the largest watershed in southern Ontario. Haldimand granted the whole valley to the Mohawk: six miles on each side of the entire river, all the way to Lake Erie.\footnote{“Haldimand Treaty of 1784,” Six Nations Lands & Resources, 2008, accessed May 15, 2019, \url{http://www.sixnations.ca/LandsResources/HaldProc.html}.}

Governor Haldimand may not have realized exactly how generous he was being, but within a decade his act had put the Mohawk, and Brant in particular, in an enviable position. As noted above, lands along the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence were in high demand. American newspapers regularly touted opportunities in the borderland, and Americans were responding by moving north. Brant and the Mohawks were sitting on hundreds of thousands of acres on a river that flowed straight into Lake Erie.

By 1796, Brant was beginning to sell pieces of the Grand River grant and British authorities were concerned. In a letter to the Lieutenant Governor, the acting administrator of Upper Canada, Peter Russell, laid out the issue. He did not know exactly what to do. Captain Brant was demanding deeds for people to whom he had sold “considerable” tracts of land. These were not British subjects but American citizens, and Russell understood some to be veterans of the American army. In the first place, Russell wrote, his understanding was that the King had instructed that no grant to any individual exceed 1200 acres. Apparently, some of Brant’s sales exceeded that figure. But further, these people were Americans, who “may throw open a wide door by the mouth of [the Grand River] to the introduction of their countrymen.” Russell also noted that he had very little power to do anything about this uncomfortable situation. He could
“evade signing the deeds,” but if Brant just settled these people on the land anyway, Russell could do nothing to stop it.\footnote{Peter Russell to J.G. Simcoe, 22 Sept. 1796, \textit{Correspondence of Peter Russell}, 40.}

Brant, in response to the controversy, asserted that the plan all along had been to “make the most of part of that tract…by leasing or otherwise disposing of it in such way as to be able to raise a certain sure revenue.” What else, he asked, would the government of Upper Canada have him and the Mohawk do? What were the white “great men” planning on doing with their landholdings? It was ridiculous to be gifted a large swath of land and then later informed “you are not to make use of what I have now given you.” Besides, he pointed out, not only were Americans frequently moving across the border, Upper and Lower Canada had granted whole townships to Americans, including American veterans. Brant pointed to Major Thomas Ingersoll as an example; Ingersoll was a Patriot veteran from Massachusetts who had recently been granted land in Queenstown, Upper Canada.\footnote{Speech of Joseph Brant, 24 Nov. 1796, \textit{Correspondence of Peter Russell}, 92. Ironically, Ingersoll’s daughter Laura Secord would become Canada’s most famous patriotic heroine, for allegedly foiling an American attack during the War of 1812.}

Brant attempted to walk a fine line in his dealings with Canadian authorities. He took pains to claim continued allegiance to the British crown, while also occasionally insinuating that he could receive a better land deal by crossing the border himself. These were not empty threats. Even though the Mohawk and many of their fellow Iroquois fought for the crown during the war, the Americans were openly courting their return and resettlement in what was now New York State. The reasoning, as laid out by General Schuyler of New York in a message to the U.S. Congress, was that if the Iroquois all moved north to Canada “they will add strength to those people,” and might easily be enlisted to fight the Americans again in the future. In New York, by contrast, they would slowly be swamped by thousands of white settlers moving into the region,
which would neutralize them as a future threat. It was clear that the Mohawk and other Iroquois would be settled in the borderland. Why not try and keep them on the American side of it?36

Even though the British dominated the borderland economically, they could not afford to lose thousands of Iroquois allies to New York State. Brant knew this, and used it to open space for his borderland entrepreneurship. As he defended his land transactions, Brant claimed the Mohawk were “the same people in principle that we were during the American War…firm in our attachment to our Great Father, the King of England.” He swore that his people would “never think of returning to that country [New York].” But he made sure to mention that three years earlier he had refused an American offer of eleven thousand acres of land in exchange for a change of allegiance. This land, he claimed, had since quadrupled in value. If British authorities denied the Mohawk the freedom to control their grant, Brant warned, it would “leave a wound not easily healed.” Immediately after this veiled threat Brant traveled to Philadelphia, then the U.S. capital. There he continued his diplomatic maneuvering, taking his complaints straight to the British envoy, Robert Liston. According to a letter from Liston, not only did Brant make “earnest complaints” to him in an official capacity, he frequently and loudly denounced the authorities in Canada to the other guests at his inn, and threatened to ally his Mohawks with the French to “overturn the British government.” Liston wrote that though he was uncomfortable interfering in Canadian affairs, Brant was “so determined, so able, and so artful,” that Liston felt obliged to mollify him by sending his complaints to the King’s ministers.37

Brant recognized that the political distinction between “patriot” and “loyalist” had lost its meaning. In this postwar era borders and identity were negotiable, and he could move between

36 Taylor, Divided Ground, 118.
37 Speech of Brant, Correspondence of Peter Russell, 94, 95, 97; Robert Liston to David Shank, 28 March 1797, Correspondence of Peter Russell, 157; Robert Liston to Robert Prescott, 8 April 1797, Correspondence of Peter Russell, 160.
many actors – British authorities in Canada, the British envoy in Philadelphia, the New York government, and the U.S. government – to create the best opportunity for himself. Though he might use his wartime loyalty in negotiations with the government in Canada, he was equally prepared to criticize the Canadians to the British envoy and anyone else who would listen in the U.S. capital. Brant also knew what he was doing in using a promised grant of New York land as a bargaining chip. British authorities were well aware that the New York side of the borderland was increasing in value, because they were the ones ensuring that appreciation by keeping trade through the St. Lawrence affordable. They were also soliciting American settlers for Upper Canada themselves, while simultaneously confronting Brant for doing the same. In a way, the governments of Upper and Lower Canada were borderland entrepreneurs no less than Joseph Brant.

Another of these entrepreneurs was John Jacob Astor. Just as Brant was nominally British, Astor was nominally American. In reality, however, like Brant, Astor made himself a citizen of the borderland. Astor arrived in New York City as a young man of twenty in 1784. Though originally from Germany he had been living in London, and his initial plan was to sell musical instruments. His brother George Astor had already established a musical instrument business in London, and John intended to be the American agent for that firm. He soon expanded his horizons. Astor had some exposure to the fur trade while in London, and apparently became friendly with a German-American fur merchant while sailing to the states. This, he decided, was a growth industry. He would need to develop connections in the backcountry as soon as possible.38

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It did not take Astor long to create something of a fur trading empire in the borderland. Immediately upon arrival in New York he began to use money from his musical instrument business to purchase furs around the city and ship them to London. Soon he realized that to be a player in the industry he would have to have a presence in Montreal, so he chose to split his time between the states and Lower Canada. Within three years of Astor’s arrival he had established an annual routine. Each summer he would make the journey from New York City to Montreal, stopping in Albany and Fort Schuyler (now Utica) to check in on business associates and potentially make purchases. In Montreal he would arrange more purchases, storing some furs in a rented warehouse and arranging shipment for the rest. Then in the fall he would head back south, stopping again around Albany before returning to New York City.39

Technically, British trading restrictions should have prevented Astor from combining all of his fur dealings into one transnational enterprise. It was illegal to ship furs directly from Montreal to New York City. His New York sales should have been limited to his Albany furs, while his Montreal furs were distributed through British shipping. In those years, however, it was easy to bend the rules to be a borderland entrepreneur. Astor began simultaneously operating through legal and illegal channels. He would ship a portion of his Montreal furs to London, where some were sold and others reshipped to New York. Then he would move the rest of the furs over the border, either by sending them as packages to contacts just over the line in New York, or simply carrying them himself. There was little danger of being caught, as there was practically no enforcement at the land border.40 This system worked well until the Jay Treaty of

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39 Contract, Astor and William Hands, 29 August 1789 and Letter, Cornelius Heeney to Peter Smith, August 1792, Mss 766, Box 4, Volume 33, John Jacob Astor business records, Baker Library (hereafter BL), Harvard Business School, Boston, Massachusetts.
1794 removed the trade restrictions, at which point Astor could openly ship his furs wherever he wanted.

While Astor was creating his borderland fur empire, he was simultaneously creating a borderland real estate empire. Again, he conducted this business on both sides of the border simultaneously. Whether the land was in New York or Lower Canada did not matter – what mattered was that it was borderland, and likely to appreciate in value. Just as was the case with the furs, Astor began in New York City and quickly expanded north. Beginning in the late 1780s, he began to purchase parcels of land in lower Manhattan. Then in 1792, as he was in the midst of those investments, the crown lands proclamations were made in the Canadas. Astor worked fast. In September of that year, on his annual trip to Montreal, he filed separate petitions for two potential townships in Lower Canada. The townships he wanted were near the Chaudiere River, just south of Quebec City. Though the committee approved his applications, and it appears he was granted rights to at least one of the townships, Astor decided to walk away from the grant. It is possible that he or a representative visited the tract and decided it was not promising.41

Even if he was disillusioned with that particular tract, Astor continued to pursue Canadian land. In 1795 he and two other men signed an agreement with Hugh Finley, the chairman of the land committee in Lower Canada. Under this agreement, Astor would provide funds, the other two men would do the legwork, and Finley would shepherd their claims through the committee. The foursome had designs on as many as six townships, and Astor was willing to supply as much as £2400 to support the project. He was particularly interested in Stanbridge, a township just north of the Vermont border near Montreal. The deal fell apart, however, at least in part due to concern in Canada that Finley was inappropriately profiting from his role as

Astor’s third attempt at Canadian land finally proved successful. In 1801, he collected over a thousand acres just north of Sherbrooke, Quebec, as repayment on a debt. William and James Barnard, the latter a hatter in Montreal, owed Astor £477. William had title to the thousand acres, so the parties agreed to a trade. Astor sold the acreage a year or so later to his brother, George, for a tidy profit.  

Throughout this whole saga, as Astor was buying up plots in New York City and maneuvering for whole townships in Lower Canada, he was also pursuing land in the northern part of New York. The most important of these deals in the U.S. side of the borderland was in 1794, when Astor invested in thousands of acres in the Mohawk Valley. Astor held on to his Mohawk Valley lands for decades, through a great deal of upheaval and political battles over titles and squatters. This was not his only venture in upstate New York either – during the 1790s he gained control of an additional 22,000 acres in various parts of the region in a handful of different transactions, most frequently in the same kind of debt-land transaction that he managed in Canada in 1801. Astor saw the borderland as one enormous zone, filled with land investment possibilities. Both British subjects and American citizens owed him money, and so he could collect in both British and American land. There was opportunity everywhere.

Even though John Jacob Astor’s interest in Canadian land faded after the turn of the nineteenth century, he still remained very much a borderland citizen. He maintained his contacts in Montreal, and the Astor family was a part of the social scene there, just as they were in New York. In an 1806 journal, a young man named Samuel Bridge recounts attending several dinner parties and dances around Montreal with Mr. and Mrs. Astor and their daughter Magdalena.

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42 Articles of Agreement, 17 October 1795, Mss 766, Box 4, Volume 33, John Jacob Astor business records, BL; Porter, *Astor*, 78-80.
43 Porter, *Astor*, 81-82.
Magdalena was eighteen, and the Astors may have been hoping to find her a husband among the wealthy families of Lower Canada. A few years later, on the eve of the War of 1812, Astor negotiated a partnership that merged his American Fur Company with the Montreal-Michilimackinac Company, creating a transnational “South West Company” with headquarters in both New York City and Montreal. Three decades after his arrival in North America, John Jacob Astor was still moving back and forth between the two great cities, taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the open borderland.

The Allen brothers were Vermont’s most famous founders, and also its most prominent borderland entrepreneurs. Recognizing the same opportunity enjoyed by Brant and Astor, the Allens managed to position themselves as a transnational family. Ethan Allen, the eldest, was the leader of the Green Mountain Boys, a Revolutionary War-era militia. Ira Allen, the youngest, was Vermont’s first Treasurer and Surveyor General. Levi Allen, a middle sibling, was heavily involved in land speculation in several places prior to the revolution, before ultimately concentrating his efforts on the Lake Champlain valley and Quebec. Unlike his brothers, Levi chose the British side in the war, though afterward he settled just a few miles over the Vermont/Quebec border and continued working closely with Ira. The plan was to send cattle, grain, potash, and especially lumber north from Vermont to Montreal, via Levi’s trading post at

45 Samuel Bridge Journal extracts, Mss 766, Box 4, Volume 33, John Jacob Astor business records, BL.
46 Hatter, *Citizens of Convenience*, 155-156. This partnership took years to come together, and for a while Astor had hoped to simply buy the Montreal-Michilimackinac Company and create a giant American Fur Company that would dominate the west. To build support in Washington, DC, Astor made a nationalistic argument about using this company to take the fur trade from Canada and center it on New York. Even if he had succeeded, as Hatter notes in *Citizens of Convenience*, Astor still would have controlled a company that spilled over the border and employed a great many British subjects. At any rate, he failed, and ended up with the South West Company.
St. John sur Richelieu in Quebec. Then they could purchase manufactured goods for Vermont in Canada. The Allen brothers had some success, but could not get the British to agree to permanent free trade, and were dependent on water levels on the Richelieu for the transport of Vermont lumber each spring. Ira Allen soon began pushing for a canal to address the water level problem, a quest that would stretch for years and eventually lead to a good deal of international intrigue.\textsuperscript{48}

The Allens began to amass land holdings as early as 1774, before the war and the borderland boom. Most importantly, they managed to secure the rights to several large tracts of land bordering Lake Champlain in what is today northwestern Vermont. Most of these lands bordered on one of two rivers: the Missisquoi, which runs through both Quebec and Vermont before emptying into the lake near St. Albans, and the Onion (today the Winooski River) which enters the lake near Burlington. Levi alone controlled as many as fifty deeds in what became St. Albans, Vermont. Ira was more involved with the Onion River lands, and set up the Onion River Land Company to promote them. He would eventually donate land to found the University of Vermont in Burlington, in the hope of increasing the value of his holdings.\textsuperscript{49}

The Allens first began promoting their Vermont lands in the years before the revolution. At that time, they did not yet use proximity to Montreal as a selling point. The first advertisements were brief, and focused almost entirely on the quality of the land. In a January 1775 ad in the \textit{Hartford Courant}, Levi Allen noted the “rich soil, pure healthy air, free from stones” and the lake and streams “abounding with…good fish.” A number of farmers were already on the land, he claimed, and more would be arriving in the spring. Anyone willing to

\textsuperscript{48} Allen went to London to try and drum up support for a canal. When that effort failed, he went to Paris and convinced the Directory to supply arms for an invasion of Canada from Vermont. Someone tipped off the British, and they captured Allen’s ship as he was returning to North America. For the whole saga, see J. Kevin Graffagnino, “Twenty Thousand Muskets!!!”: Ira Allen and the Olive Branch Affair, 1796-1800” \textit{The William and Mary Quarterly} 48:3 (1991): 409-431.
\textsuperscript{49} “Miscellaneous,” Box 5, Folder 37, Box 6, Folder 10, MSS-062, Allen Family Papers, University of Vermont Special Collections (hereafter UVM), Burlington, VT.
relocate to the north could have “500 acres or more at a very moderate lay.” The brothers were working together to sell these lands, and according to the ad any interested parties could contact Levi, in Connecticut, or Ira, on the land itself.\(^{50}\)

By the mid-1780s, the Allens knew that their main selling point was proximity to the British. In an ironic twist, the war and resulting division of the north country made their land more, not less, attractive. Geopolitics had delivered the Allens into a unique position. Vermont was within the bounds of the United States, according to the terms of the treaty ending the war. But it was not yet technically a state. For years Vermont deeds had been hotly contested – some settlers, like the Allens, had grants from the former Governor of New Hampshire, but others had grants from New York. The government in Albany insisted that their grants invalidated any other ones, and that Vermont was rightly a part of New York. Until 1790, they blocked all attempts to join Vermont to the union. This allowed the Allens and other Vermont leaders to essentially act as an independent entity, striking whatever deals they wished with their neighbors in Lower Canada.

So even more than most northeasterners in the early republic years, the Allens could be explicit about their position as de facto British North Americans. A 1787 ad, from the *Vermont Gazette* in Bennington, is noticeably different from the pre-Revolution ads. The first few paragraphs are similar, touting the land’s affordability, the variety of trees present in the Onion River valley, and the soil’s great productivity in producing corn and tobacco. Then Ira Allen and his partners get to the primary selling point. The land is “situate on the east side of Lake Champlain, about seventy miles south of St. John’s [Lower Canada]…there is sufficiency of water to carry down all kinds of [goods]…from Onion River to Chamblee, from whence vessels

\(^{50}\) *Hartford Courant*, 2 January 1775.
sail to Europe, &c.” The situation in northwest Vermont had “obvious advantages” compared to anything a settler might find in Western Pennsylvania, Ohio, or Kentucky. “A free trade to and through the province of Quebec, together with the goodness of the soil…seems to point out Onion River…as a place of future grandeur.”

At least one Canadian proprietor decided to try and outflank Allen and the Onion River Company and poach some of the same settlers. The proposal was simple: why choose northwestern Vermont for proximity to Montreal, when you could be even more connected a little further north? In 1789, Leonard Chester took out several ads in New England papers (including Ira Allen’s favored paper, the Vermont Gazette), offering farms of more than a hundred and twenty acres only four miles from the St. Lawrence River itself. The land, he claimed, was “superior to any in Vermont, and [concerning] trade, superior to any in America.” Not even the “highly applauded and really excellent Onion River land” was better. Chester even claimed that fifteen former Onion River settlers had already abandoned Vermont for his tract. Mills and schools would soon be established, and more roads cut. Furthermore, he noted, the land was located between Quebec City and Montreal, so the St. Lawrence would provide access to markets in both cities.

In 1791 Vermont finally joined the U.S. as the fourteenth state. Nevertheless, Ira Allen kept proximity to Canada as part of his sales pitch. A Vermont Gazette ad of 1793 mentions over a hundred thousand available acres of land, not only along the Onion River but also near Lake Memphremagog further east (Lake Memphremagog, like Lake Champlain, spans the border between Vermont and Quebec). If Lower Canada could offer mills, then so could Vermont; in fact, Allen claimed that mills had already been erected. A forge was promised, in addition to

51 *Vermont Gazette*, 19 March 1787.
52 *Berkshire Chronicle*, 3 July 1789; *Vermont Gazette*, 11 June 1789.
another sawmill and gristmill. And if the Canadians could offer schools, well, Vermont could provide a university. One had already been established at Burlington, and Allen promised a city there, with work for “mechanics of every denomination.” Finally, the lake provided “water communication to…Quebec,” thereby connecting settlers to the St. Lawrence and the Atlantic.\(^5^3\) Northern Vermont was the perfect option for families looking for borderland opportunities. It provided cheap land, all the amenities settlers required, and excellent connections to the British Atlantic world.

The borderland shared by the District of Maine and the Province of New Brunswick was similar, but not identical, to its counterpart in New York, Vermont, and the Canadas. New Brunswick land was not advertised to New Englanders as extensively as was land in Upper or Lower Canada. This was because that land was distributed in a different way. In this early period, decades before confederation and the birth of the federal government of Canada, the provinces of British North America were separately governed. The proclamations of 1792 that opened crown lands to settlement in Upper and Lower Canada, creating a rush of proprietors and speculators, did not apply to New Brunswick. Investors did not engage in a frenzy of competing solicitations, to try and lure Americans to their proposed townships. Migration over the New Brunswick border was more gradual, and less organized.

That movement did take place, however, and it took place because the official attitude toward the borderland was the same in the Maritime Provinces as it was in the Canadas. British authorities wanted settlers. The border was open, and land was available. Though there were few explicit calls for settlers in the newspapers of the 1790s, New Englanders had been aware of

\(^{5^3}\) *Vermont Gazette*, 27 December 1793.
northeastern opportunities for a long time. As noted in chapter one, by the 1750s reports of these opportunities were circulating in New England. Families in Eastern Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and the District of Maine knew of friends and neighbors who had relocated to the Annapolis Valley in Nova Scotia, or the Saint John River in New Brunswick. And if migration to Lower Canada was comparatively easy, migration to the Maritimes was even easier. Practically no overland travel was necessary. A few days sail across the Gulf of Maine was all it took.

The pressing question of the postwar years was political. New Brunswick had originally been the northern section of Nova Scotia. It was set off as a separate province in 1784 because of the large number of loyalist refugees who settled there. By the mid 1780s, there were substantial loyalist settlements all around the eastern side of Passamaquoddy Bay and throughout the Saint John Valley. Would British authorities keep the border open and continue to welcome migrants, even if those migrants had never been counted as loyalists?

It was soon obvious that the answer was yes. Within a year of the end of the war a group of New Englanders, the Cape Ann Association, attempted to organize a settlement on Passamaquoddy Bay in what would soon be designated New Brunswick. The Cape Ann settlers had not served in the British Army, nor had they suffered banishment or relocation during the war. It is possible that some in the association had loyalist leanings. Many of the settlers came from the town of New Boston, New Hampshire, which had a loyalist reputation. The most prominent members of the town, though, the ones known for their loyalty, did not leave. It was the younger generation that relocated: “their children and their children’s children.” Some members of the association may even have been Continental Army veterans; one man, William Vance, claimed to have been with Benedict Arnold at the siege of Quebec City in 1775. These
people were attempting, mere months after the peace treaty and the refugee migrations, to go back to the pre-war status quo. They wanted to gain a land grant and relocate east, just as New Englanders had been doing for thirty years.⁵⁴

And they were able to do so. In one of his last acts before New Brunswick passed out of his jurisdiction, Governor Parr of Nova Scotia granted the Cape Ann Association a tract in a prime location: Oak Bay, the northernmost part of Passamaquoddy Bay near the mouth of the St. Croix River. Some of the actual loyalists in the area were quite dismayed. In 1785, members of the British 74th regiment who had asked for land in Oak Bay wrote to Fredericton to complain. They had served the crown faithfully, accepted relocation to New Brunswick, and sent agents to make arrangements in Halifax and Saint John. Now they needed to clear fields and plant, and the land they requested had already been granted to a number of persons “who are new and have been during the whole course of the war within the Rebel States.” This was unacceptable. “We flatter ourselves,” the loyalist veterans wrote, “that we are entitled to a choice of land prior to people circumstanced as they are.” The slightly chagrined response from Fredericton was that the claim would be “taken into consideration.”⁵⁵

The Cape Ann Association was allowed to keep their land. Regardless of the way the veterans felt, persons who had been in the rebel states throughout the war were welcomed to British territory with no restrictions. The case of Grand Manan Island provides another example. Grand Manan is a sizable island in the Bay of Fundy, located almost on the international border, but under the control of New Brunswick. In 1806 seventeen settlers petitioned together for land grants on Grand Manan, and almost all of them were American citizens. Nathaniel Farr was the

⁵⁵ Memorial of Alexander MacNiven and Peter Callum, 10 February 1785, Microfilm Reel #F1027, Land Petitions and Grants, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (hereafter PANB), Fredericton, New Brunswick.
first name on the petition, and he and another petitioner, John Roney, were British subjects and military veterans. But the other fifteen names on the list were Americans, and they were open about it, listing themselves as “emigrants from the United States.” A local notable, George Sproule, added a brief note of support to their petition, noting that “a considerable quantity of land remains vacant” on the island. Apparently the New Brunswick council did not think twice about the application, and did not differentiate between the British veterans and the American immigrants. They simply gave a blanket grant: “May have 200 acres each to be allotted by the Surveyor General.”

The experiences of the Grand Manan settlers and the Cape Ann Associates seem to have been common in the Maine/New Brunswick border region at this time. Americans moved over the border, conducted their affairs, and whether they requested land before their arrival or afterward, they usually got the grant. This movement peaked a bit later than emigration to Lower Canada. While the 1790s saw the greatest migration over the Vermont border, the 1800s saw a burst of migration over the Maine border. One reason was political maneuvering in Europe. Starting in 1806, Napoleon’s Continental System blocked British ships from the lumber trade in the Baltic. This was an enormous boon for the British Provinces in North America. The Maritime lumber trade flourished, which led almost immediately to a labor shortage. Wages spiked. Americans began to head east for the border.

One New Brunswick source provides a window into this movement, and an interesting comparison with Philipsburg’s Book of Declaration of Aliens. In 1817, a man named Robert Pagan submitted a list of names to provincial officials in Fredericton. Pagan had served for seven years as a commissioner in charge of immigration to Charlotte County, New Brunswick, which

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56 Petition of Nathaniel Farr and Others, April 1807, Microfilm Reel #F4171, Land Petitions and Grants, PANB.  
borders directly on Washington County, Maine. After years of what he believed a troublingly large influx, Pagan had had enough. He asked permission to resign his commission. There were too many Americans arriving for him to deal with, and they were causing trouble:

The increasing emigration of persons from the United States…for the purpose of obtaining employ and settlement has become so great, that it bids fair to exceed the Loyal Population of our original settlers and their children – several serious disputes have arisen between Americans who came across the lines…[and] our settlers with whom this intrusion interferes.\(^{58}\)

Pagan attached a list of ninety-two people that had arrived since 1810. Almost everyone arrived with a family; only seven were alone. The rest had wives and children; on average they were families of five. Exactly half of the men, sixteen, listed their occupation as farmer. There were four traders, four joiners, three who listed “mill man,” a doctor, a baker, and a few others. Almost all were from Maine, or at least had been living there prior to emigrating. Their time resident in the Province varied widely, from but on average they had been there for between three and four years. It appears that quite a few Maine families made the move over the border in the first decade of the nineteenth century.\(^{59}\)

And yet, not everyone who wanted to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the border zone needed to emigrate. Some realized they could accomplish the same thing while remaining in the United States – they could have the benefits provided by the British Empire without any of the costs. They were aided by the decision, made by British and American authorities alike, to refrain from enforcing border restrictions. To keep the borderland growing, the border had to be permeable.

\(^{58}\) Letter, Robert Pagan, 14 February 1817, RS547, Folder B, Provincial Secretary Naturalization Administration Records, PANB.
\(^{59}\) Ibid.
In Maine, Passamaquoddy Bay provides the best example of this opportunity. Passamaquoddy Bay was akin to the Allen lands around Lake Champlain in Vermont. The western side of the bay was American, but it was connected economically to British markets and trade networks. As noted above, both British and Americans believed that eventually, they might create a meaningful border that favored their side. For the time being though, growth was paramount. A bit of a comedy of errors from the mid-1790s provides an excellent illustration of economic realities in the bay. Technically there was an American side and a British side, but in practice everyone was part of the same economy. When a low level official took action to enforce the border, New Brunswick authorities quickly responded by returning the border to its ambiguous and permeable state.

In late 1795, Colin Campbell reported to New Brunswick customs authorities that he had seized an American ship. This was the schooner Sally, captained by Daniel Joy. Campbell wrote that he had observed the Sally illegally unloading hundreds of bushels of American corn at a mill on the British side of the St. Croix River, in St. Stephen, New Brunswick. Accordingly, he gathered a militia and seized the ship. Captain Joy responded that this was unfair – he was moored in the middle of the river, and thus was not in British territory. But Campbell was not swayed. He took the ship. Then, because the tide had fallen, he almost immediately ran the ship aground in the river. Campbell ordered Captain Joy to fix the ship, which Joy did. Once the Sally was afloat once more, Joy attempted to escape, but Campbell re-seized the vessel and sailed it to St. Andrews harbor. Campbell seems to have realized that he may have gone too far in seizing the Sally. He offered to give back the ship if authorities in Fredericton felt that he should. He wrote that he felt obligated by law to take the vessel, but he was worried that his action “may

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60 Harold Davis provides a long history of both sides of the bay in An International Community on the St. Croix, 1604-1930 (Orono, ME: University of Maine Press, 1974).
possibly create some uneasiness on the American Side,” in addition to injuring New Brunswick grist mills.  

Another letter quickly followed Campbell’s, elaborating on the situation. This one was from some local New Brunswick notables, and they just wanted the whole situation to go away. Campbell’s action, they wrote, would “destroy the good understanding that at present subsists between the inhabitants of this county and those of Washington County [in Maine].” The Sally was only doing what vessels from both sides of the river did all the time. Throughout the year, as long as the river was navigable, American ships were continually anchoring in it and loading goods. This practice “has never been disquieted, and is supposed to be their undoubted right agreeable to the treaty of peace.” Furthermore, the men wrote, any time some impediment, like “want of water or severity of the season,” prevented New Brunswick residents from using their own mills, it was common practice to simply cross to the US side and use the mills there. Americans did the same. All Captain Joy was doing was using the most convenient working mill. Finally, they claimed that even if authorities wished to crack down on this commonly accepted blurring of the border Joy’s ship should be sprung on a technicality. Knowing that Campbell was in the area that night, Joy had apparently secured two small boats owned by British subjects: a whale boat owned by a resident of Campobello Island, and a skiff owned by a resident of St. Stephen. He had used these vessels to unload the corn and reload the ground meal, so technically, he was transporting goods in British ships and was thus within the limits of the law. Provincial authorities quickly took the side of Daniel Joy and his defenders against Colin Campbell. The Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick knew that the priority was to keep moving goods within the border zone. The people on the west side of the Passamaquoddy may

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61 Letter, Colin Campbell, 13 December 1795; Letter, Robert Pagan, James Campbell, et al, 15 December 1795, RS23A, Box 1, Folder 4, Customs House Administration Records, PANB.
have technically been on American soil. But in reality, they were operating within a British economic sphere. What was Daniel Joy doing, really, besides helping to keep New Brunswick gristmills in operation? All Campbell’s seizure did was create unnecessary hard feelings. By December 23rd, only ten days after Campbell’s letter, the Lieutenant Governor requested that customs “restore the vessel and cargo, without any reserve or stipulation, to the original owners.”

This was not the only time that British subjects in the border region spoke up about keeping the border zone unified and the boundary permeable. In the first years after the loyalist migration and the creation of the separate provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, it was impossible for the thousands of people crowding the new settlements to feed themselves. They needed to concentrate on clearing the land and building homes. So the Crown had decided to let those provinces import a large variety of necessities from the United States. Cattle, horses, pigs, poultry, grains of every sort, and lumber were all listed in a proclamation of 1785, along with the condition that these goods could only be imported in British ships, and by British subjects. The idea was that this would not need to be permanent; the provinces would be able to supply themselves shortly, as settlements expanded and economies matured.

Within a few years, however, the borderland region was functioning as an economic unit. Ignoring the border was paying dividends for both sides, and when authorities threatened to revoke permission to import some of the American goods, locals resisted. In the early 1790s, the New Brunswick government attempted to do away with permission to import lumber and livestock from the states. Apparently authorities changed their minds about the livestock

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62 Letter, [illegible] on behalf of the Lt. Gov, 23 December 1795, RS23A, Box 1, Folder 4, Customs House Administration Records, PANB.
relatively quickly, but the threat caused great concern in both Passamaquoddy and Saint John. As noted in chapter one, New England had been providing cattle to the Maritime Provinces since the 1750s. By this point, in 1791, there were regular cattle drives coming over the border from Maine to New Brunswick. Considering the possible disappearance of this trade, some residents of Saint John wrote to the Lt. Governor of their “anxiety and very great uneasiness.” New Brunswick, they asserted, simply did not have enough cattle. If imports from the states stopped, there would be no meat at all in the markets during some seasons of the year. Farmers in the province, trying to make up the deficit, would “spare too great a proportion of their stock,” which would eventually “retard the settlement of this country.” Furthermore, they claimed, many of the importers of livestock were doing so because they had “debts due in the states” and “were compelled to take such in payment.” Altering this system would upend several elements of the borderland economy. Why not simply allow trade to take its natural course? Eventually, New Brunswick farmers would have larger herds, and the importation from the states would fade away.64

Lumber was an even more complicated issue. Another letter, from the same group of people at likely the same time, explained the lumber trade to the Lt. Governor. Doing away with American lumber imports, they wrote, would be a crushing blow to the sawmills and shipping of Charlotte County. This was not a matter of competition from the Americans. American lumber was being constantly carried over the border, cut in New Brunswick mills and shipped abroad on New Brunswick ships. Business was booming, but if they were forced to rely only on their own lumber sources “notwithstanding their utmost exertions it will not be in their power for some

64 William Campbell et al to the Lt. Governor, undated [likely 1791], RS23A, Box 1, Folder 4, Customs House Administration Records, PANB. The regular cattle drives from the Penobscot region to Charlotte County, NB continued into the early nineteenth century, according to Davis, *An International Community on the Saint Croix*, 106.
time to supply even the shipping belonging to this county.”\textsuperscript{65} Mills would close, shipping would decrease precipitously, and again, economic growth would slow unnecessarily. The economics of the borderland depended on goods moving freely within the zone – if the authorities altered anything the system would fall apart.

It is unclear exactly how the importation laws changed over the next few years, or if they ever did change in practice. There were a few more threats in the following years to do away with the permission to import cattle and lumber, and in 1794 it appears the Lt. Governor did discontinue the official sanction of that trade. But the very next year, in the case of the Sally, the authorities backed down immediately when faced with the possibility of interfering with the general good feelings and free trade in the Passamaquoddy area. There are also later accounts claiming that lumber, at least, continued to make its way over the border with no interference. In his early nineteenth century \textit{Account of the Province of New Brunswick}, Thomas Baillie recorded that in 1819, “on the Scoodic [St. Croix] River alone…there were forty-seven” sawmills operating, and that they cut over seven million feet of lumber. But, Baillie noted, “this account includes the American side; and, indeed, business is done there with but little division of interests.”\textsuperscript{66} It sounds like the Passamaquoddy region continued to operate as a unified economic zone for many years.

The settlement of Houlton, Maine is another fine example of the borderland opportunity zone. Here again, Americans found a way to exploit the British system without technically being a part of it. Houlton is located on the Meduxnekeag River, very close to the border with New Brunswick. This river flows east, emptying into the Saint John River at Woodstock, New

\textsuperscript{65} William Campbell et al to the Lt. Governor, 1791, RS23A, Box 1, Folder 4, Customs House Administration Records, PANB.

\textsuperscript{66} Letter, 8 March 1794, RS23A, Box 2, Folder 7a, Customs House Administration Records, PANB; Thomas Baillie, \textit{An Account of the Province of New Brunswick} (London: J, G, & F Rivington, 1832), 112-113.
Brunswick, about eleven miles away. Fredericton, the capital of the province, is about fifty miles further downstream. There is no water connection between Houlton and the rest of Maine; the closest large town is Bangor, 120 miles away, but no road was built until the 1830s. Before that, everyone and everything coming and going from Houlton had to travel through New Brunswick. Houlton was a de facto part of the British Empire.

But, importantly, it was not a de jure part of the British Empire. The men who received the grant of land that became Houlton appear to have made this connection soon after the grant was made. The gift of land came about because of a newly established academy. In the last decade of the eighteenth century, Massachusetts made it a policy to support the establishment of colleges and academies by donating townships and half-townships of unimproved land in the District of Maine to these academies. Once a school was established, the trustees had to raise the initial funds on their own. When they had at least three thousand dollars in assets, they could petition the legislature in Boston for a grant of land. They would then sell the Maine land to settlers or speculators to raise money for the school. In the mid-1790s the legislature was busily handing out land grants to various academies. Some, including Gorham, Milton, and Dummer Academies, received land in far western Maine, near the border with New Hampshire. Others, including Williams College and New Salem and Groton Academies, received land in far eastern Maine, near New Brunswick. It is unclear how decisions were made on which academy would receive which tract of land.67

The small western Massachusetts town of New Salem received one of these grants in 1797, and a committee of three men was appointed to sell it. Often these committees would sell to a speculator, who could handle the settlement of the tract himself. The trustees of Portland

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Academy did that in 1801, when they sold their half-township to Joseph Foxcroft. Foxcroft appears to have been one of the men making a career of this – at around the same time he purchased another township that had been granted to Bowdoin College, which became the town of Dover-Foxcroft. Selling to a speculator was almost certainly the simplest thing for any academy sitting on a land grant to do.68

But this is not what happened in New Salem. Perhaps the trustees had a hard time finding a buyer, or perhaps they felt the speculators were lowballing them. All we know is that sometime between 1797 and 1804, a group of local men decided that they themselves would settle the tract. Many of these men were from New Salem, and others were from neighboring towns like Amherst and Hadley. One of the purchasers, Varney Pearce, had himself been on the three-person committee tasked with finding a buyer for the grant. As one local historian put it, the decision of a number of locals to purchase the land themselves “deprived New Salem of many worthy and good families, and of its most public citizens.”69

It is difficult to say for certain why these families decided to abandon far western Massachusetts for far eastern Maine. However, it is possible that they took a look at where the grant was located and realized that they had been handed a golden opportunity. New Salem is a hill town west of Worcester, without easy river access to the wider world. The best one could do to get goods to market would be to travel north to the Millers River, which empties into the Connecticut River just south of Vermont. Moving to new communities either north or west would not have provided much improvement. Many New Englanders were emigrating to upstate

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New York or the Ohio country at this time, but these places were even further removed from established economic networks.

But Houlton, Maine, was special. It was frontier, but connected frontier – a chance to build a brand new town that would be more advantageously situated than New Salem. Houlton’s river fed directly into the Saint John, which flowed to Fredericton and the city of Saint John, and the wider British Atlantic. You could travel to and from Houlton by boat rather than overland. There was already an established community just fourteen miles away at Woodstock, New Brunswick. Supplies would be relatively easy to come by, as they would not have to be shipped long distances overland. Women, small children, and the elderly could rest comfortably in Woodstock, indefinitely, while the male migrants worked to start the settlement. And incredibly, moving to this new settlement would not even involve leaving Massachusetts.

The Houlton migrants immediately took advantage of the proximity to New Brunswick. When the Putnam family made the journey in 1805 – overland to Boston, by boat from Boston to Saint John, and up the river to Woodstock – almost the entire family stayed in the latter town while younger men who had not yet brought families traveled on to the new settlement. A couple of years later, Captain Joseph Houlton and his large family arrived in the town that would later bear his name. The four daughters in the family settled in at Woodstock, while Joseph and his four sons worked at building homes a few miles away over the border.\textsuperscript{70}

The Reverend Frederic Dibblee, a Woodstock resident who kept a detailed journal in the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century, was among the British subjects who greeted these transient Americans. Dibblee’s journal shows that the Maine settlers were recurrent visitors to Woodstock. Various members of the Houlton family are mentioned as guests of the Dibblees in 1808 – some visiting in November, while a larger contingent attended a New Year’s Eve party that December. The

\textsuperscript{70} Old Pioneer, \textit{Houlton}, 6-8.
socializing appears to have led to economic connections as well, as Captain Houlton’s son Samuel became a frequent employee of Rev. Dibblee. In November, 1810, Dibblee notes that Samuel Houlton was helping slaughter hogs, and a few weeks later mentions that he was doing carpentry work. A year later the young Mr. Houlton and a man named Warner, who also appears to have been a Maine settler, were employed building the Dibblees a chimney.\footnote{Dibblee Diary, S122-1, Folder 1, Frederick Dibblee Fonds, New Brunswick Museum and Archives, Saint John, New Brunswick.}

Before the settlers in Houlton built a mill of their own, they traveled downstream to Woodstock and used the mills there.\footnote{Old Pioneer, \textit{Houlton}, 9.} Conversely, when the people of Woodstock decided to build a school, they contracted with the Americans for the lumber. Rev. Dibblee noted in November of 1816 that Amos Putnam, a Houlton settler, had delivered 1500 boards for the school.\footnote{Dibblee Diary, NBM.} There were cross border marriages, and cross border careers. After twelve years of practicing in Houlton, and being frequently called over the border, Dr. Samuel Rice decided to relocate to Woodstock, “where his practice was greatly increased.” Some of the slack was picked up by Lydia Putnam, who, according to a local historian, was the only local with medical knowledge: “there being no physician then above Fredericton, excepting Doctor Rice.” Ms. Putnam, too, became a frequent border crosser.\footnote{Old Pioneer, \textit{Houlton}, 36.}

The borderland shared by New England, New York, and British North America was a land of opportunity in the post-Revolutionary period. This connected frontier stretched over a massive area – it included Passamaquoddy Bay and the Saint John River Valley, the eastern townships of Lower Canada north of New Hampshire, the Lake Champlain Valley, the Ottawa Valley, the St. Lawrence Valley between Upper Canada and New York, and the country north
and south of Lake Ontario. Throughout this territory, British and American authorities encouraged an open border, and the free movement of migrants. Settlers chose American settlements or British settlements, knowing that economically, the whole zone was connected to British cities and British Atlantic trade. Perhaps the border would shift one day, and the Americans would finally assume control over all of northeastern North America. Or perhaps the British would manage to push the border south and west, taking land that was already within their economic sphere and making it legally part of the British Empire. It was impossible to predict the future. For now, the region offered cheap, safe, accessible, well-connected land. The border, blurry and porous, was something borderland settlers could largely ignore.
Chapter III:
For the Relief and Assistance of our Countrymen: Congregationalists and Catholics Define the Eastern Border

In the summer of 1798 a group of Passamaquoddy Indians from Maine traveled to Boston to petition the Massachusetts Legislature, known as the General Court. Together with Father Francis Matignon, the resident priest in Boston, the delegation requested that Massachusetts approve an annual salary for a Catholic priest to live with and minister to the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot communities in Maine. Their appeal was successful. An annual grant of two hundred dollars, from the public treasury, was ordered for “a teacher of religion and morality…of good moral and political character.” The man hired for the job, Father James Romagne, ended up ministering to Maine Indians in the employ of the Commonwealth for almost twenty years.¹

At first glance, this was a bizarre departure from the norm for Massachusetts. For over a century it had been the official policy of Massachusetts to destroy Catholicism in Maine. Catholic Indian communities were treated as an existential threat, and soldiers from Massachusetts burned their churches at least three times in the eighteenth century. After independence, the Massachusetts constitution officially established a tax-supported Congregational Church, and was quite specific about the qualifications for state-sponsored teachers of religion and morality. Though article three declares “every denomination of

Christians…[equally] under the protection of the law,” it limited tax dollars to Protestants. Why then, would Massachusetts reverse itself within two decades and provide tax dollars to Catholics?

In isolation, this seems like a dramatic change. In context, however, it was simply another step in a strategy created by Massachusetts almost ten years earlier. The decision to provide funding to the Catholic Church arose out of a desire to manage the chaotic, booming borderland that had emerged in northern New England since the revolution. Massachusetts understood that, although it had legal possession of Maine, it did not really have control. Most of the district, particularly its eastern reaches, was a shared zone. Identities in the zone were fluid, and the border had little weight. Opportunistic investors and settlers were flooding in, taking advantage of the desire of both republic and empire to develop their settlements. The de facto border, it seemed, could easily shift one way or the other. This situation made political leaders in Massachusetts uncomfortable. The settlers along the eastern coast – and even more troublingly, the Indians who still controlled Maine’s interior – remained in a position to play Americans and British off against each other. Somehow Massachusetts had to find a way to build connections with its side of the borderland, to begin to manage the territory and the people who lived there.

This seemed an impossible task. The District of Maine was potentially huge, and the government in Boston had limited resources with which to manage it. No one knew exactly where the northern border would fall, but even without its potential northernmost reaches, the district was the size of all three southern New England states combined. Furthermore, one of Maine’s fastest growing regions also happened to be the most distant from Boston: the

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3 For more on the borderland and the opportunists who took advantage of it, see chapter two.
settlements around Passamaquoddy Bay and the St. Croix River, bordering on New Brunswick. In order to assert itself throughout the district, to build connections and meet the needs of settlers, the state needed partners. It did not have time to create a secular bureaucracy from scratch. It needed organizations with the ability to manage manpower and money and funnel both into the borderland immediately. It needed churches.

Fortuitously, the churches also needed assistance from the state. New England Congregationalists had been eager for generations to build a domestic missionary network. American independence finally gave them this chance, but initially fundraising was slow. Partnering with Massachusetts to serve the District of Maine would provide an infusion of cash to help grow the operation quickly. At roughly the same time, the Catholic Church was also looking for help. There were only two priests in Boston, and they were attempting to serve not just that city, but parts of mid-coast Maine and the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy communities as well. If the state were willing to cover the cost of a priest for Maine, it would help enormously.

The partnership between churches and state began with the Congregationalists. In 1791, the Commonwealth approved annual funding for the first domestic Congregational missionary organization, the Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America (SPGNA). This state grant was transformative for the SPGNA. It stepped up its efforts, hiring more preachers, purchasing more books, and bringing more Maine communities into its network. Within a few years, however, it was clear that this one missionary society could not do

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4 It is impossible to tell the story of Congregational missionary efforts in the Early Republic without dealing with this society, which pioneered outreach to the new settlements, and had the field to itself for almost a decade. Almost all the subsequent Congregational societies communicated extensively with the SPGNA, and adapted their efforts to its existing model. Nevertheless, a number of books on religion in the Early Republic have omitted the SPGNA entirely. Stephen Marini claims that Congregationalists were largely unable to organize frontier missions, and the Missionary Society of Connecticut provided the first attempts, in 1798. Similarly, Sam Haselby writes that the Connecticut society employed the first domestic missionary in the US in 1799. The SPGNA began sending missionaries to Maine in 1791. Marini, Radical Sects, 37; Haselby, American Religious Nationalism, 263.
the job alone. Most notably, it was not reaching either the Penobscot or Passamaquoddy communities, both of which were located uncomfortably close to the border. When British officials in New Brunswick chose to fund a Catholic priest for the Maliseet Indians, their counterparts in Massachusetts decided to do likewise. This was the context in which Father Matignon and the Passamaquoddy made their successful appeal for state funds. By the turn of the nineteenth century, both Catholic and Congregational networks were providing religious services, distributing books, organizing schools, and connecting even the most remote borderland communities to Boston.

Massachusetts’s investment in this church-state partnership paid off handsomely in the years to come. The SPGNA used its funds wisely and grew quickly. Its network became more complex and efficient over time, as the society divided Maine into zones and worked to reach all corners of the district. It distributed thousands of books and pamphlets, and began to build a network of schools. As itinerant ministers reached new communities, they solicited cash donations to support the society, which created tangible financial bonds between frontier communities and the center of state power in Boston. The SPGNA’s success inspired the birth of still more missionary societies to augment the work in Maine, and as these societies multiplied, they gradually shifted the financial burden from the state to private contributors. Women’s benevolent societies, especially in Massachusetts, eventually became the dominant contributors to these missionary organizations. Meanwhile, with its own state assistance, the Catholic Diocese of Boston was free to expand its outreach beyond Maine Indians, to Maine’s Irish Catholic communities. Like Protestants, Catholics built an extensive network, visiting families, distributing books, and fostering connections between rural Maine and Boston. The two church

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5 The growth of women’s fundraising and the resulting expansion of the Congregational missionary network in Maine is the subject of chapter four.
networks may not have had a lot in common theologically, but their work in the District of Maine had remarkable parallels.

No one expected these networks to serve as a means of enforcing the border. They were supposed to help manage the borderland, meet the needs of people who lived there, and promote “good order and…civil government.” As they grew, however, they made the border meaningful in a way that it had not been before. Catholics in Maine, both white and Indian, had their needs met by an American network, and did not have to look over the border for spiritual assistance. Congregationalists in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, connected to New England in so many ways, found themselves cut off from church resources. At the same time, those resources were being funneled to places like eastern Maine, creating a distinction between communities like Calais and Eastport and their New Brunswick neighbors. As time went on, the divergence grew. Massachusetts had more preachers, more teachers, more books, and more cash, and it was able to move these into the borderland more effectively. Boston-based networks quickly succeeded in reaching even the furthest communities of eastern Maine. Fredericton and Halifax did not follow suit. Political and religious leaders in those communities were neither willing nor able to create networks that could service western New Brunswick. And even though the border region as a whole was technically closer to Halifax than to Boston, the quirky geography of the Maritimes made travel more difficult.

As a result, even as licit and illicit trade continued to blur the border, state-supported church networks gradually created a real distinction between American citizens in Maine and British subjects in New Brunswick. They also began to change what was appealing about the borderland in the first place. Initially, Americans had been attracted to the borderland because of

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its status as a shared zone. Migrants were able to build communities that were technically on the American side of the line, but were well connected to the British Atlantic. As church networks grew, however, even the most remote Maine communities were increasingly connected to Massachusetts and the rest of New England. The British persisted for years in believing that their economic sway over the borderland meant the boundary was still adjustable. However, they were ignoring the situation on the ground. Thanks to church networks and their partnership with the state, the de facto border had taken root.

In the mid 1780s, just after the close of the revolution, Boston’s Congregationalists began to organize their missionary efforts. These men had long wished for a society of their own that would serve the same purpose as the Anglican Church’s Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. That society, since 1701, had been working to grow the Church of England in the British colonies by distributing trained clergymen to new and needy settlements. Congregationalists believed they should be doing the same; northeastern North America, they felt, was their responsibility. A few ministers in Boston began to lay the groundwork in the decade or so leading up to the war, but ran into resistance from Britain. After independence, they had more freedom to maneuver, and in October 1787, the Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America was incorporated officially by an act of the Massachusetts General Court. Though its name may indicate otherwise, the SPGNA’s primary concern was not sending missionaries among the Indians. It devoted resources to a couple of Indian communities in Massachusetts, but the society was well aware of the long history of failed missions to the north. There, the SPGNA’s immediate goal was to minister to

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7 Wade C. Barclay and J. Tremayne Copplestone, *History of Methodist Missions* (New York: Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, 1949), 165.
the “others”: the white settlers who were moving into Maine. The way the society operated was relatively simple. It contacted settled ministers in Eastern Massachusetts and Southern Maine and asked them to spend a few weeks attending to a needy region. If the minister accepted, he would be paid half the money upfront. Then after the trip, he would have to submit a journal or other record of his circuit – miles traveled, towns visited, sermons preach, babies baptized, etc. – to get the rest of his money.

In January 1791, Governor John Hancock delivered a message to the General Court requesting that it pass a funding measure for the SPGNA. Hancock’s words betray anxiety about the chaotic situation along the frontier. His argument was that the SPGNA should provide the “public protestant teachers of piety, religion and morality” that, according to Massachusetts’s constitution, would provide “good order and the preservation of civil government.” This missionary society was perfectly positioned to fill that constitutional role.

It does great honor to the wisdom and humanity of our government...to assist that society in their laudable endeavors to disseminate the principles of Religion and morality amongst our fellow Citizens who are the objects of their present attention.

These citizens, Governor Hancock noted, were actively engaged in building Massachusetts. While they toiled on the frontier, “every tree they cut down and every acre of wild land they subdue, contributes to the wealth of the State.” Meanwhile “the rising generation in that part of the Commonwealth,” was dangerously destitute of religious instruction. The efforts of the SPGNA, Hancock predicted, would provide these people with the “knowledge, and information, which render the other parts of their Country so respectable.” The General Court agreed, and voted to provide the SPGNA with £150 annually for three years. The funding continued through

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11 Ibid.
the 1790s and into the nineteenth century, with the General Court regularly re-asserting its sympathy with the work of the SPGNA and approving another year or two of payments.\textsuperscript{12}

Until this state intervention the SPNGA had relied on two sources of funding. The first was the Alford fund. In 1789, the SPGNA received a large donation from the estate of John Alford, a professor at Harvard College. The bequest came in the form of bonds, primarily, which produced an annual income. The bequest was given specifically to fund missionaries to Indians, so the SPGNA could not pool it with their other resources. They chose to use the Alford money to support three missions: one on Martha’s Vineyard; one at Mashpee on Cape Cod; and one near Oneida, New York. The second source was the general fund, consisting of private contributions from members of the society, as well as any other individuals or congregations who wished to donate. When it was officially incorporated, the society was given the right to solicit donations in any of the churches in the state. This general fund was the only source the society could draw on for missions to white settler communities. Over the course of the 1790s, funding from the two sources grew steadily. In 1793, the society reported the Alford fund as producing $350, which rose to over $400 in 1798. Meanwhile, the general fund was growing even faster, from $239 in 1793 to $338 five years later.\textsuperscript{13}

Even though they were growing, these sources paled in comparison to what the state decided to provide. The state donation was initially in British pounds, but by the mid-1790s it had been converted to an annual grant of $500. This was a substantial gift: by itself it was sufficient to pay all of the society’s missionaries. The rest of the general fund was now free to be used in whatever way the SPGNA saw fit, and what it decided to do was radically increase its

\textsuperscript{12} For example, see Acts and Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts 1796-1797, 579; Acts and Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts 1800-1801, 541.

\textsuperscript{13} Report, Peter Thatcher, January 1798, MSS 48, Box 8, Folder 9, Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America records (hereafter SPGNA), Phillips Library (hereafter PL), Rowley, Massachusetts.
book distribution. A report of January 1795 laid out the result. Over the previous four years, the state’s grant had covered payments to eight missionaries. In that same period, the society used its general fund to purchase and distribute 6299 books. This included books for children as well as adults: 715 spelling books and over a thousand primers, to go along with hundreds of bibles and testaments. Three years later, a similar report continued the same story. State funds covered the fifty dollars a month needed to pay the missionaries, while the general fund had produced another 2500 books for communities throughout the District of Maine.\textsuperscript{14}

The partnership with the state effectively allowed the SPGNA to serve multiple purposes. With just the general fund to draw on it would have been limited to paying the salaries of itinerant ministers, and only one or two at a time. Now it was free not just to employ more men, but also to use them as a book delivery system. Book distribution became a primary focus of the SPGNA, second only to preaching. Rev. Daniel Little highlighted the society’s priorities in a 1792 letter: “The general object of the mission is vastly extensive and important, as it respects the public and private services of the missionary in preaching, conversation, and the distribution of books.” Ministers traveling for the society began mentioning the need for books in their letters and journals as well. A Rev. Lyon completed a month-long mission to the Passamaquoddy Bay settlements in September of 1793. Visiting families all along the border with New Brunswick, Lyon gave eight sermons and baptized almost one hundred people. The communities, he wrote, were developing well, “the people decent, in a thriving way.” The people had only one thing holding them back: Lyon reported that they had no books.\textsuperscript{15}

The SPGNA rapidly expanded this facet of its mission. Rev. Little made a visit to the settlements of northwestern Maine, where he noted, “Every town and plantation where we

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{15} James Lyon Letters, Box 8, Folder 9; Daniel Little Letters, Box 1, Folder 1, Box 3, Folder 5, SPGNA, PL.
officiated on the Kennebec and Sandy Rivers have had a proportion of books, and several other places remote from said rivers.” Little sometimes supplied Bibles and prayer books to individual families in need, and when he ran low he instructed whole communities to share the books: “The discourses on the Lord’s Day and some others I have directed to be read by every family as circular letters thro’ the town.” A few years later, in the same region, Rev. Levi Frisbie was even more meticulous in accounting for his book distribution. Frisbie drew up a chart detailing all the towns he visited and the number and titles of books he left in each. Frisbie averaged almost three dozen texts per town, with Norridgewock getting thirty-nine, Caratunk twenty-five, and Mt. Vernon forty-three. To give one example, the books he distributed around Strong and Avon, Maine, were: “4 Testaments, 2 Psalters 2 Spelling Books 6 Watts Songs, 4 Doddridge’s Addresses, 5 Belknaps Sermons, 5 Sayler’s Do (ditto), 2 New Years Gifts for Children, 1 Sewall’s Sermons, 1 Doddrige’s Principles of Religion.” Frisbie left a similar mix of books and pamphlets in practically every settlement.16

The level of detail Frisbie included in his report eventually became more common, as the SPGNA began including explicit instructions about what was expected of its missionaries in Maine. By 1805 the society was providing each man a pre-printed list of directives. Notably, the directives specified two areas where the society wanted careful records: baptisms and books. Most of the list consisted of general guidelines. Ministers were expected to preach or at least counsel at every available opportunity, without accepting personal reward. They were asked to avoid towns that already had a resident preacher. They were asked to avoid secular business while in the employ of the SPGNA. Finally, they were required to keep a daily journal, which

16 Daniel Little Letters, Ibid; Levi Frisbie Letters, Box 2, Folder 11, SPGNA, PL.
should include specifically “a list of the baptisms…and an exact account of the manner in which you distribute the books.”¹⁷

The SPGNA quickly covered the district with books and pamphlets. No region was untouched. The Reverends Alfred Johnson and Ephraim Abbott distributed literature in far eastern Maine, while Paul Coffin did the same in far western Maine. Some men found it difficult to physically transport such a large quantity of books, but the society developed a plan to mitigate that problem. In his report of 1798, the secretary of the SPGNA noted that when itinerants could not move the books “in journeys of some hundreds of miles, the society sent them to gentlemen of honour, character and abilities, in different places, requesting them to take the trouble of furnishing their poor neighbors according to their best judgement”¹⁸ In the eastern Penobscot Bay region, for example, Rev. Jonathan Fisher of Blue Hill filled this role. Fisher took several mission trips to the settlements surrounding Blue Hill in the first years of the nineteenth century, and kept careful track of his efforts to fill them with books.¹⁹

The state’s decision to take on such a large portion of the SPGNA’s expenses essentially reinvented the mission of this Congregational missionary society. The funding allowed the society to invest in something that, unlike preaching, had a measurable outcome. This had several complementary effects. First, the visits of itinerant preachers to frontier communities now had more weight. Preaching is transitory and unquantifiable. Sometimes ministers reported big crowds, and sometimes they reported small crowds, but it was impossible to know exact numbers. In addition, no one could know the impact of preaching on any community or individual. People in the borderland encountered traveling preachers of various denominations all the time. Who could tell which messages resonated the most? Books, by contrast, represented

¹⁷ Secretary’s Correspondence, Box 6, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL.
¹⁸ Peter Thatcher Report, January 1798, Box 8, Folder 9, SPGNA, PL.
¹⁹ Jonathan Fisher Letters, Box 2, Folder 9, SPGNA, PL.
a tangible change. When Levi Frisbie left over three dozen books in the small town of Mt. Vernon, for example, he made a measurable impact on that community. In 1812, Ephraim Abbot reported that during his six-month mission to the Passamaquoddy Bay region, he managed to supply nearly every family and school in the communities on the American side of the border. He ran out of books trying to supply Eastport, one of the most populous towns.20

The transition from a focus on preaching to a focus on books also increased the weight SPGNA missionaries gave to the border. In their letters, missionaries occasionally reference sermons delivered in New Brunswick. Though no one was sent directly to communities in British North America, when ministers were near the border some would occasionally cross over to preach. They did not, however, deliver books. Throughout the thirty-year period between the revolution and the War of 1812, there are no references to any SPGNA missionaries delivering books or pamphlets to British territory.21 Jonathan Fisher experienced both sides of the shift from preaching to books. Fisher took a voluntary mission trip in 1801, independent of the SPGNA but intending to augment its work. He was perfectly willing to preach to British subjects. After making his way through eastern Maine, he crossed the St. Croix River and preached in three different towns in New Brunswick. He was particularly proud of the size of his New Brunswick crowds, writing that in one town he preached to “probably more than 200 persons, of four if not five denominations.” When he began working directly for the SPGNA, however, and was entrusted with books, he stopped crossing the border. Fisher wrote of delivering a “horse load” of books throughout a one hundred and eighteen mile circuit of eastern Maine, between

20 Ephraim Abbott Letters, Box 1, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL.
21 I did find a single reference, sometime between 1818 and 1827, to Rev. Elijah Kellogg handing out a few bibles on Campobello Island.
Penobscot Bay and the border. Though he may have remembered his big New Brunswick audiences fondly, he did not bring them any books. 22

As this transition from preaching to books was taking place, the SPGNA was investing heavily in the easternmost communities in Maine. Ephraim Abbott was not the only one supplying books to the American settlements in Passamaquoddy Bay. Daniel Oliver served the region around 1805. He gave a few sermons to British audiences, but he saved the books for the Americans, distributing them throughout Washington County. Stephen Chapin reported delivering well over a hundred pieces of literature in the same settlements in 1808. He made particular mention of the needs of Eastport, seeing it as a promising spot for missionary work. Chapin never crossed the border. 23 The work of all of these missionaries, added together, resulted in a flood of printed material for American borderland communities. Increasingly, American citizens in towns like Calais, Eastport, and Robbinston had access to Bibles, prayer books, and primers for their children. British subjects just on the other side of the border, in St. Stephen and St. Andrews, did not.

The focus on book distribution also motivated the SPGNA to become more organized. When the primary goal had been sermonizing, the society was content at times to send off missionaries with vague instructions, resulting in ill-defined, improvisational missions. Before one of his earliest trips, in 1792, Levi Frisbie made a plea for more guidance, writing “If the Society should think proper to give me any further Instructions respecting the extent and bounds of my circuit…I should receive them with pleasure.” Up to that point he had only been told to visit the “eastern settlements.” 24 Once the distribution of books became a priority, however, these

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23 Daniel Oliver Letters, Box 3, Folder 14, SPNGA, PL; Stephen Chapin Journal, Box 1, Folder 18, SPGNA, PL.
24 Levi Frisbie Letter, Box 2, Folder 11, SPGNA, PL.
sorts of improvisational trips were eliminated. Careful planning and documentation were required. During the 1790s, the records show the society becoming more methodical. As the SPGNA grew and systematized its work, it transitioned to a county-by-county system. Instead of being told to identify needy communities, itinerants were asked to limit their work to one or more counties. Knowing they would need to submit a report of all their activities to receive the second half of their pay, preachers had little incentive to spend time anywhere outside of county borders, regardless of how large an audience might be waiting there.

By 1800 the society had rationalized its network still further, by dividing Maine into seven missionary districts. For the most part, these districts corresponded to county lines. Districts one through five covered all of western Maine to the Penobscot River, using county lines and major rivers as boundaries. District six consisted of almost all of Hancock County, and seven was Washington County.\(^\text{25}\) The rationalization of the network in these years gave the SPGNA missionaries a lot more clarity. A missionary traveling “eastward” may not have known where to stop; a missionary traveling to one particular district did. By the mid to late 1790s, Samuel Eaton was receiving the kind of precise guidelines that Levi Frisbie had been looking for a few years earlier. For several years, the SPGNA asked Eaton to take a two-month mission covering “the vacant towns and Plantations in the Countys of Hancock and Washington.”\(^\text{26}\) Eaton knew how far eastward to travel. And he knew that his trip was circumscribed by Maine county boundaries. A trip over the international line was now explicitly outside his purview.

A further step the SPGNA took to refine its work was to make its itinerants census takers of a sort. This was perhaps the clearest example of the secularizing influence of state money on the Congregational missionary network in Maine. Gradually, ever since the first state grant, the

\(^{25}\) “Maine Missionary Districts,” undated, Box 8, Folder 9, SPGNA, PL.
\(^{26}\) Samuel Eaton Letters, Box 2, Folder 5, SPGNA, PL.
emphasis had shifted from missionaries as preachers, to missionaries as book distributors. Now the missionaries were to serve as data gatherers. The SPGNA was invested in any information that could help it spend money more wisely, in part because every few years, it asked the Massachusetts General Court for a renewal of the state grant. And so itinerant ministers were asked to make certain inquiries in each community they visited, and submit all the information in a chart. This Congregational survey was not exactly a secular census, but neither was it exclusively religious. With this information the society could send missionaries to the towns where they were most needed, narrowing their focus from a whole county or district. It could also more effectively distribute books, especially schoolbooks.

The charts that have survived are nearly identical, though the ministers who created them were operating in different parts of Maine and were unlikely to have collaborated. It seems clear that the SPGNA gave detailed instructions. In 1804, for example, a Reverend Chadwick traveled through Kennebec and Lincoln counties, and produced a chart tracking the towns he visited, their populations, where their residents had emigrated from, what denominations were present, the local “religious disposition,” local ability to support schools, and the number of school houses and houses of public worship. The same year, from Hancock and Washington counties, Rev. Alfred Johnson sent a chart detailing the town names, the population at last census, the number of families, where they had emigrated from, the local denominations, how many people were actually church members, how much money was raised for “public religious instruction,” the number of school and meeting houses, and the name of the local minister, if one existed.

A few questions, such as the one on emigration, seem particularly divorced from the SPGNA’s original, Congregational mission. This is the sort of data that would interest

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27 Benjamin Chadwick Letter, Box 1, Folder 17, SPNGA, PL.
28 Alfred Johnson Letter, Box 3, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL.
government more than church officials. It also implies that a fair amount of detective work was required of the missionary. In order to get a detailed answer it would have been necessary to question several people in each community. Some ministers were more diligent than others. Alfred Johnson seemed to give up on the question for a while. He put “Casco Bay et cet” for eight towns in Washington County, and “Hingham et cet” for five more. Perhaps he got the impression that almost everyone in that particular region was from Southern Maine or Eastern Massachusetts and decided not to bother with details. Occasionally he went the other way, however, writing “Andover and Beverly and Bradford” for the town of Blue Hill and “Nova Scotia and Worcester” for Eddington.²⁹

The limiting of itinerants to particular districts, the ongoing distribution of books, and the increased focus on information gathering had the biggest impact on the most rural communities of Maine’s borderland. Ephraim Abbott’s missions to Passamaquoddy Bay in 1811 and 1812 illustrate how thorough SPGNA ministers became in their circuits. Like earlier missionaries, he preached in the larger towns, spending four Sabbaths in Robbinston, six in Calais, and a full three months in Eastport, providing ample opportunity for families from around the region to go and hear him. Yet Abbott also made several trips up the St. Croix River, to preach in tiny unnamed settlements to a handful of families at a time – he mentions specific trips to families in Townships One, Three, Six, Seven, Twelve, Seventeen, and others. Abbott could easily have devoted some time to the New Brunswick towns on the other side of the river. Indeed, it would have been much easier to do so than to travel upriver to reach extremely isolated families. He could also have visited Campobello Island, or Grand Manan Island, which were close by and had sizable settlements. The status of these islands, moreover, was still being

²⁹ Ibid. Some of these were former Nova Scotians who were veterans of Jonathan Eddy’s attack on Ft. Cumberland during the revolution. They resettled in Maine when the attack was defeated.
negotiated between the U.S. and Britain. Abbott, however, had his understanding of the de facto border, and he seems to have taken these limits very seriously.\textsuperscript{30}

These changes tied even the most remote Maine families into the Congregational network. This is not to say that settlers committed to Congregational preaching exclusively. Most remained opportunists, willing to attend any available sermon. But their connection to the SPGNA was dependable and predictable. Though other ministers might show up – Methodists, Baptists, Quakers, or others – they tended to be independent actors. They were unpredictable, and not connected to a larger system. SPGNA missionaries were more reliable. They made an effort to cover the whole ground, and if one had been there before, another would arrive before too long. Knowing that, a remote family could make requests for books, pamphlets, and permanent settled preachers. The dependability of the SPGNA and the predictability of its itinerants meant that Maine families were not just listening to a message. They could speak out; they could communicate with the rest of Massachusetts. Congregational missionaries were building real connections between Boston and the most distant corner of the District of Maine.

And there was a further method of cultivating those connections and amplifying rural Maine voices: donations. Everywhere missionaries went, they asked for contributions. This was good for both the SPGNA and individual missionaries. An itinerant might not collect enough money to pay for the entire trip, but whatever he did collect he could have immediately, without having to wait months for his journal to be mailed to Boston, and the money to be sent in return. So in all these small towns and villages, the ministers asked for whatever contributions might be available, and noted the amounts received in their mission journals.

Hard currency was extremely difficult to come by in the borderland. These were young settlements far from urban centers. Farms were still in the process of being cleared; for the most

\textsuperscript{30} Ephriam Abbott Journal, Box 1, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL.
part the region only produced lumber and fish. David Owen, of Campobello Island in Passamaquoddy Bay, put it succinctly in a letter of 1788: “all payments are made in barter, there is no specie in the bay.”31 A cash donation, in such circumstances, was meaningful. It gave weight to the network being built by the SPGNA. All over Maine in the decades after independence, settlers in small communities scraped together those meaningful contributions. Ephriam Abbott, working in Washington County, received $10.05 from the people of Dennenysville and the surrounding settlements. Abbott wrote, “they said they had received much benefit from the society, & that they hoped that they would grant them further assistance; that they needed preaching and books.”32 Indeed, the SPGNA remembered them, sending the Rev. Daniel Lovejoy a few years later. He too, collected in the area, getting almost $17.00 in Dennenysville and a whopping $73.00 in Robbinston, where he spent most of his Sundays. A few years later Lovejoy was traveling around the small mid-coast settlements between the Kennebec and Penobscot Rivers, collecting a few dollars here, and a few dollars there.33

It was the late 1790s, just as the SPGNA was beginning to rationalize its missions and organize its information gathering, when Massachusetts decided to extend state funding to Catholics as well. This action came in response to a delegation of Maine Indians who approached the General Court together with Father Matignon of Boston. The new law granted two hundred dollars a year to Father James Romagne, who served in Maine for the next two decades. He returned to France in 1818, two years before Maine became an independent state.34

32 Ephriam Abbott Journal, Box 1, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL.
33 Daniel Lovejoy Letters, Box 3, Folder 6, SPGNA, PL.
34 The story of Father Romagne and his service in Maine has not been addressed much in recent scholarship. It can be pieced together from older histories of the Catholic Church in New England, most notably William Leo Lucey, The Catholic Church in Maine (Francesstown, NH: Marshall Jones Company, 1957); Robert Howard Lord, et al,
The Massachusetts General Court provided several explanations for this generosity toward the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy: their service as “faithful auxiliaries” during the revolution, their frequent requests for priests during treaty negotiations, and the fact that Massachusetts was “now in possession of lands formerly their own.” The state went on, however, to describe the two Indian communities in almost exactly the same terms that had been used to describe white settlers when the SPGNA requested funds almost a decade earlier. In 1791, the white settlers of Maine were described as “pitiable…rude, uncivilized” and too poor to access “knowledge human and divine.” They did not “feel as they ought the force of moral or political obligations.” Similarly, Maine’s Indians in 1798 were “reduced to a state of great poverty,” and could not afford to make the necessary “progress in virtue, morality, religion, and habits of industry and civilization.” Supplying them a state-sponsored priest would result in “great utility…both to them and to the state.”

The General Court was also already committed to using Congregational church networks to spread morality and civilization in Maine. And it was aware that the money it was spending on this project was not reaching Penobscot or Passamaquoddy communities. The SPGNA was clear in its reports about the extent to which it was serving Native Americans. Its Alford fund was being used for two missions in southeastern Massachusetts and one in upstate New York. The society did not bother with Maine Indians because it knew that the earlier Congregational ministers sent there – at least five by the mid-1700s – had failed. Periodically, SPGNA missionaries made renewed inquiries, which were invariably followed by pessimistic reports. Hezekiah May, for example, worked the Penobscot River area for a few years starting around

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35 Resolves, 29 June 1798, Chapter 69a, Massachusetts General Court Records, Massachusetts Archives, Boston, Massachusetts; Petition, 21 January 1791, SPNGA, PL.
1808. He told the society to continue to ignore the Penobscot Indians. They were already more solemn and devout than their white neighbors, and furthermore: “They think that they have a more authentic religion…they think that Protestantism is a mere temporary declension from the Catholic faith and communion, and that in more auspicious times…their heretical neighbors [and] the whole world will become of their religion.”

The Commonwealth was therefore spending hundreds of dollars per year to “civilize” Maine, without reaching Indian communities. Funding a priest would expand state connections to all Maine communities, filling the gap. And the state had another motivating factor: it needed to counter a move by the British. Off and on, for the previous few decades, British authorities had attempted to draw the interest of Maine Indians eastward by placing priests on the Saint John River. They had most recently used this strategy during the war years. Now, a decade later, the British renewed their efforts by poaching the first resident priest assigned to the District of Maine after independence, Father Francois Rousset-Ciquard.

Ciquard arrived in Maine in the early 1790s, part of a brief flood of missionary priests who fled to the United States from revolutionary France. Starting in 1791, around twenty French priests took refuge in the U.S., which roughly doubled the number of available priests in the new republic. John Carroll, the first American bishop, set to work sending these men where they were most needed. Many stayed in the eastern cities, but Carroll sent at least two to the Illinois territory, another to Indiana, and some to Kentucky. A few years earlier, a delegation from the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy communities had traveled to Maryland to ask Carroll for a resident priest for Maine. Carroll had been unable to help at the time, but he remembered the

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36 Hezekiah May Letter, Box 3, Folder 9, SPGNA, PL.
37 These events are outlined in detail in chapter one.
visit as he began to distribute the newly arrived French priests. Father Ciquard became the only priest sent northeast instead of west.\(^{38}\)

It is unclear exactly how Ciquard understood the parameters of his assignment. He had no real connection with the government of Massachusetts; his assignment came from Baltimore, not Boston, so he would have had no reason to consider the future boundaries of a Boston Diocese. He was certainly not collecting pay from Massachusetts. Furthermore, Carroll may not have mentioned the northern border as a limiting factor at all. Regardless of what he was told, it is clear that Father Ciquard chose to basically ignore the border. The Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Maliseet communities were all very closely related, so the priest served all three. And as previously noted, he was not alone. This was an early, chaotic period, when even Congregational ministers had no clear guidelines about the extent of their mission fields. It probably seemed quite natural for Father Ciquard to move back and forth across the border. For the first few years, however, he spent the majority of his time in the District of Maine.\(^{39}\)

In 1793, John Allen, the de facto Indian agent in the region, warned Massachusetts of troublesome developments in the borderland. Allen reported that the British might be “endeavoring to draw the Indians into New Brunswick,” to “secure their interest” in case of any conflict with the United States. Allen’s fears were well placed. When Sir Guy Carleton took up the role of Governor General of British North America in 1785, he was asked to try and “induce” Indians living within the U.S. to “remove within our territories, and to discontinue any intercourse” with the Americans. In New Brunswick, the result was a plan to convince Father Ciquard to relocate permanently to the British side of the line. “Several letters have been sent the


Priest,” wrote John Allen, “promising every attention, & a satisfactory compensation.” A boat was even sent, which anchored off St. Andrews on the borderline waiting to take Ciquard away. Allen claimed he did everything he could to convince the priest to stay, but to no avail. Now he was extremely concerned. If this worked the way the British intended, the Passamaquoddy would become “attached solely to [the British] government.” This would “operate very much against the settlement of the Eastern Country.” Though maintaining good relations with all Maine Indians was vital, the Passamaquoddy were particularly important. Their ancestral lands straddled the boundary line at Passamaquoddy Bay, so in any future border negotiation Massachusetts needed their support. This community could not look to New Brunswick for their religious needs; they had to remain oriented toward Boston. It was urgent that Massachusetts do something to secure the “interest and friendship” of the Passamaquoddy “as soon as possible.” Obviously this meant providing them with another priest – this one paid by the state to serve only on the American side of the border.40

Meanwhile, the Catholic Church in Boston was growing and looking to assume responsibility for northern New England. After an unsettled postwar decade which saw a handful of priests come and go, the Massachusetts church began to stabilize. Another French exile, Francis Matignon, took charge in 1792. Matignon wrote to a former student, John Cheverus, and urged him to come to Boston to help. Cheverus arrived in 1796, and embarked on his first mission trip to Maine the following year. It was quickly apparent that someone would need to be based in Maine full time. Cheverus could not be that person, because Matignon needed his assistance in Boston. He could make an annual trip to Maine, but no more than that. And one

yearly visit would not be enough to prevent the Indian communities from looking across the border to Father Ciquard. Indeed, on that first trip in 1797, Cheverus found that Ciquard was already there, dipping back over the border on a visit with the Penobscot. The only way to keep Indian communities firmly oriented toward Boston was to appoint a full time resident priest who depended on Massachusetts for support. The Catholic Church in Boston and the Massachusetts General Court found that they suddenly had complementary interests. This led to the petition to the General Court, and its rapid approval.\textsuperscript{41}

The grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts had a greater impact than the state likely intended. It allowed the Catholic Church in Boston to expand its network in Maine, keep in better contact with both Indian Catholic and Irish Catholic communities, and serve more of their needs. Essentially, the government of Massachusetts subsidized the creation of a stable, effective Catholic Church in Maine during the twenty years that Father Romagne was on the state payroll. This while it was simultaneously subsidizing the creation of a stable Congregational network in the same place.

It is unclear to what extent the General Court understood that this is what they were doing. Father Romagne had been hired to serve only the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot communities. He was even briefly considered Massachusetts’s Indian agent for those communities. And he was effective in that role. About a year after his arrival, Romagne aided the Passamaquoddy in successfully petitioning the government for a grant of ninety acres at Pleasant Point, near Eastport, Maine. He secured an additional three hundred dollars from the Commonwealth to build a permanent church on the same ninety acres, noting that it would “stabilize the tribe more efficiently.” He put a vaccination program in place by 1804, and claimed to have treated over a hundred and fifty members of both tribes. He alternated between

\textsuperscript{41} Lord, \textit{Archdiocese of Boston}, 478-534.
the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy communities, provided both with regular religious services, and made it unnecessary for them to travel to New Brunswick or invite Father Ciquard to cross to Maine. It seems that the government of Massachusetts did get what it paid for.42

However, after a consultation with Father Cheverus, Father Romagne chose to withdraw from the official position of Indian Agent. The two men decided that Romagne would combine his work with Maine Indians with visits to the Irish Catholic communities of mid-coast Maine, exactly as Cheverus was already doing. Thanks to the state paying him to live in eastern Maine, Romagne was able to collaborate with Cheverus on a complementary schedule that allowed the two of them to cover the entire coast north of Boston throughout the year. Each summer, Cheverus left Boston and headed northeast, visiting Catholics in Portsmouth New Hampshire, Portland Maine, and the mid-coast towns around Newcastle and Damariscotta, before finally reaching the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy. Each winter, in turn, Romagne left the Indian settlements and travelled southwest, visiting the same mid-coast towns, then Portland and Portsmouth, and often continuing on to Boston. These dual trips allowed Catholics throughout the northeast to be connected year round. Romagne was able to distribute letters from Boston all along the coast, reassuring Maine families that they were important parts of the larger network. He was able to stop in multiple places, temporarily providing the services of a resident priest. At one point he quite explicitly integrated the Catholic network in Maine. Romagne spent the winter of 1805 with Irish Catholics in Newcastle, and apparently a substantial portion of the Penobscot community joined him, wintering there as well. The very first Catholic buried in Newcastle’s

42 Lucey, Catholic Church in Maine, 27; Lord, Archdiocese of Boston, 590-592.
newly consecrated Catholic cemetery was a Penobscot woman who passed away during that winter.\textsuperscript{43}

The connections fostered by the complementary travels of Cheverus and Romagne were vital in growing Maine’s Catholic Church. Cheverus took pains to nurture small Catholic communities, reassured them that they would receive regular priestly visits, and instructed them in how to conduct private services at home. From the start of his tenure in Boston, he purchased texts and spread them around the northeast. In 1797 he left “several prayer books” in Bristol, Newcastle, and other communities of mid-coast Maine and southern New Hampshire.\textsuperscript{44} Cheverus provided extremely detailed instructions about the use of these prayer books. In letters he laid out particular chapters and pages to read on Sundays and other holy days, noting which were appropriate for morning and which for night. He reminded families that they should be ready for confession and the sacrament, because it would not be too long before he, Romagne, or another priest would visit. And he encouraged them to hold tightly to the church, to be tolerant but always faithful: “never forget that you belong to the Roman-Catholic Church…and that it is unlawful for you to attend the public worship of any other persuasion.”\textsuperscript{45}

By 1812, the combined efforts of Fathers Cheverus and Romagne over fourteen years created quite an extensive network in the northeast. The linked communities included Portsmouth, Portland, Newcastle, Wiscasset, Union, Bristol, Jefferson, Waldoboro, Edgecomb, Pittstown, Hallowell, Bangor, Gardiner, Whitefield, and of course the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy villages. And the whole system was facilitated by the state support that enabled

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\textsuperscript{43} Lord, \textit{Archdiocese of Boston}, 592, 614; Cheverus Letters, Record Group I.03.01, Box 1, Folders 3, 4, 8, 11, Cheverus Papers, Archdiocese of Boston Archives (hereafter ADB), Braintree, Massachusetts.
\textsuperscript{45} Cheverus Letters, Box 1, Folder 11, 12. Cheverus Papers, ADB.
\end{footnotesize}
a priest to be based in Maine. The system would, in fact, decline once state support was withheld. When Maine separated from Massachusetts, the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy communities approached the new state government and asked it to continue the funding that Massachusetts had provided for two decades. Maine officials said no. For years afterward, the two Indian communities were left with occasional, temporary visits, but no resident priest. The network became unstable. It was the stability of Father Romagne, provided by two decades of annual state grants, that enabled Fathers Cheverus and Matignon to create a dependable network in which both white and Indian Catholics could depend on frequent contact and services from Boston. Neither group would need to look over the border to British North America for help.

As Cheverus and Romagne began to link together Maine’s Catholic communities, the Congregational network continued to develop. During the first decade of the nineteenth century the SPGNA moved beyond simple book distribution, and began to organize schools. This move was partly inspired by a need to maintain the annual donation from the Commonwealth. At this point, there must have been some grumbling in Boston over the church-state partnership. What if Maine were to secede from Massachusetts? This was not a particularly far-fetched idea. Proponents of an independent Maine held several secession conventions in the late 1780s, and managed to arrange a test vote in the early 1790s. These efforts failed, but the issue had not been put to rest entirely. Why should Massachusetts continue to fund missionaries for a district that might break away? The SPGNA stated its case in an 1804 petition. Though separation was certainly possible at some point in the future, the society reminded the General Court that both states would always be part of the same nation.

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The real danger lay not in a hypothetical, future state border, but in the real national one. Just as the Commonwealth feared losing Indian communities to the British, they feared losing white settlers too. Throughout the 1790s, as described in chapter two, the New England states steadily lost families—to Upper and Lower Canada, and also to parts of upstate New York that were connected to the Canadas economically. Thus far there had been less movement from Maine into New Brunswick or Nova Scotia, but it was happening occasionally. The government of Massachusetts needed to always be aware that its settlers were “situated near the people of a foreign province, the sovereign of which, regards the conditions of his subjects in the wilderness with a tender eye.” Massachusetts needed to ensure that Maine settlements were competitive, or people would understandably look elsewhere. The way to do this was through schools:

The establishment of schools in those plantations is an object of great consequence. Could this be done, it would naturally induce people of sober life and conversation to remove into that part of the country, in preference to going into New York, the Canadas and other places without the Commonwealth.47

The SPGNA missionaries were already serving the Commonwealth as public teachers of piety and morality. Now they would serve as schoolmasters too.

Appeals for more and better schools were a familiar refrain in the early republic, especially in the northeast. The calls for a more educated citizenry closely paralleled the kinds of sentiments found in the Massachusetts Constitution and in John Hancock’s call for state-supported missionaries. The state constitution had called for Protestant ministers to promote “good order and the preservation of civil government.”48 Hancock believed that SPGNA missionaries would bring not just religion, but morality as well, as they spread the “knowledge,

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47 Petition, 30 January 1804, Box 6, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL.
and information” that the District of Maine was lacking. Many other Americans felt the same way. At roughly the same time the SPGNA was incorporating in Massachusetts, Noah Webster of Connecticut published an essay “On the Education of the Youth of America,” in which he declared that in a republic, even the “yeomanry” required “an acquaintance with ethics and with the general principles of law, commerce, money and government.” This would soften the “rough manners of the wilderness” and promote the “principles of virtue and good behavior.”

Education was the best way to bring order to the brave new world of a free republic, and to create a nation of “virtuous, well-behaved citizens.”

Not all of the states took on the issue of schools, and only a few invested substantial funds in the problem. These tended to be the states that were flush with cash from land sales. The borderland was booming, which gave states like New York and Connecticut the ability to be innovative with their schools. In the mid-1790s, New York State decided to put in place an experimental program with the proceeds from land sales. It allotted fifty thousand dollars per year for five years for a grant program: towns that required schools could receive a generous state grant if they pledged matching funds. This was successful in the short run, and led to a striking expansion in schools and enrollment. But it was expensive, and the New York legislature was unwilling to call for local property tax money for schools. So the program was allowed to lapse.

Connecticut put together a similar program that ended up being much more successful. That state retained the right to a giant tract of land called the Western Reserve, which eventually

49 Acts and Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts 1791-1792, 563
52 Kaestle, Pillars of the Republic, 10-11.
became the northern part of Ohio. In 1795, Connecticut sold this tract for 1.2 million dollars, with which it created a school fund. Like New York, Connecticut set up a partial grant system, though it apparently did not require a matching grant to be pledged. Many towns used the annual state grant to provide a few months of free school, and then offered a supplementary program that charged a small tuition. By the early years of the nineteenth century, the 1.2 million dollars was producing over 50,000 dollars a year of interest for Connecticut’s school fund, and the state had perhaps the best school system in the country.  

Massachusetts had the oldest school laws in North America, but the Commonwealth was a bit slower than its neighbors in providing state funding. The General Court did pass a law in 1789 with certain educational requirements. Towns with fifty or more families were required to provide at least six months of elementary school, and towns with two hundred or more families had to add a grammar school with instruction in classical languages. This law, however well intentioned, did not amount to much. Most towns in Massachusetts were already providing some schooling, and there was no real enforcement of the grammar school requirement, and no explicit state funding as in New York and Connecticut.  

Though the General Court may not have been willing to provide explicit state funding or property taxes, it did have a way of supporting schools on the Maine frontier. It had the partnership with the SPGNA. Those frontier counties in the District of Maine were not only the most needy, as new settlements, they were also the most concerning, because of the proximity of British North America. So the state chose to continue the annual grant to the SPGNA, with the understanding that the society would be active in promoting schools.  

53 Ibid.  
54 Ibid.
In a brief memo, the society lauded the “patronage and liberality of the Legislature,” which would allow the society “the means of extending their usefulness…by aiding in the establishment and support of schools.” Their first attempts were a bit haphazard. Just as mission trips had evolved to become more meticulous and circumscribed, the SPGNA’s work in schools became more methodical over time. First the society asked its ministers, who were already collecting town data, to add inquiries about where schools were most needed, and which communities might be able to cover at least part of the cost. Then they started handing out teaching assignments. These went to men and women alike. Eunice Cushman received a contract for Davistown, in mid-coast Maine. Thomas Peabody was sent to Gilead. Lucy Gould took on duties in Caratunk, and Hannah Gilpatrick in Cornish.

The new focus on Maine schools proved to be a wise strategy for the SPGNA. Not only did it help ensure that state money kept flowing, it also stimulated more private donations. The SPGNA did not have a lot to brag about when it came to building exclusively Congregational church communities. Methodists and Baptists were not losing ground in Maine. But even as missionaries bemoaned their lack of success in conversions, they continued to distribute printed material to grateful communities. Paul Coffin, in 1797, wrote that poor preaching was luring the people of western Maine into “a religion of the imagination and into strange and very hurtful opinions.” He was only given the opportunity to perform two baptisms on his trip, both infants. But the people he spoke to welcomed his books. In 1808, according to Stephen Chapin “the Baptists have prevailed. Their success has inspired them with fresh zeal and confidence and

55 Memo, 1804, Box 8, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL.
56 Receipts, Box 8, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL.
57 Paul Coffin Letters, Box 1, Folder 22, SPGNA, PL.
rendered them more cool toward your missionaries.” Maine families were happy, however, to accept the over a hundred pamphlets and bound volumes Chapin distributed.  

Maine settlers could reject Congregational baptism or choose to ignore preaching. No one, however, could afford to turn down books or schools. Parents wanted education for their children, and this, according to Chapin, was how Congregationalists could maintain their influence:

I think that it would be wise, if some missionaries were employed in teaching schools in the winter. We have little reason to expect a reform among those who have arrived to the meridian of life. Their opinions, habits, + prejudices are too deeply rooted to be eradicated. It is among the rising generation that we must look for a reformation.  

In years to come, the society would hear similar reports from missionary after missionary. Even as they lost ground in terms of baptisms, they gained contributions for schools. Residents of Maine towns who would never have otherwise contributed to a Congregationalist gave money to the SPGNA to preserve their schools. And private donations in Massachusetts increased as well, as the society was able to tout its success educating the rising generation of Americans in the borderland. As the years went on, other missionary societies were founded in Massachusetts and joined the SPGNA mission in Maine, greatly increasing the money, manpower, and printed material circulating in the district. This development, which will be detailed in chapter four, led to the creation of still more schools in the smallest central and eastern Maine settlements, and the training of a small army of teachers to supply them. Increasingly, Maine’s borderland communities had not only a steady supply of books, but also an organized network of schools. The distinction between Maine and New Brunswick communities sharpened, as the American side of the borderland became more closely tied to this Boston-based Congregational network.

58. Stephen Chapin Letters, Box 1, Folder 18, SPGNA, PL.
59. Ibid.
The difference between the connections created in Maine by Congregationalists and Catholics, and those created in New Brunswick by Methodists and Anglicans, was stark. The Americans kept men and printed material flowing into the U.S. side of the borderland with the help of state funding. Their British rivals did not do the same. Throughout the decades discussed above, as the SPGNA sent minister after minister to eastern Maine, only two state sanctioned preachers served the nearby British settlements. Duncan McColl, a Methodist, resided in St. Stephen from the mid-1780s. Reverend Andrews, an Anglican, served in St. Andrews from roughly the same time. These men provided stable preaching, but they rarely traveled away from Passamaquoddy Bay, and visits from other British preachers were practically unheard of. Essentially, the fact that these men were ensconced in their communities meant that for Anglican and Methodist authorities, Charlotte County, New Brunswick was taken care of. It was not a cause for concern.

As a result, however, unlike their neighbors on the American side of the border, British subjects in Charlotte County remained disconnected from larger political or religious networks. This was ironic, since the population was higher and needs greater on the British side of the border. Because of loyalist refugees and other migrants looking to take advantage of Britain’s liberal land grants, almost two thousand settlers arrived on the eastern side of Passamaquoddy Bay over a two-year period in the 1780s. It would take years for the population of the Maine settlements on the western side to catch up. But while Congregationalists brought those settlements into their network almost immediately, no one did the same for New Brunswick. Itinerants did not arrive to deliver books and solicit donations. Families never had the

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opportunity to invest in the same sort of connection with Saint John or Halifax. They existed essentially on an island.

For years, Rev. Andrews provided the only connection Charlotte County families had with the Anglican Church. For most of each year he was in St. Andrews, but each autumn he would travel to settlements around the bay, preaching and performing baptisms. Many families needed his services. Rev. Andrews’s records indicate that he paid annual or biennial visits to at least five locations on the New Brunswick side of the bay: St. Georges, St. Stephens, St. Davids, Maguagadavic, and Digdeguash. He also visited Deer and Campobello Islands, which were still disputed territory, though under nominal British control. By September of most years there were quite a few new arrivals waiting for baptism. In 1787 he baptized at least twenty-four children; in 1792 he baptized twenty-five. Considering the number of baptisms he performed, there must have been sizable crowds in the settlements around the bay for his preaching. Yet at no point in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries did the Rev. Andrews receive help from other Anglicans.

The reason for this is clear in the papers of the Anglican Bishop of Nova Scotia, Charles Inglis. There was simply no manpower. Inglis found it difficult to secure ministers for even his most important positions, and when he could find available preachers, they tended to be Americans. This was an issue from the beginning of his tenure. Inglis arrived in Halifax in 1787, to find that the very first minister who called on him was there to announce his departure for New Hampshire. This was followed by the death of the resident minister in Saint John, the largest settlement in New Brunswick. Inglis chose the Rev. Mather Byles, a loyalist from Boston, for the job. The Anglican hierarchy apparently pushed back against the appointment, however,
leading Inglis to warn them that the congregation in Saint John was being led into division and confusion by unscrupulous “Methodist teachers who have no check to their career.”

The authorities must have relented, because Byles soon assumed the position. Inglis was reminded, however, to “be wary of [holding out] too much encouragement and invitation to American-bred divines.” Inglis’s frustration was obvious in his letters back to England. The only available ministers were “American-bred divines.” They kept contacting Inglis and asking for work. The Reverends Bowden and Wright, of Connecticut and New York, respectively, volunteered their services while Inglis was trying to fill the Saint John position. Meanwhile a Rev. Cockran from New York simply arrived on Inglis’s doorstep, volunteering to be sent anywhere he was needed. And since most of the settlers in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were from the “revolted colonies,” they often requested ministers from their previous homes. Parishioners in Saint John, in fact, had requested a Reverend Moore, from Hampsted, New York, and only agreed to the Rev. Byles when Moore declined.

Even as Inglis was trying to fill vacant positions, some of his established ministers were also giving him trouble. Perhaps as a way of convincing his superiors to agree to install Byles, Inglis argued that effective ministers were in short supply. At that moment, in the winter of 1788, there were eleven men serving the province. “Of these,” Inglis wrote, only “four are diligent, useful clergymen,” while “three are indifferent, neither doing much good or harm, and as for the remaining four, it would be happy for the Church if they were not in her orders.” Weak, ineffective clergymen were a further problem because they would be unable to counter the efforts of other sects – not only the Methodists, but an even more troublesome group. “A set of

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61 Charles Inglis to Archbishop, 18 December 1788, MG1, Vol. 479, Charles Inglis Papers, Nova Scotia Archives (hereafter NSA), Halifax, Nova Scotia.
62 Inglis to Archbishop, June 28, 1788; Inglis to Mr. Cumberland, 5 May 1790, Inglis Papers, NSA.
63 Inglis to Archbishop, 18 December 1788, Inglis Papers, NSA.
enthusiastic Anabaptists, called here…New Lights have got footing” in the town of Granville, Nova Scotia, Inglis wrote. Since Granville only saw an Anglican missionary a few Sundays a year, for the rest of the time they “can hear no other than those fanatics.”

Inglis was pressured from all sides. American-bred ministers requesting positions, New Lights with no ordination infiltrating his congregations, and a mere trickle of approved, British educated ministers arriving in his provinces. And it was only going to get worse. John Wesley, Inglis noted, was appointing Methodist Bishops, with powers of ordination, in the American states. “A numerous clergy will be the certain consequence,” Inglis wrote, and “shoals of these clergymen and ministers will pour into the British colonies.” Meanwhile, loyal British subjects in Nova Scotia who wished to become ministers would be forced to go to school in the states themselves, where they would “imbibe principles that are unfriendly to the British constitution.” The only solution was to set up a college. Congregationalists could train ministers at colleges in New England. Inglis needed to be able to train his own Anglican ministers in Nova Scotia.

The creation of King’s College, though eventually successful, was an arduous process. Inglis pressed for the school from the beginning of his tenure, mentioning it in letter after letter. Before it was even in operation, he began trying to collect students, noting that he “prevented three young men from going to college in one of the revolted colonies” in 1788. But it would take over a decade, until 1802, for the school to be chartered as a university. Throughout the 1790s, it floundered. Inglis’s school developed a reputation as unreliable, and perhaps doomed. In a 1798 letter, the Anglican Bishop of Quebec wrote that he heard the Nova Scotia college had

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64 Inglis to Dr. Morice, 16 October 16 1789, Inglis Papers, NSA.
65 Inglis Letter, 3 April 1786, Microfilm Reel #10345, NSA.
66 Inglis to Archbishop, 28 June 1788, Inglis papers, NSA.
only three students and was, effectively, a failure. Again, loyal subjects in British North America
were faced with the necessity of sending their young men to the Americans – who, according to
the bishop, still had “much of the old leaven among them.”68

As the 1790s gave way to the 1800s, across the Gulf of Maine the SPGNA was using its
annual state grant and increasing donations to hire more ministers, purchase more books, and
expand its Maine network. Meanwhile, Bishop Inglis never had the money or manpower to build
anything comparable in British North America. In fact, the only person capable of moving
around the district, connecting communities to an Anglican network and distributing books, was
Inglis himself. This was a daunting task. The District of Maine may have been large, but the
Inglis’s diocese was gargantuan. New Brunswick alone is as large as Maine, and Inglis was also
in charge of Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island (then St. John’s Island), and Newfoundland. For
the first five years of his tenure Inglis was even responsible for Quebec, until a separate bishop
of Canada was appointed in 1793.

Even considering the massive size of his diocese, Inglis could likely have done more to
connect it. Over the years he displayed a distinct reluctance to travel. He never bothered with a
visit to Newfoundland, and only visited Cape Breton Island once. Prince Edward Island received
one visit as well: in 1789 as Inglis embarked on his only visit to Quebec. Inglis visited New
Brunswick, but there is no evidence that he ever included the Passamaquoddy Bay settlements in
his travels. There were even some Nova Scotia communities, like Yarmouth at the far
southwestern tip of the peninsula, which he ignored.69 Furthermore, a visit from Inglis brought
no guarantee of books, or even of preaching. During his one visit to Prince Edward Island,

68 Bishop of Quebec to Peter Russell, 12 June 1798, in The Correspondence of the Honourable Peter Russell, With
Allied Documents Relating to His Administration of the Government of Upper Canada During the Official Term of
69 Judith Fingard, “Charles Inglis,” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, accessed May 21, 2019,
settlers in Charlottetown asked him to preach in the “coffee and ball room,” because they had yet to build a church. This, they said, was the room they had been using for services. Inglis flatly refused, “that I might in the most pointed manner shew my disapprobation of the contempt thrown on Divine Worship by having it celebrated in so very improper a place.”

In the first years of the nineteenth century Congregationalists continued to funnel resources into Washington County, Maine, while Anglicans continued to ignore Charlotte County, New Brunswick. As a result, British subjects began to look over the border for help. In the mid-1810s, Rev. Daniel Lovejoy performed annual missions to the American settlements on Passamaquoddy Bay. His home base was Robbinstown, Maine, directly across the St. Croix River from St. Andrews. According to Lovejoy’s letters, in 1817, several people from St. Andrews attended his services in Robbinstown and asked him to come preach in their town on a regular basis. Feeling uncertain, Lovejoy met with the Rev. Andrews, who was then over eighty years old and could only preach once a month. Andrews “readily and cheerfully consented” to Lovejoy’s preaching, and so the American crossed over to preach “near every Sabbath” while he was simultaneously serving Robbinstown. Lovejoy was clearly conflicted, since he knew the SPGNA had not intended for him to preach in British territory. He did not bring any books to the New Brunswick communities. But St. Andrews was a large town, and Lovejoy got big crowds, “more hearers in this place than any other.” The people also took up a collection and contributed more than twenty dollars to the SPGNA, hoping they could continue this cross-border partnership.

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70 Inglis Journal, 18 May 1789, MG1 Vol 480, Inglis Papers, NSA.
71 Daniel Lovejoy Letters, Box 3, Folder 6, SPGNA, PL.
Still detached, after over thirty years, from their official state church and its networks, these British subjects responded to the only organized effort to reach Passamaquoddy Bay, even though it was American. Unfortunately for the parishioners of St. Andrews, their attempt to link themselves to Maine’s Congregational network did not work. The de facto border held. There is no evidence that Lovejoy was chastised for his transnational sermons, but there is also no evidence that the SPGNA did anything to foster this nascent connection to New Brunswick. Though donations to the SPGNA from communities in Maine kept the missionaries coming, the donation from St. Andrews did not have the same effect.

The experience of Methodists in New Brunswick mirrored that of Anglicans. The church had one minister in Charlotte County, Duncan McColl. The man in charge, William Black, was in Halifax. And like his Anglican counterpart in St. Andrews, McColl was left to fend for himself. In 1804, he had been ministering to the town of St. Stephen for about two decades. In all that time, he wrote, he had received three visits from his “brethren,” and at least one of these was a visit from the American side of the border. In 1795 Jessie Lee, a Methodist serving in Maine, traveled to the Passamaquoddy Bay settlements. Then Lee and McColl together traveled westward, all the way to the annual New England Methodist conference in New London, Connecticut.\footnote{Patricia Thompson, \textit{Roots and Wings: 200 Years of Methodism in Maine, 1793-1993} (Winthrop, ME: Maine Annual Conference, 1993), 7.} There seems to have been no opportunity offered McColl to make a similar trip eastward to Halifax, and as time went on even the sixty miles to Saint John became too difficult. William Black, in the early 1800s, noted that McColl had been “nearly stationary for a number of years back.” He occasionally encouraged McColl to trade pulpits with the minister in Saint John,
but it is unclear whether the two men managed to accomplish this. In an 1815 letter, McColl expressed his happiness at being able to visit Saint John for the first time in years.  

William Black could do little to help Duncan McColl because he had the same problems as Charles Inglis. Methodists in the Maritimes were chronically short of manpower, and even once positions were filled there was no guarantee they would stay that way. In the early 1800s, the committee in London repeatedly asked Black to make a trip to Bermuda, to assist in the work there. After he dodged the requests for years, the committee switched gears, asking that Black send the Rev. Marsden, from Saint John, New Brunswick. This was unacceptable, Black wrote. Saint John had over a hundred members in its Methodist society. They had a half-dozen classes and no competition except for the Anglicans. It would be terrible for that community to lose its preacher before a replacement could be secured. Meanwhile, he had a crisis in Prince Edward Island to deal with. The minister there, a Mr. Bulpitt, cut off all communication with his fellow Methodists, to the point that Black was forced to send one of his Nova Scotia ministers to investigate. He learned that Bulpitt had caused a schism in the island’s church community because of his heavy drinking. Black would have liked to get rid of his rogue minister to heal the schism, but Bulpitt and his wife refused to leave. Hannah Bulpitt had started a successful school

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73 William Black letter, undated; McColl to Joseph Benson, 7 June 1815, MC990, Microfilm Reel #9720, Wesleyan Methodist Church Foreign Missions Fonds, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (hereafter PANB), Fredericton, NB. McColl’s inability to travel and need for help is also in George Rawlyk, *Wrapped up in God: A Study of Several Canadian Revivals and Revivalists* (Burlington, ON: Welch Publishing, 1988), 65, 74.

The Methodist attitude toward the Maine/New Brunswick border was quite different from the attitude toward the New York/Canada border. Jessie Lee’s visit to Duncan McCall appears to be one of the only times a Methodist missionary crossed from Maine to New Brunswick. Meanwhile, during the 1790s and 1810s Methodists regularly crossed from New York to Upper and Lower Canada – as many as seventy-six of them, according to one source. Considering the needs of the border settlements in New Brunswick, and the inability of the Methodist hierarchy in the Maritimes to meet those needs (as detailed in this chapter), it is surprising that this sort of border crossing was limited to the west. The fact that it did not occur in the east, however, meant that Methodist networks ended up making some contribution to the border formation that is the subject of this study. For the NY missionaries, see Robert Handy, *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 134.
in Charlottetown, which provided the couple with income independent from the Methodist church.

Black, then, had very little flexibility to manage his ministerial positions, and not much support from London. As a result, in New Brunswick, the status quo remained unchanged for decades. In 1812, William Bennett took over responsibility for the district from William Black. Over the following years, Bennett traveled all over his new jurisdiction, and in 1817 Charlotte County finally got a visit. In St. Stephen, Duncan McColl had also been serving for three decades, and he was still the only Methodist available for the entire British side of the bay. Bennett wrote to London that the community of St. David was large and still growing, and needed a missionary of its own. McColl could not effectively serve multiple communities any longer, and before long he would be gone and St. Stephen would be vacant too. In fact, McColl and Bennett spent some of the visit discussing the former’s plans to bequeath his property to the church upon his death. The lack of a strong Anglican or Methodist network meant that resources, most notably books, were not delivered to New Brunswick communities in the same way they were delivered to Maine communities. It is not as if the British did not try at all. Both sides made efforts to distribute printed material. What is certain is that Congregationalists in Maine, and to a lesser extent Catholics, were far more organized and thorough in putting book distribution plans into action. As noted above, the SPGNA devoted hundreds of dollars annually to purchasing printed material. It divided Maine into districts and made sure someone in each district was assigned to organize the distribution. It demanded each missionary keep careful track of the numbers and

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75 Bennett letter, 3 November 1817, MC990, Microfilm Reel #9720, Wesleyan Methodist Church Foreign Missions Fonds, PANB.
titles of books distributed. Nothing similar happened in the British Provinces. Bishop Inglis did distribute some printed material. In a letter sent the summer of 1788, soon after his arrival, he mentioned that he had supplied tracts to several communities around Halifax, in addition to sending all he could spare to St. John (Prince Edward) Island. At that point, however, all the books Inglis brought from England had been distributed.\textsuperscript{76} In his correspondence over the following years, Inglis mentions the perpetual need for books and his willingness to help secure them, without detailing a specific plan for doing so.

As for the Methodists, Duncan McColl at least seems to have been in permanent need of books. He brought up the issue frequently in his letters. In 1804, he noted that the “want of books is much against us.” A year later he apologized for his lack of funds and inability to commission books, but hoped “well wishers in the cause of Christ” might send some. A decade later, he was still making requests. His church, McColl wrote, was thriving. He claims to have added a hundred people over the course of the year. But they were “in great need of books.” Even “the smallest number will be thankfully accepted” and would “attach [the people] more firmly to the cause.”\textsuperscript{77} Two years later, in 1817, McColl continued to make the same request.

Neither the Anglicans nor the Methodists ever put in place a network that could ensure that books were distributed in an orderly fashion in the British side of the borderland. This divergence, between “horse loads” of books circulating in eastern Maine, and a perpetual want of books in New Brunswick, began to create a real difference between the two sides of the de facto border. Politically and economically, the boundary was still blurry. American citizens and British subjects still had much in common. Families still migrated easily over the border, and politicians from both sides avoided conflict in the interest of developing the entire borderland region. But

\textsuperscript{76} Inglis to Archbishop, 28 June 1788, Inglis Papers, NSA.
\textsuperscript{77} McColl to Bennett, 6 August 1804, July 1805, McColl to Joseph Benson, 7 June 1815, Wesleyan Methodist Church Foreign Missions fonds, PANB.
the Congregational and Catholic networks, both based in Boston, both subsidized by the state, were gradually creating an area in which the border mattered. And with the addition of new missionary societies, new fundraising techniques, and greater participation from women, this phenomenon would only grow.
Chapter IV:

“Ladies Cent Societies” and the Expansion of Maine’s Congregational Network

For a little over a decade after its incorporation in 1787, the Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America (SPGNA) had the District of Maine to itself. There were independent Baptist and Methodist preachers to compete with, but no other organized Congregational societies to help. Then suddenly, new missionary societies began to form at a rapid pace. At least six joined the effort in New England, and three of them – the Massachusetts, Evangelical, and Maine Missionary Societies – chose to focus on the settlers of Maine. These groups aimed to cooperate with the SPGNA rather than compete with it, so they set to work building on that society’s existing network.

These new societies did not get started with the help of state funding, as had the SPGNA. Instead, their initial growth came thanks to an innovation pioneered by the women of Boston: the Cent Institution, popularly known as the “ladies cent society.” Around 1800, just as the Massachusetts Missionary Society (MMS) was beginning to get organized, women around Boston began donating a penny per week for missionary work and pooling their individual gifts into large contributions. Cent society donations quickly made up a substantial percentage of the MMS treasury. The idea then spread, and as cent societies multiplied, Congregational leaders found they had a large pool of potential funds. Within just a few years, there was a blueprint for success. When the Maine Missionary Society (MEMS) formed, its first order of business was to call on women. At the inaugural meeting in 1808, members voted to address a letter “to the Ladies…soliciting contributions (as cent societies).” By 1810, women over southern and western Maine had contributed over two hundred dollars to the MEMS. By 1811, they made up well over
half the total donation pool. From about a hundred dollars at its founding, the MEMS treasury grew tenfold in just three years, thanks largely to ladies cent societies.\textsuperscript{1}

Almost as soon as they were founded, the MEMS and other new missionary societies were able to join with the SPGNA and help expand the Congregational network that was building a meaningful border in Maine. This was a crucial development. The SPGNA would not have made much of a difference alone. The District of Maine was too large, and supplying missionaries and books to the furthest eastern settlements meant that large swaths of the district were not well served. Once new missionary societies were born they could collaborate, organizing their mission fields to make sure that together they covered the whole region. This accelerated the re-orientation of the borderland, as eastern Maine communities that had been mostly connected to New Brunswick became increasingly better connected to Massachusetts. It was the funding provided by ladies cent societies, and the stimulus it gave to the domestic missionary movement in New England, that made all this possible.

None of this would have happened without the changes in the Congregational mission in Maine that are described in the previous chapter. The process began with the 1790 grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to the SPGNA. After the infusion of state funds, the work of the SPGNA in Maine began to change. The society chose to redirect its fundraising efforts away from preaching, now covered by the state grant, and toward the distribution of books and the founding of schools. This partial secularization of the Congregational network opened up opportunities for the women of Maine that had not existed before. Women had always interacted

\textsuperscript{1} Trustees Reports, in \textit{Reports Maine Missionary Society 1808-1829}, M266 M285, Maine Historical Society (hereafter MEHS), Portland, Maine. Even these totals understate the total donations from women. There were donations from individual women, anonymous donations that could have been from women, and donations listed as coming from a particular parish, which likely included contributions from women.
with SPGNA missionaries – in fact, since they made up the majority of churchgoers, women interacted with missionaries more often than men did. But women could not help build the network, because they could not serve as preachers. They could, however, serve as teachers. When the SPGNA began handing out teaching contracts, they went to men and women alike. As these teachers took positions along the edges of settlement in central and eastern Maine, the Congregational network became more and more extensive.

This reconceived, partly secularized mission saw immediate success. Many Maine settlers who were suspicious of an overtly Congregational network were more accepting of one focused on books and schools. But the SPGNA alone could not keep up with demand. The population of the District of Maine was growing very quickly. In 1790 the district had about one hundred thousand residents. By 1810 that had more than doubled, and by 1820 it had tripled.² When it separated from Massachusetts in 1820, Maine became the largest New England state by area, and the second largest by population.³ As early as 1800 the SPGNA, even with a state grant, needed assistance. And so the new Congregational societies began to form. Because they wanted to cooperate rather than compete with the SPGNA, they copied its approach, focusing on distributing books and opening schools. By the War of 1812 the network was thriving, reaching into the furthest, most sparsely settled areas of eastern and central Maine.

Meanwhile, the multiplication of missionary societies in the northeast went hand-in-hand with the growth in women’s fundraising. Each fledgling Congregational society was faced with the same problem. Massachusetts was not going to extend a state grant to every new society. Not even the SPGNA grant was permanently guaranteed. The new societies had to find a way to

³ Connecticut reclaimed the number two spot in population by 1890. Today Maine remains in third place behind Massachusetts and Connecticut, narrowly edging out New Hampshire.
complement the work of the SPGNA without its state funding. The invention of the cent society provided the answer. Though typically women were not able to become official, dues-paying members, cent societies created a sort of subsidiary membership—a middle ground between full-fledged membership and donor anonymity. Because cent societies pooled individual donations into large grants, they were prominently featured in the published papers of the missionary organizations. Women’s groups could see how much they were contributing relative to other women in neighboring towns, and relative to the dues-paying men. Women also began to assemble large enough donations to set conditions on their use. As this system grew, it created a blueprint for still more missionary societies. Ambitious ministers knew that they could create a donor base almost immediately by making an appeal to women. The organizations fed off each other: more organized giving led to new missionary societies, while new missionary societies led to more organized giving. By 1810 the Congregational network in Maine was thriving, thanks largely to ladies cent societies.

The shift from a focus on preaching to a focus on teaching, the opportunities that shift opened for women, and the symbiotic relationship between ladies cent societies and new missionary groups led to women becoming key players in the Congregational network in Maine. Women paid for a large portion of the printed material flooding into the district. Women also provided much of the funding for the training of schoolteachers, themselves mostly women, who built a network of schools in the remote communities of Maine. By contrast, just over the border in New Brunswick, British church networks remained exclusively masculine. It took years for Anglicans and Methodists to take advantage of women’s fundraising or enlist women as teachers. The result was a more haphazard state-building process, and a resulting divergence in available resources. No similar networks of book distribution or schools materialized. The lack
of teaching opportunities for women in New Brunswick effectively sealed the border to newly trained female teachers, bottling them up in Maine and accelerating the resource divergence. A surplus of teachers in far eastern Maine connected the borderland to Massachusetts even more strongly. Families in tiny settlements in Eastern Maine received not just Bibles and pamphlets, but actual schools, while families just a few miles away in New Brunswick did not. The integration of women into the Congregational network and Massachusetts’s state-building mission, therefore, was critically important – not just to the growth of the missionary movement in America, but also to the creation of a meaningful border in the northeast.

One of the first groups that arose to complement the work of the SPGNA was the Massachusetts Missionary Society (MMS). This society was similarly born in Boston, and its founders positioned it as almost an exact replica of the SPGNA. The stated object of the new society was a clear echo of the established group: while the latter was dedicated to the propagation of the gospel to the Indians and others in North America, the MMS declared its object was to “diffuse the knowledge of the gospel among the heathen as well as other people in the remote parts of our country where it is seldom or never preached.” To prevent anyone thinking they intended to be competitors, however, the MMS founders made clear that they wished only to assist in the good work: “To exclude all misconception and prejudice,” they wrote, “we solemnly declare, that it is totally foreign from our views, to weaken the evangelical influence of any society of a similar complexion already existing.”

There were a few differences between the stated goals of the two societies. In the first place, the Massachusetts Missionary Society made clear from the start that its mission was to the

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4 Founding Statement, 29 May 1799, and printed letter, 1799, RG5335, Box 1, Folders 37, 42, Massachusetts Conference Collection records, Series 2: Massachusetts Missionary Society (hereafter MMS), Congregational Library and Archives (hereafter CL), Boston, Massachusetts.
people of “our country.” In doing so, the MMS stated directly what was already a tacit understanding among Congregationalists: though the border may have been open for some, it was closed for their missionaries. At its own founding, the SPGNA had implied that its field encompassed all of North America. In practice, however, as described in chapter three, any border crossing for SPGNA ministers tapered off during the first decade or so of missionary work. By the end of the 1790s, the society had moved on from vague eastward missions to clearly delineated circuits that were limited to the District of Maine. It became clear that the name of the organization notwithstanding, the SPGNA saw its responsibility as limited to the citizens of the United States. By the turn of the century, the SPGNA was appealing for state funds by naming Mainers as “part of the nation” and “our brethren,” and drawing a contrast with those on the other side of the border, who were “people of a foreign province.”5 As new missionary organizations like the Massachusetts Missionary Society formed, they chose to adopt what had become the SPGNA’s de facto, more limited field.

The MMS also learned from the SPGNA’s experience with ever more circumscribed mission fields. The older society had experienced several phases from the late 1780s through the early nineteenth century. While in the early years, missionaries were simply asked to travel “eastward,” as the 1790s progressed they were asked to limit their circuits to particular counties. Eventually these circuits shrunk still further, with missionaries asked to base themselves in one or two primary communities. The MMS was founded just as this second shift was underway, and its founders were clear that missionaries’ circuits should be as limited as possible. Each minister

5 Petition to the Commonwealth, 30 January 1804, MSS 48, Box 6, Folder 1, Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America records (hereafter SPGNA), Phillips Library (hereafter PL), Rowley, Massachusetts.
would be asked to remain in one or at most two towns the vast majority of the time, although they could travel further at their own discretion “if specially called in Providence.”

In their initial meetings, the founders of the MMS went into some detail about how they hoped the society would function. They would not have the state funding that was going to the SPGNA, so they intended their more limited funding to be used more carefully. Instead of repeatedly sending itinerants, they hoped to plant the seeds for settled ministers. By placing each man primarily in one community, the society hoped that community would feel “obligated to pay a certain proportion of his support.” As time went on these communities would take on more and more responsibility for paying the missionary, until eventually they paid his full salary and he became a settled minister. This was a clear departure from the SPGNA’s practice of simply requesting donations in every town along a lengthy circuit. The MMS founders believed this was inefficient. Maine settlers, they wrote, were not likely to feel comfortable giving much money to a man in transit, or a Boston-based society they knew little about. But if a minister was a local, familiar figure, and was able to “suit [his] discourses to their circumstances,” they might be more forthcoming.

There were other benefits to a smaller circuit. The MMS hoped that its missionaries could collaborate and consult with other ministers, both stationary and itinerant. It also hoped that this plan would allow for a more efficient distribution of books and pamphlets. It would give ministers a chance to seek out potential teachers who were “sound in the faith,” and assist in the founding of new schools. And perhaps most importantly, the founders hoped that their ministers would be able to form “societies for religious worship” in the communities surrounding their home bases. The MMS missionary would be responsible for visiting each of these societies

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6 “Sketches of a plan for establishing missionaries,” undated, Box 1, Folder 36, MMS, CL.
7 Ibid.
several times a year, but he would also appoint a suitable person to lead each group in his
absence. Hopefully, in time, these sub-group leaders “might…become missionaries
themselves.”

Obviously, then, the new Massachusetts Missionary Society had ambitious plans. It did,
however, have one major problem. It needed money. Its founders wanted to immediately send
missionaries to Maine to begin the partnership with the SPGNA, while also possibly sending a
few men west to evangelize the Yankee-settled towns of upstate New York. Yet embarrassingly,
in its first year the MMS was only able to attract thirty-eight members, and could not afford to
hire any missionaries at all. Something needed to be done to step up donations.

By 1802, year three of operations, the situation had begun to improve. Increasing
financial stability meant that the MMS could afford to hire four missionaries. Membership was
up, but even more significantly, women began to appear on the donor rolls in substantial
numbers. Two developments stand out in that year’s treasurer’s report. In the first place, women
made up about a quarter of the individual donors listed, and likely accounted for many of the
anonymous donations as well. It seems that a number of women around Boston had decided to
donate to the society as if they were members, even though they would not be formally enrolled.
At the same time, some women in the area began to experiment with pooling their donations.
There were two sizable donations listed from the Reverend Daniel Hopkins in Salem: one from
his society in general, totaling sixty-six dollars, and one from “a number of females of his
society,” totaling twenty-three dollars. Another group, listed only as “Female Society, Boston,”
gave forty dollars.

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8 Ibid.
9 Massachusetts Missionary Magazine, 1801, Range 125, CL.
10 Massachusetts Missionary Magazine, 1802, CL.
This “Female Society” was the Boston Female Society for Missionary Purposes, one of the first organized women’s benevolent organizations. Mary Webb, a particularly devout twenty-one year old Bostonian, created it in 1800. Ms. Webb was a Baptist, but after hearing (or perhaps reading) a sermon delivered in the support of the MMS, she fell into a “passion for missions.” Though the MMS was Congregational, there was no Baptist missionary society for her to support, so she gathered some friends to raise funds for the Congregationalists.\textsuperscript{11}

The Boston Female Society for Missionary Purposes did not play a long-term role in the Congregational missions in Maine. It soon disappeared from the MMS treasurer’s reports. But it is worth mentioning Ms. Webb’s society here for two reasons. First, it appears to have pioneered the practice of specifying that a donation be used for Bibles and other books. This was the only donation in the inaugural MMS trustees report that was listed with conditions: it was “to purchase books to be sent on by the missionaries.” This set a precedent. When the first cent society began its donations two years later, it made similar specifications. Second, Mrs. Webb decided that her missionary society would charge two dollars as annual dues, which was exactly the same amount the MMS charged its members. This was rather steep. Later Baptist women’s organizations charged fifty cents annually, and even the men’s Baptist societies only charged one dollar. Once cent societies were created, they asked for fifty-two cents per year. The most logical reason for Mary Webb to request a full two dollars was to imitate the MMS. Her society provided the first chance for women in Boston to contribute to missionary work as if they were full members of a missionary society.\textsuperscript{12}

It was around this time, as women like Mary Webb were experimenting with fundraising, that the first of what would become a flood of ladies cent societies appeared. There are


\textsuperscript{12} Vail, \textit{Mary Webb}, 33.
conflicting stories about how the idea arose. One story, told decades later, placed the genesis at a
dinner in Boston in 1799. A Mrs. McFarland, the first treasurer of the New Hampshire Cent
Society, claimed that a group of ministers were drinking wine at her uncle’s home in Boston,
when they had the thought to forgo one glass of wine each and donate that cent to missionary
work. Somehow the ladies of Boston took up this idea, and Mrs. McFarland herself claimed
credit for bringing the concept north to New Hampshire.\textsuperscript{13} A similar (and more likely) story
gives credit to Mrs. Mehitable Simpkins, whose husband John was the treasurer of the
Massachusetts Missionary Society. This story begins at an 1802 dinner party at the Simpkins
home. Conversation at the party turned to the fundraising problems of the missionary society.
Someone, inspired by the cost of a glass of wine, suggested the penny per week plan. Mrs.
Simpkins decided to put the idea into practice, and the first cent society was born.\textsuperscript{14}

One reason the cent society concept was able to spread so quickly was its obvious
similarity to a well-known Bible passage: the story of the widow’s two mites. This story appears
in two different gospels, Mark and Luke. In both gospels, Jesus is preaching near the treasury of
the Temple in Jerusalem. He points out to his disciples that while many rich men are donating
large sums to the treasury, one poor widow offers only “two mites.” In the version from the
Gospel of Luke, Jesus says:

\begin{quote}
of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these
have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast
in all the living that she had.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Obviously, most of the women who chose to contribute to cent societies were not poor widows,
and they were asked to donate fifty cents a year, not two. But the idea of a small sacrifice making

\textsuperscript{13} Annual Report of the Trustees of the New Hampshire Missionary Society, 28 August 1851, (Concord, NH:
\textsuperscript{14} Joel Carpenter and Wilbert Shenk, \textit{Earthen Vessels: American Evangelicals and Foreign Missions, 1880-1980}
(Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990), 253-254.
\textsuperscript{15} Luke 21:3-4, King James Version.
a big difference appealed to many people. And the parable provided an excellent selling point for the society: if a poor widow was willing to give her last few pennies for the church, then surely almost any woman in Boston could part with one penny per week.

The cent society idea was immediately successful. Mary Webb’s Boston Female Society for Missionary Purposes had managed to gather forty dollars for its first donation. Just one year later, Mehitable Simpkins and her fledgling “Cent Institution” presented the MMS with three hundred dollars and fifteen cents. This was the result of a subscription paper circulated by Simpkins “in Boston and various other towns.” Like Mary Webb’s society, the cent institution was limited to females, and specific about the use of its donation. Women had given their cent per week “to be laid out in bibles, primers, catechisms, Dr. Watt’s psalms and hymns, and divine songs for children.” The donation covered a massive amount of these books. Almost two hundred bibles and several hundred other books and pamphlets were provided to missionary Jotham Sewall in Maine, and there was enough money left over to supply a smaller amount of books to two other missionaries serving to the west.16

The cent society concept, almost overnight, became an indispensable part of missionary financing in Massachusetts. The MMS was doing rather well by 1804. Membership was growing fast, and around three hundred men were paying the two-dollar annual dues. Six hundred dollars annually was impressive, but Mrs. Simpkins and her donors had managed to produce fifty percent of that total on their first try. This one organization quickly made up a third of the MMS donor base, and its contributions would only increase. In 1805, Mrs. Simpkins made two separate gifts of around five hundred dollars to the MMS. By the following year, she had contributed almost two thousand dollars. Within five years Simpkins’s society was contributing over a

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16 *Massachusetts Missionary Magazine*, 1804, CL.
thousand dollars per year to the MMS. This purchased an enormous amount of books. Over a four-year period, from 1807 to 1810, cent society donations to the MMS from around the greater Boston area paid for almost four thousand books.\textsuperscript{17}

The quick success enjoyed by the Massachusetts Missionary Society was inspiring, and it occurred to Congregationalists around New England that the missionary industry still had room to grow. More societies began to appear, in Connecticut, New Hampshire, and elsewhere in Massachusetts. Two chose to focus almost all of their attention on Maine: the Evangelical Missionary Society and the Maine Missionary Society, both founded around 1808. By this point the Massachusetts Missionary Society had been around for a decade, and it had been four years since the first cent society donation. The playbook was becoming clear. Each new society knew it could quickly step into an auxiliary role in Maine, cooperating with the SPGNA and other societies. And each new society knew it could rely on women for funding.

The Evangelical Missionary Society (EMS) was an effort by Congregationalists in central Massachusetts to get in on the action. Though the SPGNA and MMS envisioned themselves as statewide societies, they were based in and around Boston. Of the twenty-one men listed in the act of incorporation for the SPGNA, for example, sixteen lived in Boston, Brookline, or Cambridge.\textsuperscript{18} The initial membership base of the MMS was similar. The EMS, by contrast, was born out of Congregational associations in Worcester and Middlesex counties to the west. Its founding members were from the towns of Worcester, Concord, and Shrewsbury.\textsuperscript{19} The EMS founders were also aware that a shift from sermons to schools was taking place in the

\textsuperscript{17} Massachusetts Missionary Magazine, 1804-1805, CL; R. Pierce Beaver, \textit{All Loves Excelling: American Protestant Women in World Mission} (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1968), 21

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Acts and Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts 1786-1787} (Boston: Wright and Potter Printing, 1893), 586-587.

\textsuperscript{19} Frederick Weis, \textit{A Brief Historical Sketch of the Evangelical Missionary Society in Massachusetts 1807-1951} (Lancaster, MA: 1951).
Congregational network, as their mission statement made clear. The SPGNA, two decades earlier, vowed to “propagate the Gospel among the said Indians…and also among other people who through poverty or other circumstances are destitute of the means of religious instruction.”

The EMS, recognizing the changes brought by state funding and cent society donations, went straight to books and schools. It intended to expand Christian knowledge through the “distribution of pious and religious books and tracts, [and] by aiding and supporting schoolmasters.”

In the summer of 1808, just as the MMS had a decade earlier, the EMS reached out to other societies in an effort to be allies rather than rivals. Both the SPGNA and the MMS responded warmly. Mission districts had not yet been set for the upcoming year, so it would be simple to harmonize their efforts. The general attitude held that the more funding streams applied to the District of Maine the better. And its funding stream, the EMS rapidly learned, would be coming from ladies cent societies. In the four years since the first cent society donation, the idea had clearly spread. The EMS’s inaugural treasurer’s report lists a contribution of over eleven dollars from “Sundry Young Ladies of Concord,” in addition to several sizable donations from individual women of the town. All told, the women of Concord donated over thirty dollars, outraising some entire communities. The following year, the same women officially identified themselves as the Ladies Cent Society of Concord, and donated close to twenty dollars.

This was the start of the dominance of cent societies in the finances of the EMS. Each year the Ladies Cent Society in Concord made its contribution, and each year more groups joined

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21 Morse to Bancroft, 4 August 1808, Box 1, Folder 1, EMS.

22 Treasurer’s Reports, 1808-1810, Box 10, Folder 1, EMS.
in the giving. In 1811 the Ladies Cent Society of Watertown began contributing, and the following year so did a society in Waltham. In 1813 those three societies were joined by one in Ashburnham, and in 1815 by two more in Weston and Templeton. By the end of the decade the treasurer had to double up the listings to keep all the cent societies on the tally sheet. Salem, Worcester, Marlboro, and Burlington had all joined the effort. Cent society contributions increased to the point that they became the second most important source of funding for the EMS, after membership dues. The growth was remarkable, especially compared to other funding sources like the collection at the annual meeting. In 1813 the EMS made seventy-two dollars at its annual meeting, and received forty-six from the ladies cent societies. In 1814, the two sources were almost at parity: fifty-seven from the meeting, fifty-two from the cent societies. After that, the ladies rapidly outpaced the annual meeting. In 1815 the cent societies contributed one hundred seventy three dollars, almost three times the annual meeting collection, and the following year it was one hundred and fifty to forty seven. The various cent societies had made themselves indispensible to EMS finances.

The Maine Missionary Society (MEMS), founded at roughly the same time as the EMS, provides the clearest illustration of the well-oiled machine that the Congregational missionary system had become. Its founders incorporated knowing they would get their society off the ground quickly, by calling on Maine women to provide the necessary funding. And they knew that all they needed to do was add their labor to an already successful network. The blueprint was clear, and all the Maine ministers had to do was follow it.

The MEMS was essentially a rebranding of a previous organization, the Lincoln and Kennebec Religious Tract Society. This group had been in existence since 1802, and over five

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23 Treasurer’s Reports, 1811-1817, Box 10, Folders 2-4, EMS.
years managed to distribute over 20,000 books and pamphlets in Maine. In 1807, the tract society “resolved themselves” into the missionary society, so as to broaden the mission to itinerant preachers and schools. At their first meeting after reorganizing, the MEMS made it clear that it would replicate the work of the SPGNA almost exactly. Those two groups were already in contact, and letters were being sent to the rest of the missionary societies. The goal was for the MEMS to act as an agent, “…for dispersing the books, for recommending suitable men in said district, [and] for pointing out the places where their services shall be most needed.”

The next order of business was funding, and as noted above, the MEMS made its appeal to women. The women of Maine responded with alacrity. Though only four years had passed since the cent society concept was born, it appears to have taken New England by storm. The first treasurer’s report, one year after the appeal, shows contributions from cent societies in Minot, Bath, and Caratunk. A year later, in 1810, societies in Portland, Gorham, Hallowell, Winthrop, Yarmouth, and more joined in. At this point, the MEMS reported collecting a little less than two hundred dollars annually from membership dues and at the yearly meeting. Ladies cent societies far outdistanced that, contributing close to three hundred dollars. The following year they neared the three hundred dollar mark again. Cent societies appeared throughout the mid-coast region as far as Newcastle, and up the Kennebec River Valley as far as Norridgewock. The larger communities in southern Maine contributed huge sums: the society in Portland made a yearly donation of around eighty dollars, and two individual societies in Yarmouth contributed close to a hundred dollars a year combined. By 1811 the MEMS had gone from a hundred dollars in the bank to almost a thousand, and was carrying a surplus from year to year.

24 Records 1807-1869, Coll. 1704, Vol. 2, Congregational Conference/Maine Missionary Society (hereafter MEMS), MEHS.
25 Reports Maine Missionary Society 1808-1829, MEHS.
The MEMS began its mission, as its predecessors had, by supplementing the work of already established societies. At the SPGNA’s request, the Maine society directed an SPGNA missionary to the area around the Sandy River. Similarly, they directed a man from the Hampshire Missionary Society to the western border communities of Rumford and Lovell. At the same time, however, the infusion of cash from cent societies allowed the MEMS to carve out a place for itself. It began by dividing central and western Maine into mission “stands.” Within two years of the society’s incorporation, as hundreds of dollars flowed in from cent societies, the MEMS was able to begin sending its own missionaries to cover these stands. A few years later, the society was employing itinerants and supplementing the salaries of settled ministers in Pittston, Brewer, and other central and western Maine towns.26

One result of the MEMS’s arrival on the scene and immediate fundraising success was that it allowed the SPGNA to use more of its resources in far eastern Maine, near the border with New Brunswick. The eastern Maine settlements, especially the area around Passamaquoddy Bay, had always received particular attention from the SPGNA. The society was advised by several of its missionaries to focus on the region. In 1808, missionary Stephen Chapin identified Eastport and the surrounding area as the most important missionary field in Maine. When the new Maine Missionary Society began corresponding with the SPGNA a year or so later, the two groups collaborated in creating their map of mission stands. All of the MEMS stands were located west of the Penobscot River. The newer society would direct its resources to the mid-coast region around Bristol and Cushing, to the upper reaches of the Kennebec River near Norridgewock and Caratunk, and to Rumford, Lovell and other towns in the mountainous region bordering on New

26 Trustee Records 1807-1829, Vol. 1, MEMS, MEHS.
Hampshire. The SPGNA, for its part, would cover eastern Maine. Eastport and the
Passamaquoddy settlements were the very first stand on its list.27

As the Massachusetts, Evangelical, and then Maine Missionary Society formed, and
resources flooded into the American side of the northeastern borderland, there was nothing
officially preventing these societies from extending their assistance across the border into British
North America. Indeed, at first glance, it is puzzling that they chose not to. The vast majority of
the pre-loyalist settlers in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were New England
Congregationalists, and their churches did not simply vanish in the aftermath of the revolution.
As the missionary network in Maine was growing in the 1790s and 1800s, there were
Congregational communities in the provinces that were looking for support. Liverpool Nova
Scotia and Sheffield New Brunswick, for example, were both trying to secure a trained
Congregational minister, and residents of those towns wrote to New England asking for help.

It would have been relatively simple and logical for the societies to create a borderless
mission field in the northeast. The pioneer society, the SPGNA, had originally envisioned its
mission as encompassing all of North America. The MMS did commit, in its founding
documents, to serve the people of “our country,” but there was nothing in the founding
documents of the EMS or MEMS limiting those societies to the boundaries of Maine or the
United States in general. They relied largely on cent societies for funding, rather than a state
grant, so they had no obligation to avoid spending state money outside the bounds of
Massachusetts. The MEMS, moreover, was quite ambitious in its early years. Due to the “great
objects which the society have in view,” it investigated the possibility of sending missionaries
west to the Mississippi country, or even east to Africa. The stated goal of the society was to

27 Stephen Chapin, Journal, Box 1, Folder 18, SPGNA, PL; Gillet to Morse, 1808, Box 6, Folder 2, SPGNA, PL;
Trustee Records 1807-1829, Vol. 1, MEMS, MEHS.
“send the glorious gospel to those who are destitute of…religious instruction.” This description could apply to people just about anywhere.\textsuperscript{28}

The Maine Missionary Society, then, was the most likely candidate to cross the border, due to ambition and simple geographic proximity. And it did at least consider the possibility. In the summer of 1816 the MEMS made plans to send the Rev. Daniel Lovejoy to the Saint John River in New Brunswick, with an eye to assisting the town of Sheffield. Sheffield, mentioned above, was one of the communities asking for help. Its church dated back to the 1760s, and by the 1800s it was one of the only Congregational communities left in New Brunswick. By 1816 Sheffield had been without a stable minister for over twenty years. And yet, for some reason, Lovejoy never took the trip. He may have simply declined. He continues to show up on the payroll, but only for missions in Maine. There is no record of any further attempt by the MEMS to aid New Brunswick.\textsuperscript{29}

It appears that the collaborative nature of the Congregational mission in Maine played the most important role in keeping the network limited to the American side of the border. Each new society, in order to quickly begin operations, attached itself to the already existing network created by the SPGNA. That society limited itself to serving Massachusetts citizens, in part because it was forced to repeatedly justify its existence to the Massachusetts General Court as it requested the renewal of the state grant. The new societies, even though they did not receive a state grant, ended up acting as if they did. Over time, the idea that the border limited these societies came to be taken for granted. Decades later, in the 1830s, some remnant Congregationalists in the Maritime Provinces made a direct appeal to the Maine Missionary

\textsuperscript{28} Trustee Records 1807-1829, Vol. 1, MEMS, MEHS; “Address of the Maine Missionary Society to the Public,” 1808, ECL 5.26, MEHS.
\textsuperscript{29} Trustee Records 1807-1829, Vol. 1, MEMS, MEHS; D.G. Bell, ed., The Newlight Baptist Journals of James Manning and James Innis (Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1984), 173.
Society for help. They were dismissed, because “the operations of the Society are restricted to the State.” According to its founding documents, this was not actually true, but it seems practice had solidified into policy by that point.\textsuperscript{30}

By the second decade of the nineteenth century collaboration between the missionary societies of Maine had settled into a comfortable routine. Fueled by the rapid rise of the center society phenomenon, and building horizontally off the original state-sponsored network of the SPGNA, they attempted to leave no part of Maine untouched. Working together, they were now reaching almost all of the district’s settlements, from the western border with New Hampshire and Lower Canada to the eastern border with New Brunswick. At this point, the affiliated societies began to use their resources to support organized networks of schools.

As usual, the SPGNA pioneered the practice. Around the turn of the nineteenth century the society began to argue that it could “extend its usefulness” to Massachusetts by helping to establish and support schools in the “new towns” of the District of Maine. The argument was based explicitly on the contemporaneous openness of the northeastern borderland. The SPGNA pointed out that settlers departing Massachusetts proper had many options, including Upper and Lower Canada and the rest of British North America. A network of schools in the new settlements of the District of Maine might entice settlers to stay within the bounds of the Commonwealth. As new Congregational missionary societies attached themselves to the SPGNA network, they too promoted this new focus on schools. As noted above, neither of the two missionary societies founded in the eighteenth century – the SPGNA and MMS – mentioned schools in their founding documents. The two societies founded in the first decade of the nineteenth century both did. The state itself joined in, as it promoted settlement in the District of

\textsuperscript{30} Calvin Montague Clark, \textit{History of the Congregational Churches in Maine} (Portland, ME: Southworth Press, 1926), 118-119.
Maine. In a public advertisement for Maine land, the Commonwealth Land Office reminded prospective settlers that if they chose the district “you will remain an integral part of Massachusetts, and...numerous associations...will diffuse the blessed tidings of the Gospel within your walls, and send public qualified teachers to...aid in instructing your offspring.”

This development opened the door for women to actively participate in extending the missionary system. Women had been interacting with the missionary societies since they first arrived in Maine, but not in active roles. The ministers who founded the missionary societies were all men, and the missionaries they sent to Maine were also all men. These missionaries, however, interacted with women. In fact, they interacted primarily with women. Often when an itinerant missionary arrived at a household, women and children were the only ones present, and so missionary journals and letters are filled with references to conversations with women. William MacLean, travelling in 1800, referred to the homes he stayed in by names of the male head-of-household, and yet he appears to have spoken almost exclusively with women:

Lodged at Mr. Lawrence, whereof I spent the evening agreeably his wife being a serious woman...visited young Mr. Nickels, where I had some agreeable conversations with his wife a serious woman...when preaching an aged lady Mrs. Nickerson appeared to be uncommonly affected...she (Nickerson) shew’d me a letter she lately received from a son & daughter in Hampshire State giving an account of a remarkable revival of religion in the town where they live...32

Later MacLean was asked to speak with a young woman who had apparently been preaching herself, and the two had a lengthy confrontation. The woman informed MacLean that she “found herself irresistibly constrained by the power of God to speak in public,” and he did his best to

31 Petition, Secretary’s Incoming Correspondence, Box 6 Folder 1; “Advertisement to the People,” 7 July 1817, Books about the Commission for the Sale and Settlement of the Public Lands in the District of Maine, Maine State Archives, Augusta, Maine.
32 William Maclean Journal, Ms. N-176, Box 1, Folder 9, Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America records 1752-1948, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts.
dissuade her. He was relatively diplomatic, however; he apparently felt this woman was genuine in her faith, if a bit too enthusiastic for his taste. Obviously MacLean was leaning heavily on the hospitality of women in his travels, and he did not want to alienate anybody. He wanted women to participate in the mission without actually preaching.  

Things were much the same a few years later in Washington County. Alexander Maclean, moving from house to house in Calais, seems to have been referred from woman to woman:

“Aug 13 – Visited Mrs. Brewers, whose sister Mrs. Goddard I had some agreeable conversation with the preceding evening at Mr. Down’s – After spending an hour with her, at her request I went…”  

And Jonathan Fisher’s trip around the mid-coast communities a few years after that was remarkably similar. Fisher noted the names of people he baptized, and they were almost entirely female. When he did baptize males, they tended to be the sons of the women who were seeking him out. At one point, for example, he baptized Peggy Douglas and two other women, and then a few days later he baptized Douglas’s four sons, in addition to two more women.

Whenever Fisher mentioned calling on people in their homes, he always noted meeting either the woman of the house alone, or the husband and wife together. Speaking one on one with a man was exceedingly rare.

Over and over again, whether in private homes, meetinghouses or churches, Congregational itinerants interacted with women. The evidence from their letters and journals is backed up by other studies, which show that during this time period women made up the majority of churchgoers. According to some estimates, in mid-eighteenth century southern New

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33 Ibid.
34 Alexander Maclean Journal, Box 3, Folder 7, SPGNA, PL.
35 Jonathan Fisher Journal, Box 2, Folder 9, SPGNA, PL.
England women made up a full seventy percent of Congregational Church members.\textsuperscript{36} Almost all of the settlers in late-eighteenth century Maine were migrants from southern New England. When we consider these facts alongside the practice of soliciting donations and book distribution, it is fair to conclude that women were donating money and receiving books. Since women were often the only adults present during home visits, this must have been relatively common. Furthermore, when it comes to book distribution there is at least some direct evidence linking women to the bibliographic network. Missionaries did not typically name individual book recipients in their letters or journals, but there was an exception. In 1806, Alfred Johnson included with his journal a list of names. He seems to have treated it as a sign-up sheet, asking anyone who took a book to sign his or her name. And several women did indeed sign the sheet: Mary Tufft, Sally Mathews, and Nancy Nesmith.\textsuperscript{37}

Obviously, then, Maine women provided a great deal of enthusiasm for the Congregational project, and an enormous potential labor pool. But though they could interact with itinerant ministers, donate money, and receive books, they could not build the network as workers. Women could not preach or baptize children. Though ladies cent societies began to provide the funding for a massive amount of printed material, male ministers continued to serve as the actual distributors. Once the focus shifted to schools, however, women began interacting with the missionary societies in a new way.

Starting around 1804, the SPGNA began hiring both men and women for positions as teachers. At first, this was a bit haphazard, with contracts handed out seemingly at random.\textsuperscript{38} Towns that needed a teacher contacted the society, and it tried to address their needs. As new

\textsuperscript{37} Alfred Johnson, Box 3, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL.
\textsuperscript{38} Memo, 1804, Box 8, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL. For more detail see chapter three.
missionary societies were founded, however, they recognized an opportunity to work together to organize and rationalize the system. Societies tried to pool their resources to ensure they were serving as many communities as possible. The key figures in this process were a few ministers who were able to combine funding from multiple missionary societies, most notably John Sawyer and Peter Nurse.

John Sawyer put his system together in the new communities north and northwest of Bangor. In letters to the missionary societies, he described an educational crisis in the region. Sawyer was at the frontier of settlement. He was surrounded by twenty-four relatively new communities, and within those communities he claimed to have over three thousand children who required schooling. He set up his first school near Dexter in 1815, and within a few years was using funding from three different societies to support a network of schools for both girls and boys. Combining resources from all three societies enabled Sawyer to offer teaching and preaching year round; over one year, for example, Sawyer was paid for four months by the SPGNA, four months by the MEMS, and three by the MMS. Those societies supplied him with hundreds of books as well, which he distributed throughout his network. It is unclear from his letters exactly who the teachers leading Sawyer’s schools were, but at one point he did mention the arrival of some teachers from the rest of Maine and points west. It seems likely that the missionary societies referred some teachers to Sawyer, while others were teachers he himself trained.39

At roughly the same time, Peter Nurse was taking charge of schools along the coast of Maine east of Penobscot Bay. Nurse later claimed to have personally educated nearly fifty men and women who subsequently took teaching jobs, and he took credit for spreading schools

39 John Sawyer Letters, Box 4, Folder 9, SPGNA, PL.
throughout Hancock and Washington counties. The process began sometime around 1810, when Nurse was a missionary based in Ellsworth, Maine, and, like Sawyer, was collecting pay from multiple societies. Nurse was one of the first two men hired by the newly formed Evangelical Missionary Society in 1808. Within a year or so he had settled into a regular role in and around Ellsworth. He managed to secure additional funding from the SPGNA, which, added to his salary from the EMS and the donations he received from the Ellsworth community, enabled him to remain more or less permanently.\(^\text{40}\)

The people of Ellsworth and the surrounding towns were happy with Nurse’s preaching, but thrilled with the new schools. By 1811 Nurse had established a central school in Ellsworth that produced graduates who could assume responsibilities for schools of their own. The summer of 1811, Nurse reported that at least six young women who he had trained in Ellsworth had found teaching engagements.\(^\text{41}\) At the same time, a local committee was writing to the EMS praising Nurse and pledging to do whatever they could to raise local funds for his support. They hoped that the EMS would likewise continue to supply regular funding.

we are also a divided people; though less so than we have been…Mr Nurse’s preaching, his manners and conversation and especially his schoolkeeping are producing gradually a great change in the feelings of those who have heretofore been displeased with such men. He is really doing wonders in school…His scholars, who are numerous and include many of the young men and women of our town, will not many of them be fond of hearing such ignorant preachers as have heretofore distracted this and most new settlements.\(^\text{42}\)

A number of Congregational ministers reported on this phenomenon – Maine settlers were either tepid or actively hostile, until the conversation shifted from preaching to schools. According to John Brewer, who like Nurse visited the area around Penobscot Bay, locals had “violent prejudices against ministers of education…I must use their expressive language, they don’t like

\(^{40}\) Treasurer’s Reports, Box 10, Folder 1, EMS; Peter Nurse Letters, Box 3, Folder 13, SPGNA, PL.

\(^{41}\) Nurse to Thayer, 21 May 1811, Box 1, Folder 2, EMS.

\(^{42}\) Committee to Thayer, 26 January 1811, Box 1, Folder 2, EMS.
these ‘grand folks.’” Nurse himself reported that there were several families in Ellsworth who only tolerated him for the sake of their children. The town committee in its reports to Massachusetts admitted that while practically everyone in town wanted Nurse as a schoolmaster, only about half would support him as a settled minister.

The schools received a lot of support in part because they were decidedly secular. It is difficult to determine exactly the extent to which Congregational principles entered into Nurse’s schools. In one letter, he mentions instructing local youths in “the English language and in the principles of Christianity.” But in another, more detailed letter, he describes his curriculum as consisting of reading, spelling, grammar, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, navigation, French, Latin, Greek, and rhetoric. Nurse mentioned with particular pride one class “of eight, headed by a young man about twenty-two years old and closed by a little girl not quite seven, which has been nearly through the Primer and has advanced about forty lines in Virgil.” John Sawyer’s schools further north were similar. He did mention distributing catechisms to his students, but claimed to be teaching reading, spelling, writing, grammar and arithmetic. This sort of program, as we will see, was decidedly different from what Anglican-affiliated schools offered on the British side of the border. Those schools ran into more resistance from the majority, non-Anglican population. Congregationalists realized that their secular approach to schools was keeping people happy, while allowing their missionaries more influence than they might otherwise have had.

Accordingly, the SPGNA and EMS continued for years to support Nurse in spite of his letters making it clear that the preaching side of his duties was not going particularly well. In May 1817, Nurse bemoaned the fact that his church had no new members, and in fact was losing

43 John Brewer to Aaron Bancroft, 12 March 1810, Box 1, Folder 1, EMS.
44 Peter Nurse letters, Box 3, Folder 12, SPGNA, PL; John Sawyer Letters, Box 4, Folder 9, SPGNA, PL.
congregants to the Baptists. The schools, however, were still coming along nicely. In the same letter, Nurse mentions seven men and eighteen women who he had educated and sent out to teach over a “tract of country more than 150 miles in length.” If this estimate was accurate, his students were spread through all of Maine between the Penobscot River and the border with New Brunswick. Nurse facilitated this distribution of teachers by creating a program that allowed for the rapid expansion of his network of schools. He decided to offer small villages a deal: if they would pay a teacher for ten weeks, then he would cover an additional five with missionary society funds. This way he could spread the money to as many communities as possible. According to Nurse’s 1818 update, his partial funding plan was so popular that he was carrying a surplus of funds from year to year, even as the number of schools grew. The SPGNA and EMS must have realized that Peter Nurse’s school network was a good investment.45

Nurse’s protégés included both male and female teachers, but the women outnumbered the men. As early as the summer of 1811, six women educated in Peter Nurse’s school in Ellsworth were employed teaching their own small schools. The numbers would only increase from there. By 1815 Nurse reported that he had fifteen women employed in the region, and two more in Ellsworth. And there were still more communities seeking teachers – the requests came in faster than Nurse could fill them. In addition to all the women, Nurse had two men teaching nearby, and two more who would be available soon. Even during the war years of 1813 and 1814, when Nurse claimed, “the people are cut off from almost every means of making money,” he managed to find employment for five of his teachers, four women and one man.46

45 Peter Nurse letters, Box 3, Folder 13, SPGNA, PL.
46 Peter Nurse letters, Box 1, Folders 5-7, EMS.
Even before Sawyer and Nurse set up their school networks, the horizontally integrated network of Congregational missionary societies had already created a distinction between the American and British sides of the northeastern borderland. The new societies adopted the SPGNA’s focus on serving Massachusetts residents exclusively, even though they were not explicitly limited by state funding. Each new society that joined the network added enough funding for hundreds, sometimes thousands, of additional books and pamphlets to be distributed in Maine communities. The new societies also allowed the SPGNA to invest heavily in serving the easternmost section of Maine, making sure that the Americans furthest from Boston, and closest to the British settlements, received a great deal of attention. The effect was a gradual re-orientation of the American side of the borderland. Communities there were still closer economically to New Brunswick than they were to Massachusetts. But they were increasingly well connected to a Boston-based network. From afar – in negotiations between Washington and London – this still seemed like a shared zone, with a boundary that could be shifted by diplomacy or war. On the ground, however, this network was making Maine less a borderland and more an integral part of Massachusetts.

The burgeoning school networks accentuated this process, in part because of differences between New England and British North American attitudes toward schools. While women were immediately welcomed into the Congregational network in Maine as teachers, they could not pursue teaching opportunities in New Brunswick. This essentially bottled up the supply of female teachers, making it easier for even the smallest Maine settlement to organize a school, while larger communities close by in British territory went without.

One reason for this was the secularization of the Congregational network in Maine. Maine schools, in an effort to appeal to all, essentially threw out anything that was explicitly
connected to Congregationalism. The earliest missions and mission-sponsored schools in the British provinces, by contrast, were supported by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and were overtly Anglican. By 1800 there were fourteen of these SPG schools spread through New Brunswick. Often the SPG missionary himself served as the schoolmaster, but if an outside man was hired, he was required to conform to the Church of England and be willing to teach the Anglican catechism. The school program was devoted to Anglicanism first, and all else second. The Standing Orders of the Society were clear. Memorizing and understanding the Church catechism was the primary goal, and women were not permitted to serve as teachers.47

The SPG’s stringent requirements and Anglicanism made it difficult for them to grow their school network in the way the Congregationalists grew theirs. As far back as the 1760s, when settlers began to stream into what would become Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the SPG was trying to open more schools. Local agents of the society attempted to combine SPG funds with settler subscriptions, as Nurse did in Maine, but could not always find a willing teacher who fit their qualifications. A minister in Windsor, Nova Scotia complained in the mid 1760s that he needed at least two teachers for that community, and could not find a qualified man willing to take the job for the money being offered. Moreover, only a few settlers were Anglican, and many objected to the “proselytizing character” of the SPG schools.48 Sometimes these dissenting settlers would pool their resources to hire an itinerant teacher, but this was a dangerous proposition. It was practically impossible to investigate the qualifications of such men, and they developed a reputation as unreliable drunkards. One prominent Maritime Baptist,

Edward Manning, complained later that the schools of his youth were “miserable.” His teachers “were commonly intemperate. The last four I had were all fond of stimulants…the whole population in rural districts suffered in like manner.”

It would certainly have been easier to secure a schoolteacher if the positions had been opened to women, but that move was delayed for decades. The first breakthrough came with the introduction of the so-called “Madras” schools. The Madras, or Monitorial system, was one in which more advanced students assisted the primary teacher in educating less advanced students. It was growing in popularity in the early nineteenth century British Empire. The system arrived in British North America in 1820 when a teacher training school opened in Halifax, and Madras schools began to appear in New Brunswick within a year or two. Slowly, women began to assume roles as teachers. But this was at least fifteen years after the SPGNA began to employ women in Maine, and a decade after Peter Nurse’s graduates began to spread eastward from Ellsworth. Furthermore, prejudices remained strong. It took until 1838 for Nova Scotia to pass an act authorizing female teachers for that province’s public schools. The gap is remarkable – Congregational missionary societies had begun hiring women to teach in state-subsidized schools in Maine over thirty years earlier.

Just as the British Provinces were slow to enlist women as teachers and expand educational options, Provincial church networks were also slow to call upon women as fundraisers. The feedback loop between ladies cent societies and missionary organizations is another phenomenon that might have overlapped and blurred the border, had the idea spread throughout the borderland early enough. However, it took about twenty years for British church networks to adopt the plan. This is a bit surprising. Communication between New England and

50 MacNaughton, Education in New Brunswick, 66; Bingay, Education in Nova Scotia, 47-48.
the Maritimes was frequent. Boston and New York newspapers frequently made their way to Halifax and Saint John, and papers in the latter communities reprinted American news regularly. Clearly Maritime residents were aware of the organizing that was going on to their south. Many of the independent congregations in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick were originally founded as Congregational churches. And the New England missionary societies were making some effort at trans-border communication. In its first years, the Massachusetts Missionary Society sent letters around the Atlantic world, requesting news of the state of religion in various places. At least one letter was sent to New Brunswick, because the MMS printed a response in its magazine.\(^5\)

Why then, the delay? There were several contributing factors. In the first place, Congregationalists in New England were far better equipped to create missionary societies than any non-Anglican group in British North America. The most likely candidates in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were probably the Baptists, but Baptists had nowhere near the resources enjoyed by New England Congregationalists. Nor did they have a chance at the kind of state funding that enabled the pioneer Massachusetts society, the SPGNA, to get off the ground. Baptists also tended to be too independent and haphazard in their travels to form a missionary plan. These men, singly or in small groups, travelled wherever they believed they had been called by God to preach. They saw the whole unconverted world as their field. And they were not used to the idea of collecting official compensation. Baptists were supposed to simply go where the Lord directed, with faith that families along the way would provide assistance. Collecting a salary was something a “hireling ministry” would do; it was exactly the sort of materialism the Baptists had always used to attack representatives of the more established churches. One Nova Scotia preacher noted in the 1820s that he had spread the gospel for three

\(^5\) *Massachusetts Missionary Magazine*, 1803, CL.
decades without “promise of pecuniary remuneration.” As Baptists began to consider setting up a system for compensating missionaries, this man agonized over the changes.  

It took until 1814 – twenty-five years after the SPGNA began operations in Maine, ten years after the rise of cent societies – for the Baptist Association in the Maritimes to even begin to organize a domestic missionary network. Even then, the moment was so late in arriving that much of the energy was already taken up by foreign missions. In the first missionary excitement, after the 1814 Baptist Association meeting in Chester, Nova Scotia, the entire collection of over £8 was donated to foreign missions. It was almost as an afterthought that the Association members later appointed the first two domestic missionaries to itinerate locally, and vowed to raise the necessary funds. After that the missionary field grew year to year: in 1815 men were sent east of Halifax, in 1816 to the northeast coast of New Brunswick. By 1818 missionaries were being sent to these places plus the Saint John River settlements, the south bank of the St. Lawrence, and to Black Nova Scotian communities around Halifax.

Just as had been the case in New England two decades earlier, female societies rapidly assumed a role as the major donors for home missionaries. In the Maritimes, they were dubbed “mite societies” rather than cent societies, but the form and function seem to have been the same. The first appeared in New Brunswick in 1818, when the Female Mite Society of the City of Saint John donated £4, 17s to the Nova Scotia Association. This was a sizable donation, making up about one tenth of the association’s total yearly income. There was no sign of this mite society or others like it in earlier years, when the focus was on foreign missions, so there seems to have been a strong correlation between female fundraising and home missionary work specifically. It

52 Joseph Dimock, quoted in Levy, Baptists of the Maritime Provinces, 89.
53 Levy, Baptists of the Maritime Provinces, 90.
also appears there was a bit of pent up demand for this kind of fundraising opportunity. Once home missions began to spread, women in communities across the Maritimes began to take action. Within two years, there were at least six more mite societies sending donations from around Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and the importance of these donations would only grow. By the early 1820s, there were separate missionary organizations in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, with the work in Prince Edward Island handled by the Nova Scotians. The principal support for all of these associations, at least through the 1820s, came from female mite societies.  

In the 1820s, then, a system finally took shape in British North America that mirrored what had been successful in Maine for over two decades. Just as in Massachusetts, the middle and upper class women of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia rapidly organized their fundraising once they had a home missionary network to support. This support enabled the missionary societies to organize their efforts and provide more services to people on the ground. They were far behind their counterparts on the other side of the border, however. For example, the SPGNA first divided Maine into missionary districts sometime around the year 1800. Almost immediately it began funneling a substantial amount of resources into even the furthest district in eastern Maine. As more societies formed and the network grew, missionaries like Ephraim Abbott covered every conceivable settlement; Abbot even voyaged up the St. Croix River to preach to tiny crowds in half a dozen unnamed townships. The New Brunswick Association, by contrast, did not even divide that Province into districts until 1834. Even then, the districts only covered the southern half of the territory, from the border with Maine to the border with Nova

56 “Maine Missionary Districts,” undated, Box 8, Folder 9, SPGNA, PL.
57 Ephriam Abbott, Box 1, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL.
Scotia. It took three more years for missionaries to begin to attend to the northern half of New Brunswick.\textsuperscript{58}

For years, the British had maintained an open border, in the interest of developing their settlements. The boundary was rarely enforced, and officials accepted that Maine communities on the American side of the borderland were effectively part of the British economic sphere. Maine settlers could easily sell their goods in British markets, and those who wished to move to British territory were accommodated. Both British and Americans believed the border was flexible anyway, and might eventually be shifted in a way that would benefit their side.

It was during the War of 1812 that the British first came to reconsider this open borderland, and one of the inspirations for this shift was the network of teachers and schools created by the Congregational missionary societies in Maine. When war broke out, authorities in New Brunswick decided to take stock of any recent arrivals from the United States. They did not intend to deport these people. The idea was simply to investigate how many Americans there might be in the province and whether any of them were in trouble with the law. In general, these new arrivals were asked to self-report, and most raised little concern. There were quite a few Maine loggers in the northeastern part of the province, and a substantial number of New England-born dockworkers in the city of Saint John. No one appeared to be objectionable.

The only issue arose in the little town of Woodstock, just over the border from Maine. Woodstock resident John Bedell wrote to Fredericton listing nineteen different American men living around that community. “Some of these persons,” he wrote, were “offering themselves for school masters.” These men were the product of Peter Nurse’s efforts in Ellsworth, Maine, and

\textsuperscript{58} Levy, \textit{Maritime Provinces}, 127-128.
the Congregational network more generally. In an 1815 letter, Nurse specifically mentioned a male student of his who had been working for over a year as a teacher in New Brunswick.\(^5^9\) He also mentioned that during the war years, communities in Maine suffered financially. Women were not able to take teaching jobs in New Brunswick, but men were, and it makes sense that a few might look for possibilities on the British side of the border. John Bedell, for his part, did not know what to do. Schools were “much wanted,” and he did not want to discourage them. However, it was vital to “prevent as much as possible republican principles being disseminated amongst us- and the minds of our youth from receiving any improper bias or false principles of religion or government.”\(^6^0\)

The border had been left open for years, with the idea that the Maine part of the borderland was essentially part of the British economic sphere anyway. Now authorities began to recognize that there had been a change. Over the previous two decades, through church networks, both the government and private citizens in Massachusetts had invested an enormous amount of resources in eastern Maine. Communities just across the border from New Brunswick were now connected to southern Maine and Boston in a way that the British had not expected. And now, instead of British economic power spilling westward into the states, “republican principles” in the form of teachers were spilling eastward into the provinces.

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\(^5^9\) Nurse to Thayer, 26 September 1815, Box 1, Folder 7, EMS.

\(^6^0\) Bedell to Odell, 18 June 1813, 9 November 1813, RS547, Naturalization Records, Folder 1, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick, Fredericton, New Brunswick.
Figure 2- Passamaquoddy & Machias with the large island of Grand Manan, B.R. Jones, 1816

Chapter V:

Testing the Limits of Sovereignty: The War of 1812 and its Aftermath

At no point in the thirty years between the end of the American Revolution and the start of the War of 1812 was there agreement on the exact boundary between the District of Maine and the colony of New Brunswick. Everyone, though, knew approximately where the border was supposed to be. It started in Passamaquoddy Bay, with the Americans in control of the western side of the bay and the British the eastern side. Then, according to the Treaty of Paris, the boundary ran along the St. Croix River, and then along “a line drawn due north from the source of St. Croix River to the highlands.” It followed the highlands “which divide those rivers that empty themselves into the river St. Lawrence, from those which fall into the Atlantic Ocean” until it hit the headwaters of the Connecticut River in northern New Hampshire.\(^2\) Then the line continued west.

There were many problems with the boundary as laid out in the treaty. The one that caused the most controversy later in the nineteenth century was the exact location of the so-called highlands. That question would not be finally resolved until the 1840s. However, early on there were hardly any settlers in the interior near any highlands; most English-speaking settlers lived along the coast. There too, though, the treaty had its problems. In the first place, it turned out that nobody in Passamaquoddy Bay called any of the local rivers the “St. Croix.” This was the name Samuel Champlain had given the river on which his expedition wintered in 1604. Champlain had made the name a feature of European maps, but the local Indians never used it, nor did the first English settlers of the bay. They called the two main rivers in the area the Schoodic and the Magaguadavic.

So the first order of business was determining which of those two rivers was the proper boundary. It took almost fifteen years of both interviews with locals and archeological

excavation before commissioners finally agreed that the Schoodic was Champlain’s river. This did not, however, put an end to the negotiations. There remained the question of islands. Passamaquoddy Bay includes dozens of islands, and the Treaty of Paris was not exactly precise in tracing the line through them. The treaty awarded the United States “all islands within twenty leagues of [its]…shores,” while noting that this did not include “such islands as…heretofore have been within the limits of…Nova Scotia.” Americans argued that at least the westernmost islands in the bay were properly part of Maine. The British held that all the Passamaquoddy islands belonged to New Brunswick.

The British and Americans spent years negotiating – first about the rivers, then about the islands. In 1807, just a few years before the start of the War of 1812, the two sides were still accusing each other of promoting dubious claims. Much of this was prolonged by the British, who still believed they might one day push the border all the way to the Penobscot River, thus taking the eastern third of Maine and rendering the question of Passamaquoddy Islands irrelevant. It was also prolonged by a desire on both sides to keep the economy of the whole borderland humming. Settlements in New Brunswick were growing, settlements in Maine were too, and trade was moving back and forth. The Americans knew this trade mostly depended on British authorities’ hands off approach to trade restrictions, so they did not want to antagonize their neighbors by pushing too hard for border concessions. The British did not want to disrupt trade either, and wanted to preserve harmonious relations with the American settlers on the western side of the bay who might one day return to British subjecthood. They also continued to cultivate the Passamaquoddy Indian community – with small land reserves in New Brunswick,

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3 Ibid.
4 For the long history of British/American arguments over the border, see Francis M. Carroll, A Good and Wise Measure: The Search for the Canadian-American Boundary, 1783-1842 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).
and by placing resident priests a short distance away among the Maliseet on the St. John River. Maintaining the connection between Passamaquoddy and Maliseet communities was important. When the time came to secure a more advantageous border, the British knew it would help to have Passamaquoddy support.

And so, throughout these decades of diplomacy, the British and Americans continued to treat the border as negotiable. On the ground, however, the church networks detailed in chapters three and four operated differently. Beginning in the 1790s, and increasingly in the 1800s, both Congregationalists and Catholics treated the de facto border as a settled border. The British may have claimed Moose Island, but it was held by Americans, and so was included in the Congregational network. The Americans claimed Grand Manan Island, but Congregational missionaries avoided it because they understood Grand Manan to be British. Methodists and Anglicans in border communities in New Brunswick might have kept borders blurry by serving Maine settlers, but they were not even provided the resources to properly cover British territory. Meanwhile the Boston Catholic Church, beginning in 1798, drew the Passamaquoddy into its network in Maine. This distanced the Passamaquoddy from the Maliseet, connecting them more directly with the Penobscot, with whom they were now sharing a priest. Though Passamaquoddy identity may have still seemed flexible to British authorities, the actual people living in the community were increasingly oriented westward.

During the War of 1812, the British decided to make their attempt to enlarge New Brunswick.5 British forces took the land they wanted, first on the western side of Passamaquoddy

5 Recent scholarship on the War of 1812 has generally taken a broad view, placing the conflict in its larger Atlantic World context. Two books that come to similar conclusions about the war are Alan Taylor, The Civil War of 1812 (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), and Troy Bickham, The Weight of Vengeance: The United States, the British Empire, and the War of 1812 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Both Taylor and Bickham see the post-revolution period as a kind of cold war. Taylor focuses on Britain’s creation of a counterrevolutionary regime in Upper Canada, and its hope to weaken the fledgling republic and dominate the interior of North America. Bickham
Bay, and then all the way to the Penobscot River. The crown assumed that at the very least all the
Passamaquoddy islands were now permanently part of New Brunswick, and all men residing there were forced to take an oath of allegiance. In the rest of the zone the occupying forces were a bit more cautious, offering privileges to Maine residents who took the opportunity to return to subjecthood. Few did, however. Most people carried on with their lives as before. And even though the British threatened apprehension and court martial for anyone “found sojourning…or passing or repassing” within the occupied zone, both Congregationalists and Catholics made a point of ignoring the order. Ministers and priests continued to serve their networks throughout the region without pause. Well within British lines in Ellsworth, Peter Nurse continued to collect his pay from Boston and help his pupils secure teaching positions. In Boston, Father Cheverus assured his parishioners that he would be completing his circuit as if nothing had changed.

Church networks had built and maintained the connections between the easternmost settlements in Maine and the rest of Massachusetts. Now those connections paid off. The British ended up returning most of the occupied territory to the United States in the Treaty of Ghent. They tried to preserve at least some of their gains by keeping the Passamaquoddy islands, but after three more years even those were returned. The border, which appeared temporary and negotiable before the war, turned out to be immovable. And as the British learned this lesson, they discovered another troubling reality. Their own lax enforcement of a border they believed to be flexible had allowed American teachers to cross over and take positions educating young British subjects. This was a development authorities had not considered. Loggers and fishermen

_argues that the British were most interested in preserving their dominance of the Atlantic by quashing an increasingly powerful rival. Neither focuses on Maine or the Maritimes. For a brief account of the invasion of Maine, see George F.W. Young, _The Capture and Occupation of Downeast Maine, 1814-1815/1818_, (Stonington, ME: Penobscot Books, 2014). For a New Brunswick perspective, see Robert Dallison, _A Neighbourly War: New Brunswick and the War of 1812_ (Fredericton, NB: Goose Lane Editions, 2012).

were not thought to be dangerous sources of republican principles, but teachers were a different story. Officials in Fredericton began to take another look at the families who had crossed over the previous decade. Who were these people, after all? Before the war few distinctions had been made. Migrants were simply looking for opportunity in the borderland – which, after all, was mainly under British economic control. Now, people from the Maine side of the line seemed less like apolitical opportunists and more like foreigners.

What followed was a rapid reevaluation of the border and migration from the United States. Just a few years earlier, Maine residents who requested land in New Brunswick had been treated as lapsed British subjects. Even when they petitioned alongside British veterans – even if they had carried arms against the crown – they were simply handed land as if there was no political distinction to be made. Now, almost overnight, Maine residents were re-classified as “foreign Protestants.” The change in thinking even applied to some who had already arrived in New Brunswick. During the years of the porous border, there had been no appeals to loyalty. The authorities expressed little interest in why New Englanders wished to relocate to British North America, they were simply happy to welcome them when they did. Now retroactive complaints began to be made: these people were only interested in land, and had no love for the King or the Empire. The authorities dusted off their old procedures for naturalizing foreign Protestants, and began to read land petitions more closely. Attitudes had changed in the northeastern borderland.

The decades-long debate over the fate of the Passamaquoddy Bay islands provides one of the clearest examples of a de facto border becoming inflexible before politicians understood or expected it. There are dozens of islands in and around the bay, but only a few mattered to both sides. These were Moose Island, which is very close to Pleasant Point, Maine; Campobello
Island, which is even closer to Maine than Moose Island; and Grand Manan, the most distant and largest of the three. After the Treaty of Paris in 1783, the Americans managed to hold Moose Island, while the British held Campobello and Grand Manan. The British had the better deal when it came to land, the Americans when it came to people. Campobello Island is about fifteen square miles, and Grand Manan is fifty. Moose Island is the smallest of the three, but contained Eastport, the largest community. The British were determined to hold both Campobello and Grand Manan, though they worried their legal claim to the latter was shaky. Ironically they had a better claim to Moose Island, but the Americans were equally determined to retain that.

Throughout the period from 1783 to 1812, the two powers made efforts to determine the rightful possession of each of these islands. British negotiators tended to reach as far back into the past as possible to buttress their claims. In 1621, James I of England had granted Sir William Alexander a giant tract of land, consisting of what is today Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and much of eastern Quebec. The grant specifically included all islands within six leagues of the boundary line. This grant, according to the British, attached all the islands in question to New Brunswick. The Americans pointed to a much more recent document, drawn up at the close of the French and Indian War. In the aftermath of victory over the French, no one had found it pressing to determine which British colony received which islands. The Royal Commission in 1763, therefore, had simply drawn a line dividing Massachusetts from Nova Scotia, “from Cape Sable across the entrance of the Bay of Fundy to the mouth of the River St. Croix.” Grand Manan was clearly west of this line, which barely grazed its northern tip. The Royal Commission of 1763, Americans argued, obviously superseded a two century-old land grant. Therefore, Grand Manan was properly part of Maine.7

7 Carroll, A Good and Wise Measure, 38-40.
The issue for the Americans came down to logic and jurisdiction. All three islands are much closer to mainland Maine than they are to mainland New Brunswick. Logically, they would be more easily administered from the United States. Moose Island is so close to Maine that it is no longer an island – it was linked to the mainland by a causeway in the 1930s. And today, though Campobello is part of New Brunswick, most visitors arrive over a bridge from the town of Lubec, Maine. In 1803, the US Minister to Great Britain pointed out that “to avoid questions of interfering jurisdiction arising from its being to the westward of a suitable boundary line, [Campobello] should belong to Massachusetts.” He acknowledged that the settlers on the island had received title from British authorities, but felt that it would be no problem to transfer the titles. ⁸

A few years later, Secretary of State James Madison made a similar point about Grand Manan in a letter to the US Ministers to Great Britain. That island is not quite as conveniently situated as is Campobello, but the question of jurisdiction was similar. Grand Manan is about seven miles off the coast of Maine, but eighteen miles from New Brunswick. As noted above, the vast majority of the island lies west of a straight line drawn according to the treaty stipulations. Thusly, according to Madison, the island was “clearly within the general limits of the United States” and “no just title can…be alleged on the British side.” His correspondents agreed, noting that even if the British wished to give themselves the entirety of Passamaquoddy Bay, by pushing the borderline all the way to the U.S. mainland, Grand Manan would still be on the American side of that line. The American claim to the island seemed strong. ⁹


⁹ James Madison to James Monroe, 15 May 1806; Monroe and Pinkney to Madison, 25 April 1807, in Manning, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 172, 589.
The British, for their part, always believed that Moose Island and the town of Eastport by rights belonged to them. All the Passamaquoddy Bay islands, they claimed, were properly part of New Brunswick. There was no logical reason for the border to shift eastward just for the purposes of delivering one island to the United States. Besides, their agreeing to such a shift would strengthen the American claim on Campobello and Grand Manan Islands, and be a major impediment to any future effort to move the border even further west. And so, throughout the interwar period, the British never let go of their claim to Moose Island. In the 1780s, officials in New Brunswick even tried a few times to collect taxes from settlers in Eastport, though they were always rebuffed.\(^\text{10}\) Moose Island settlers insisted that they were under the jurisdiction of the United States. It is not hard to understand why. As the easternmost settlement in Maine, Eastport was in a lucrative position to benefit from both licit and illicit trade. If Moose Island became one of many New Brunswick islands, Eastport would cease to be the easternmost port, and would lose its special position to Lubec, Robbinston, or another settlement on the mainland.\(^\text{11}\)

The U.S. and Britain found themselves at a decades-long impasse over these islands. But in the years after the revolution both sides were invested in maintaining the region as a borderland. This meant keeping the border permeable and encouraging trade and migration, so as to promote development of the whole region. Neither side wanted to start a fight over sovereignty, because that risked dividing the region and curbing development. The British always had the power to simply take Moose Island, but such an action would anger Americans

\(^{10}\) Young, *Capture and Occupation of Downeast Maine*, xi.

\(^{11}\) This is exactly what happened when the British did seize Moose Island temporarily during the War of 1812. Some Eastport merchants removed to Lubec, where they created a new “easternmost” port. See Young, *British Capture*, 11.
and disrupt the trade on which so many British subjects depended. And both sides were optimistic that eventually they would get the border they wanted.  

The Americans felt like a fight over the border would hurt U.S. interests more than it would British interests. According to James Madison, commerce with the Maritimes was “more beneficial to the United States than to those colonies.” The most important item of that commerce was gypsum. At that time, the US estimated that it was importing somewhere between thirty and fifty tons of gypsum per year from the Maritime colonies to use as fertilizer. Some British estimates put the trade much higher. This was not entirely a legal trade, so it was hard to pin down exact numbers. The gypsum was brought to Maine first, where American ships then moved it to New York, Philadelphia, and the Chesapeake. Every summer more than fifty American vessels anchored in Passamaquoddy Bay to take on gypsum. And this was just one element of the trading relationship. There was also a trade in fish, from the colonies to Boston and then to points south. If the United States did something to anger the British, all of this could fall apart. The extensive gypsum trade, Madison pointed out, depended on some selective enforcement of trade restrictions on the British side: it “is the result of a connivance in practice…which may possibly be withdrawn.” In 1807, Madison advised his ministers in Britain to postpone the question of Grand Manan and other islands “for future decision,” while sweetening things a bit by suggesting that “British vessels shall not be restrained from carrying” gypsum anywhere in the United States.

Meanwhile, the residents of British North America would not necessarily have agreed with Madison that trade was more beneficial to Americans than it was to them. As noted in

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12 Graham, Sea Power, 172.
14 Madison to Monroe and Pinkney, 30 July 1807, in Manning, Diplomatic Correspondence, 180.
chapter two, authorities in New Brunswick regularly backed down from threats to enforce trade restrictions, often at the urging of locals. Everyone around Passamaquoddy Bay had an interest in the trans-border trading zone continuing to function without interference. Furthermore, the gypsum trade was a bit of a free for all, particularly in Nova Scotia. Technically, anyone in Nova Scotia wishing to ship goods outside the province was required to register with the naval officer in Halifax. The requirement applied not only to shipping to Maine, but also to shipping across the bay to the sister province of New Brunswick. This was tremendously inconvenient for Nova Scotians who lived on the north side of the peninsula. Instead of simply making a forty-mile trip across the bay, they were asked to first make a three hundred mile trip to Halifax for the registration, and then retrace that same route to get back to where they wished to begin their voyage in the first place.\(^{15}\)

The result of this policy was that no one on the northern shore of Nova Scotia bothered to comply with it. Trade in the bay operated independently, with little oversight. So while fifty boats were arriving from the United States to take on the gypsum, hundreds of small British vessels were involved in collecting and delivering it. By 1800, the British believed at least 100,000 tons had been shipped, and a great many families in both Nova Scotia and New Brunswick relied on the trade. They also depended on the goods they were receiving from the Americans, most prominently flour. The Maritimes had become increasingly dependent on bread and flour from the United States over the years. By 1790 they were importing 40,000 barrels of bread and meal and 80,000 bushels of grain annually, and by the time of the War of 1812 the provinces were paying the Americans roughly £100,000 annually for food. Farmers in the

provinces could not compete with the American grain, so they went into lumbering or entered into the flourishing gypsum trade.\textsuperscript{16}

The upshot of all this was that neither side felt like disrupting what had become a very complex and extensive trading relationship by fighting over a few islands.\textsuperscript{17} So they decided to delay a final decision and, in the short term, simply exchange one poor claim for another. In negotiations in London, ministers Monroe and Pinkney “argued in vain” for the American claim to Grand Manan Island. The British announced that they were in possession of the island, and had been for years, and “possession…was a reasonable ground upon which to presume everything which constituted title.” The American ministers pointed out that this ignored the actual stipulations of the treaty of peace. The British “retorted” that the American claim to Moose Island, as well as the smaller Dudley and Frederick Islands, was also “very questionable.” If they were expected to go along with a questionable claim to three islands, the Americans should happily go along with a questionable claim to one. Monroe and Pinkney maintained that the American claim to the three islands in question was perfectly fine, but in the interest of compromise, they would agree to “leave the case of Grand Manan for future adjustment.” There the negotiations ended for the time being, with a profitable trading relationship preserved.\textsuperscript{18}

During all of these negotiations, as the Americans and British devoted a great deal of time to maintaining their trading relationship, neither side seem to have given a lot of thought to other elements of life in Passamaquoddy Bay. Had they looked beyond trade, at the other networks operating in the region, they might have discovered a way of strengthening their

\textsuperscript{16} Graham, \textit{Sea Power}, 48

\textsuperscript{17} After the War of 1812, merchants from Saint John, New Brunswick made a concerted effort to take control of the gypsum trade, so as to direct its profits to Saint John. They had made a previous attempt in 1806, which failed because Nova Scotia ignored it. The two provinces managed to collaborate on legislation in 1817 and 1820, which caused uproar and a great deal of violent resistance in and around Passamaquoddy. See Joshua Smith, \textit{Borderland Smuggling}, 95-108

\textsuperscript{18} Monroe and Pinkney to Madison, 25 April 1807, in Manning, \textit{Diplomatic Correspondence}, 595-596
negotiating position. Because while negotiators were arguing about the wording of seventeenth century land grants and decades-old commissions, Congregational missionaries in Maine were building a Boston-based network that included Moose Island, and excluded Campobello and Grand Manan. Ministers traveled the region practically every year during the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Had they been asked to visit all the islands in question, they surely would have. Itinerants made long journeys to visit settlers in the interior of Maine, up rivers and over terrible, sometimes non-existent roads. A quick visit to Grand Manan would have been much easier than visiting almost any inland settlement. Furthermore, most of the Grand Manan settlers were originally from Maine. And yet, though the missionary network was partially funded by Massachusetts, and the missionary societies invested a great deal of time and energy in the Passamaquoddy region, no one seems to have thought to use the network to expand the de facto border.

The Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America received its first state grant in 1791. Even at this early date, the society was already beginning to send missionaries to the furthest eastern settlements in Maine. In the fall of 1791, missionary James Lyon wrote from Machias that he was prepared to embark for three full months of work in the Passamaquoddy settlements. A year later, he made a similar trip, this time for just one month. Lyon gave eight sermons, visited three-dozen families, and baptized almost a hundred people over the course of that month. Daniel Oliver similarly visited Passamaquoddy Bay for years, itinerating almost every year from 1804 to 1809. Oliver clearly saw Eastport and Moose Island as his responsibility. He even made a special note of the needs of the island, recommending during his first trip in 1804 that the SPGNA send a missionary to concentrate purely on Moose
Island. “There ought to be a missionary upon this island three or six months,” Oliver wrote, which “would open a door for the settlement of a [permanent] congregational minister.”

Oliver distributed books throughout the area, noting a particular need in Washington County. He even crossed the border a few times, to give sermons in St. Andrews and St. Stephen, New Brunswick. But Oliver never mentioned visiting Campobello Island or Grand Manan Island. They are odd omissions. Campobello had a small but growing community of settlers. Many were loyalist refugees, but the same could be said for St. Andrews, where Oliver did choose to preach. And Oliver visited the area around Lubec, which as noted above, is adjacent to Campobello. Grand Manan would have been visible to anyone traveling in the bay – prominent on the horizon, just a few miles away. Oliver was being quite thorough in his travels. But of all the disputed islands in the region, Moose Island was the only one on his list.

Stephen Chapin was a contemporary of Daniel Oliver. He also took specific note of Eastport while ignoring the other disputed settlements. Over the course of 1808, Chapin reported travelling nearly one thousand miles, delivering forty-two sermons, visiting one hundred families, ten schools, and distributing well over a hundred pieces of literature. As mentioned in chapter three, Chapin was a strong proponent of schools, arguing that Congregational missionaries would make more progress in Maine by spending a greater proportion of their time teaching the “rising generation.” Chapin noted in his journal that Eastport was an outlier along the Maine coast. The settlers east of the Penobscot River, he wrote, tended to be from eastern Massachusetts. Mostly they were from south of Boston, though there were a few from the longer-settled parts of Maine, like Casco Bay. Eastport, however, was different: “Its inhabitants

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19 James Lyon, Box 3, Folder 6; Box 8, Folder 9; Daniel Oliver, Box 3, Folder 14, MSS 48, Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America records (hereafter SPGNA), Phillips Library (hereafter PL), Rowley, Massachusetts.
are from various parts. They are principally adventurers.” In Chapin’s opinion, Eastport was more than a promising location for missionary work; it was one of the most important spots in Maine. The SPGNA ought, he wrote, to divide up Maine into missionary fields and place one missionary at the center of each. Eastport headed his list of fields.  

The SPGNA seems to have taken this advice to heart. It was considering the idea at the same time the Maine Missionary Society and the Evangelical Missionary Society were arriving on the scene, and this new assistance brought the promise of covering more ground. In conversation with the Maine Missionary Society, the SPGNA considered dividing the District of Maine into thirty sections and asking each missionary to cover one or two sections. This way all settlements in the district could receive at least nominal coverage, with only fifteen missionaries divided between the payrolls of the various societies. The societies made a preliminary attempt to divide the district, and Eastport and its surrounding settlements were the very first towns on the list. Clearly, the SPGNA was prioritizing the area.  

In 1811 and 1812, Ephraim Abbott made the SPGNA’s most comprehensive mission trips to the Passamaquoddy region. Abbott preached everywhere. He spent a full month in Robbinston, almost a month in Eastport, and a month and a half in Calais. He visited Lubec and Denneysville. He traveled up the St. Croix River to reach settlements that did not yet have names; Abbot specifically mentions reaching Townships One, Three, Six, Seven, Twelve, and Seventeen. During the first part of his visit, Abbott noticed the need for books, so he collected as many as he could from the various societies operating in Maine. By 1812 he claimed to have supplied nearly every family or school in the area, though Eastport was so populous that he failed to reach every household there. Abbott even spent some time visiting the Passamaquoddy.

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20 Stephen Chapin, Box 1, Folder 18, SPGNA, PL.  
21 Gillet to Morse, Box 6, Folder 2, SPGNA, PL.
Indian community, though they had no use for him, since their priest was in residence most of the year. In all his travels, however, Abbott never seems to have bothered with Campobello or Grand Manan Islands. According to his notes, he saw his field as consisting of the entire country “East of Machias…40 miles from North to South & 20 from East to West.” Only Moose Island, of the disputed islands, was considered part of that field.22

The British, too, had opportunities to use church networks to their advantage from the New Brunswick side of the border. Their failure to do so is puzzling, particularly in the case of Eastport. As established above, the British believed throughout the entire interwar era – from 1783 to 1812 – that Moose Island and Eastport were part of New Brunswick and would one day revert to British control. They even tried to collect taxes from Moose Island settlers. Simultaneously, and again throughout the entire era, the Anglican Reverend Samuel Andrews was serving the British settlements of Passamaquoddy Bay. Reverend Andrews made a circuit of the bay every year. He regularly visited both Deer and Campobello Islands. These two islands are each barely a mile from Eastport. And the community had an obvious need for religious services. As Congregational ministers frequently mentioned, Eastport was one of the most populous settlements in the region. When Ephraim Abbott tried to supply all the settlers in the area in 1812, the only place he could not completely serve was Eastport. An occasional friendly visit from the Reverend Andrews might have made the people of Moose Island a little more receptive to British overtures, and he surely would have visited if instructed to do so. But no one in Fredericton or Halifax intervened in the reverend’s routine.23

In fact, as mentioned in chapter three, the only border crossing happened from the other side. In 1817 a number of people from St. Andrews met with Daniel Lovejoy, the Congregational

22 Ephriam Abbott, Box 1, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL.
23 Anglican Church Records, St. Andrews Parish, Microfilm Reel #F1082, Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (hereafter PANB), Fredericton, New Brunswick.
missionary stationed in Robbinstown, Maine, and asked him to visit their community. Lovejoy made sure to ask the permission of the Reverend Andrews, who was happy to consent. At that point Andrews was over eighty and unable to preach every week, and had not received much assistance from the Anglican hierarchy based in Halifax. The Reverend Lovejoy preached regularly in St. Andrews for a few weeks, and the people there even took up a collection to try and cultivate this connection to Maine’s Congregational missionary network. Lovejoy’s border crossing happened at the same time that Britain was trying to retain Moose Island, which it had seized during the War of 1812 and refused to return afterwards. Here was another missed opportunity – and the last one, since the British finally abandoned their claim to Moose Island in 1818. British forces controlled the island for four full years. They might have encouraged the Anglican Bishop in Halifax, Charles Inglis, to provide more resources to the area. This would have had the double benefit of providing religious services to the occupied territory, and much needed assistance to the elderly Reverend Andrews. But neither political nor Anglican officials chose to act. American church networks remained the only ones active in the borderland.

In the case of the Passamaquoddy Indians, it was the Catholics who quietly solidified the border before the British realized it was happening. The status of the Passamaquoddy created a great deal of confusion in the years after the American Revolution. For decades, authorities in New Brunswick and the rest of British North America were unsure whether the Passamaquoddy were “British” or “American” Indians. In many ways the Passamaquoddy lived a trans-border life, and so did not fit neatly into either category. But as noted in chapter three, during the 1790s Massachusetts authorities attempted to win the “interest and friendship” of the community by putting a priest on the state payroll. This decision connected the Passamaquoddy to a Catholic
network based in Boston, and created a social boundary between them and the rest of New Brunswick. Even though technically their community continued to overlap the political border, Passamaquoddy life was increasingly oriented toward the Americans. The British, in their hopes to shift the border west, did not anticipate any opposition from an Indian community that was geographically as British as it was American. They failed to understand what the Catholic network in Maine had accomplished until it was too late.

The British in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia had a long history with the Indians living around Passamaquoddy Bay. There were efforts as early as the 1760s to use priests stationed on the St. John River to draw the Passamaquoddy people more firmly into a British sphere. It was well known in both Boston and Halifax that the Passamaquoddy and the Maliseet community on the St. John were essentially the same people. They were often mentioned as belonging to the same nation, and the Passamaquoddy only began negotiating as a separate group in the mid-1700s. So it was easy to orient the community eastward if the closest available priest was on the St. John. During the American Revolution, this played out exactly the way the British wanted. After the Passamaquoddy declared their support for the Americans and assisted them in attacking Nova Scotia, the British responded by paying a priest to settle among the Maliseet. Almost immediately, the Passamaquoddy stopped aiding the Americans and began spending more time in British territory.\(^2^4\)

After the war the boundary may have been a bit uncertain and negotiable, but it was obvious that it passed through the middle of Passamaquoddy territory. The goal for the British, then, was to keep the community straddling the border. Maintaining at least some land for the Passamaquoddy in New Brunswick would ensure that the border remained an abstraction for

\(^{24}\) For more on this, see chapter one.
them, or so the British believed. It would also make it possible to continue the old strategy of
drawing Passamaquoddy attention eastward with a priest on the St. John. And so, in the earliest
maps laying out loyalist grants in and around the bay, there always appears a block of land east
of the St. Croix River marked as “Land reserved by Order of His Excellency Governor Parr for
Indians.”25 This was a two hundred acre section reserved from a much larger tract of land
referred to in the Provincial records as “Indian Lands.” When the time came to settle loyalist
refugees in the area, officials decided to give away most, but not all, of the Indian lands. Those
two hundred acres would preserve a place for the Passamaquoddy in British territory.

The so-called Indian lands had been a center of Passamaquoddy life for centuries. Samuel
Champlain took note of Indians living and fishing each summer on what was almost certainly the
same land, near the falls of the St. Croix. These were some of the best lands in the river valley,
so as the loyalists arrived they became a frequent point of contention. First, the “Indian Lands at
the falls of the Schoodic [St. Croix] River,” a tract of over four thousand acres, was reserved to
the officers and men of the loyalist 74th Regiment and North Carolina Highlanders. Officers were
allotted two hundred acres, and enlisted men one hundred. As that group was arriving, they
found themselves in conflict with another settler named William Anstruther, who petitioned for
the same lands. Anstruther wrote that he and his associates wished to settle immediately on the
east side of the St. Croix River, and needed two hundred acres apiece. Their first choice was the
lands “called Indian Lands…including an old Indian Camp Ground.”26 Then, complicating
things still further, a third association made a claim for the same lands.

The New Brunswick authorities tried to distribute most of the land in an equitable
fashion. But they refused to distribute all of it. The two hundred acre parcel was retained for the

26 Petition of William Anstruther, 19 February 1785, Microfilm Reel #F1024, Land Petitions and Grants, PANB.
Passamaquoddy. The Lt. Governor declared that those lands were “reserved for the future consideration of government.” Anstruther was the most frustrated of the petitioners. He wrote back claiming that the Indian Lands were the only decent lands left in the area, and reminding the Lt. Governor of his four years of loyal service during the war. But his pleas had little affect. Loyal service notwithstanding, Anstruther was forced to petition for a completely different tract, this time many miles to the north on a tributary of the St. John.27 The Passamaquoddy, it should be remembered, had not been loyalists. They had actually partnered with the Americans in attacking Nova Scotia. But as the eastern side of the bay filled up with refugees, the British were willing to anger some loyalists to ensure the Passamaquoddy retained their small piece of land.

This continued to be an unpopular decision among the white settlers of Charlotte County, New Brunswick. The two hundred acres may have been a small plot, but it was well located, in what was apparently “the best fishing place.” Periodically more requests were made for the plot of land, to no avail. One group protested that they had been “much threatened” by the Indians and by “old inhabitants” of the area, but had persevered, making improvements “at the risk of our lives.” There was no reason not to grant them the tract, they wrote, since “the Savages thought proper to quit this place and settled themselves within the states.” The response, however, was that the “Indian Lands are not to be granted.”28 Six years later, in 1791, the inhabitants of St. Stephen wrote to Fredericton complaining of their lack of an Anglican church. They had grown into a sizable community, and felt they deserved a preacher and schoolmaster. The Indian lands, they thought, would make the perfect glebe. The land office, however, chose to ignore the request.29

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27 Orders in Council, February 1785, Petition of William Anstruther, September 1785, Ibid.  
28 Petition of William Evan Hughes, undated, Microfilm Reel #F1026, Land Petitions and Grants, PANB.  
29 Petition of Inhabitants of St. Stephen, 2 February 1791, Microfilm Reel #F1038, Land Petitions and Grants, PANB.
A decade later the parcel of land was still sitting there, and the inhabitants of St. Stephen enlisted the Reverend Andrews to plead once again for a church. Andrews wrote to Fredericton in 1800, noting that he visited St. Stephen a few times every year to preach and always drew big crowds. The town needed its own church and settled Anglican minister, but he knew that could not happen without a securing a glebe. The Indian reserve was ideal. It was centrally located, right on the river, mostly cleared, and Andrews claimed the Passamaquoddy were not doing anything with it. Soon after Andrews’s letter, a group of local men wrote to Fredericton to back him up. They claimed that no one had seen Indians on the plot of land for years. The Passamaquoddy preferred the American side of the river, and if they were crossing into British territory they were doing it far upstream. It would seem like the perfect opportunity to dispose of this plot of land, especially considering that the Reverend Andrews had for years been the sole representative of the established church in the whole of Charlotte County. And yet, the government in Fredericton still would not grant the land. The most they would do was recommend to the petitioners that they speak to the Passamaquoddy about possibly purchasing it.  

The two hundred acres at the falls of the St. Croix was not the only land saved for the Passamaquoddy in New Brunswick. There was another plot of one hundred acres, sometimes referred to as a fishing reserve, located further up the river. This was near the junction of the Canoose Stream with the St. Croix, about twenty miles up the river from St. Stephen. The British government appears to have granted the Canoose reserve soon after the war and then forgotten about it. Few loyalist settlers ventured that far up the river and so no one else petitioned for it. It was frequently omitted in early nineteenth century lists of New Brunswick Indian reserves, even

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30 Samuel Andrews letter, 1 March 1800, Peter Cristy et al letter, 7 July 1800, RS 637, 29j, Records of the Surveyor General, Indian Material, PANB.
though a few Passamaquoddy families lived there. There were unofficial Passamaquoddy lands as well. At least some families lived in and around St. Andrews at areas that were not official reserves, but were “designated as Indian encampments.” The Passamaquoddy visited Grand Manan Island each year as well, and had camps that were more or less permanent, even if they were only used for part of the year. Visits to Grand Manan were so frequent that some New Brunswick authorities believed that there was an official Passamaquoddy reserve on the island, though one had never been officially granted.\textsuperscript{31}

The attitude in New Brunswick toward the Passamaquoddy was similar to the attitude toward the borderland as a whole. British officials were optimistic that one day they would be able to shift the border westward. At that future point all Passamaquoddy territory would fall within British North America. In the meantime, it was important to maintain an open borderland and a flexible border. Both white settlers and Indians could move about freely, the whole region would prosper, and the boundary could be settled at a later date.

Just as was the case with the islands, however, the British should have paid more attention to church networks on the ground and their affect on the de facto border. Because in 1798, after decades of allowing the British to draw Maine Indians eastward with priests on the St. John River, the Americans finally countered. The Massachusetts Legislature hired Father James Romagne to serve both the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy communities, for a salary of two hundred dollars per year. This upped the ante in the borderland. Massachusetts did not place Father Romagne on the Penobscot and try to draw the Passamaquoddy Indians westward. They made sure the priest actually lived for part of the year in the communities on Passamaquoddy Bay. This time it was the British who failed to counter. They maintained their strategy.

unchanged, supporting their priest on the St. John but not installing anyone on their side of the bay.

Massachusetts’s decision to hire Father Romagne changed everything. Passamaquoddy lives continued to overlap the border, and the community may have seemed to a casual observer as British as they were American. But Massachusetts was now directly supplying their church. And Father Romagne took his duties beyond preaching and baptism. He aided the community in petitioning for more land. He put a vaccination program in place. His annual travels connected the community directly with Boston, ensuring better communication and more regular visits from Boston-based priests like Father Cheverus. While the British were attempting to passively preserve a trans-border identity for the Passamaquoddy, the Catholic network in Maine was actively strengthening their attachment to New England. Before long, the barrier this created between the Passamaquoddy and New Brunswick would prove rather solid.

During the War of 1812, the British decided the time had come to create the border they had always wanted. In the spring of 1814, the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick sent a petition to London, requesting that measures be taken to “alter the boundary between [Maine] and this Province.” Their agent in London pressed the issue, noting that the Penobscot River was “a natural boundary and would obviate most of the inconveniences to which the British Colonies are now subjected.” Governor Sherbrooke of Nova Scotia chimed in as well, claiming the Penobscot as “the old frontier of the State of Massachusetts,” and requesting that British forces “take that river…as our boundary.” British officials also remembered that during the Revolution, in 1779, they had successfully attacked and occupied Penobscot Bay. Their occupation even led to a controversial petition, created by representatives from a few eastern Maine towns, that
eastern Maine be considered a neutral zone.\textsuperscript{32} Though this petition ultimately failed, surely some of the same sentiment lingered thirty years later. The appeals for invasion were successful. Lord Bathurst, the Secretary for War and the Colonies, sent orders to Nova Scotia to “rectify” the boundary by occupying “as far as its occupation is practicable, that part of the District of Maine which at present intercepts the communication between Halifax and Quebec.”\textsuperscript{33}

These plans were no secret – in letters home, American diplomats repeatedly mentioned the British desire to shift boundaries in North America. In June 1814, two ministers reported to Secretary of State James Monroe that the British aimed for the “curtailment of [American] boundaries,” and even the “dismemberment” of parts of the union.\textsuperscript{34} When ministers for the two warring nations sat down officially in August the British were even more explicit, even though they had not yet completed their occupation of eastern Maine. The boundary line, they announced, would be revised. “That portion of the District of Maine…which intervenes between New Brunswick and Quebec” would have to be ceded to British North America. All islands in Passamaquoddy Bay would obviously be included, regardless of prior possession, once New Brunswick controlled the entire region.\textsuperscript{35}

The operation to effect this border adjustment began with the seizure of Moose Island and the city of Eastport on July 11, 1814. The British invasion caught the community completely off guard. American Captain Jacob Varnum reported that he was enjoying the morning breeze on a piazza, when “suddenly the reach or strait inside of Grand Manan became whitened by the canvas of a large fleet of vessels making directly for our harbor. It was a beautiful sight but

\textsuperscript{33} Dallison, A Neighbourly War, 90-96; Young, British Capture, 12-13.
\textsuperscript{34} Monroe to Adams, Bayard, et al, 27 June 1814, in Diplomatic Correspondence, 220.
\textsuperscript{35} Adams, Bayard, et al to Monroe, 19 August 1814, in Diplomatic Correspondence, 630-631.
rather ominous." American forces on the island were outnumbered about fifteen to one, and surrendered immediately. U.S. soldiers were taken prisoner and transported to Halifax, and the male civilians on the island were required to swear an oath of allegiance to the crown. A month later, at the end of August, an invasion force left Eastport for Penobscot Bay. It captured Castine on September 1st, then sailed up the Penobscot River and fought an engagement with American militia forces at Hampden on the 2nd. The British won, occupied Bangor the next day, and at that point controlled the eastern third of the District of Maine.36

The British did not administer the rest of eastern Maine in exactly the same way they administered Moose Island. All men on Moose Island were required to swear an oath of allegiance to the King. Men in the rest of eastern Maine were given a choice: they could swear an oath of allegiance to the King, or a different oath that pledged them only to behave “peaceably and quietly,” and refrain from carrying arms. There appears to have been an understanding from the start that while Moose Island would likely be permanently British, the status of the rest of eastern Maine had yet to be determined. According to a proclamation by the Lt. Governor of Nova Scotia, John Sherbrooke, a final decision would have to wait “until His Majesty’s pleasure shall be known,” and “orders and regulations” be established “for the permanent Government of that Country.” The British were, however, laying the groundwork for potentially shifting the border to the Penobscot permanently. Advantages were offered, in Sherbrooke’s proclamation, to those willing to take the loyalty oath. They would receive a coasting license, and so would have

permission to trade throughout the region. They would also be able to import goods from Great Britain and its other colonies.\textsuperscript{37}

In the same proclamation, Governor Sherbooke warned New Englanders against exactly the kind of movement that had characterized church networks in Maine for the previous twenty-five years. Any person who was not an inhabitant of eastern Maine at the time of occupation was prohibited from visiting the occupied zone, or “passing or repassing” the boundary, without a license from a senior British official. Violation was punishable by arrest, court martial, and banishment from the zone.\textsuperscript{38} This would seem to be a blanket prohibition, applicable to the Congregational missionaries working for any of the four missionary societies operating in Maine, and the Catholic Father Cheverus, who traveled throughout Maine every summer.

By the time war and invasion arrived, however, the networks created by the Congregational and Catholic churches in the District of Maine were deeply entrenched. No one seems to have considered altering the routine. And though they had not created a specific exception in the proclamation, the authorities apparently did nothing to stop religious itinerants. The Catholic network carried on as if nothing had changed. Father Romagne was with the Passamaquoddy when the invasion began, but reported being treated well. When the rest of the coast to the Penobscot was taken in 1814, he happened to be in that community, and so his residence was occupied twice. But Romagne carried on with his annual travel plans. He completed his typical circuit that winter, from the Indian communities within the occupation zone to Newcastle and the other mid-coast towns that were still held by Americans. Father Cheverus did the same, starting in Boston and crossing and recrossing the line. His circuit now consisted of well over a dozen communities, from Portsmouth, New Hampshire and Portland,


\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.
Maine, all the way to Bangor and the Indian communities within the occupation zone. Cheverus was adamant that, war or no war, he would keep to his schedule. “Otherwise,” he wrote, “it would be said here…that fear had caused me to leave…for the people here really believe themselves very exposed to the enemy.”

Meanwhile, the Congregationalists continued to maintain their missionary network as well. Jonathan Fisher, the resident minister in Blue Hill, Maine, had engaged in a great deal of missionary work over the years. He traveled the country east of Penobscot Bay on his own in the late 1790s, and over the first two decades of the nineteenth century he worked regularly for the missionary societies, especially the SPGNA. In 1814 Fisher found himself right in the middle of the invasion. On September 3rd, during the Battle of Hampden, he wrote in his diary: “cannons [are] heard plainly at Blue Hill.” He spent the next few weeks describing his and his neighbors increasing anxiety over finding themselves in occupied territory. The British, Fisher wrote, “have declared by proclamation their determination to hold possession of the territory between the Penobscot River and Passamaquoddy Bay.” On September 6th residents of Blue Hill met and signed articles of capitulation, and were required to hand over their guns, though those guns were restored days later to anyone who signed an agreement not to participate in the fighting. On the eighth, Fisher wrote, he “felt to-day somewhat dejected under a view of our situation as fallen into the hands of the British.”

And yet, though dejected and in the hands of the British, Fisher continued his work in the Congregational network. Just as he had been doing for years, Fisher preached in various places throughout the Penobscot River valley. In the winter of 1814/1815 he travelled from Blue Hill, in the occupied zone, to Bangor to preach there. Then he carried on into the American-held towns

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39 Ibid
to the northwest, visiting Garland, Corinth, and other communities. This passing of the border appears to have raised no alarms. At roughly the same time, in the fall of 1814, another missionary traveling around Penobscot Bay was encouraging even more engagement with the war zone. In a letter to Boston, Alfred Johnson noted that while the region had been “starv’d” for preaching, it was beginning to revive with the occupation. The British were stimulating trade, and attracting “a multitude of strangers.” Johnson seemed to believe that the war provided more opportunity for the Congregationalists, not less.\footnote{Ibid; Alfred Johnson letter, 31 October 1814, Box 3, Folder 1, SPGNA, PL.}

Most striking in its implications for the border was the fact that the British occupation had no effect on Peter Nurse and his network of teachers in eastern Maine. Nurse was based in Ellsworth, within the occupied zone, but his work was not independent. He was essentially an employee of two Massachusetts-based missionary societies simultaneously, the SPGNA and the Evangelical Missionary Society. Nurse continued to collect his pay and keep the societies apprised of his work throughout the war. Essentially, the British were allowing Congregational organizations to continue to maintain their influence across the whole District of Maine by funneling money and literature into Nurse’s schools. This decision had repercussions. Only one year earlier, local officials in New Brunswick had begun to complain about young men from Maine “offering themselves for school masters,” and potentially carrying “republican principles” over the border. Peter Nurse knew about this phenomenon, writing just after the war ended that at least one student of his had been teaching in New Brunswick for over a year.\footnote{Nurse to Thayer, 26 September 1815, bMS 502, Box 1, Folder 7, Evangelical Missionary Society in Massachusetts records, 1808-1914 (hereafter EMS), Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Bedell to Odell, 18 June, 9 November 1813, RS547, Folder 1, Naturalization Records, PANB.} So just as the British were trying to create a new border, they began losing control of the old one. As they were ostensibly trying to protect their new boundary at the Penobscot, they were doing nothing to
address the missionary networks that overlapped that boundary and funded Maine teachers. This allowed those teachers, and potentially their republican principles, to spread into New Brunswick proper.

At the same time, the Catholic network in Maine was ensuring Passamaquoddy support for the Americans. The British had for years allowed for a transnational Passamaquoddy community partly in anticipation of this military adjustment of the border, but their strategy was a failure. At the outbreak of war, the Passamaquoddy community at Pleasant Point made it clear that they felt no attachment to the British. Some apparently asked for a notice to be posted in their chapel, “forbidding all British subjects” from doing “any injury whatever” to the building or the Passamaquoddy community. Chief Francis Joseph Neptune called a meeting with Americans in Eastport, where he made clear the Passamaquoddy “attachment to our American Brothers, and…desire and inclination to live in peace and amity with all our neighbors, particularly our American Brothers.” Father Matignon in Boston noted happily that these Indians, “whom Mr. Ciquart [sic] formerly governed have declared themselves neutral.” Ciquard was the priest who had been poached by New Brunswick, and who had drawn the Passamaquoddy toward the British interest until Massachusetts agreed to hire Father Romagne in 1798.

The 1814 invasion of eastern Maine was exactly the situation that John Allen had warned Massachusetts about twenty years earlier, and the reason the state chose to hire Father Romagne. The British, Allen wrote in 1793, were trying to secure the Passamaquoddy interest in case of “any rupture...with this country.” It was imperative to prevent that community from getting

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43 Quoted in Micah Pawling, “Petitions and the Reconfiguration of Homeland: Persistence and Tradition Among Wabanaki Peoples in the Nineteenth Century” (PhD diss., University of Maine, 2010), 244.
“settled down & attached solely to the other Government.” Allen had even dismissed concerns about borders. It did not matter whether the individual Passamaquoddy communities resided on the British or the American side of the de facto border. What mattered was securing their “amity & interest,” and the way to do that was to provide them with a priest. Now, in 1814, events played out just as Allen had predicted. For sixteen years, the Passamaquoddy had been well served by a priest paid for by Massachusetts. Father Romagne lived alongside the Indians, preached, baptized, assisted with petitions and vaccinations. Though their community straddled the border, the Passamaquoddy relied on Boston for everything and Fredericton for nothing. And so when the British army arrived to take eastern Maine and looked for their acquiescence, they were disappointed. The Passamaquoddy were not inclined to do anything that might shift the border westward. They wanted to remain part of Massachusetts and the Diocese of Boston.45

The post-War of 1812 period brought changes to the way British authorities understood the borderland. In the previous decades, during the borderland boom of the 1790s and 1800s, the whole region had been open. Like their counterparts in other parts of the northeast – the Canadas, Vermont – New Brunswick authorities chose to keep people and goods moving freely within the space. Migrants from the United States were welcome. Americans moved over the border unimpeded, conducted their affairs with no trouble, and when they asked for grants of land they got them. Actions that might get in the way of the spirit of openness and free trade – like Colin Campbell’s seizure of the American ship Sally in the St. Croix River – were quickly reversed.46 When the U.S. tried to enforce its 1807 Embargo Act along the northeastern border, British authorities actively encouraged Maine residents to skirt the laws. Then, during the early years of

46 For the story of the Sally, see chapter two.
the War of 1812, the same authorities tacitly allowed many instances of collusive capture, in which an American captain would intentionally allow an “enemy” privateer to seize his ship, thereby illegally trading his cargo.47

All of this activity, however, took place during a time when the British believed that the border would still be adjusted, and unofficial colonial policy was to treat U.S. citizens as lapsed British subjects. Across the northeast British authorities were soliciting Americans settlers for the borderland. Proclamations in both Upper and Lower Canada offered whole townships to anyone who wished to petition for them. Both private land speculators and public entities – like the Executive Council of Upper Canada itself – took out ads in American newspapers to draw families north. Anyone could relocate to British North American territory for any reason, at any time. These people, after all – people who were adults between 1783-1812 – had been British subjects at birth. Even the men who had taken up arms in the rebel cause were lumped in with all the rest. A quick informal oath was all that was necessary to reenter the fold, and sometimes even the oath could be ignored.48

The war years began to shift the thinking in New Brunswick. The outbreak of hostilities, the invasion and subsequent withdrawal from eastern Maine, and the peace process finally showed British authorities that their earlier optimistic assessment of borderland possibilities was flawed. They were not going to get the generous border they had envisioned. And beyond that, the people of Maine had changed. This was a surprise. In the earlier years the settlers rushing into the borderland all seemed the same, like apolitical opportunists. It did not matter whether they chose the British or the American side of the borderland, because all they were interested in was good, connected land. And economically, they would all be dependent on British trade

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48 For much more on borderland migration see chapter two.
anyway. They did not seem like dangerous republicans, because geographically and economically they were closer to their neighboring British subjects than they were to the heart of New England.

Therefore, what the British expected to find in eastern Maine at the outset of the War of 1812 was a remote outpost, still apolitical and estranged from faraway Boston – the sort of place that might favor collaboration, or at least neutrality, as it had in 1779. What they found instead was a region that had been rapidly integrated with the rest of the state, and was in constant contact with Boston. The Congregational and Catholic networks in Maine created that connection – and created it quickly, thanks to state funding, and in the case of the Congregationalists, the rise of ladies cent societies. Both networks, moreover, devoted a disproportionate amount of resources to the far eastern corner of the District of Maine. Settlements there received a wealth of books and schools, and soon produced a surplus of schoolteachers. These borderland opportunists were suddenly republicans. That de facto border that the British thought was flexible had quietly become inflexible. New Brunswick needed to reevaluate its border policy.

The first changes happened early in the war. When the fighting began, officials began to consider that a category of people that could be labeled “Americans” lived in their province, and that they probably should gather some information about them. There was no push to round anyone up for deportation. The Jay Treaty of 1794 had made clear that in the event of a war, there would be no such deportations from either country, so long as resident aliens continued to “behave peaceably and commit no offence against the Laws.” Authorities decided, however, to at least take stock of the resident Americans. Though they would likely not be deported, it was

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important to ensure that they were, indeed, behaving peaceably and committing no offence. Attention to the issue varied among the cities and counties of the province. Officials in some places simply issued proclamations, waited for Americans to come forward and report themselves, and then noted their names. Others with the same task, for instance in the busy port of Saint John, did a little investigating.

All told, the province discovered quite a few American residents. Almost all of these people were from Maine or the rest of Massachusetts, and they were living all over New Brunswick. Most raised little alarm. A letter from one settlement on the Miramichi River noted that a handful of Americans had been cutting timber there for about three years. A more comprehensive survey from the same region, this time covering all of Northumberland County, found just over a hundred American workers. Some authorities tried to differentiate between Americans who were temporary laborers and others who had relocated to the province with a family. Walter Bates, the sheriff of Kings County, submitted a list of ten Americans. He noted, however, that at least four of these men had families in New Brunswick and “consider[ed] themselves as subjects.” Authorities in Saint John forwarded a list of twenty-seven men who had “come from the United States…to reside and settle” in Saint John over the past few years, and had taken oaths of allegiance. A handful of the men had brought families along, and all of them had been living in Massachusetts/Maine before crossing the border. The Saint John authorities noted “no instance of seditious practice, or symptoms of danger” amongst the Americans.50

All together, New Brunswick discovered that it had a little over two hundred Americans in residence during the War of 1812, most from Maine. This was remarkably similar to the number of British aliens discovered in Maine by the Americans, who were conducting a similar

50 Letters, RS547, Folder 1, Naturalization Records, PANB.
survey. Just as in New Brunswick, authorities issued proclamations in various places and relied on those concerned to self-report. A wide variety of British-born people chose to announce themselves: from newcomers to Portland who had arrived only days earlier, to families who had been resident in Maine for more than thirty years. The records did not differentiate between aliens from the British Isles and British North America, so it is impossible to determine how many had crossed the Maine/New Brunswick border. But many people on the list lived in the eastern section of Maine. Over fifty declared that they were residents of Eastport, Castine, or other towns east of the Penobscot River.51

The discovery of over fifty British aliens living in the region of Maine most exposed to the British did not, apparently, raise alarms. Nor did the discoveries in any other states. But New Brunswick authorities had a different reaction to their findings. Though most of the Americans they uncovered seemed innocuous, there were some who were potentially problematic. As noted in chapter four, John Bedell, of Woodstock, New Brunswick, identified nineteen resident Americans in his community. Most of them had reported themselves, as requested, and seemed to pose little threat. But, Bedell noted, “there are some of these persons from the States offering themselves for school masters.” Schools were important, and teachers were in high demand, but Bedell believed it was vital to “prevent as much as possible republican principles being disseminated amongst us – and the minds of our youth from receiving any improper bias or false principles of religion or government…”52 This was the first complication in the prevailing New Brunswick view of the borderland. Lumbermen on the Miramichi, dockworkers in Saint John, farm families looking for improved land – these were the sorts of people the British expected to find in the borderland. They were the kind of apolitical migrants that a colony needed to grow,

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52 Bedell to Odell, 18 June, 9 November 1813, RS547, Folder 1, Naturalization Records, PANB.
and they were the reason the border had not been enforced. Teachers, though, seemed different. How could they be apolitical? They had been educated in Massachusetts and were now bringing their republican education into British territory. Perhaps the open border was ill advised.

These concerns only deepened after the failed occupation of eastern Maine and the end of the war. The people on the other side of the border were supposed to have been essentially the same as their British North American counterparts. That proved not to be the case. Though everyone knew Washington County, Maine, was economically entwined with New Brunswick, politically it seemed to have shifted. It had always seemed unnecessary to quibble about who counted as a “real” British subject, but now maybe a distinction made sense. Plus, after thirty years, a new generation was coming of age. These people were native to New Brunswick. Shouldn’t they have more rights and privileges than newly arrived Americans? Requiring only a short oath from migrants now seemed insufficient.

An 1817 letter to the government in Fredericton summarizes the changes in post-war thinking. This letter, by Robert Pagan, commissioner of Charlotte County, was mentioned in chapter two. Pagan was reporting the number of arrivals from the United States that he had personally dealt with over the previous seven years. He listed ninety-two men, almost all from Maine, the majority with families. These were not the kind of people who had ever raised concerns before; in fact, these were the immigrants the British had been seeking for years. The majority were farmers, and most of the others were traders or craftsmen of some sort. Pagan, however, saw the whole lot as simply a flood of newcomers. He complained that the influx “bids fair to exceed the Loyal Population of our original settlers and their children,” and mentioned several “serious disputes” between new arrivals and “original settlers.”

53 Robert Pagan letter, 14 December 1817, RS547, Folder 1, Naturalization Records, PANB.
Pagan went on to complain less about sheer numbers, and more about procedure. The arrivals, he thought, were able to take the appropriate oaths far too easily. Most of them were looking for permanent land and “privileges,” and he had “discovered in very few of them proofs, that Loyalty to the King and a Preference to the British Constitution were the main inducements to the change of their Allegiance.” Pagan claimed that he had attempted to keep things proper, trying in “almost every instance” to get a reference from at least one or two trustworthy locals. But sometimes no reference was available, and Pagan apparently felt he couldn’t reject someone solely on that basis. “It certainly will be necessary,” he wrote, “that some restriction or regulation be adopted to make it more difficult” for immigrants to take the oaths.54

It is worth stepping back here and noting the difference between Pagan’s view of this migration in 1817 and the way American migrants to British territory had been treated for decades. First, there is the category he created for “original settlers.” Thirty years earlier, after the arrival of the loyalist refugees in New Brunswick, original settlers would have referred to the families who moved to the Saint John River valley or Passamaquoddy Bay in the 1760s. Ironically, most of these people were from the District of Maine or the rest of Massachusetts. To them, the loyalist arrivals of 1783 were the newcomers. Furthermore, some of the 1783 arrivals, like the Cape Ann Association, were non-loyalist migrants from Massachusetts. Now all of these people – pre-Revolutionary New England migrants, loyalist refugees, non-loyalist settlers of the first decade or so – were thrown together into the category of “original settlers.” Meanwhile migrants arriving from the same places for many of the same reasons, but after the turn of the century, were now classified as new.

54 Ibid.
Second, it had not previously been important that either loyalty to the King, or preference for the British Constitution, be the reasons for migration north or east. In fact, throughout British North America, those trying to solicit settlers had explicitly centered their pitch on the quality and affordability of the land, and marginalized any consideration of political allegiance. Government officials in the Canadas placed advertisements directly into American newspapers, trying to interest readers in Canadian land opportunities. These same government officials granted Canadian land to men who had carried arms against the British government, to little controversy. Speculators in Lower Canada made targeted pitches to Vermont settlers, touting access to Montreal and the St. Lawrence River to try and lure them just a few more miles beyond the border. Americans who asked for land in New Brunswick – the Cape Ann Association in the 1780s, or the Grand Manan settlers in the 1800s – were simply given the land they asked for. Even when settlers with actual loyalist credentials explicitly challenged the policy, nothing changed.55

By 1817, though, many people in New Brunswick were thinking like Robert Pagan. For years Americans had received land grants with no trouble, but now some petitioners found their claims rejected. Previously overlooked distinctions between petitioners began to be emphasized. In 1818 a man named Reubin Brockway and another named Solomon Stone filed nearly identical requests for land. These men were living on the Magaguadavic River, which begins in central New Brunswick and flows southwest, emptying into Passamaquoddy Bay at the town of St. George. Brockway was forty-three and married, and admitted being born in New Hampshire. He claimed to have been in New Brunswick for fourteen years, and to have taken an oath of allegiance in 1811, seven years before his petition. He wrote that he “considers himself a British

55 Again, see chapter two.
subject.” He had “always” been on the Magaguadavic River, he claimed, and now he wanted to make it official; he asked for 300 acres to be granted on the west side of the river. New Brunswick officials approved the grant, and noted on his paperwork: “Recommended – born before the American rebellion.”

Solomon Stone, however, had not been born before the rebellion. Stone and Brockway knew each other because Brockway specified in his petition that he was requesting the land just below the parcel requested by Stone. Stone might have believed that he had an even better case for approval than Brockway. He had been a New Brunswick resident for a full eighteen years, and had arrived as a child of eight. He too, wrote that the “considers himself a British subject.” However, he was only twenty-six. He had been born in Machias, Maine a full decade after the end of the American Revolution. And having arrived as a child, he had apparently never been administered any oaths. This now mattered. Stone’s petition was rejected, and a note attached made it clear that he would have to be naturalized.

But what would that naturalization look like? Should Americans now naturalize as if they had never been subjects? Or could they still reclaim all the privileges of natural born subjectionhood? Conveniently, a legal matter had just been debated in Fredericton that pointed a way forward. In 1815, Aaron Upton of St. Stephen New Brunswick petitioned the government to register his newly built ship as British owned. Upton pointed out that he had been born in the United States, but in 1777, “before the independence of those states was acknowledged by His Majesty.” In 1800, at the age of 23, he moved to New Brunswick with his family and they had been there ever since. He noted that he paid taxes and served on juries, was enrolled in the

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56 Petition of Reubin Brockway, 22 January 1818, Microfilm Reel #F4180, Land Petitions and Grants, PANB.
57 Petition of Solomon Stone, 22 January 1818, Ibid.
militia, and considered himself a British subject. “He never took the Oath of Allegiance to the United States, nor held any office” there. Should he not be considered a “natural born” subject?  

Advocate General Ward Chipman was torn. That Upton was a British subject seemed obvious, but it was difficult to say whether he was “naturalized” or “natural born.” Chipman wrote that registering the boat did not pose a problem, as there was plenty of precedent for “granting registers to such vessels as are taken under His Majesty’s protection” – for example in times of war, when warships capitulate and sailors take oaths of allegiance to the crown. But the larger question of natural-born subjecthood was a problem. Chipman had doubts about the idea that Upton was a “natural-born subject from having been born within the United States before the acknowledgement of their independence.” It seemed as though he was a naturalized subject. He could, though, be considered natural born if he followed the stipulations of the Plantation Act of 1740, “An Act for Naturalizing such foreign Protestants and others therein mentioned, as are settled or shall settle in any of His Majesty's Colonies in America.” That act had been passed to enable non-British migrants in the colonies a chance to fully participate in political life, by providing a set of steps that would grant status as “one of His Majesty’s natural-born subjects.” It had not been used of late in New Brunswick, but it could be revived.

Chipman’s decision on the Upton case happened to coincide with the rising debate on how to handle American migrants. The Plantation Act of 1740 seemed to provide an easy solution. And so beginning in 1817, New Brunswick reclassified migrants from the United States as foreign Protestants. From that point on, petitioners were required to attain a certificate of naturalization, which once approved would grant them the status of a natural-born subject. For approval, they now had to have been residents of New Brunswick for seven years, without

58 Petition of Aaron Upton, 1815, RS547, Naturalization Records, PANB.
59 Ward Chipman letter, undated, ibid.
having left for more than a period of two months. They had to find two witnesses to testify to their residence in the Province, and their good character. And they had to have a minister certify that they had recently partaken of the Lord’s Supper, in a local Protestant church. Only after these qualifications were met would the applicant be allowed to take the appropriate oaths and be considered a natural born British subject.

The new process worked just as intended, and drastically reduced the number of people applying for naturalization. Pagan’s letter of 1817 listed ninety-two people who took the oaths over an eight-year period, just in Charlotte County. The New Brunswick Record Book of Naturalization covered the entire province, and for the subsequent seventeen years it lists only sixty-five names. Little had changed about the demographics of applicants – almost eighty percent of the men taking the oaths were from northern New England. But the new requirements made for a slower, more deliberate process. Before, any man freshly over the border could expect to be welcomed into subjection freely and immediately. Now, one had to prove oneself. The boundaries of New Brunswick were becoming more clearly defined.

There was no similar call to re-evaluate immigration on the American side of the border, during or after the war. Neither Massachusetts nor the United States as a whole chose to do anything to alter the naturalization laws that were already in place. There had been some political battles over those laws in the late eighteenth century, but those had more to do with party politics than with protecting the border. In the very first years after independence Massachusetts had been very liberal with naturalization. The state was even willing to re-naturalize loyalist returnees who had been banished by name during the war. The first federal law, in 1790, was liberal too. It required immigrants to reside in the U.S. for only two years prior to naturalization,

60 Record Book of Certificates of Naturalization, 1818-1835, RS35, F4, PANB.
and to take an oath. This law lasted five years, before the French Revolution and increasing enmity between Federalists and anti-Federalists led to its revision. The 1795 naturalization act increased the residency period to five years, and required potential citizens to provide three years notice before taking the required oaths. During the worst of the partisan fighting three years later the waiting period was briefly extended, but that law was soon repealed and U.S. returned to the requirements of 1795. And there the requirements stayed, through the upcoming war with Britain and into the later nineteenth century.

In the post-revolution years, there had been practically no impediment to naturalization on either side of the northeastern border. The region was truly a borderland, jointly shared by the two powers, in which communities blended into each other. As the 1790s and 1800s progressed, it was the British who maintained that status for the region. While the Americans argued over their laws, and made it slightly more onerous to migrate to the states, British authorities did nothing to close the borderland. Politically, the boundary did not matter yet. Flexibility was good. The British North American colonies had effective economic sovereignty over the region, and that was enough.

And then, the experience of the War of 1812 and its peace process led to a reversal. The boundary was not flexible after all. While the borderland appeared economically blended, church networks in Maine had quietly defined the limits of sovereignty. The far side of the line was now a foreign country, and had to be treated as such. New naturalization restrictions solidified the border for alien Americans, and the former borderland became legally bordered.

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Conclusion:

You Will Remain an Integral Part of Massachusetts: The End of the Shared Borderland

After the War of 1812 and a failed attempt to annex eastern Maine, the British in New Brunswick were forced to come to terms with their unexpected weakness in the borderland. For Americans in the District of Maine, however, it was just the opposite. Their grip on the region turned out to be unexpectedly strong. Maine had experienced invasion and occupation, and in the end the border had not budged an inch. The remote settlements of the east and northeast, economically and geographically so close to the British, were American after all. The border would not be shifting to the west.

But perhaps it could be pushed to the east or north? As the British moved to a defensive posture, altering naturalization laws to ward off American influence, New Englanders began to think offensively. There was no reason to fear the British anymore. Congregational missionaries and Catholic priests had succeeded in making the easternmost white communities – and, crucially, the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy people – permanently part of Maine. It was time to take advantage of what those networks had accomplished. With ambitious investment and attention to the borderland, Maine might end up with very expansive boundaries indeed.

This attitude steadily increased tensions with New Brunswick, and eventually came close to producing yet another war. The primary point of contention became the exact location of the highlands, which, according to the 1783 Treaty of Paris, were supposed to divide the rivers flowing south into the Atlantic from the rivers flowing north into the St. Lawrence. Maine contended that the highlands in question were north of the Saint John River, which empties into the Bay of Fundy. Britain claimed that the treaty was not meant to include the Saint John, and the
highlands were much further south, near the headwaters of the Penobscot River. In 1831 the two nations placed the matter before an impartial arbiter, the King of the Netherlands, who made the Saint John River the boundary. The Maine Legislature rejected this compromise. Lumbermen and settlers from both sides began to move into the disputed region; a Maine census taker was arrested in New Brunswick, a New Brunswick official was arrested in Maine. Relations even became tense in Passamaquoddy Bay, where Mainers had perhaps not given up entirely on taking Grand Manan and Campobello Islands. In 1839 both New Brunswick and Maine sent soldiers to the disputed zone, only to have the federal government in Washington step in before fighting could break out. A temporary truce took hold, and in 1842 the Webster-Ashburton Treaty finally settled (almost) the entire border.¹

The expansive ambition that led to this border crisis began in the first years after the War of 1812, when Maine was still part of Massachusetts. That state created a commission to deal with Maine lands, and began to increase investment in the region. For the first time, plans were made to build a road north of Bangor to reach Houlton and the other townships on the eastern borderline. Another road was planned from the headwaters of the Kennebec northwest toward Quebec. Had such roads been built earlier, the commission claimed, “many respectable settlements would have been made [already]…and many useful citizens would have been located there.” Those settlers would also help prevent British subjects from either New Brunswick or

Quebec from cutting timber on American territory. These roads were crucial, for “the agriculture and commerce of the State, convenience of the citizens, and…intercourse between two nations.”

The commission then began to solicit settlers for the northern reaches of Maine. The specifics of these solicitations make clear that since the 1790s and 1800s, the borderland had fundamentally changed. Proximity to British North America was no longer part of the pitch. Instead the commissioners chose to emphasize the networks, steadily built by Congregational missionary societies over the previous decades, which linked Maine communities to the rest of Massachusetts. “The expense of removing a family to Maine is inconsiderable,” commissioners asserted, and “the advantages there are many.” And what were those advantages?

Remember, if you remove there you will remain an integral part of Massachusetts, and that the numerous associations, and well directed institutions within the state to ameliorate the condition of Man, will diffuse the blessed tidings of the Gospel within your walls, and send public qualified teachers to expound its consoling doctrines to your very threshold, and aid in instructing your offspring, till you are of sufficient ability to provide for yourselves…

This was not an empty promise. The following year, in 1818, the town of Houlton received its first Congregational missionary: Rev. Seth Winslow of the Evangelical Missionary Society. The town assembled an eighty-dollar donation for the EMS, and that society promised more missionary support as soon as the new Bangor-Houlton road was constructed.

This new strategy for settlement in the north country, inaugurated by Massachusetts and soon to be adopted by the independent state of Maine, clearly illustrates the changes that are the subject of this study. For decades, northern New England had been a borderland, and it was marketed as such. It was appealing because it was shared – the border was an abstraction, and the

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2 Commissioners Reports, 28 May 1817 and 11 June 1817, Location 2120-0103, Books about the Commission for the Sale and Settlement of the Public Lands in the District of Maine, Maine State Archives (hereafter MSA), Augusta, Maine.
3 Advertisement to the People, 7 July 1817, Ibid.
4 Old Pioneer, History of the Town of Houlton (Haverhill, MA: Morse and Son, 1884), 36-46.
whole region had strong connections to British North America. For example, when the Houlton grant was awarded in 1797, the grantees realized that they had an opportunity to build a town that was technically in Massachusetts, but was a de facto part of New Brunswick. Twenty years later, there had been a fundamental reorientation. Eastern Maine was no longer attached to New Brunswick, but rather integral to Massachusetts. The borderland had been bordered.

Some of the first people to feel the impact of this bordering were the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy. Just as the border with the British solidified in the northeast, these communities were dismayed to find another border arise in the southwest. This one, established by Maine’s statehood, separated them from Massachusetts and the funding they had come to rely on for a resident priest. The events of the following years – as these two communities lost and then ultimately regained state support for their Catholic Church – provide a revealing conclusion to this study. They demonstrate not only the new realities of a solid border in Maine, but also the continued relevance of the church networks that helped to build that border.

In March of 1820, Maine finally broke from Massachusetts to become an independent state. The move was a long time coming, and in the end was driven mostly by party politics. There had never been widespread popular support for independence. Proponents of separation began holding statehood conventions in the 1780s, but had a terrible time convincing people to attend. Most residents of the well-settled towns along the coast were very happy to be part of Massachusetts. The only people strongly in favor of separation were a small group of elite men from the Portland area who were hoping to dominate the new state government, and backcountry squatters who were hoping statehood would interfere with the claims of wealthy landowners. These two groups were not natural allies, and as they squabbled the Massachusetts Legislature
lowered taxes in the district, created a few more counties (resulting in more government jobs), and successfully neutralized some of the separation support. In subsequent years separation enthusiasts occasionally managed to put statehood to a vote, but it was always rejected. The movement picked up momentum after the War of 1812, when the Democratic-Republican Party made it a part of their efforts to take control of Maine from the Federalist Party. The Federalists were still quite strong in Boston, and the Democratic-Republicans hoped to dominate the government of an independent Maine. A successful vote finally came in 1819, and statehood the following year.\(^5\)

In 1821, just one year later, Reverend Elijah Kellogg recognized that separation had created a potential opportunity. Kellogg had just accepted a mission from the Massachusetts Missionary Society to serve in the easternmost communities of Maine, on the shores of Passamaquoddy Bay. In recent decades, missionaries from the Congregational network had ignored the Catholic Passamaquoddy Indians, who were served by Father Romagne, the priest paid for by Massachusetts. But just before Maine’s statehood, Father Romagne returned to France. The Maine government then chose to discontinue the funding that would have provided the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot people with a new resident priest. These communities were newly vulnerable.

Reverend Kellogg wondered if, in their current state, he might make some inroads with the Passamaquoddy and thereby collect more money. The new state border, after all, did not really affect his Congregational network. The various Congregational missionary societies were supported by their membership and ladies cent societies, and no longer required funding from the

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states of Massachusetts or Maine. Kellogg knew the Society for Propagating the Gospel Among
the Indians and Others in North America had a special fund, the Alford fund, used to support
Indian missions. It had never been used in Maine, but perhaps now was the time? Kellogg could
try to convince the Passamaquoddy that their situation had changed, and they might choose to be
more receptive. Then he could collect pay from two societies, not just one.

The Reverend Kellogg was optimistic about his chances. Yes, he was working for the
same missionary organizations that had failed for generations to make progress with Maine
Indians. But it was a new day – Maine was an independent state, with a firm eastern border.
Kellogg had a newly empowered state government behind him, which had made clear that while
there would be some continuity in its relationship with the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy, there
would also be changes. Though the state would assume “all the duties and obligations of the
Commonwealth of Massachusetts toward the said Indians,” this apparently did not extend to
continued state funding for the Catholic Church. It was an understandable decision. The 1798
decision to put a priest on the state payroll was inspired by fear of British influence from the
east, and a desire to secure the “interest and friendship” of the Passamaquoddy and facilitate
“settlement of the Eastern Country.” Now the region was well settled, and no one was fearful of
British influence. The British had their chance at the eastern country during the War of 1812, and
failed. The Passamaquoddy had the opportunity to help them, and chose not to. Now they were
permanent residents of the State of Maine.6

Kellogg wrote to the SPGNA before leaving for Passamaquoddy Bay, and made his
proposal to collect money from the Alford fund. The SPGNA was skeptical. They had received

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6 Release of Claims between Maine and Penobscot Tribe, 17 August 1820, Digital Maine Repository, Maine State
Indian Tribes, in 1793,” in Frederic Kidder, *Military Operations in Eastern Maine and Nova Scotia During the
the same reports for years: outreach to Maine’s Indian communities was useless. Missionary Hezekiah May, in 1810, told them not to bother with the Penobscot, who had no interest in Congregationalists and prided themselves on their Catholicism: “they think they have a more universal and prevalent religion.” Ephriam Abbott echoed May’s sentiments a year later in regard to the Passamaquoddy, who, he said, were already more solemn and devout than their white neighbors and quite attached to their priest.⁷ There seemed little reason to believe that Kellogg would be successful where every other missionary had failed. Ultimately, the SPGNA decided to approve thirty dollars from the Alford fund for a few weeks work, with an asterisk attached. The pay was conditional on Kellogg demonstrating that he had accomplished something. No one else in the records received a similar asterisk. Even months later, when the time came to issue the funds, the SPGNA was reticent. The society voted to give Kellogg the funds because it “appear[ed] by his letter” that he “has rendered services.” They hoped, however, for a “fuller account in his journal.”⁸

The payment from the Alford fund ultimately went through, because it turned out that the Reverend Kellogg was making progress. When he first started visiting the Passamaquoddy, Kellogg received the usual protestations about their attachment to Catholicism and the French language, and their lack of interest in Protestant preaching or schools. Kellogg persisted, however, reminding community leaders that the new Maine government was eager for them to learn English, so that they might understand “the laws they were under.” This might have been a hard sell if Kellogg had to negotiate with a priest paid for by Massachusetts. But in 1821 there

⁷ Ephraim Abbott letters, Box 1, Folder 1; Hezekiah May letters, Box 3, Folder 9, MSS 48, Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America records (hereafter SPGNA), Phillips Library (hereafter PL), Rowley, Massachusetts.
⁸ Notes, May 1821 and Notes, October 1821, Ms. N-176, Box 2, Folder 1, Society for Propagating the Gospel Among the Indians and Others in North America records (hereafter SPGNA), Massachusetts Historical Society (hereafter MHS), Boston, Massachusetts.
was no priest in residence, and Kellogg found himself dealing mostly with Deacon Sockabasin, a leader in the community and its unofficial interpreter. Sockabasin, it turned out, was inclined to make a deal. He had been trying, without success, to get the state to purchase the Passamaquoddy a wood lot. Kellogg was willing to help, and soon did manage to secure a four hundred dollar grant for a wood lot. Before long, the Reverend Kellogg had permission to open a small school in the Passamaquoddy community.⁹

Kellogg soon found a way to augment his funding still further, this time with federal money. In 1819, the federal government had passed the Indian Civilization Act, which created something popularly known as the Civilization Fund. This fund was intended to supply grants to teachers who set up schools in Indian communities “adjoining the frontier settlements of the United States.”¹⁰ Kellogg, with the apparent assistance of Deacon Sockabasin, convinced the authorities in Washington that his school deserved money from the Civilization Fund.¹¹ This almost immediately raised alarms with the Diocese of Boston. Irish Catholics living in Eastport began warning the Passamaquoddy that Bishop Fenwick disliked the new school. The Bishop, however, did not have the ability to immediately counter with a priest and school of his own. All he could do in the short term was write a strongly worded letter. If Kellogg was only teaching reading and writing, Fenwick wrote, the school was fine. He suspected though, that the minister might be “instilling his religious principles into the minds of [Passamaquoddy] children.” This was unacceptable.¹²

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⁹ Elijah Kellogg Journal, 1821, M100.4, Box 4, Folder 75, Kellogg Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Hawthorne-Longfellow Library, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine.
¹¹ It is unclear to what extent Sockabasin helped with this plan. In the letters referenced below, Edward Kavanagh implies that Kellogg and Sockabasin worked together to defraud the government, and presumably shared the money from the Civilization Fund. I do not have any other sources that confirm this, however.
¹² Kellogg Journal, 1826-1827, Ms. N-176, Box 2, Folder 1, SPGNA, MHS.
Bishop Fenwick, in Massachusetts, did not have the power to eliminate Kellogg’s Congregational school and return Catholic services to a Catholic community. Fortunately, there were prominent Catholics in Maine who did have that power. In 1831, Edward Kavanagh of Newcastle became the first Catholic elected to the U.S. Congress from New England. As a child, Kavanagh and his family had interacted with both Cheverus and Romagne on their annual trips through Maine. He almost certainly met members of Maine’s Catholic Indian communities as well, as they occasionally traveled with the priests. Kavanagh entered Congress determined to eliminate Kellogg’s funding and return Catholic schools to the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy. Most people in those communities were still firmly Catholic, and there was no reason for the federal government to be funneling their money to a Congregationalist. “Kellogg and Saco-beson,” Kavanagh wrote to Bishop Fenwick, “have really defrauded the government in the basest manner.”

In 1833 Kavanagh managed to have the Civilization Fund money withdrawn from Kellogg and allocated to Catholic schools. Though federal authorities initially designated the full grant of three hundred dollars solely for the Passamaquoddy, they soon agreed for it to be shared with the Penobscot. The Reverend Kellogg traveled to Washington to complain, but without success. In 1835 the grant was increased to reflect the fact that it was going to two communities, and in subsequent years it increased still more. The Congregationalist attempt to use Maine’s new boundaries to assert control over the Passamaquoddy went down in defeat. In the end, funding for Catholic priests and schools returned, thanks to the old network built thirty years earlier by Fathers Cheverus and Romagne and subsidized by the state of Massachusetts. What

14 Kavanagh to Fenwick, 21 January 1833, May 1835, Ibid.
began as an effort to control a chaotic and open borderland remained a potent force in Maine far after the border had been settled for good.

A line on a map means very little, especially if the people it divides choose to ignore it. When those people begin to respect it, and build networks that abide by it, the line becomes meaningful. In his study of European borderlands, Peter Sahlins contends that border building and state formation are almost always two-way processes. Centers may try, but they cannot simply impose boundaries on their peripheries. Politics and war may draw lines on maps, but the “shape and significance” of boundaries is “constructed out of local social relations in the borderland.” The people who live in borderlands, in other words, do the work of border building.\textsuperscript{15}

In 1783, American and British negotiators in Paris drew a line on a map separating New England from British North America. Both sides knew the line to be an approximation. Both sides aimed to develop their settlements in the region, and looked forward to adjusting the border from a position of strength. When the time came to effect that adjustment, however, the dueling centers found that at least one part of the periphery had changed. The border between Maine and New Brunswick was built. The people living in the borderland – with some assistance from others in the northeast – did the work.

Many groups contributed to the process, each driven by its own motivations. The Penobscot and Passamaquoddy made their contribution through their decades-long determination to secure a resident priest. Their steady pressure, applied in negotiation after negotiation, finally paid off. This allowed Fathers Romagne and Cheverus to play their part, as they built a strong,

stable network that connected Catholics across the District of Maine to each other and to Boston. Meanwhile, the Congregational missionaries of the SPGNA did similar work, distributing books and pamphlets throughout the district, taking donations, and most importantly, collecting the data that allowed their society and other missionary societies to more effectively serve Maine settlements. Men like John Sawyer and Peter Nurse built the border by combining the resources of multiple missionary societies to create networks of schools, and by training the teachers who staffed them. Young women contributed by taking these jobs, expanding the reach of a network that had previously employed only trained male ministers. And finally, the women of Massachusetts played perhaps the most important role, by creating an effective way of assembling resources and moving those resources into the borderland. Through the ladies cent societies, the women of southern New England invested in northern New England. They connected eastern Maine to the rest of Massachusetts, which made the border with New Brunswick increasingly meaningful. It was their work that allowed Massachusetts, in 1817, to brag of the “well directed institutions” that made Maine an “integral” part of the Commonwealth. Thought they may not have planned or even recognized their collaboration, all these people – men and women, Catholics and Congregationalists, schoolteachers and Passamaquoddy negotiators – changed the borderland, by giving shape and significance to the northeastern border.
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