

Maine History

Volume 50
Number 1 *Maine Political History*

Article 6

1-1-2016

Captain Jeremiah O'Brien: Maine Mariner

Sheldon S. Cohen
Loyola University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal>



Part of the [History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons](#), [Military History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Cohen, Sheldon S.. "Captain Jeremiah O'Brien: Maine Mariner." *Maine History* 50, 1 (2016): 79-107.
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mainehistoryjournal/vol50/iss1/6>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Maine History by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact um.library.technical.services@maine.edu.

CAPTAIN JEREMIAH O'BRIEN: MAINE MARINER

BY SHELDON S. COHEN

In contrast to most of the major army campaigns, clashes, leadership personalities, effectiveness levels, and strategies of the major land combatants during the American Revolution, Patriot naval activities have not received the overall attention they deserve. William J. Morgan, a former editor of the monumental series, Naval Documents of the American Revolution, has noted, "all too frequently historians of the American Revolution have ignored the maritime aspects of the conflict, or, at best have reflected slight understanding of that decisive element." Morgan's observations, made several decades ago, can be verified by surveying the contents then found in prominent writings of the American Revolution. Whereas the lives, exploits, and achievements of such prominent maritime men such as John Paul Jones, Esek Hopkins, Joshua Barney, Abraham Whipple, Dudley Saltonstall, and John Barry have received scholarly attention, there were many others in naval annals that deserve mention in maritime annals. Searches for such American maritime heroes reveal the names of several little-known seamen from New England in particular. These Yankee ship captains include unheralded men, such as Robert Niles of Connecticut, John P. Rathbun of Rhode Island, Thomas Simpson of Massachusetts, and John B. Hopkins of Rhode Island. Added to such lesser-known New Englanders, this article focuses on the career of Jeremiah O'Brien, (1744-1818), an Irishman who spent most of his life in Maine. O'Brien led a fascinating life, and the readers of this work should surely see that, though he was one of the least remembered, he was a great man who hailed from what Mainers today—with justifiable pride—refer to as "Down East."

Sheldon S. Cohen graduated from Yale University in 1953. He received his master's degree from Harvard in 1956 and his doctorate in early American history from New York University in 1963. Since then, he has taught at New York University, Bradley University, and from 1969 until his retirement in 1999, at Loyola University in Chicago. He has published several articles on topics in early American history in journals such as *William and Mary Quarterly*, *New England Quarterly*, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, and *Virginia*

Magazine of History and Biography. *He has also written three books relating to the naval matters and Loyalists during the American Revolution.*

Nail to the mast her holy flag,
Set every threadbare sail,
And give her to the god of storms,
The lightning and the gale.

Old Ironsides

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

The maritime history of the American Revolution includes many published works focusing on the conflict's eminent heroes. John Paul Jones would quite likely head any list of such prominent eighteenth-century sea captains. This roster of Patriot warriors of the sea would also include noted mariners such as John Barry, Abraham Whipple, Esek Hopkins, and Dudley Saltonstall. Often overlooked are the more obscure Yankee shipmasters whose contributions to the struggle for Independence also deserve mention. One such individual, Captain Jeremiah O'Brien, hailed from the Eastern Country of Massachusetts, also designated in the eighteenth century as the District of Maine.

The small Yankee community of Machias, Maine was located in a very distant part of an American Royal colony, yet it was not isolated from the important events transpiring in the British Empire after 1763. It was here that Jeremiah O'Brien, his brother Gideon, father Morris, as well as several other settlers from Scarborough put down roots in 1765 and founded the small community. The rest of O'Brien's family soon followed.¹ Shortly after the establishment of Machias, Britain began to tighten its control over the thirteen American continental colonies. Parliamentary legislation, as reflected in the Sugar or Regulating Act of 1764 and the Stamp Act of 1765 had particularly harsh economic consequences that reverberated within New England and were reported in several of the newspapers arriving in Machias. But perhaps the most deeply felt action in the community came during 1774 when the Boston Port Bill closed Boston Harbor to arriving cargoes.²

Many, but not all, residents from the communities of the Eastern District, as well as those from towns in Massachusetts Bay, reacted strongly against what were considered arbitrary and unjust British poli-

cies. The calls for non-importation agreements were apparent in this coastal region; anti-Imperial pamphlets and newspapers were distributed among the literate populace; extra-legal dissident groups, such as the Sons of Liberty, appeared; the Committees of Correspondence, which emerged in 1772, had their advocates in several Eastern District locales; Britain's appointed custom officials were made aware of their unpopularity; reports of Liberty Tree erections in New England were made, and the region's recalcitrant opinions concerning Royal government policies were brought forward to the meeting of the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia 1774.³

It is probable that Machias residents were, by then, prepared for some form of an approaching clash between the American colonists and Britain. Thus, news of the British engagements with American dissidents at Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, did not catch the residents, including the O'Briens, by complete surprise when it arrived by late May. Receipt of the definitive reports was followed almost immediately with the erection of a Liberty Tree just outside the community, reportedly under Jeremiah O'Brien's supervision. That same month, the townsmen also were probably apprised of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress's "authorizing and requiring preparation and efforts incidental to a state of hostility." One of Jeremiah's biographers asserted that Morris O'Brien, and particularly, Jeremiah and his two younger brothers, had participated in minor anti-British actions beforehand, but he does not include smuggling.⁴

In the meantime, the increasingly milder days of that May proceeded forward for Maine's seacoast dwellers. They became aware of the fact that the American rebels were mounting a siege against Boston; that insurgent actions had increased throughout much of the region; and the fact that the British had increased their Royal naval presence in the waters of Northern New England. However, commercial trade was continuing, and Britain had yet to issue its Proclamation of Rebellion. It was also known that this region had a significant number of individuals who disavowed any wish for rebellion. These Loyalists, also referred to as Tories, were continuing their commercial trade and other business activities with steadfast allegiance to the Crown. There were also a number of individuals who felt that the region could hopefully avoid participation in any serious clash, but events of the next month would prove them in error.⁵

The inevitable encounter occurred in Machias during early June 1775. The spark for the engagement occurred on Friday June 2, when

three ships arrived at the mouth of the Machias River in Machias Bay. They included *Unity*, (80 tons) and *Polly*, (90 tons), sloops loaded with needed foodstuffs and household supplies for the area's families.⁶ The third vessel was *Margaretta*, an unregistered, fifty-ton armed cutter (schooner), with a crew of about forty-to-fifty sailors to provide an escort. (The Royal Navy, or its administrators, on these occasions usually acquired such equipped vessels for a specific purpose, and *Margaretta* had previously performed patrol duty in the then closed Boston harbor.)⁷

In this case, Vice Admiral Samuel Graves, commander of the port of Boston, and the Royal Navy's North American Squadron, had approved the voyage on May 26. Graves assigned Midshipman James Moore, who likely knew the admiral, to command the *Margaretta* on this mission. Ichabod Jones, an alleged Loyalist merchant from Boston, who had moved to Machias in 1774 with his wife and daughter, owned the two accompanying supply sloops. After the closing of the port of Boston, Jones reportedly had personally come on the voyage—he commanded *Unity* while a fellow Boston merchant captain, Nathaniel Horton, was at *Polly's* helm—to make certain local residents complied with the merchant's specified terms prior to the vessels being unloaded. Both captains had already made several of these trading voyages before, including one that had been completed during May of 1775.⁸

The day after the arrival of these ships, Jones circulated a document among the dissident residents under which they would only receive the sloop's cargoes if they would safeguard and assist the loading of lumber onto his sloops. Jones may well have expected the residents to comply with his demands simply out of gratitude; after all it was known that he was primarily responsible for obtaining the legal deed for the township from the Massachusetts government.⁹ He may also have felt that his objectives might be further enhanced through the assistance of his nephew, Stephen Jones, also a supporter of the Crown, who was then residing in the community. Other reasons that Jones felt the community would assent to his demands were the realization that they needed the supplies and, in addition, that the coercive presence of the armed *Margaretta*, with its compliment of over forty men, should provide enough intimidation to assure the town's compliance. However, Jones failed to receive many of the townspeople's compliance to his initial ultimatum. Thus, he responded by scheduling a town meeting which was called for the following Tuesday, June 6. There, he evidently assumed a majority of the attendees would comply, realizing the imperative need for supplies¹⁰.

Jeremiah O'Brien and his family were among the minority at the



Rendering of hand-to-hand combat aboard the *Margaretta* on June 12, 1775. Andrew M. Sullivan, *Life of Captain Jeremiah O'Brien, Machias, Maine: Commander of the First American Naval Flying Squadron of the War of the Revolution* (Norristown, NJ: G.W. Sherman, 1902) Collections of the Maine Historical Society.

meeting who opposed Ichabod Jones's proposal. Shortly afterwards they gathered with other local sympathizers and agreed to undermine the plans of Jones and Moore. These individuals correctly suspected the two Loyalist captains were conspiring to obtain the town's submission. (Moore's intentions were confirmed when he made an unfulfilled threat to open fire on the community if they did not remove their Liberty Tree.)¹¹ That Saturday, June 10, some like-minded protestors arrived

from nearby East Machias to join the group led by the O'Briens. Early the next morning, this assembled group of dissidents reportedly held a secret meeting, led by Morris and Jeremiah O'Brien, along with their nearby East Machias insurgent colleagues, where Benjamin Foster was assigned the task of seizing Captain Moore and the other British naval officers while they were attending Mr. Lyon's Sunday religious services the next afternoon. Afterward, the group would move quickly to capture *Margaretta* and the Jones's two docked sloops.¹²

The hastily formed scheme may have seemed feasible, but it failed to work. Ichabod Jones and his nephew, Stephen, received warning of the approaching armed insurgents while attending Sunday services. Alerted of the O'Brien's plan, the British officers and crewmen quickly scrambled from the meetinghouse to defend their anchored vessels. Captain Moore and some other seamen, apparently reached the safety of their ships, but Jones and his nephew were captured and detained for several days while their loaded sloops remained anchored in the harbor. Once on his schooner, Moore fled from his anchored location to Scott's Point and reiterated his threats to bombard the community indiscriminately. Also, from his new location he seized a vulnerable New England trading sloop, confiscated its cargo, and detained the ship's merchant captain, Robert Avery, who was from Norwich, Connecticut.¹³

However, any thoughts by Captain Moore that his ship was then out of danger proved premature. On Monday morning, June 12, an insurgent visitor from New York, Joseph Wheaton, together with Dennis O'Brien hatched a new plan to take control of *Margaretta*. It involved seizing *Unity*, one of Ichabod Jones's anchored sloops, arming the ship with cannons, and then sailing to Scott's Point to capture the *Margaretta*. Command of the proposed foray was then given to Jeremiah O'Brien. The conspirators rowed out to *Unity*, which was armed with four six-pound cannon, and took command of the ship. They then sailed the vessel to a nearby dock. There it was loaded with supplies; fortifications were then added, using the ship's cargo of lumber as well as bricks from town. The newly reinforced sloop was boarded by a crew of thirty-five men, and was then set to commence the risky mission. Five of Jeremiah O'Brien's younger brothers were among *Unity's* crew.

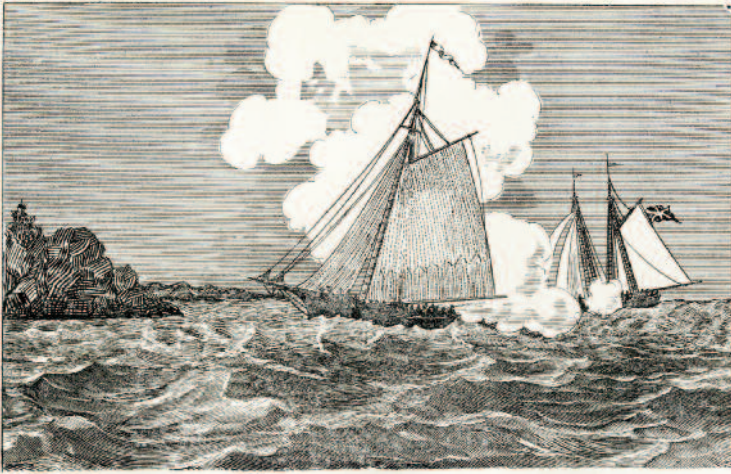
Unfortunately, Captain O'Brien had yet to obtain maritime assistance from his friend Captain Benjamin Foster who had previously captured the *Falmouth*, but had the misfortune of temporarily running the ship aground.¹⁴ Jeremiah O'Brien's commandeered sloop *Unity* set out to challenge the *Margaretta* early in the morning of Monday, June 12. The other sloop, *Polly*, remained anchored at a Machias dock. Midship-

Washington City April 28, 1818

Dear Sir

I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 14 of February last noting that your Brother Jeremiah had answered my former one and given me the particulars of that most gallant little affair of taking the Margarett, Dellyart and Tapscroft Schooners in the month of April and May in the year 1775 - that letter has miscarried & I fear lost - I should have answered yours some time since, but hoped to receive that of Capt. O'Brien, and answered both in the reason of the apparent delay - your letter I have not only paid particular attention to, but have shown it to my friend Jos Anderson Comptroller of the Treasury to the post M. A. G. to the Commr. of the Land Office, but to several other influential men & shall show it to the President - But Sir such has been my occupation and hurry in the office where I am employed that I could not pay that attention to several important interests which my wife & I will recommend to you: to make a fair plain Statement of the attack on Machias 14 Sept. 1814 - By the British force and of the manner of their taking your vessel, or destroying of her, have the affair clearly stated, and sworn to by the best evidence and most respectable ^{men} you can obtain when this is done enclose your paper under cover (with a power of attorney to some one here to make proper application for your loss) and address them either to Joseph Anderson Comptroller

Joseph Wheaton of Machias, serving as a government official in Washington, D.C., in 1818, wrote to Gideon O'Brien and recounted his memory of the capture by Machias residents of the British schooner *Margaretta* in 1775. The incident is often called the first Naval battle of the Revolution. O'Brien was one of the brothers of the commander of the expedition, Jeremiah O'Brien. Collections of the Maine Historical Society



This illustration serves as the frontispiece of *Life of Captain Jeremiah O'Brien, Machias, Maine; Commander of the First American Naval Flying Squadron of the War of the Revolution* by the Rev. Andrew M. Sherman (1902). The illustration is entitled "The First Sea Fight of the War of the Revolution" and depicts the battle that resulted in the capture of the British ship *Margaretta* by Machias patriots, led by Jeremiah O'Brien. They were in the sloop *Unity*. Collections of the Maine Historical Society.

man Moore, captain of *Margaretta*, had prepared for the confrontation by cutting away his tenders and ordering his crew to battle stations. When the faster sloop approached close to his schooner, Captain Moore threatened to open fire unless his pursuer turned back. O'Brien remained on course, at which time Moore ordered his crew to fire. The resulting canon shot caused two deaths on the *Unity*. Then, one of the *Unity's* crew returned fire with a rifle from their sloop and instantly killed the helmsman standing on *Margaretta's* deck. O'Brien failed in a daring venture to tie up alongside the enemy schooner but he was successful in his second attempt. A boarding party, numbering twenty Patriots boarded the *Margaretta*, led by Jeremiah's younger brother John.

The American boarding party and the crew on *Margaretta* exchanged fire. Captain James Moore personally sought to repel the rebels by throwing hand grenades onto the deck of the *Unity*, which had him tethered. His efforts were stifled when Samuel Watts, a teenage sharpshooter aboard *Unity*, mortally wounded Moore. This decisive development ended British resistance in this area.¹⁵ After Moore was shot, the British command fell to another midshipman named Stillingfleet who apparently had no desire to continue fighting and surrendered to Jere-

miah O'Brien. Benjamin Foster, with his captured packet *Falmouth*, arrived on the scene. However, Foster played no more than a secondary role in the engagement.¹⁶

The casualties in this encounter totaled only two killed and three wounded for the Americans and five killed and nine wounded for the British. Added to the American dead was the unfortunate Captain Robert Avery of Connecticut whose trading vessel was previously seized by Captain Moore. Avery, who knew the Gulf of Maine well, had been forced to serve as a navigator aboard Moore's schooner.¹⁷ Despite not being one of the great naval battles of the American Revolution, the Battle of Machias had important historical ramifications: it was the first naval encounter of the War for Independence where shots were fired.

In the aftermath of this conflict, the captured British seamen were sent by the Machias Committee of Safety to the oversight of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress meeting in Watertown, due to the British siege of Boston. By the time the detainees reached Massachusetts, General George Washington had already assumed command of the Continental Army and was assessing his overall situation and possible courses of action. Both the general and the Massachusetts congress apparently agreed to the prisoner exchange, which transpired later in the year. For his part, Midshipman Stillingfleet was considered a British naval officer, and after only serving several weeks in custody was released to Royal Navy officials.¹⁸

Ichabod Jones, the Loyalist lumberman whose two sloops figured prominently in the affair, was detained by the Machias Committee of Safety and later dispatched to western Massachusetts. That October, he was released from his confinement in Northampton. His nephew, Steven, was also held captive and later freed.¹⁹ Then on June 13, 1775, Machias insurgent Joseph Getchell took the ship by river north of the town for concealment and to confiscate much of its weaponry. There it remained for over a year, until George Benner, the ship's new captain, used the stripped down schooner as a commercial vessel, trading with several of the settlements between Machias and Falmouth. Three or four years later the vessel was run aground onto some rocks near Jonesport and was abandoned. And as for the *Polly* and *Unity*, scholars agree that these vessels were declared prizes, but they differ over which of them was thereafter captained by Jeremiah O' Brien. Recent writings such as John F. Millar's *Early American Ships* argue that he commanded *Polly*.²⁰

O'Brien was commissioned as a naval captain by the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, and he moved quickly to revamp his new com-

mand. Jeremiah's wife, Mary, was said to have contributed a "pine tree" ensign she made herself from "sturdy cloth" which was flown at the time of sailing. The refitted warship, with five guns and ten swivels was renamed *Machias Liberty*, with a crew of about forty seamen. The ship's armaments came primarily from the captured *Margaretta*, which was then held as a prize of war.²¹ Though his first voyage was a failure, his second, accompanied by Benjamin Foster who was in command of a small schooner, was more rewarding. These two small warships were able to seize the armed schooner *HMS Diligent*, mounting eight guns with a crew of about fifty men. They also took its tender, *Tapnaquish*, manned by about twenty seamen. These two vessels had sailed from Halifax and were taken at nearby Bucks Harbor in Maine.²²

The two Yankee seizures were taken to Machias Harbor where they anchored. Once again, the small community gave Jeremiah O'Brien a hero's welcome. It may well have been at this time he received the attribution "Machias Admiral," and a small albeit vulnerable fort guarding the inlet was erected and named for him. After the Provincial Congress received word of this triumph, he and Benjamin Foster were summoned to Watertown. Boston then remained under siege, but on his round-about journey there, the Maine mariner stopped in Cambridge where he had the honor of dining with General Washington. O'Brien next traveled to neighboring Watertown where he and Foster submitted petitions from several communities in the Eastern District plus a request for personal remuneration of expenses for transporting his new haul of British prisoners for their confinement in Massachusetts. The legislators did take his monetary request under consideration, and also affirmed O'Brien's command of both *Machias Liberty* and *Diligent*.²³

Vice Admiral Samuel Graves, commanding Royal Navy warships in New England waters, soon became aware of further disobedience by the American rebels. On June 15, 1775, Rhode Island's Captain Abraham Whipple had run the armed British naval tender, *Diana*, aground in Narragansett Bay. The following August, the sloop *HMS Falcon* was fired upon in New England waters. There were also reports that in some American seaports, Royal Navy vessels were given an unpleasant welcome, and that there were several rebel plots to damage anchored British vessels.²⁴ Captain Henry Mowat, the commander of the warship *HMS Canceaux*, was already experiencing insurgency outside Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Acknowledging this, Graves declared that "the four New England Governments are in open and avowed Rebellion against his Majesty, and have been daring enough to make

Seizures of several of his Majesty's ships and Vessels, and to send the Crews to Prison." He added that in their existing rebellion, the insurgents "had fired on his Majesty's ships, causing casualties," and were "intent on fortifying their Sea Ports" with the intentions of continuing to attack British subjects serving in his Fleet and Army. Graves then instructed Captain Mowat to gather several British warships into a squadron and attack any seaports and ships that had participated in acts of rebellion. He was especially seeking revenge against Captain O'Brien and the belligerents in this Eastern Massachusetts community:

My Design is to chastise Marblehead, Salem, Newbury Port, Cape Anne Harbour, Portsmouth, Ipswich, Saco, Falmouth in Casco Bay, and particularly Machias, where the *Margaretta* was taken, the Officer commanding her [was] killed, and the People made Prisoners, and where *Diligent*, a schooner, was seized and the Officers and Crew carried [as] Prisoners up the Country, and where preparations I am informed, are now making [planning] to invade the Province of Nova Scotia.²⁵

You are to go to all or as many of the above named Places as you can, and make the most vigorous Efforts to burn the Towns, and destroy the Shipping in the Harbours. And as the Number of Marines you carry in the vessels are too few to land and maintain any Post, you are to be careful not to risqué their Lives or any of your People by attempting where there is not great probability of Success, but to content yourself with falling upon the Rebels, doing what you can with Expedition and coming away before they can assemble to cut off your Retreat, and never risqué your Ships aground or where you cannot put to Sea at all times of Tide, Wind permitting.²⁶

Captain Mowat responded forcefully to Admiral Graves's instructions during the autumn of 1775, attacking several of the places specified by the admiral. The most noteworthy was Falmouth in the Eastern District. In September, Mowat, had warned the community against any insurrectionist activities, but when the residents failed to respond satisfactorily, his squadron opened fire on the town on October 18. Afterward he ordered the troops ashore, where they proceeded to evict the residents and burn the community. A few days' later, other seaport towns in northern New England experienced threats from Mowat's squadron, but none experienced the destruction Falmouth endured. Machias, itself passed the autumn and winter of 1775 and 1776 unmolesed, and the community maintained O'Brien's "Flying Squadron" as the townspeople called it.²⁷

Spring arrived at the small Maine seaport along with some good news for patriotic New Englanders. On March 17, 1776, British forces formally evacuated Boston. This season also saw the continued emergence of a Continental Navy, which the Second Continental Congress had authorized in October 1775. One month later, John Adams, a delegate to the Congress, included Jeremiah O' Brien's name, misspelled as "Obrian," on a "List of Persons Suitable for Naval Commands." He was not awarded a captaincy in this newly proclaimed Continental Navy, but the previous December, the Massachusetts legislature had established its own navy in which O' Brien played a noteworthy and valorous role. Congress designated several other individuals to serve as captains in this Yankee fleet, among them Rhode Island's politically influential Esek Hopkins as commodore. Somewhat simultaneously came reports that the poorly managed American expedition to seize Canada failed quite badly, with a considerable loss of men and equipment.²⁸

As for Machias, during the previous summer of 1775, *Machias Liberty* with its five guns, ten swivels, and a crew of approximately forty were awaiting orders. Jeremiah O'Brien, whom local citizens now dubbed "the Machias Admiral," commanded the vessel alongside his younger brother William as First Lieutenant. Another local insurgent, William Miller, was appointed Second Lieutenant. The schooner *Diligent* was captained by the community's John Lambert, with John O'Brien, another brother of Jeremiah, serving as First Lieutenant. *Diligent* was listed as armed with eight guns and twenty swivels, and likewise had a crew of about forty. Both warships were readied for action by that summer, and their commanders received instructions and advice from the local Machias Committee of Safety as well as the Massachusetts Provincial Council. In late August 1775 *Machias Liberty* sailed from the Maine port toward the waters surrounding Nova Scotia searching for small, vulnerable ships. O'Brien's actions for the remainder of the year proved rather unproductive.²⁹

The following January, Captain O'Brien and a fellow insurgent from Maine, Colonel Samuel Thompson, concocted a plan, which they dispatched to the Continental Congress and to General Washington. They intended to sail their two armed ships to Nova Scotia where they would initiate a surprise attack on Halifax and Windsor harbors destroying the dockyards of both communities. This possibility was something that Admiral Samuel Graves suspected, and he gave warnings about the two communities' vulnerability during the previous September. Second thoughts, however, carried the day, and O'Brien himself soon dropped the scheme.³⁰

The cruises of this two-ship "Flying Squadron" continued. According to O'Brien's biographer, local residents were proud of this designation and endorsed the squadron's new wartime voyage. It lasted until late October 1776. Andrew Sherman, O'Brien's chronicler, declared that during this time the two ships "guarded the sea coast" in order to interdict supplies and ammunition that would aid "the British army of occupation." He also noted that the area for operations included the several hundred miles of rocky and hazardous coastline off Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine. In addition, Sherman asserted that O'Brien's "squadron" executed their tasks rather well despite their limited ammunition and their crew's grumbling over their absence of pay.³¹

Several important developments that occurred during the latter months of 1776 affected Captain O'Brien and his active participation in the ongoing war.³² On August 30 Francis Shaw, a fellow townsman and an active insurgent, dispatched a petition to the Massachusetts government noting that John Lambert was willing to serve as skipper of *Diligent*, adding his special praise for Lambert's abilities. Two weeks later the Council reported that O'Brien and Lambert had seized the sloop, *Polly*, commanded by William Hazen who was sailing to St. John, Nova Scotia. Lambert and O'Brien declared that the ship was carrying suspected American Loyalists. Soon afterward, Hazen brought charges against O'Brien and Lambert to Massachusetts's governmental authorities.³³

Machias rebels immediately responded, petitioning Massachusetts's authorities. They denounced the "unjustifiable Methods taken to negate the Character of Captain Jeremiah O'Brien." The petition, however, may not have been needed: on November 16, 1776 authorities decided that the Maine captain "may be justified as there are sufficient reasons for his strong suspicions of them going to supply the enemy."³⁴ The Massachusetts Council did, however, conclude that O'Brien received some monies from the incident that he allegedly did not deserve. They therefore ordered, "that there be paid out of the Treasury of this State, to Mr. William Hazen the Sum of Seven Pounds, Three Shillings, & ten pence in full for the Ballance of what loot was taken out of the Schooner *Polly*, by Capt. Obrien & Capt. Lambert."³⁵

The Maine mariner was quite likely pleased with this outcome. However, the year concluded without a ship for him to command. Despite the fact that his crew had received a vote of payment by the Massachusetts government, that body then concluded there was no further need to maintain O'Brien's armed sloop. As a consequence, on October 15, 1776, *Machias Liberty*, its captain, officers, and crew, as well as those

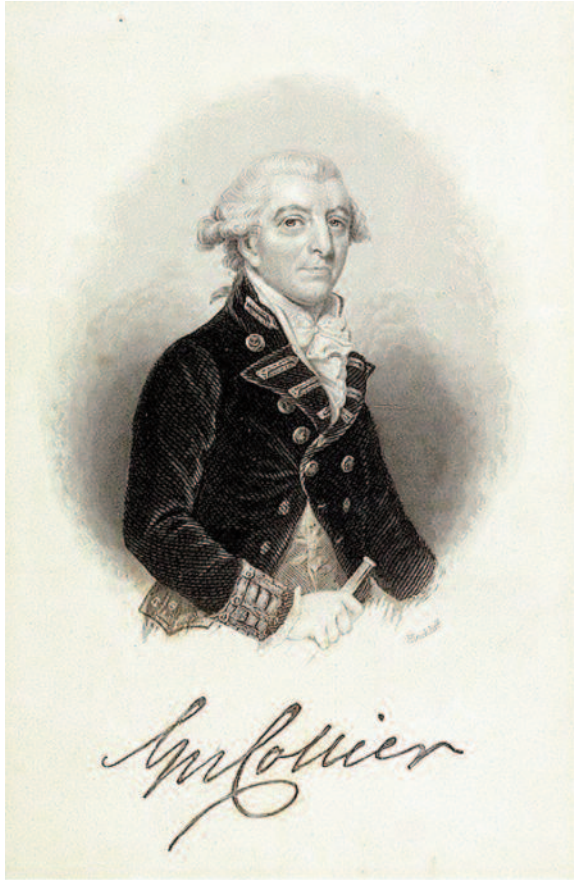


An oil painting by an unidentified artist shows the *Polly* en route to Portland in 1847. O'Brien captured *Polly* as a prize of war. Though the record is still debated, it is likely that O'Brien captured *Polly* during the American Revolution. Collections of Maine Historical Society.

aboard *Diligent*, were discharged from the Massachusetts service. In the case of O'Brien's vessel, *Machias Liberty*, the General Court also ordered that the state was to "take possession of all the Cannon and other Stores which are on board said sloop." This resolve concluded the wartime service of O'Brien's armed sloop.³⁶

It was not until the following summer that Jeremiah O'Brien received a new, and more promising, command. It was to captain an armed schooner, fitted out in Newburyport by the Massachusetts State Navy and named *Resolution*. The modest privateer was about "thirty-five tons burthen, [with] ten swivel guns," and a crew numbering about two dozen. O'Brien received this command by the ship's owner, Daniel Martin, of Newburyport, petitioning the Massachusetts State Council on August 12, 1777. The next day the council concurred with Martin's request. Captain O'Brien was likely in Newburyport at this time, along with some of his ship's crew awaiting such approval, and he thereafter prepared to depart with his new command.³⁷

Once his selection was approved, however, O'Brien wisely delayed



Sir George Collier, commander of the Royal Navy in Nova Scotia, received permission to launch a preemptive attack on the small Eastern Maine community of Machias during 1777 in an effort to undermine any planned American attack on the eastern territories of British North America. National Maritime Museum.

weighing anchor. This hesitation was prompted by details of a recent attack on his Machias residence—rumors of which had caused apprehension among the townspeople. The previous month, Captain Sir George Collier, commanding Royal Navy operations in Nova Scotia, received permission to launch a preemptive attack on the small eastern Maine community in an effort to undermine any planned American attack on the eastern territories of British North America. Consequently, on July 30, Captain Collier sailed from Nova Scotia with two Royal Navy warships. These armed vessels subsequently joined with two others, and they all arrived at Machias Harbor on August 13.³⁸

From his flagship, Collier ordered a Royal Marine detachment of 123 crewmen along with several marines under Captain George Dawson from HMS *Hope* to go ashore. The marines landed, and despite coming under sporadic hostile fire, proceeded to destroy or seize all arms or ammunition that they were able to uncover in and around the settlement. According to Collier's subsequent report, the marines also "set fire to & totally consumed, [rebel] military stores] so that in all Probability the Rebels will lay aside all future Thoughts of invading their Neighbours as it will take considerable Time & Expencc before the Articles wanted can be reestablished." The raiding detachment returned to their ships, having lost three men with eighteen wounded. Rebel casualties were one or two killed and several wounded. Word of this disaster probably reached O'Brien within several days, and as late as September 6 it was reported that Machias residents feared another British attack. This incident quite likely convinced O'Brien's to delay leaving Newburyport.³⁹

The Massachusetts privateer at last did embark, but with mixed results. On September 29 came word from Machias that *Resolution*, along with other Massachusetts privateers, had taken "a rich prize off Cape Negro [Nova Scotia] coming from Ireland and loaded with Pork," but afterward it was retaken by the frigate *Scarborough*, leaving only the unfortunate Yankee prize master as a British prisoner-of-war.⁴⁰

Eleven days later, however, there was better news. On October 9, libels were filed. The Massachusetts Maritime Court noting that O'Brien combined with the Massachusetts armed schooner, *Blackbird*, commanded by William Groves, to seize the 100-ton Sloop *Annabella* off Cape Negro. However, for some reason, *Resolution* was not available for further service under Captain O'Brien. He later commanded smaller privateers, including the armed ships or sloops, *Cyrus*, *Little Vincent*, and *Tyger* of Massachusetts's State Navy, although without any cited seizures.⁴¹ The captain returned to Machias in early 1779. There, his fame in the Eastern District earned him another honor: induction as a charter member of the second Masonic lodge to be organized in Maine.⁴²

In 1779 O'Brien was appointed commander of a Ranger Company to defend against a rumored Indian invasion of the Eastern District. The incursion was reputedly to be led by Major Robert Rogers of "Rogers Rangers" fame, who had taken up the Loyalist cause. However, O'Brien's presence apparently was not needed, and on November 15 he was discharged with the honorary rank of colonel. Three days later, the

famed American patriot, Colonel Ethan Allen, leading "The Green Mountain Boys," arranged a peace agreement with the restive tribes and Maine's Eastern District residents were then able to obtain some sense of peace.

The ensuing year, O'Brien was awarded a new maritime command from the Massachusetts State Navy. It was the rather sizeable twenty-four gun brigantine *Hannibal*. The vessel was listed as about two hundred and fifty tons burthen with a ship's compliment of 130.⁴³ On *Hannibal's* first cruise, under Jeremiah's younger brother John in 1780, it overtook several small-unprotected enemy ships in Atlantic and Long Island Sound waters. On one occasion the younger O'Brien barely escaped as Royal Navy warships pursued him on Long Island Sound. John received commendations from the General Court for his efforts. However he should have warned his elder brother more strongly of the considerable number of British warships lurking in the area of the lower New York sea lanes.⁴⁴

Jeremiah took over as captain following his younger brother's return. His ship was given an ample supply of provisions, gunpowder, and shot in Newburyport. The ship's mission was "to cruise against the enemies of the United States." With these general orders, O'Brien sailed from Marblehead in early September 1780. His intention was to attack unprotected, or lightly armed enemy merchant vessels off New York. Other American armed vessels had previously made some successes in this venture. However, when O'Brien approached his destination on, September 18, he was surprised by two British frigates that quickly gave chase. Unable to elude its pursuers, *Hannibal* was chased down and obliged to surrender. The valorous Maine ship captain's active wartime career was now over.⁴⁵

His Royal Navy captors initially dispatched the captured Maine skipper to New York harbor. Along with his younger brother and the other officers and crewmen, he was sent to the infamous and overcrowded prison ship *Jersey*, anchored in Wallabout Bay off Brooklyn. It was quite possible that his British captors knew of him; particularly his leading role in the seizing of *Margaretta* over five years before, as well as his later escapades commanding Yankee privateers. If so, it was likely that he suffered extra abuse and harassment. For about six months, he survived neglect, poor provisioning, lack of medical care, and rigorous punishments. Treatment like this caused recurrent illnesses as well as the deaths of an estimated nine to ten thousand American army and navy prisoners.⁴⁶ In 1781, possibly because he was considered a special

prisoner, he was carried across the Atlantic to Mill Prison. The long-established detention center was located in Devon between Plymouth and Devonport along England's southern coast.⁴⁷

Mill Prison was land based and, in some ways, an improvement over O'Brien's prison-ship confinement. It was, nonetheless a bleak-looking detention facility with double stone brick walls topped with glass-shard friezes. It was supervised by a harsh and arbitrary agent, William Cowdry, who administered his prison under exacting rules, with inadequate medical care, and, most notably, with a distinct lack of sanitary conditions. The great majority of detainees experienced illnesses in one form or another.⁴⁸ On November 17, 1781, a letter was dispatched through an exchanged American prisoner to Benjamin Franklin, then an American Peace Commissioner in Paris. It was penned by Nathaniel Nazro, a Boston patriot, who was also captured on *Hannibal* and was a resident of the jail since the previous January. Nazro had some indirect connections to Dr. Franklin through mutual American friends. Within the communication, there was a petition from several American prisoners, including Jeremiah O'Brien, bemoaning the several deaths of comrades during their passage to Britain and complaining of "a want of food," and "a long, tedious and painfull Imprisonment."⁴⁹

But Mill Prison was, in reality, far from secure. From its opening in early 1777, the American inmates followed the time-honored military adage that, "the first duty of a prisoner-of-war is to escape." Thus, many American detainees attempted flee from their incarceration. Such varied attempts were particularly numerous between 1781 and 1783, and they occurred even after Parliament had recognized the Americans as prisoners-of-war in March 1782.⁵⁰

O'Brien evidently made his escape from Mill Prison in the early 1782. According to his biographer he altered his appearance to deceive the guards and gained the support of a French washerwoman at the prison. He reportedly bribed the washerwoman to smuggle him to freedom.⁵¹ He allegedly donned unobtrusive garments and hid out during the morning in the prison yard. That evening, he leisurely, but "with great inward trepidation" walked unrecognized out of the prison's gates and down to the waters of the bay below. There he met the French washerwoman, who told him that her husband was waiting in a large rowboat. The Frenchman helped row Jeremiah and three other fugitive American officers across the English Channel to France.⁶¹

American escapees from British prisons generally made for the

coast of France and then traveled to Paris, where Benjamin Franklin gave them money for return passage to America. Captain O'Brien was not listed among them, but there were also American agents resident in French seaports, as well as sympathetic and well off Frenchmen living in that nation, with little love for Britain. These individuals were known to have aided American escapees. However he managed it, he was back living with his family in his large Machias residence by October 1782.⁵²

Determinative events for the residents of Machias, as well as all Americans, occurred during the year following O'Brien's return. In November 1782, British and American peace negotiators in Paris signed the Preliminary Articles of Peace. After this, the conflict wound down, despite skirmishes in America and naval clashes in the West Indies, the latter fought chiefly between French and British naval vessels. Prisoner releases and exchanges were concluded, and some, but not all British posts in America were evacuated. On September 3, 1783, the Peace of Paris was signed, with Britain formally recognizing the independence of the United States. Word of this accord sparked celebrations throughout the new thirteen-state nation.⁵³

Peacetime offered Jeremiah O'Brien opportunities in the newly recognized country. Indeed he appeared to view the war's conclusion as a means to develop and exploit the vast lands and offshore waters of the District of Maine. In commercial matters, he returned to his sawmills to produce more lumber. A bridge was completed across the Middle River in early 1784, and O'Brien seems to have at least offered advice on its construction. He was also active in the town's social affairs, and he and his family attended religious services still presided over by the Reverend Mr. Lyon.⁵⁴ On June 23, 1784, the Massachusetts General Court incorporated O'Brien's community, thus it became the first municipal corporation established in the Eastern District between the Penobscot and the St. Croix rivers. In 1785, Colonel O'Brien was elected to the community's Board of Selectmen, and in 1787 he served on a three-man committee that petitioned the Massachusetts legislature for an abatement of state taxes. O'Brien's name also appears during these years on lists of grand jurors. While involved in these and other local matters, he found time to speculate in several sizeable land purchases near Machias.⁵⁵

O'Brien's final major appointment came in 1811 when President James Madison named him Collector of Customs for the port of Machias. Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury under President Madison, may have influenced this appointment. Eleven years before, Gallatin had stayed in O'Brien's home when he had suffered an unspec-

ified illness, and Mrs. O'Brien provided him with requisite care.⁵⁶

The federal selection was renewed four years afterward, and he held this respected post at the time of his death. During O'Brien's tenure, in August 1813, an armed American cutter *Lark* intercepted the sloop *Traveller*, which was smuggling cargo into the Eastern District. Because the contraband-carrying ship was detained within O'Brien's jurisdiction, the case was resolved by a United States district court. *Traveller* was deemed a condemned prize and its cargo ordered sold, with the proceeds divided among several individuals who took part in the capture and disposition. The collector of customs for Machias was among the benefactors of these distributed funds. O'Brien share was reportedly over \$4,200.⁵⁷

One important external event that directly impacted this aging Machias seaman was the War of 1812, which commenced in the spring of that year. The causes included a long stream of complaints involving British maritime depredations against American shipping, including impressments of American seamen and British attempts to conspire with Native American tribes to rebel against settlers moving west of the Appalachians.⁵⁸ The war also expressed the ardent desires of Jeffersonian expansionists to wrest control of Canada from British rule. The ensuing conflict did not go as American nationalists had expected, and O'Brien was himself involved in one of its lesser-known episodes.⁵⁹

During the war, Britain blockaded much of the American coast, and in the later stages sent a force southward from Canada to seize Albany, New York in concert with a naval campaign in the Chesapeake Bay area against Washington and Baltimore, and later an expedition against New Orleans.⁷⁰ Germane to the Eastern Country another expedition was organized in Halifax by Sir John Coape Sherbrooke, Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. The objective of the Halifax expedition was to attack Maine east of the Penobscot and occupy settlements in the area with the intention of establishing a separate Royal Colony called New Ireland. One such community in this area was Machias whose residents had already been adversely affected by an inability to trade any of their lumber and potato production. The war also brought a sharp increase in smuggling, which O'Brien, as collector of the customs, had noticed.⁶⁰

Sherbrooke's enterprise started well. He easily defeated an American defensive force at Hampden on the Penobscot on September 3, 1814, and then proceeded against other settlements in the region. On September 11, a marine detachment, protected by the guns of an off-shore British warship, landed and entered Machias itself. Local lore and other writings have it that Captain O'Brien, aware of the impending ar-

rival of the enemy, donned his old Revolutionary War naval uniform and unsuccessfully attempted to rally a defensive force within the town. It seemed likely that most of the residents, choosing discretion, concluded that resistance was useless and any shots fired by them might well result in the invaders looting and destroying the town. Without firing any shots, the British military units entered the community from two directions while the elderly but armed O'Brien awaited their appearance from inside his own home. The previous day, anticipating the worst, it is said that he discretely gathered many of his valuable private papers and personal valuables and carefully hid them in the house. Afterward, he employed a trusted friend to hide everything in a secure location, miles away from the settlement.⁶¹

It was not long before members of a British marine unit entered his residence. In O'Brien's presence, they then began a search of the premises, and soon came upon the elderly resident's sword, last worn during the American Revolution. He displayed it openly to the officer in charge, who generously permitted him to retain it, evidently deciding there was no menace from this impudent, crusty old Yankee. He also allowed the brash master of the house to keep his naval officer's hat. A subsequent search of the home turned up nothing considered threatening.⁶²

The inspection concluded, there was still another reported incident, which, if true, remains but one more example of the septuagenarian seaman's firmness and pluck. O'Brien apparently invited the British soldiers to share refreshments before their departure and furnished some cakes and hard cider from his basement. When toasts were offered the British naval officer, as was the normal procedure, toasted to the "King's health." Evidently without hesitation, O'Brien toasted, "the success of the American arms." It was obviously something his assembled British visitors did not wish to hear, especially from such an up-start, elderly Yankee, but their host was not detained, reprimanded, or threatened. And it is possible that his adversaries may even found a bit of admiration for the unabashed patriotism and resoluteness exhibited by this seventy-year old American.⁶³

The British occupation of Machias lasted a little more than a week in September 1814. Then, over three months later—December 24, 1814—a peace treaty signed at Ghent in Belgium ended the conflict. The British plan to establish a "New Ireland" colony on the eastern lands of Maine collapsed, and the signed treaty left American lands as they were before the war. For roughly a decade after the conflict the United States enjoyed what is referred to as "The Era of Good Feelings," years that brought internal improvements, technological development, an in-



A British naval cutlass circa 1804. Josephine O'Brien Campbell of Cherryfield gave the cutlass to the Maine Historical Society in 1909, with the notation that it had belonged to her relative, Col. Jeremiah O'Brien, the captain of the *Unity* that captured the British sloop *Margaretta* on June 12, 1775 in Machias. Collections of the Maine Historical Society.

crease in settlement of western and southern lands, new states entering the union, and the expansion of secondary and higher level institutions of learning. This era was also a time when Americans took special pride in honoring the diminishing number of elderly patriots who had given inestimable service for the cause of Independence.⁶⁴

In Maine, Jeremiah O'Brien was one such American insurgent who was esteemed for the courageous and intrepid exertions he contributed during the long-past conflict. O'Brien was doubtlessly singled out for praise during Independence Day celebrations and Masonic gatherings held yearly in his seaside community. But the aging and increasing frail veteran did not have that many Fourth of July observances to enjoy following the War of 1812. He died at his home, surrounded by relatives and friends on Wednesday September 5, 1818. The Massachusetts *Independent Chronicle* and *Boston Patriot* noted his passing on September 18, along with other American publications. His funeral and burial were both well attended by many who were unable to conceal their great admiration for such a brave and outspoken man. Thus his adventure-filled lifetime came to a close.⁶⁵



Upper left: *USS Jeremiah O'Brien*, torpedo boat. Upper right: *USS Jeremiah O'Brien*, O'Brien-class destroyer. Middle left: *USS Jeremiah O'Brien*, Sims-class destroyer. Middle right: *SS Jeremiah O'Brien*, Liberty ship. Lower left: *USS Jeremiah O'Brien*, Allan M. Sumner-class destroyer. Lower right: *USS Jeremiah O'Brien*, Spruance-class destroyer. Collections of the United States Navy and the National Archives.

The following chart lists the United States Navy warships named in honor of Captain Jeremiah O'Brien:

Year Commis- sioned	War/Area Used	Type	Fate
1905	Unspecified	Motor-Torpedo Boat	Decommissioned 1909
1915	World War One	Destroyer	Decommissioned 1922
1940	World War Two	Sims-Class Destroyer	Sunk in the S. Pacific, 1942
1943	World War Two	Liberty Ship	Anchored for Tours in San Francisco
1944	World War Two	Allen N. Sumner Destroyer	Decommissioned 1972
1977	Asia/Middle East	Spruance-Class Destroyer	Decommissioned 2003

NOTES

1. Andrew M. Sherman, *Life of Captain Jeremiah O'Brien, Machias Maine* (Morristown, NJ: G.W. Sherman, 1902), 243-44. The author would like to dedicate this article to Sergeant Howard E. Woodford (1921-1945) a boyhood mentor and posthumous recipient of the Medal of Honor.

2. Merrill Jensen, *The Founding of A Nation; A History of the American Revolution, 1763-1776* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), chaps. IV-XI; Timothy H. Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots: The Revolution of the People* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011), 42-49; *Ibid.* 67-68; James S. Leamon, *Revolution Downeast; The War for Independence in Maine* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 8-13, 17-19; Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 170-173.

3. Martin Borden and Penn Borden, eds., *The American Tory* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1972), xiii-142; Middlekauff, *Glorious Cause*, 214-218; Breen, *American Patriots*, 96-97; Leamon, *Revolution Downeast*, 19, 74, 86; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 19-21, 23-25.

4. Middlekauff, *Glorious Cause*, 268-278; Leamon, *Revolution Downeast*, 60, 65; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 20-22, 26; Breen, *American Patriots*, 239.

5. William F. Lincoln, comp., *Journals of Each Provincial Congress of Massachusetts in 1774 and 1775 and of the Committee of Safety* (Boston: Dutton and Wentworth, 1838), 137, 185; Leamon, *Revolution Downeast*, 63-64; Middlekauff, *Glorious Cause*, 274-276; Breen, *American Patriots*, 108, 168; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 20-22; For an excellent volume covering the American Revolution see: John Shy, *A People Numerous and Armed: Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976).

6. Middlekauff, *Glorious Cause*, 525-526; Breen, *American Patriots*, 147-148, 286-287; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 28-29, 30-32.
7. "James Lyon to Massachusetts Provincial Congress, 14 June, 1775," in William Clark, Michael Crawford, et. al, eds., *Naval Documents of the American Revolution* (Washington, DC: Naval Historical Division, Dept. of the Navy, 1964), 676. Hereinafter referred to as *Naval Docs*, Tara Knowler, Archives Assistant, Royal Museums Greenwich, to Sheldon S. Cohen 5 November, 2013; Charles M. Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," *Collections of the Maine Historical Society*, vol. 6, no. 2, 3rd ser. (April, 1895), 128-129; William D. Williamson, *The History of Maine, From its First Discovery* vol. 2 (Hallowell, ME: Glazier and Masters, 1832), 426-429; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 28-29, 30-33.
8. "Vice Adm. Samuel Graves to Midshipman James Moore, 26 May, 1775," *Naval Docs*, vol. 1, 537-538; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 30-33; Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 128-129.
9. Williamson, *History of Maine*, vol. 2, 428-429; Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 129-130; "James Lyon, to Mass. Provincial Congress, 14 June, 1775," *Naval Docs*, vol. 1, 676; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 34-35 Leamon, *Revolution Downeast*, 68-69.
10. Williamson, *History of Maine*, vol 2. 429-443; Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 130; "James Lyon to the Mass. Provincial Congress, 14 June, 1775," 676; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 36-37.
11. George W. Drisko, *Narrative of the Town of Machias: The Old and the New, the Early and the Late* (Machias, ME: Press of the Republican, 1904), 41-48, 51-52; Charles E. Clark, *Maine: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), 63-64; Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 130-31; "James Lyon to the Mass. Provincial Congress, 14 June, 1775," 676; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 41-42.
12. "Diary of Simeon Perkins of Liverpool Nova Scotia, Thursday June 22, [1775]," "Deposition of Jabez Cobb regarding the Loss of the Schooner Margareta," 26 June, 1775," *Naval Docs*, vol. 1, 738, 757; Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 130-31; "James Lyon to the Mass. Provincial Congress, 14 June, 1775, 676; Williamson, *History of Maine*, vol. 2, 429-432; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 44-46.
13. "James Lyon to the Mass. Provincial Congress, 14 June, 1775," 676; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 47-48.
14. "James Lyon to the Mass. Provincial Congress, 14 June, 1775," 676-677; Williamson, *History of Maine*, vol. 2, 429-432; Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 132-133; Sherman, *Capt. Jeremiah O'Brien*, 49-52.
15. "James Lyon to the Mass. Provincial Congress, 14 June, 1775, 676-677; Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 135; Sherman, *Capt. Jeremiah O'Brien*, 55-58.
16. "James Lyon to the Mass. Provincial Congress, 14 June, 1775, 677; Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 134; Sherman, *Capt. Jeremiah O'Brien*, 59-62; "Deposition of Jabez Cobb," 26 June, 1775, 757-758.
17. "Deposition of Jabez Cobb, 26 June, 1775," 757-758; Williamson, *History of Maine*, vol. 2, 429-430; "James Lyon to the Mass. Provincial Congress 14 June, 1775," 677; Sherman, *Capt. Jeremiah O'Brien*, 64-68; "Tara Knowler, Assistant Archivist, Royal Museum, Greenwich, to Sheldon Cohen, 5 November, 2013.
18. Deposition of Jabez Cobb, *Naval Docs*, vol. 1, 757-758; "Deposition of Thomas Flin, Master of the Falmouth Packet, 10 July, 1775, *Naval Docs*, vol. 1, 848-849; Lieutenant

John Knight, R. N., to Vice Admiral Samuel Graves, 10th, Augt [August] 1775, *Naval Docs*, vol. 1, 1108; Middlekauff, *Glorious Cause* 303, 339-343; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 78-79.

19. Elizabeth Mancke, *The Faultlines of Empire: Political Differentiation in Massachusetts and Nova Scotia, ca 1760-1830* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 26, 52, 95-97, 113; Leamon, *Revolution Downeast*, 26, 52, 95-97; Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 131; "Journal of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, August 21, 1775," *Naval Docs*, vol. 1, 1213; Leamon, *Revolution Downeast*, 68-69; Mancke, *Faultlines of Empire*, 86, 100.

20. John. F. Millar, *Early American Ships* (Williamsburg, VA: Thirteen Colonies Press, 1986), 157; "Petition of Ichabod Jones to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, October 9, 1775," *Naval Docs*, vol 2, 369; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 79-80. 80-83.

21. Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 131-132; Lincoln, "Journals of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, June 26, August 21, 1775," 414, 464, *Naval Docs*, vol.1, 758-759, 1095-1096; Leamon, *Revolution Downeast*, 84, 121; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 82-83.

22. "Lieutenant John Knight, R. N. to Vice Admiral Samuel Graves, 10 Aug, 1775," *Naval Docs*, vol. 1, 1110; "Petition of Two Officers of the Armed Schooner, Diligent to the Massachusetts General Court, Oct., 11 1776," *Naval Docs*, vol. 6, 1231-1232; Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 132-133; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 83-86. It was not until 1784 that New Brunswick was declared a separate province from Nova Scotia.

23. Lincoln, "Journals of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, 1774, 1775," 395, 410-411, 415; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 85-89; Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 136-137. The fragile Fort O'Brien was subsequently destroyed by British forces.

24. Lincoln, "Journals of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, 1774-1775," 396, 402; "Petition of Benjamin Foster and Jeremiah O'Brien to the Massachusetts General Court, 19 July, 1775," *Naval Docs*, vol. 1, 924-925; "Journal of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, August 21, 23, 1775," *Naval Docs*, vol. 1, 1195, 1212-1213; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 90-93.

25. "Journal Captain John Linzee, H. M. sloop, Falcon, 8 Aug. 1775," *Naval Docs*, vol. 1, 1093-1094; "Narrative of Vice Admiral Samuel Graves, Boston, 23 August, 1775," *Naval Docs*, vol. 1, 1213-1214; Sheldon S. Cohen, *Commodore Abraham Whipple of the Continental Navy: Privateer, Patriot, Pioneer* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010), 45-46.

26. Vice Adm. Samuel Graves to Lieut. Henry Mowat, 6 Oct., 1775, *Naval Docs*, vol. 2, 324-326.

27. Clark, *Bicentennial History of Maine*, 70-72.

28. Middlekauff, *Glorious Cause*, 304-308, 325-334; *Naval Docs*, vol. 2, 1162-1163.

29. "Petition of Benjamin Foster and Jeremiah O'Brien to Mass. General Court, and Machias Committee of Safety Aug. 28, 1775," "Petition of Benjamin Foster and Jeremiah O'Brien to Mass. General Court, Oct. 14, 1775," *Naval Docs*, vol. 2, 219, 449-450; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 93-95, 101-108.

30. "Vice Admiral Samuel Graves to Captain Edward Le Cre, 4 Sept., 1775," *Naval Docs*, vol. 2, 11; Leamon, *Revolution Downeast*, 87-91; "Plan of an Expedition Against Wind-

sor and Halifax, Jan. 30, 1776," *Naval Docs*, vol. 3, 1047; Colonel Samuel Thompson and Jeremiah O'Brien, Plan to destroy the dockyard at Halifax [Nova Scotia], Jan. 1776," John F. Butler, comp, *Index to Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1978), 3900.

31. "Journal of the Massachusetts Council, August 6, 1776," *Naval Docs*, vol. 6, 78-79; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 108-111, 135-36.

32. "Journal of the Massachusetts Council, Aug. 6, 1776," *Naval Docs*, vol. 6, 78-79; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 111-113.

33. "Petition of Francis Shaw [Machias] to Massachusetts General Court, Aug. 30, 1776," *Naval Docs*, vol. 6, 357; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 138-39.

34. "Report of Committee of the Massachusetts General Court, Sept. 16, 1776," *Naval Docs*, vol. 6, 851; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 156-157; "Acts and Resolves of the Massachusetts General Court, Oct. 10, 25, Nov. 16, 1776," *Naval Docs*, vol. 6, 1195, 1411. Ibid, vol. 7, 184; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 157-159.

35. "Acts and Resolves of the Massachusetts General Court, October 15, 1776," *Naval Docs*, vol. 6, 1231-1232, 1269-1270.

36. "Petition of Daniel Martin to the Massachusetts Council, Aug. 12, 1777," "Continental Bond for Massachusetts Privateer Schooner, Resolution, Aug 12, 13, 1777," *Naval Docs*, vol. 9, 738-739; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 161-162.

37. "Captain Sir George Collier, R.N., to Philip Stephens, 29 July, 1777, "Intelligence," Captain Sir George Collier, R.N. to Philip Stevens, 16 Aug, 1777, *Naval Docs*, vol. 9, 347-349, 749-750; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 163-165; Williamson, *History of Maine*, vol. 2, 460-461.

38. "Captain Sir George Collier, R.N. to Philip Stevens, 16 Aug., 1777," 749-750, *Naval Docs*, vol. 9, 750-752; Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 134-138; Williamson, *History of Maine*, vol. 2, 461-462.

39. "Captain Sir George Collier to Philip Stevens, 16 Aug, 1777," 750-751, "News from Machias, 6 Sept. 1777," *Naval Docs*, vol. 9, 750-751, 884-885; Pope, "Machias in the Revolution," 136-137; Frederic Kidder, *Military Operations in Eastern Maine and Nova Scotia during the Revolution* (A. Trochsler, 1867), 224-228; Williamson, *History of Maine*, vol. 2, 462-463.

40. "News from Machias, 29 Sept, 1777," *Naval Docs*, vol. 9, 978; "Libels Filed in the Massachusetts Court of the Middle District, October 9, 1777," *Naval Docs*, vol. 10, 89-90; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 161-164, 168.

41. Gardner Allen, *Massachusetts Privateers of the Revolution* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1927), 107, 208, 303; Tiger[Tyger], schooner, Bond for letter of *marque*, Dec. 8, 1781, M247, r204, i196, v15, p.3, Papers of the Continental Congress; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 167-168; Leamon, *Revolution Downeast*, 99-100.

42. St. John Indians, Machias, Speech at a conference between the eastern Indians and [Colonel] John Allan, Nov. 18, 1779. Copy by John Avery of Massachusetts. M247, r 183, i 166, p. 481, Papers of the Continental Congress; Russell Bourne, "The Pennobscot Fiasco," *American Heritage* 25 (October 1974), 28-33; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 169-171.

43. Allen, *Massachusetts Privateers*, 164; HANNIBAL, ship. Bond for letter of *marque*.

Sept. 8, 1780. M247, r 203, i196, v7, p.2, Papers of the Continental Congress; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien* 170-171.

44. Allen, *Massachusetts Privateers*, 164; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 171-172.

45. Allen, *Massachusetts Privateers*, 164; Sherman, 173-174.

46. For accounts of the sufferings of Americans incarcerated in such prison hulks during the American Revolution see James L. Banks, *David Sproat and the Naval Prisoners in the War of the Revolution* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1909); Larry Bowman, *Captive American Prisoners during the American Revolution* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1977); Danske Dandridge, *American Prisoners of the Revolution* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1967).

47. Sheldon S. Cohen, *Yankee Sailors in British Goals: Prisoners of War at Forton and Mill, 1777-1783* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1995), 33-36; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 174-177.

48. Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 178-180.

49. "Samuel Hubbard to Benjamin Franklin, Feb. 12, 1782," Barbara Oberg, Ellen Cohn, eds. *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* vol. 31 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 567; Cohen, *Yankee Sailors*, 172; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 179-181.

50. Cohen, *Yankee Sailors*, 74-76, 106-110, 181-188, 201-203.

51. Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 181-182, 190. Note: the exact details involved in the escape of O'Brien are based on Jeremiah's personal declaration. They admittedly lack corroboration.

52. Cohen, *Yankee Sailors*, 199-200; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 182-183.

53. Richard B. Morris, *The Peacemakers: The Great Powers and American Independence* (New York: Harper Books, 1965), 173-179, 386-410, 438-461; Jonathan R. Dull, *A Diplomatic History of the American Revolution* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 121-128, 137-144, 159-163, 170-174; John O'Brien, "Exertions of the O'Brien Family at Machias Maine in the American Revolution," *Collections of the Maine Historical Society*, 1st ser. vol. 2, (1847), 242-249; Middlekauff, chaps. 20-22.

54. Richard A. Harrison, *Princetonians, 1776-1783: A Biographical Dictionary* (Baltimore, MD: Princeton University Press, 2014), 282.

55. Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 193-96, 203-204; Williamson, *History of Maine*, vol. 2, 508-509.

56. Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 196-198,

57. Harry L. Coles, *The War of 1812* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 1-39; Alan Taylor, *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British, Subjects, Irish Rebels & Indian Allies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), 3-10; Harvey Strum, "Smuggling in Maine During the Embargo Act and the War of 1812," *Colby College Quarterly*, 17 (June 1983), 1-9; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 206-207.

58. Coles, *War of 1812*, 31-69; Taylor, *Civil War of 1812*, 10-12, 110-125.

59. Coles, *War of 1812*, 149-170; Taylor, *Civil War of 1812*, 412-438.

60. James S. Leamon, "The Search for Security in Maine after Penobscot," *Maine Historical Society Quarterly*, 21 (no. 3, 1982), 119-153; Leamon, *Revolution Downeast*, 105-106, 157, 174-181; Mancke, *Faultlines of Empire*, 23; Williamson, *History of Maine*, vol.

2, 603-604, 645-648; Drisko, *Narrative of the Town of Machias*, 186-187 Clark, *Maine, A Bicentennial History* 68-69; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 209-210.

61. Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 210-213; Leamon, *Revolution Downeast*, 81-82, 92-94; Mancke, *Faultlines of Empire*, 103-104.

62. Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 212-213.

63. Coles, *War of 1812*, 237-263. Taylor, *Civil War of 1812*, 411-438.

64. See George Dangerfield, *The Era of Good Feelings* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1952), xiv-525; Taylor, *Civil War of 1812*, 441-458; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 213-215.

65. *Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot*. Sept. 18, 1818; Sherman, *Captain Jeremiah O'Brien*, 214-215.