English Coastal Exploration
By James Kences

I. English Coastal Exploration in Northern New England and the Involvement of Sir Ferdinando Gorges

II.

At the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, the era of wars with Spain also came to an end. King James I, the first of the Stuart monarchs of the seventeenth century, pursued a more conciliatory, less ideological, foreign policy. One consequence of this new attitude was a re-commitment on the part of the English in American exploration. A series of voyages close to the coast of what would later be designated New England, began to delineate the topographical features, the evidence of native peoples, and identification of the flora and fauna. The Gosnold and Pring voyages of 1602 and 1603, were followed by Captain George Weymouth two years later. Weymouth focused his interest on the islands and rivers of the northern Maine coast, providing some of the first detailed information on the environment and also the natives. When he sailed for England in June 1605, he carried with him as passengers, five Indians. Upon his arrival at Plymouth England, Captain Weymouth transferred three of the natives to Sir Ferdinando Gorges, who was then in command of the Plymouth fort.

Gorges was an Elizabethan in outlook, who was far more concerned with American colonization as a part of strategy directed against Spain and the Spanish Indies. Gorges was much closer to the generation of Sir Walter Raleigh, Humphrey Gilbert, Sir Francis Drake. He had commenced his career as a soldier in his youth, and had participated in several military campaigns. In 1595, he had obtained his appointment to the Plymouth fort, and with this new position, became vigilant against the Spanish threat. When Gorges received the Indians in 1605, a new phase of his career opened. Within a year the famous effort of the Virginia charters was established. From this event, to the south, would emerge “the first colony” Jamestown under the London Company; far to the north, at the Kennebec River, Gorges and the Plymouth Company sought to create another settlement “the second colony”. But it was not to be—by 1608 Popham Beach was abandoned, following a succession of misfortunes, and confrontation with a challenging climate.

Though Jamestown experienced significant setbacks in the early years, the colony persevered. As the numbers of migrants increased, the need to access food sources became more urgent. One of these food sources were the fish that flourished in the northern waters. When the ships from Virginia ventured north, they entered the sphere of the Plymouth Company, still under Gorges’ leadership. This was to become the basis of conflict. In 1614 Captain John Smith undertook a detailed exploration of the New England coast. His objective was to bring about the creation of northern settlement sustained by a fishing economy, and perhaps also to improve relations between the southern and northern sectors of the Virginia charters. Captain Smith conferred with Gorges upon his return to England regarding prospective colony, but was repeatedly defeated by circumstances, and finally gave up. Though not successful in achieving his objectives, Captain Smith did create the first detailed map of the region, and had also provided one of the earliest

representations of Mount Agamenticus—a distinctive landmark on the coast from that time forward.

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2 Gorges and the Council of New England:1620-1635

The Council of New England was brought into existence in England, at almost the same time the famed Plymouth Pilgrims were deliberating over where they would place their settlement. A formal request was made to King James for a new charter in 1619 which would promise for the former Northern Company of Adventurers, the group who were behind the abortive Popham Beach effort, the enlarged privileges currently enjoyed by the Virginia group centered at Jamestown. Plymouth Colony of 1620 was to become the first successful effort to colonize the New England region, but within only a few years, would be joined by several scattered beach-heads from coastal Maine to coastal Massachusetts. The Council of New England was the over-arching authority for all of these settlements. Gorges wanted control over fishing rights, trade with the natives, and greater clout overall. Friction was inevitable. It was virtually impossible to effectively regulate Indian trade when so many entrepreneurs abounded. Instances of traders providing liquor, and worse, firearms and ammunition, continued despite prohibitory proclamations. The incidents which involved the Plymouth Pilgrims and the men at Wessagusset and Merry Mount, were provoked by just such infractions.

Gorges was possessed of expectations that may have worked on paper but could not be fulfilled in reality on the ground. Events quickly got beyond his control, and the unleashed energy of early colonization, was beyond his powers to manage. The Council of New England is significant for the history of this town, because several critical actions took place while the organization existed. It would be here, more directly under his personal supervision, that Gorges would try to implement his unique conception of English settlement—the manor, the city, the seat of the Anglican church, political offices little removed from the Middle Ages. In truth, it was still just a small town made up of farmers and fishermen.

In August 1622, under the Council of New England, Gorges and Captain John Mason, obtained rights to territory between the Merrimack and Kennebec Rivers—the basis of the proprietary governments of what would later be New Hampshire and Maine. This was a stepwise process, that was to require over a decade of successive legal agreements. By the conclusion, in 1635, when the Council of New England surrendered its charter to the King, Mason and his heirs would possess proprietary rights to New Hampshire, and Gorges, the rights to Maine.Before the decade of the 1620s had ended, Gorges and his business partner Captain Mason had organized the Laconia Company to conduct Indian trade with the distant Lake of the Iroquois, and also to maintain a coastal fishery. The Laconia venture was a stimulant to settlement at the mouth of the Piscataqua River, which was believed to reach to the western realm. Laconia was not a financial success, and was brought down with mounting debts.

By the early 1630s, Gorges and the Council of New England had begun to make a series of grants, that in time would evolve into recognizable communities upon the Maine coast; December 1631 the Twelve Thousand Acre grant on the Agamenticus River, to Gorges's grandson, also named Ferdinando, Edward Godfrey, an officer of the Laconia Company, who had helped to operate the fishery, Humphrey Hooke, Lieut. Col. Walter Norton and others, marked the beginning of organized English life here. A tiny nucleus of one or two houses, occupied by Godfrey, Edward Johnson, and probably Norton, close to what would later be termed Meeting House Creek, marked the site of initial settlement.

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3 Bristol and Gorgeana: the Gorges Proprietary Government 1635-1647

As of 1635 the Council of New England was no more—the charter had been surrendered to King Charles I, who had succeeded his father as monarch in 1625. Sir Ferdinando Gorges was not only granted proprietary rights to New Somerset or Maine, but he was declared Lord Governor over New England. However formidable his powers might have seemed, he was actually witnessing his authority slip from his grasp. Elderly, and never able to make the voyage to America, he was compelled to relegate his responsibilities to others. England was advancing towards civil war, and Charles I was very much on the defensive. Massachusetts Bay was rapidly developed into a score of towns, presided over by Boston. Maine was dwarfed by Massachusetts from the very inception; population exceeded the northern region by many times, and an economy based upon maritime trade, industrial experiments as ambitious as the Lynn ironworks, agricultural produce and the harvesting of lumber, represented the many directions of expansion, and the potential of the future. The take off was in the 1640s.

The first small cluster of houses at Agamenticus was to be joined by a small industrial area further up river at Point Christian. This was the site chosen for tidal mills and also the Gorges manor house. It was to this manor house that Thomas Gorges arrived in June of 1640. He had been entrusted by Sir Ferdinando Gorges to head the government, but had to contend with multiple issues which threatened to fragment Maine; the feud between John Winter and George Cleeve that had begun when Winter forcibly evicted the other man from his homestead situated on one of the islands in Casco Bay, took a new turn, when Cleeve succeeded in obtaining support from Sir Alexander Rigby, so as to transform the 1630 "Plough Patent" into the basis of a rival government, to be known as Lygonia. Within weeks of his death in the spring of 1647, Gorges' Maine was divided into two groups of communities; Lygonia to the north, and the southern government, centered around Gorgeana, under the leadership of Edward Godfrey.

Gorgeana came into existence as a chartered entity in March of 1642—six months later, the English Civil War erupted when King Charles raised the royal standard at Nottingham. Sir Ferdinando Gorges lived to witness the king's defeat, but was spared the knowledge of the later trial and execution of January 1649. The extended period of instability on the other side of the Atlantic, the passions

generated by the war and the royalist stigma, and above all the death of Gorges, and the departure from the scene of his personality, proved entirely to the advantage of Massachusetts, and to a relatively large number of Maine inhabitants fully in sympathy with the Bay Colony. Any chance of cohesiveness was gone because of the Lygonia agitation, and disapproval of the policies and leadership of the southern Maine government.

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4 The Town of York: First Submission to Massachusetts 1647-1662

". . .And so, you may be put out of doubt of the right of our claim and interest. . ." The concluding lines of a letter directed to the Maine government from Massachusetts in July of 1652—a prelude to the tumultuous period ahead. In order to legitimize what was basically a usurpation or conquest, the Bay Colony relied heavily upon an interpretation of their territorial boundaries derived from their charter. By this interpretation, fixed upon a survey of the Merrimack River, the province of Maine could be perceived as intrusive, and therefore illegal. With considerable sarcasm, Edward Godfrey rejected the claim; 'your unknown line, you now willingly labor to engrasp" was his answer to the boundary debate.

Unfortunately for Godfrey, a unified front was impossible, as there was far too much discontent prevalent within the region. Massachusetts began to assemble a group of allies in Maine—even within Gorgeana. Peter Weare was among them, also John Davis; men who commanded authority. Evidence of what would develop into internal betrayal is revealed in the court records with references to disobedience and provocative speeches. Massachusetts could of course, exploit this conduct, as it confirmed for the political leaders that the transfer of power would be welcomed, and that any threatened resistance was diminished. Those who remained most loyal to the idea of Gorges' Maine would obstruct, but never with violence. Undercurrents of hostility to what transpired in 1652, can still be detected decades later. These antagonisms may have contributed to the alienation that was to result from the Indian wars, and the conviction that Massachusetts failed to invest sufficient energy or resources in defending the northern frontier.

The absorption of Maine was a protracted process that commenced in the autumn of 1652, and was not completed until 1658, when the towns of Lygonia had finally submitted. In the midst of this, Godfrey, who tried without success to protect his land holdings within what was now known as York, made the decision to sail to England. He never returned to the place he had resided for close to a quarter century and died at a London debtors prison. Until the end, he fought against aggressive actions of Massachusetts. Ironically, the two names Gorges and Godfrey, once so dominant here, left so few physical traces, and the extensive land grants they received, have since dissolved away with the passage of time.

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5 The Brief Return of the Gorges Government and the Final Bay Colony Takeover 1662-1668

The defiant capitulation of Peter Stuyvesant to English soldiers under the command of Colonel Richard Nicolls at New Amsterdam in August 1664, is one of the most familiar set pieces of early American history. The surrender signaled the end of Dutch colonization of the Hudson, and the inception of New York. The very same mission which was to allow for English expansion in the Restoration era, and a whole new phase of the colonial program, had another side to it, somewhat obscure, but directly relevant to the town of York. King Charles II, son of the executed king, returned to England in 1660. Within a few years of his being restored as monarch, the king ordered four commissioners to America. The men were assigned several tasks; they were instructed to provide a report of conditions in New England, with emphasis upon Massachusetts with a reputation for being uncooperative with the royal prerogative. As one of the four took command of forces who were to defeat Stuyvesant, the remaining three, not only dealt with the Bay Colony government, they came to Maine, and in June 1665, at York, they took possession of the region in the name of the king.

Upon the departure of Colonel Nicolls for England in the spring of 1668, Massachusetts resumed the organized effort to take possession of Maine, and by "force of arms" in July of that year, a small party of soldiers led by John Leverett, overawed the established government and for the last time, reasserted Bay Colony dominance.

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6 Frontier Town: The First Indian War and the Beginnings of a Half-Century of Wartime Danger

By the decade of the 1670s clusters of houses at diverse sites, linked together by roads, or more often trails in a partially cleared forest, characterized the town. The first sites of the early decades were to be joined by Cape Neddick, to the north, Brave Boat Harbor, to the south, Brixham, and Scotland, to the west. The somewhat exotic name Scotland, was derived from a region of farmsteads possessed by Scots—McIntire, Junkins, Maxwell-- who had been transported to New England as punishment for having faced Cromwell in battle. In some instances, several miles separated one neighborhood from another. These conditions made York vulnerable in the event of Indian war. For raiding parties who sought any opportunity to strike when it was realized their would be no significant retaliation, an array of scattered farmsteads inadequately linked together, and even independent of one another, was close to ideal.

Politically integrated into Massachusetts, the population of York looked to Boston for assistance; but Boston was not only far away, a challenge for any military support, or for the crucial provisioning of the soldiers, Massachusetts possessed so many areas of exposed frontier, that it could only distribute so much, and this even minimal amount of resources was always destined to those places

where needs seemed most urgent. And that was not all; the province placed heavy demands upon the towns for war taxes, and did not readily accept explanations from the locals that they could not pay. Regardless of whether they were destitute or in real danger, the townspeople were to contribute as an obligation, and their was little room for compromise, because one concession offered, would be followed by a multitude of requests.

The frontier towns adopted the strategy of constructing garrison houses, often just modified houses, strengthened for defense. The garrisons served as refuge for several family groups who lived in proximity. In the event of an alarm, signaled by the discharge of guns or clanging of the town bell,everyone within listening distance, abruptly suspended ordinary routines, gathered together the most necessary items, and departed for the garrisons, to remain, for days, even for weeks and months. It was not an easy life; cramped quarters, food in short supply, all kinds of inconveniences. To venture from the garrison, was to be at risk. So often, the tragedies unfolded, when the act of stepping out the door, to perhaps work the fields, fetch water, care for livestock, ended with death or capture.

New England had little experience with Indian war before the 1670s. At times, war had certainly threatened, and forces were mobilized, but nothing transpired. The Pequot War of the 1630s, was confined to Connecticut, and was not an equal contest. Forty years later, the situation was different, because of the increase of frontier towns, the availability of firearms to the natives, mounting grievances between either group of peoples. As English towns pressed forward into tribal territories, value systems clashed over a range of issues, from property to behavior. The very act of applying English names to the native landscape symbolized the phenomenon. Agamenticus was retained as a reminder of the native relationship to this place, but it stands out strangely against a much larger number of English sounding place names. The multiple pronunciations found in the records, such as Adementicus, or Accomenticus, suggest a failure to ever fully assimilate the word. Phases of culture history, and of conquest, so clearly revealed by single words—Agamenticus, Gorgeana, York.

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7 Frontier Town: The Final Phase of the Indian Wars

Moody—Sewall—Bradbury—Nowell—all surnames of families soon to be prominent in town affairs, and recent migrants from Essex County in Massachusetts. The raid of January 1692 had created a void that had to be filled; the Reverend Shubael Dummer was dead, and property owners were removed by death or capture, or the impulse to live elsewhere. Many names vanish from the scene, and with them, part of the character of York as it had existed before 1692. Gone is Masterson, Sheeres, Alcock. Banks observed of Alcock,"the name has been extinct in the town for over two centuries.. ." Though not killed by Indians, two dominant leaders,Major John Davis and Edward Rishworth, were also absent, having died from natural causes in the early 1690s.

Some of the oldest families, such as the Prebles, the Bragdons, the Donnells, the Moultons, the Weares, will continue to remain very much in evidence. Abraham Preble, the owner of one of the garrison houses, held on, despite losses by his family in the raid; John Preble was killed, Benjamin and Obadiah Preble taken into captivity, but the Prebles continued in positions of authority in government and the militia. The Moulton family also suffered losses; Joseph Moulton and his wife were both killed, their son Jeremiah survived, able to evade capture. Jeremiah Moulton the child of 1692, matured into the military officer of the 1720s. His personal story provides a thread for York's narrative for over half of the eighteenth century. In August 1724, he was one of the commanders who led soldiers against the Indian mission at Norridgewock, presided over by Father Sebastian Rasle, who by that time had earned a notorious reputation as agitator of hostile natives.

The Norridgewock raid is often interpreted as the vengeful culmination of decades of hatred set in motion by 1692. Much the same has been said of York's involvement in the Louisbourg campaign of 1745, against French Canada, another of Jeremiah Moulton's personal accomplishments. While this is hard to prove, it points outs that Moulton and others with memories of the attack, were fortunate enough to live to a later time when the town had fully emerged from the direct Indian threat. Indian dangers receeded from decade to decade. The raids of Queen Anne's war, especially after 1705, and the threat posed during Dummer's War in the 1720s, were already very different in magnitude, and the Indians were compelled to seek peace because they were outnumbered and the provincial military possessed the advantages. During the 1740s and 1750s, the people of York no longer had to live confined to garrisons. For towns north of Falmouth, such dangers still existed. Finally safe from the peril, soldiers could be called upon for the great efforts to Canada, or towards the New York frontier.

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8 Expansion and the Final French-Canada Wars 1726-1760

The cycles of war and peace, beginning in the 1670s, established a pattern of behavior in which expansion was suppressed during periods of danger, and then, almost as with energy bursts, all kinds of movements followed closely the restoration of peace. Sawmills were constructed on the rivers, homes built in outlying areas, new towns were planted, and families migrated away to places, which at one period would have been far too forbidding to contemplate. Jeremiah Moulton, who lived to the Stamp Act crisis of 1765, was both a partner in mill operations and a town proprietor in new towns. Also during his lifetime York County was divided; in 1760, Cumberland and Lincoln Counties were created. The loss of the town's prominence was inevitable, as population moved farther away.

In 1735, York was undertaking the construction of a court house, while petitioners appealed to the legislature to allow for court sessions to be held closer to their own towns. This is but the first phase of a century long process that was to result in the town's diminished stature. It no longer made any practical sense for the former structure to be maintained, but the town collectively resisted every

challenge to tradition, until it became an anachronism—a curiously surviving relic of an earlier era—prosperous shire town with an active maritime commerce. Other towns took the lead, such as Falmouth, better situated for shipping, and to the network of northern towns.

Two events within York during the decade of the 1730s—the formal creation of the Second Parish in the western part of the town, and the division of the common lands, were expressions of the changed conditions, and also warning signs for the future. Approval of a second meeting house had been obtained in 1719, in the aftermath of Queen Anne's War, and became legally organized as a parish in 1732. When towns formed separate parishes it was often a prelude to sectional movements toward the creation of new towns. For the neighboring town of Kittery, sectional movements led eventually to Berwick and Eliot, as a tension generated by the differences of the agriculturally based economies of the interior, conflicted with the coast. Though difficult to document unless explicitly stated, this may have been the case in York as well. But nothing was to happen. The creation of the Second Parish had no such outcome, and no other parishes were ever formed.

The division of the common lands, again initiated in 1732, with the second division occurring in 1750, was significant because it revealed that the old wartime threat was indeed eliminated, and that the lands could be securely possessed. The division was an indication of the pressures currently existing caused by the need for land, and of growing resentments over land availability. The exodus from town to the new towns was in reaction, in part, to the limits of obtainable land, and to the limits of opportunity caused by so much land locked up by the holdings of the older families.

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9 The Era of Jonathan Sayward:Pre-Revolutionary York 1760-1775

Woodbridge's tavern in the area of the court buildings during the 1770s is supposed to have brandished William Pitt upon its sign, and the words "Entertainment for the Sons of Liberty" Pitt has been credited with the organization of the British military effort which brought about the final defeat of French Canada between 1758 and 1760. Men from town participated in that effort, from Quebec to Montreal. Thomas Moody, son of the Reverend Joseph Moody, and a tanner by profession, kept a diary of military life in the summer and fall of 1760; the surrender of Montreal marked the end of French Canada. Another contemporary diarist Jonathan Sayward noted how the town celebrated the event.

From the peace of 1763 which ended the Seven Years War to the clash on Lexington Green, was just a little over a decade. York's veterans of the war of the 1750s, committed themselves to war with Great Britain, after having endured a succession of insults and betrayals. Historically known as Sugar Acts,Stamp Acts,Townshend Acts, Tea Acts, from 1764 until 1773; each of these parliamentary enactments had two objectives, the raising of revenue and the policing of colonial commerce to discourage illegal smuggling and other infractions. The troubles were also due to personalities, from

King George III who succeeded to the throne in 1760, Governor Francis Barnard of Massachusetts, Thomas Hutchinson, James Otis, Samuel Adams.

The men from town who came closest to the developing crisis, were the small number sent to Boston as representatives to the legislature which convened at the end of May at the Town House at the head of King Street—the brick building ornamented with the gilded lion and unicorn visible in Revere's engraving of the Boston Massacre. Among those men was Sayward, first elected in 1764, and every year after, until 1769. Sayward owned a small fleet of merchant ships, traded actively the length of the Atlantic seaboard, the West Indies, the Canadian Maritimes. He lived in a mansion at the York River, across from the mill pond, site of a 1726 industrial complex of saw and grist mills of which his father, Joseph Sayward was a partner.

In 1766, following the violent Boston riots which literally destroyed Thomas Hutchinson's North End mansion, Sayward labored in favor of compensation for the sufferers. This was not a popular position, and helped to profile his political sympathies. When another vote was taken in the legislature regarding a money grant to Hutchinson as Chief Justice of the provincial court, Sayward, voted for the grant, while almost unanimously the radical group voted against it. Sayward served upon committees with some of the most prominent radicals, including James Otis and Samuel Adams, but he was Hutchinson's personal friend.

Jonathan Sayward's active political career ended in 1768, when he was declared one of the "Rescinders" a minority of conservatives in the Massachusetts House who voted against the Circular Letter that was intended for the different colonial legislatures. Ninety-two men, the "Glorious Ninety-Two" who were memorialized by Paul Revere's Liberty Bowl, voted for the letter. By the late 1760s and early 1770s, Sayward's Loyalist leanings were obvious. For the most ardent of local radicals he was perceived as being suspect. In the summer of 1774, John Adams, within weeks of departing for the First Continental Congress, had an encounter with him at a tavern within town. Sayward brought up the Reverend Samuel Moody, and what he thought was wise advice, as Adams prepared for his mission fraught with dangers.

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10 The Era of Jonathan Sayward: Eight Years of War 1775-1783

On January 1, 1777 129 of the town's adult male population of 607, was in the army. However the numbers fluctuated between 1775 and 1783, the entire span of the war, York was required to sacrifice much, from having to contend with long absences and neglected farm fields, the introduction of disease, wildly inflated currency and prohibitive prices for the most basic goods, enemy privateers off the coast, anxieties over the fate of loved ones, moments of panic, misinformation and miscommunication, the ebb and flow of wandering people and refugees. With a few exceptions, the war was hundreds of miles away—New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey—and

when family members watched as husbands and fathers disappeared down the road, they knew the chances of ever seeing them again were not very encouraging. If a bullet did not kill, an illness could.

The British army in the era of King George III was one of the great European armies, and by 1776 it would be augmented with Hessian mercenaries. For the Americans to confront this force, seemed to many a foolhardy enterprise, and in truth, the war could not have been won without French aid that took so many forms, from arms and ammunition to uniforms and provisions. For a generation of older soldiers sobered by memories of the perfidious French of the 1750s and even the 1740s, to become so beholden to the one time enemy, must have been a genuine psychic shock—Catholic, aristocratic, French, but their ships loaded with arms came right into Portsmouth, and Jonathan Sayward listened as men told him they were certain the French would enter the war, and that in the end the American would be victorious.

York did not know of the Lexington Alarm which was to result in thousands of soldiers from throughout New England, racing towards Boston, until the evening of April 19, 1775. The men under the command of Captain Johnson Moulton, marched south, but upon arriving to New Hampshire were instructed to return home. As we examine the list of these men, sixty-one in all, we see, beginning with Captain Moulton himself, descendants of the seventeenth century families—Bragdons, Simpsons, Donnells,Saywards, McIntires. There are also names of migrants who did not arrive until the next century—Sewall, Trevett, Kingsbury. Samuel Derby, a lieutenant, had not arrived in town until the late 1760s, and was originally from Concord in Massachusetts. Another group of names represented some of the old families of Kittery, Wells, Berwick—Sawyer, Plaisted,Low. There was also a Negro named Caesar.

The manpower demands of the war were enormous and constant, far exceeding any of the previous wars. The extensive geographical area encompassed New England, north into Canada, and south as far as the Carolinas and Georgia, even to Florida and the West Indies. In addition the operations were complex, and involved careful coordination. Losses due to casualties, disease, and to captures and imprisonment, numbered in the thousands, and had to be replaced. As York was situated at the coast, another element, was vigilant monitoring of the horizon for signs of enemy ships, as well as the threat posed by privateers. Whenever any of the town's mariners departed from shore, they risked not only being captured, but of being taken back to Britain, to languish in one of the notorious prisons. Thomas Adams and James Harris, two local men taken from the Hercules, suffered this fate, and died while in confinement at Old Mill Prison in 1782.

As soon as independence was declared in July of 1776, the process of transforming British colonial provinces into American states was initiated. New governments emerged formally organized under constitutions. For Massachusetts, the effort was protracted. Not until 1780 was a constitution enacted. During that same year, inflation was also at its worst. The economy was badly distorted by the inflated currency. Every aspect of town life was impacted by these conditions—from the collection of taxes, to the costs of the most basic goods. With so many of the farm families depleted by commitments to the army, and with the usual pattern of maritime trade and even the fishery

disrupted by the war, it was a challenge to even bring in supplies. Despite the victory at Yorktown in October 1781, the dangers and the obstacles remained for almost two more years.

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11 The Era of Jonathan Sayward: In the New Nation 1783-1800

". . .[We]really apprehend such a time of scarcity before the month of April next as they never saw before, probably one half the inhabitants without bread. . ." In January 1783 the town's selectmen appealed to Massachusetts for clemency, confronted by a fine for having failed to comply with demands to meet the quota of soldiers. The petition provides a glimpse into the difficulties of post-war recovery, and a reminder that the end of war is when a community must reckon with the impact—diminished population, farms and buildings in disrepair, a greatly reduced fleet of ships. York was now a town in the state of Massachusetts, and part of the United States,in the Confederation, but conditions remained chaotic. Within a few years, veterans would revolt against the government in Boston, Shay's Rebellion, studied by Sayward in the pages of his diary.

Some of the earliest expressions of movement toward Maine statehood surfaced in 1785 and 1786, with the first of the conventions held in Falmouth. But Shay's Rebellion intervened, and the climate of opinion changed amidst the insurgency. Momentarily, any drive for statehood was submerged, and another three decades would elapse before this was actually brought about. Portland had come into existence in July of 1786, a new center of gravity for the region, and only a decade after the bombardment and fire of autumn 1775.

Shay's Rebellion had also exerted a strong influence upon those who advocated for a more effective government for the administration of the states. It was no accident that in 1787, a year later, a convention was held in Philadelphia, that was to result in the drafting of a federal Constitution. Under the new form of government that was brought into existence following ratification, a president, House of Representatives, and Senate took form. December 1788, David Sewall, an ardent opponent of Separation, was chosen an elector in the first presidential election, that brought George Washington to the presidency, and John Adams to the vice-presidency. In October of 1789, Washington, on tour of New England, came as close as Portsmouth.

Sayward now an old man had witnessed much. The changes were symbolized by innovations as basic as the money—pounds and shillings and dollars and cents. The British icons were gone, torn down long ago. His diary reveals that the decade of the 1780s was punctuated by some monumental weather events; severe storms, freshets in the river that swept away bridges, high tides. The following decade would be marked by outbreaks of disease, the old enemy smallpox, also measles. In distant Philadelphia, yellow fever would be rampant. Sayward lived long enough to see the completion of David Sewall's mansion Coventry Hall, an architectural showpiece in the center of town. The Woodbridge family burglary ring and the last minute pardon of a condemned man, Abbott, only days from his execution, were much talked about events.

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12 Embargo, War, and Economic Decline 1800-1820

One of the great events of modern history, the storming of the Bastille in Paris, took place as Washington entered his first term in office in 1789. For over two decades, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, would not only destabilize Europe, but the repercussions would be felt in America. France's recent involvement in the war with Britain, stirred emotions which carried over into our perceptions of their Revolution. Because of that involvement, detachment was largely impossible. The Democratic-Republicans of the early nineteenth century took the contemporary French zeal to heart, and the Federalists, the opposing party, reacted towards them, even over-reacted towards them, as a source of danger.

In 1793 and 1794, Washington, in his second term, had formally declared the United States would remain neutral as the French revolutionary government entered into war with Britain and the alliance of other nations. The controversial Jay Treaty with Great Britain also occurred at this time. In the aftermath of the treaty, our relations with revolutionary France deteriorated. John Adams assumed the presidency in the spring of 1797, and soon, military mobilization was undertaken for the so-called Quasi War with France. Adams and the other Federalists adopted what seemed extreme measures with the Alien and Sedition Acts directed against the opposition. These actions so discredited the administration, that in 1800 the Democratic-Republicans won the election, and in 1801 Thomas Jefferson was inaugurated president.

During the period 1806 to 1807, prelude to the Jefferson Embargo, the two warring powers in Europe, began to impose restrictions upon maritime trade, in a series of back and forth retaliatory acts. A new provocation took place in June 1807 when the American ship Chesapeake was fired upon by the British ship Leopard. The incident might have led to war, passions were inflamed, but Jefferson hoped to maintain peace, though also sought to bring an end upon restrictions to trade, and that was the intended purpose of the Embargo instituted in December of 1807. American ships were to be prohibited from foreign ports, while coasting vessels and the ships employed in the fishery could remain active, but subject to being monitored.

While much is made of the injurious effect of the Embargo upon York's maritime operations, it is probably closer to the truth to place the legislation as a part of a larger whole that extends back to the Revolution, and the losses suffered at that time, as well as to challenges which begin in the early 1790s at the opening of the war with France. In 1794, an embargo was imposed upon ship traffic, though for not an extended period. Still, with war on such a scale, already occurring, and destined to grow more serious in the following years, the situation for maritime commerce was not auspicious.

A new threat loomed as the British navy became more aggressive with impressments. American sailors were vulnerable to this policy, and were deterred from taking part in risky voyages. The belligerent tone of the British, was met with increased militant nationalism of the War Hawks,

especially after the elections of 1810. Within two years, war was declared against Britain, the War of 1812. The war was yet another severe blow to York's commerce. Further, discontent over the failure of Massachusetts to provide adequetly for Maine's defense, helped to re-ignite the movement for statehood. Between 1816 to 1819, the movement gained sufficient momentum to succeed. In 1820 statehood became a reality. York was now a town in the state of Maine.

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13 Maine Statehood and the Eclipse of the County Seat 1820-1832

". . .The place has rather been on the decline for some years. . ." The comment of Asa Freeman was made in 1821. The cumulative effect of the many hits upon the town might help to explain the meaning. A pattern of contraction occurring at several levels had begun decades earlier, with the departures caused by migration to other places. The population, at one time significantly higher then all but a few Maine towns, was no longer as pronounced, and was certainly dwarfed by Portland, and other emerging urban centers.

As agitation increased for removal of the courts, the town's leadership attempted to forestall the movement. Before the War of 1812, a new court house was constructed, to replace the 1735 structure. Only a few years later, the move of judicial offices to Alfred began; the Registry of deeds in 1816—probate court and clerk of courts in 1820. When a county prison was to be installed at Alfred in 1823, voters sought to defeat the plan, but failed. And so, one by one, the old institutions went. Still more hits were to occur in the 1830s, as a large triangular section of land to the west was transferred to South Berwick, just as the final transfer of courts to Alfred was in process.

In 1833, the town and the Congregational Church were in conflict over rights to the court house building. The church took the position that they held the land upon which the building stood. The town countered that it was legally owned by the town. The feud went on for months, ironically as a visit of President Andrew Jackson was being anticipated. President Jackson never came, the visit was cancelled.

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14 Temperance, Anti-Slavery, Prelude to the Civil War 1832-1861

". . .Are you in favor of this Maine Liquor Law?. . .I am not. . ." So wrote Luther Junkins in April of 1852. In the early summer of that year he remarked of the famed law, "it is as bad in my opinion as the abolition party" the Free Soil Party. The Maine law prohibited the sale of all liquor except for industrial or medical purposes, and had been enacted in large part because of the energy of Neal Dow, who was elected as mayor of Portland. Junkins had inquired of his correspondent, "what do

you think of the election of the mayor of Portland?" Instead of standing firm, the state legislature compromised, and the New Maine Law of 1858 was far less severe.

There is no question that temperance was a vital concern to part of York's population. The town records contain numerous statements regarding the issue In April of 1848, nine men, including David Wilcox, put their signatures to a long statement, with a warning directed at all who were apathetic: "[If nothing is done] idleness, poverty, vice and crime shall stalk our streets. . .and make desolate. . .our quiet homes and all our cherished institutions. . ." Another statement, put into the records in April 1852, pledged to "expel the demon alcohol from the community."

Beyond the most vocal group of advocates, and the individuals who attached their signatures to their declarations, it is more difficult to determine what others believed. When we turn to religious leaders who observed that the consumption of alcohol persisted, the notion that temperance was universally supported is open to challenge. In December of 1849, for example, the Baptist Elder Mark Fernald, witnessed how Christmas was celebrated in town; ". . .some from the east of the town met a gang in the south of York, and had a shameful riot of drinking, shooting, dancing & all day and all night. . ." Fernald may not be the best judge of what this was all about, but it is likely that many did not want their freedoms invaded. If the use of alcohol remained pervasive, the positions taken by the temperance advocates, and their warnings, would have been understandably strong.

Anti-slavery, another of the contemporary moral reform movements, never appeared in the public record, and is not mentioned by the diarists. In the November 1852 election, the Free-Soil candidate John P. Hale only obtained four votes, while the Democratic candidate Franklin Pierce received 297 votes. Two years later, Joseph Moody supplied the spelling of abolitionist as "aboligionist" as if the word was still unfamiliar. York men sailed to the American South on their ships, and observed slavery first hand. This personal contact was different from those who knew of slavery only from what they read.

The crisis over slavery, or the expansion of slavery in the new states, was at the heart of Maine's very existence. Statehood in 1820 had occurred as part of the Missouri Compromise. Three decades later, after the Mexican War, and the addition of new territory, a new phase commenced, as the Free-Soil Party of the late 1840s, evolved into the Republican Party of the 1850s. While the Republican Party certainly was attractive to abolitionists, the nucleus of party values was broader in character, focused more upon restriction of slavery from the territories, then upon anti-slavery and abolition. In November 1860, York's politics changed with a Republican majority in the elections, " the first time for 28 years the Democrat ticket has not had the majority. . ." This was the election which brought Abraham Lincoln to power, and soon afterwards was followed by the Secession of the Southern states to form the Confederacy.

English Coastal Exploration
By James Kences

In the middle of the town since 1906 has been the statue of a Civil War soldier. Many towns throughout New England possess such monuments. When the statue was dedicated, Joshua Chamberlain, former commander of the Twentieth Maine, and defender of Little Round Top at Gettysburg, delivered the address. Only four decades had passed since the end of the war, best known as the War of the Rebellion. The children of 1906 could be told stories by the old veterans who kept the memory of what had happened alive. Now, over one hundred years later, the veterans have passed, but also their audience. And so, the statue stands, but with little actual meaning.

It was a war and the casualties were horrendous. Battle after battle was fought, and thousands of men perished. Two national capitals, Richmond, Virginia and Washington DC, were close enough together, that it was assumed falsely, that a masterful campaign properly executed would bring about a great victory. From Bull Run in July of 1861 to Petersburg in 1864, the access points to those two capitals were to be marked literally by the blood of an entire generation. One commander after another followed in succession—McClellan, Burnside, Hooker,Grant—and the war grew more desperate, less heroic, less epic, as the frustrations of a succession of failed conquests, finally brought about a final phase of steady, constantly advancing destruction of the Confederacy's resources.

The men who marched off to that war, did so to preserve the Union. Secession was the violation of a principle they had been taught since their childhoods, of an inviolable Union. At one level it was a war over the raging controversies caused by the survival of slavery, but the Union was the cause men were willing to fight and die for, just as the Union was the pre-occupation of Abraham Lincoln whenever he spoke. The war went on as it did, because defeat or compromise would have meant an end to the Union, and as the numbers of dead multiplied, the Union became a single sacred unifying cause.

Andersonville, the notorious gigantic stockaded prison camp located in Georgia, became the place where one York soldier died in 1864. "Spoke with Mr. Walker about Albert, whom they fear is kill'd or taken prisoner. . ." Harriet Emerson had made reference to Albert R. Walker, a soldier of the First Maine Cavalry, who was captured during the fumbled Dahlgren raid upon Richmond in early March. Four brothers of the Walker family entered the war as soldiers, but Albert died at Andersonville. Other men from town were soldiers in the cavalry regiment—Albert Moulton, William Blaisdell. They had formally enlisted in the winter of 1864, in response to one of a number of calls from the president for volunteers. For the town leaders, each call meant a town meeting, and a vote to determine how much each soldier was to receive as bounty.

The two hundred or three hundred dollar bounties, seem relatively small, but when, over the course of four years, such amounts had to be paid, the total became a hefty sum. Only five soldiers subject to a bounty was equal to one thousand dollars—fifteen soldiers, three thousand, and up it went. For Harriet Emerson the war was about anxiety for loved ones, her two sons. For Charles Clark, the war was about all the monetary costs, and the constant demands from the state and federal governments.

The town was forced to find money it did not have, and went to great lengths to comply with whatever was expected. Clark never mentioned any of the battles in his diary. But in April of 1865, he made note of the fall of Richmond—Harriet Emerson's son was at the Confederate capital. This jubilation over the imminent end of war was dashed by Lincoln's assassination, and Clark mentioned that also; ". . .President Abraham Lincoln was shot through the head by an assassin at Washington at 10PM. . ." Vengeful Radical Republicans, Reconstruction without Lincoln's guidance, the presidencies of Andrew Johnson and Ulysses S. Grant—the nation's immediate future. At York, in contrast, hotels rose at the shore, ushering in an era of prosperity.

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16 Seashore Resort: the Earliest of the Beach Hotels 1865-1887

". . .Abbie and I have been down to see the new hotel 'The Marshall House'—it is a splendid affair for this place. . ." Harriet Emerson reported her first visit to the Stage Neck site of Nathaniel Grant Marshall's three story hotel, in May 1871, as the summer season opened. From period photographs it is evident how the building dominated the landscape, and how the area of York Harbor changed within just a few years, as other hotels, and then cottages, came to occupy the shore. Marshall, who had lived in York since the early nineteenth century, had started out as a store clerk at a general store at York Corner, but shortly afterwards became the proprietor. In 1841he married into the Bragdon family, and a decade later, sold the store and entered politics, taking on many offices.

At the death of Charles Clark, the diarist, Marshall became town clerk. The project that was to occupy his attention in this position was the town hall, and the town records. Marshall wanted to restore pride in the town, and to properly recognize the historical heritage. At the dedication of the town hall in 1874, he spoke of how the building had been abused and neglected. The old court house and the Gaol across the street had been purchased from the county by Washington Junkins in 1869, and from him transferred to town ownership. In 1873, voters approved the removal of the school from the town hall, and a year later, endorsed the placement of stone posts fitted with rods or chains, and prohibited horses from the immediate grounds. These actions are representative of the earliest efforts to rehabilitate the town, and to be aware of the qualities that made it special, and attractive to visitors from outside.

Another dimension to this rehabilitation involved physical improvements; modifications to the Congregational Church and the placement of the entrance facing the street, reconstruction of Sewall's Bridge, the gradual elimination of the low marshy areas at Long Sands Beach, and the establishment of a public road from York Harbor to the area north, previously interrupted by Norwood Farms. In 1879, a new attraction was introduced, with the light house at Nubble. Marshall died in 1882. He did not live to witness the next phase, with all of its turbulence, but his sons did. In many respects, his sons assumed a central role.

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17 Seaside Resort: Tourists by Trains and Trolleys 1887-1925

Only traces of the many hotels and of the means of transport which brought the tourists to the town, remain; a succession of spectacular fires, or demolitions, eliminated the majority of the hotels, and the tracks once so conspicuous, have all been removed. Photographs in the hundreds, from the 1880s onwards, are a unique source. Very rapid changes to the town occurred beginning in the late 1880s, as a number of firsts followed closely in a span of just a few years;newspaper, bank, electricity, water, hospital. It is difficult to conceive what this would have been like for those who experienced the phenomenon. From the dirt roads and horse traffic of an earlier era, a confusing array of poles, trackways, were added to the scene, with electrical power, water pipes and hydrants. Telephone connections, bicycles, archaic automobiles, introduced still more confusion.

August 8, 1887: “The first train on the York railroad started from here at 6:54. I had the first ride” Joseph Bragdon wrote in his diary. At the Marshall House that evening, a fireworks display marked the occasion. Marshall’son, Edward Simpson Marshall, current owner of the Marshall House, had also been a prime mover for the railroad, the York Harbor and Beach Rail Road. A decade later, August 1897, the electric railroad, the trolley commenced operations. York Beach became, at least during the summer, the most densely populated area of the town. The culture of the Beach was distinctive, and close to being urban in character, with “several large hotels, boarding houses and cottages in close proximity to each other. . .” St. Aspinquid Park, a complex of attractions, was opened to the public in July of 1898.

The introduction of water and electricity in 1895 can be attributed to two men, Josiah Chase and Edward S. Marshall. Chase installed pipes to carry water from Chase’s Pond into the town. Marshall set up an electrical plant, and was able to supply electricity to his customers. Significantly, the same two men would later be on opposite sides in the town division controversy in 1909 and 1910, with Chase a champion of those opposed to the plan, and Marshall an advocate of division. How all of the events relate to one another is not entirely clear, but their definitely seems to be a pattern. The source of much of the trouble was the way in which different sections of the town began to react against each other, especially York Harbor and York Beach, with some of the strongest contrasts due to wealth and social status. In 1900, the differences began to be institutionalized as two governing corporations came into existence.

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18 Seaside Resort: Tourists in Automobiles 1925-1941

In 1900, the automobile was still so much of a novelty as to justify a newspaper article. The speed limit at the time was 8 miles an hour. Two decades later, as cars proliferated in the thousands, they were not only omnipresent, but also a nuisance. The sounds of motors, garages, oil stains on the

pavement, took precedence, as horses, blacksmith shops, and the rattling of wooden wheels, and creaking carriages and carts, vanished forever. Paved roads and more roads, motels amongst the hotels, shoreside camps for trailers, wide highways with many lanes, parking regulations. In July 1928, the town leaders deliberated over the issue of parking in York Village, within only an hour allowed during daytime. A traffic signal was to be installed at York Corner.

In 1900, airplanes did not even exist—in the 1920s, they too were at York. The controversial personality, Billy Mitchell, Brigadier General William Mitchell, landed his planes on the beaches during the summer of 1923, so that "the summer colony could witness the operation of the giant airships in the air. . ." Lindbergh in the Spirit of St. Louis made the first trans-Atlantic crossing in May 1927, and was celebrated with a ticker tape parade for an achievement, that is currently made by hundreds every day, and in much shorter time. In June of 1929, when he suddenly appeared at York Harbor in his yacht, he was so much of a hero that a huge crowd gathered to catch a glimpse of him; "they all called him skipper" his new wife wrote her mother.

The month that Lindbergh came to town, was also the moment that a debate over the future of the town hall dominated the local news. A new town hall, larger, provided with modern features—that was the expectation, but of the outward appearance of the building, and how a modern structure, perhaps of brick, would alter the character of the town center, was hard for some to accept. ". . .To put a modern Town Hall on the site of the old one, and among the fine old colonial houses and buildings, would be a misfortune to York. My friends it would be vandalism!" So warned Helen Lathrop in a letter in which she pledged to personally finance a design created by the best architects that would retain the colonial style.

Next came Sewall's Bridge, a wooden bridge that could not bear the same stresses as one of concrete. But this too was a local icon, and had been of wood for one hundred and seventy years. In the end, wooden construction was approved, and the town collectively demonstrated an aggressive desire to keep things the way they were. The future of Sewall's Bridge in the early 1930s seemed to stir the passions of a woman who lived but a stone's throw away, Elizabeth Perkins. In 1939, she created the Association for the Preservation of Historic Landmarks, and had already, in the decade, invested her energies in the preservation of the old school house. She brought Jefferd's Tavern from Wells.

Charles E. Banks published the first volume of the History of York Maine in 1931. A descendent of one of the town's seventeenth century families, and Assistant Surgeon General, he was also an artist, who filled the pages of his book with careful sketches. For the maps, and much of the detailed information regarding town history, Banks turned to Angevine Gowen, an extraordinarily gifted Renaissance Man who resided at Cider Hill. Gowen was an engineer, surveyor, photographer, a wood worker who made musical instruments, and above all was intolerant of inaccuracy. The partnership of the two men had yielded a product the town has valued ever since. Unfortunately, Banks died suddenly in October 1931, and the appearance of the second volume of the history was delayed until 1935. The proposed third volume, genealogies, never appeared.

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19 Fighting for Democracy: Four Years of War 1941-1945

May 1941: against a background of radio static, and at times, close to inaudible, a message of encouragement crossed the Atlantic to a city in England from the town hall of a small town in Maine, as the people of York spoke directly to York, England, jeopardized by German bombing raids. The effort was led by Reverend Millinger of the Congregational Church, who already had earned a national reputation for his unorthodox ways. Time Magazine had featured him in one of its issues, for the historical service he gave at the church in August 1936, dressed as the Reverend Samuel Moody, and delivering one of Moody's most famous sermons.

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20 Turnpike, Toll Booth and Population Pressures: the Most Recent Decades

Seventy years—from the end of World War II until the present, a year in the 21st century. The vast majority of all the people who currently live in town, either were born, or arrived here as migrants, in those seventy years. For the nation it has been a period of the Cold War to the War on Terrorism, punctuated by Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan. The televisions of the late 1940s, black and white images on the screen, the antennas on the roofs of houses, would be followed by the colored televisions of the 1960s, and later by cable television or satellite television. Computers, now so inexpensive and universal, as to be a commonplace, were ponderous, exorbitantly costly machines seventy years ago. On the other end of telephones, were operators, familiar voices, easily recognized. The pace in town was different, more local, more personal contact, with the intrusions every contemporary has learned to tolerate, not yet so unrelenting.

The system of turnpikes interconnected the regions of the United States, facilitated the movement of traffic, and allowed for an increase in the volume of traffic. Commuting as a daily routine, back and forth to any of the urban centers, is possible, and does not even consume a great amount of time. In our era, many persons can live in a town, but still have most of their interests and activities pursued elsewhere. Under those circumstances, residency is diffused between two, or even more, places. The old rootedness, in which entire lives were lived without ever venturing far beyond the boundaries, is inconceivable. Our awareness is global; every morning we can learn of what is happening thousands of miles away. It is this awareness which challenges the very concept of a town, and which might be perceived as the most significant evolutionary event of the past four centuries. This is relatively recent, and has increased gradually over the decades, as technology has transformed communication.

As we speed by the old buildings every day in our cars, we must try to somehow pause and think about where we are as a vital daily discipline. Apply imagination and the capacity to visualize the

past; the dirt roads, the horses and wagons, the struggles of living without any of the conveniences, primitive medical treatments. From the moment any of us entered the town, we became a part of an organic entity, like it or not, and we can draw from that entity unique strengths, because this town is a unique place.

How many places in America can boast of having John Adams, Mark Twain, Reverend George Whiefield, Joshua Chamberlain, and so many others as visitors who walked the streets? Or Captain John Smith and a Shuttle astronaut? Only York—yes, only York. To understand how York is connected to American history, to realize how one small town can embrace so many phases of a larger history, is to simultaneously understand the town and the nation, and that is one of the valuable contributions history can make for the present.

The best history, the most instructive, practically useful history, creates a sense of continuity and context, and reveals just how we got to where we are. That knowledge is akin to the stairs that ascend from one floor of a building to another. Without stairs, a height of many feet would be unsafe—just look from a top story window at the ground below. The stairs convert the distance to safe incremental steps, so that movement up or down is possible, and the heights are far less forbidding. That is what has been attempted here, continuity and context, in as close as the sources allow, for a continuous flow of over four centuries of a stream of time within a locality of but a few miles in breadth.