

Contingent and Continuum: Simeon Perkins and “Loyalist” Nova Scotia, 1773- 1785

by

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As with all things in life,  
for Rowan

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## **Abstract**

Nova Scotia remained loyal to the British Crown during the American Revolution. The majority of the population had close ties with New England, which raises the question of why Nova Scotia adopted this position during the conflict. This thesis explores this question through the lens of Simeon Perkins, a Connecticut- born merchant who lived in Nova Scotia. Perkins has been viewed as a conventional Loyalist, but a close examination of his diary reveals that his loyalism differed in important respects from the traditional perspective of Loyalists. This thesis explores different aspects of loyalty in Nova Scotia, and it argues that Perkins' loyalty was both contingent and evolved significantly over the course of the American Revolution. The transformative nature of this experience within Nova Scotia is discussed in relation to patterns within Perkins's trade and commerce.

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## **List of Abbreviations Used**

NSGWC- *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*

PANS- Public Archives of Nova Scotia

COP- Colonial Office Papers

ECM- Executive Council Minutes

JOHA- Journals of the House of Assembly

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## Chapter One: Introduction

The American Revolutionary period garners significant attention from those who live in the colonies which eventually became the United States of America but what of the other British colonies in North America? There were a total twenty-six colonies that were held by the British crown, stretching from Newfoundland to South America, each independent from one another but all members of the same extended colonial family. How is this event remembered in those colonies who remained a part of the British fold? What was the wartime experience of these other colonies? How did these 'loyal' inhabitants decide where to place their allegiance? The answers to these questions can only be discerned when one examines each colony on an individual basis.

The colonies of the Caribbean were mostly excluded from the American Revolution because of physical geography: they were simply too far away. Newfoundland, similarly, was excluded from the majority of the conflict because of geographic location. Both the Caribbean islands and Newfoundland required a marine force in order to be a viable target for the Continental military and the Americans did not have access to significant naval forces until 1778 when the French joined the war.<sup>1</sup> Privateers, the only means of attack against either region, were not a viable solution as they operated outside the control of the military and as such, could not be easily used in co-ordinated attacks.<sup>2</sup>

In Quebec, religion and the law played a significant role in securing the loyalism of the predominantly French Catholic population. Colonial authorities' successfully

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> Olaf Janzen, "The Royal Navy and the Defence of Newfoundland during the American Revolution," *Acadiensis* 14, no. 1 (1984): 28-48.

formed an alliance with the Bishop of Quebec which granted greater religious protection in exchange for the loyalty of the Catholic flock. To ensure compliance, the Bishop threatened all those who disobeyed with excommunication which effectively kept the population in check.<sup>3</sup> Legally speaking, the British government, through the enactment of the Quebec Act in 1775, restored some of the pre-conquest legal practices, specifically French civil law.<sup>4</sup> This was something which was well received by the population and aided to further cement loyalism within in the province. The French inhabitants felt some respect from King George III and were more inclined to swear fealty to him after this act of parliament was passed.

In Nova Scotia, however, the situation was different still. Located adjacent to Massachusetts, it was arguably the best situated socially, politically, and culturally to join the revolution, but it did not. Why was this the outcome for the small province on the coast, a place where most of the population had close ties, be it familial or commercial, to the communities along the New England seaboard?

Historians have tackled the question of Nova Scotia's position during the American Revolution since the 1930s, and it is one which has been investigated and discussed periodically ever since. J.B. Brebner was the first to identify the causes for the phenomenon that he referred to as the 'Neutral Yankees' of Nova Scotia but his

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<sup>3</sup> The Bishop of Quebec, Jean- Olivier Briand, formed an alliance with the British governor Sir Guy Carleton. Briand instructed the Catholic population to remain loyal to their King and those who rebelled faced excommunication. This threat, coupled with Carleton's unique military advantages, successfully repelled the American invaders during the Quebec campaign of 1775 and sealed Quebec's loyalty to the British crown. See George Rawlyk, *Revolution Rejected 1775-1776: Canadian Historical Controversies* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 62.

<sup>4</sup> Donald Fyson, "Between the Ancien Régime and Liberal Modernity: Law, Justice and State Formation in Colonial Quebec, 1760–1867," *History Compass* 12, no. 5 (2014): 412-32.

reasoning and his selection of causes generate more questions than offer answers.<sup>5</sup> Brebner's findings were accepted as definitive and the field went into stagnation for several decades.<sup>6</sup> During the 1960s, George Rawlyk re-opened the discussion of the topic by way of synthesising many of the arguments which had been outlined since the revolutionary period took place but argued that there was still much work to be done in order to understand the broader themes at work.<sup>7</sup>

Where in the province one should look for evidence related to the questions surrounding Nova Scotia's loyalism during the American Revolution is deceptive. Instinctively one would assume that Halifax, the provincial capital, would be a point of departure but this assumption is inaccurate. Halifax was the focal point of British support during the American Revolution but only a fraction of the population, some 3000 people according to the last census taken before the war in 1767, lived in the town and the further away one went from the town, the more the sentiment of allegiance to the crown faded.<sup>8</sup> If one wishes to truly understand the position of the ordinary folk, those who did not enjoy the political and economic privilege of Halifax, one must look to those places with questionable allegiance, like Liverpool, located on the South Shore of the province.

Liverpool is arguably the most significant community in the discussion of Nova Scotia during the American Revolution because of the fact that it was home to the largest homogenous community of New England Planters in the province and, as such,

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<sup>5</sup> John Bartlet Brebner, *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia: A Marginal Colony during the Revolutionary Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969).

<sup>6</sup> Leonard W. Labaree, "The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia. A Marginal Colony during the Revolutionary Years (Book Review)," *The Journal of Modern History* 10, no. 1 (1938): 108-09.

<sup>7</sup> Rawlyk, 53-54.

<sup>8</sup> PANS, *Census of Nova Scotia, 1767*, accessed February 10, 2018, available at <https://novascotia.ca/archives/census/returnsRG1v443.asp?ID=>

it was viewed with tremendous suspicion by those in power during the time period in question.<sup>9</sup> Julian Gwyn, a notable scholar of the Atlantic World, has made several case studies on Planter communities which all mention the American Revolution but he did not undertake an examination of Liverpool.<sup>10</sup> In recent scholarship, historian Elizabeth Mancke offered a comparison between Liverpool and Machias, another similar community close to the provincial border between Nova Scotia and Massachusetts during the Revolutionary period. This book, *The Fault Lines of Empire: Political Differentiation in Massachusetts and Nova Scotia, Ca. 1760-1830* is the only recent monograph on the community.<sup>11</sup> For Mancke, the causes of Nova Scotian neutrality are

...the military might of the British navy with a base in Halifax; the colony's geographic isolation from other colonies; distances between settlements within the colony; and an ideological confusion among settlers from New England caused by their removal from the revolutionary conflict in their homeland.<sup>12</sup>

There is a distinctive advantage in using Liverpool as a starting point for the discussion of the American Revolution in the context of Nova Scotia which is the presence of a man and his diary which served as a record of the events as they transpired.

Simeon Perkins is one of the best-known diarists in Nova Scotia during the 18th and 19th centuries. He came to the province, newly widowed and with a small child back in Connecticut, in hopes of joining the North Atlantic trade network, specifically in

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<sup>9</sup> PANS, *Census of Nova Scotia, 1767*, accessed February 10, 2018, available at <https://novascotia.ca/archives/census/returnsRG1v443.asp?ID=>; Simeon Perkins, *The Diary of Simeon Perkins, Vol. 1*, edited Harold Innis (Publications of the Champlain Society: Toronto, 1948), 98. Perkins, vol. 1, 98.

<sup>10</sup> Gwyn used Horton, Falmouth, and Newport for his case studies but did not use Liverpool. See Julian Gwyn, *Planter Nova Scotia, 1760-1815: Falmouth Township* (Wolfville: Kings-Hants Heritage Connection, Wolfville Historical Society, 2010); Julian Gwyn, *Planter Nova Scotia, 1760-1815: Horton Township* (Wolfville: Kings-Hants Heritage Connection, Wolfville Historical Society, 2010); Julian Gwyn, *Planter Nova Scotia, 1760-1815: Newport Township* (Wolfville: Kings-Hants Heritage Connection, Wolfville Historical Society, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Mancke, *The Fault Lines of Empire Political Differentiation in Massachusetts and Nova Scotia, Ca. 1760-1830* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

both the logging and fishing industries. Whether or not it was his intention to permanently relocate to Liverpool when he first arrived in 1762 is unclear. Perkins records that he left the province in 1767 due to financial hardship but returned some eighteen months later, after which he never left the province again after 1775.<sup>13</sup> He married a local woman, had eight more children, and laid down roots in the town that became his home until he died in 1812 at the age of 78.<sup>14</sup> In Canadian and Nova Scotian history, Perkins is remembered as a Loyalist of the highest order; in the town of Liverpool, he is a veritable folk hero and a major player in the Loyalist heritage of the Maritimes.<sup>15</sup> He was a soldier, a politician, a merchant, a judge, a religious leader, and had a keen interest in social welfare. Simeon Perkins was well respected in Nova Scotia and an acquaintance worth having within the greater context of the Atlantic world. He rose to local fame after he led a successful defence of the town against American privateer raiders in 1780, though it is unclear how well known this victory was outside of Liverpool.<sup>16</sup> He continued in these varied careers well into his old-age and his diary was there with him, recording the events of daily life as he saw and experienced them.

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<sup>13</sup> Perkins visited Halifax frequently due to the fact that he was a member of the Legislative Assembly for the town of Liverpool, a post he occupied on several occasions, but this trip in the spring of 1775 represented his last 'overseas' trip. See C. Bruce Fergusson, "Perkins, Simeon," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed November 30, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perkins\\_simeon\\_5E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perkins_simeon_5E.html).

<sup>14</sup> Perkins died on 9 May, 1812. His obituary appeared in *The Royal Gazette*; See "Obituary of Simeon Perkins". *The Royal Gazette*, June 3, 1812. PANS, Nova Scotia Archives Newspaper Collection, MFM roll number 8172.

<sup>15</sup> In Liverpool, one can visit Perkins House, Simeon Perkins' residence which has been preserved by the Nova Scotia Museum network and is open to the public. The Queens County Museum, located adjacent to Perkins House, houses his diary, which is on display, and a hand-carved folk statue of Perkins, created in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by a local artist.

<sup>16</sup> Perkins describes this in one of his longest diary entries dated September 13, 1780. See Simeon Perkins, *The Diary of Simeon Perkins, Vol. 2*, edited D.C. Harvey and C. Bruce Fergusson (Publications of the Champlain Society: Toronto, 1958), 41-42; This particular raid did not appear in the newspaper in Halifax. The *NSGWC* was published weekly on Tuesdays and would have likely appeared in the edition dated September 19, 1780. Unfortunately, this edition has been lost but we can see that there is no mention of the raid in any subsequent editions. If it was mentioned, it was only mentioned in the single

This thesis seeks to do three things: expand on the traditional definition of what loyalists and loyalism are; examine why Nova Scotia did not join the American Revolution; and describe the transition from wartime to peacetime and how this influenced the inhabitants of the province. The first two objectives will be achieved through a thorough examination of the diary of Simeon Perkins and the secondary literature which surrounds loyalism, Loyalists, and different aspects of the American Revolution, specifically those related to trade during the American Revolution and the role which privateers played in influencing the choices made by both individuals and towns over the course of this time period. The third objective will be achieved primarily through an examination of Perkins' diary with a focus on relationships, attitudes, and behaviours which were present before, during and after the American Revolution. For my purposes, the timeframe under examination will be 1773 - 1785, which includes the years of the American Revolution, as well as two years before fighting started and two years after the Treaty of Paris was signed. This extended time period allows for a discussion of the pre-revolutionary economic context as well as interpersonal relationships before the fighting began and allows for a discussion of these two concepts as they transitioned back to a peaceful state.

At the crux of any discussion of Nova Scotia during this period is how one defines a Loyalist and loyalism. This project seeks to engage with traditionally held notions about loyalism and what it meant to be a Loyalist during this time period and complicate those notions by expanding on the ideas put forward by historians such as Robert Calhoon, who clearly identified active and passive loyalism but did not expand

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edition. See *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, September 4, 1770; September 13, 1774-December 28, 1784. PANS, Nova Scotia Archives Newspaper Collection, MFM roll number 8156.

into the notion of coercive loyalism.<sup>17</sup> Coercive loyalism allows for the discussion of both minority groups and mitigating factors which prompted those living through this period to take up the position of Loyalist albeit was not what they wanted nor morally felt was the right choice. These groups include such people as enslaved people of color, indigenous peoples, religious dissenters such as the Quakers, and those who simply wanted to live in peace such as the Planters in Nova Scotia. This project also seeks to investigate which type of loyalism can rightfully be applied to Nova Scotia during this time period by investigating the diary of Simeon Perkins who will serve as a case study.

Viewing the question of why Nova Scotia did not join the American Revolution through the lens of Simeon Perkins is useful because of his geographical, social, economic, political, and military positions within the province. His diary offers a first-hand account of the multi-faceted experience of the American Revolution within Nova Scotia. As a politician, Perkins frequently left Liverpool for Halifax to attend to business at the seat of power. As such, he interacted not only with those in power, but also with those who struggled to feed themselves and their families; his spectrum of friendships and acquaintances stretched from the governor to those in Liverpool who lived a hand-to-mouth existence. Owing to his political and geographical positions, Perkins was both outside and inside the sphere of power and influence of Halifax. This is significant because there was a tremendous disconnect between events and opinions in Halifax and those who lived in the out ports of Nova Scotia, such as Liverpool. As a result, Perkins had exposure to a gamut of beliefs on the question of revolution and American

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<sup>17</sup> Robert Calhoon, "Loyalism and Neutrality," in *A Companion to the American Revolution: Blackwell Companions to American History*, edited by Jack P. Greene, J. R. Poole and Wiley (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

independence. Power was highly centralized in Nova Scotia and quite frequently, that seat of power had very little control over the actions and ideas of those who were not under their direct gaze. This model of government is one which Mancke also elaborates on and this disconnect between the provincial authorities and the outports. When the province was settled, it used not the New England model of settlement but rather the Virginia model of settlement, specifically how land was distributed and what the rights of landowners and grantees were.<sup>18</sup> The ruling class in Liverpool soon learned how to balance their expectations with what was permissible under policy in Nova Scotia.<sup>19</sup> At the very crux of this practice was how to conduct business without drawing attention from Halifax, something which meant that the provincial authorities were quite accustomed to ignoring the outports so long as the inhabitants and those who held power in these small communities did nothing to draw attention.<sup>20</sup>

As a member of the merchant class, Perkins had direct access to those who had the financial ability and political power to sway not only the direction of the government but the will of the people. Merchants were under tremendous suspicion during the American Revolution; some of Perkins' partners, one in particular, faced criminal charges for his actions during the early years of the American Revolution.<sup>21</sup> It is Perkins' ties to the merchants of not only Nova Scotia but to the rest of the Atlantic world which can best be used as a tool to understand the transition from peace, to war, and back to

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<sup>18</sup> Mancke, 158.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Macke, 68- 73

<sup>21</sup> Malachy Salter, a Halifax- based merchant, was both a friend and business associate of Simeon Perkins. Salter was accused of seditious conversation as well as other charges. He was later found not guilty but the nature of his involvement has recently come into question again. See S. Buggie, "SALTER, MALACHY," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed December 3, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter\\_malachy\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter_malachy_4E.html); See Barry Cahill, "The Treason of the Merchants: Dissent and Repression in Halifax in the Era of the American Revolution", *Acadiensis*, XXVI, 1 (Autumn 1996), 52- 70.

peace. With whom one did business is a major indicator of allegiance, as was the location of trade transactions, and the speed of the transition back to normal trade relations. All of these factors are indicative of the transformative nature of the American Revolution, at least within the context of Nova Scotia.

Simeon Perkins was first and foremost a businessman, and maintaining and expanding his business interests were of paramount importance to him. In a time when financial competence was the thing for which businessmen strove, people and events which could facilitate achieving this end goal were favoured.<sup>22</sup> Those people and events which threatened Perkins' financial stability were something which had to be avoided and protected against. Making money was of such paramount importance to Perkins that when the war was over, he readily engaged in trade with the Americans, though their privateers had engaged in many offences against Perkins and the other merchants of Liverpool including theft, assault, kidnapping, ransom, and general terrorization. Curiously, Perkins rarely expressed an opinion on the privateers who perpetrated these crimes against himself and his associates but rather viewed them as the price of doing business during a war, and once peace was achieved, Perkins did not hold on to any feelings of ill-will but rather resumed trading relations with New Englanders so quickly that it was almost as if the American Revolution had been nothing more than an inconvenience. The war, it seems, and the acts which took place during those eight years, did not change his views on his family, his friends, or his business partners. The

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<sup>22</sup> Financial competence was the antecedent idea of 'middle class'. Financially competent meant that an individual was financially independent and removed from imminent financial ruin. See Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1990): 3-29.

attitude demonstrated by Perkins substantiates the calling into question of the transformative nature of the American Revolution with regard to economics.<sup>23</sup>

### **Organization of Thesis**

Chapter Two, entitled “Mis- en- Scène: The Diary of Simeon Perkins” provides an orientation to not only the physical geography of the place where these events transpired but also to the man himself. I will offer a brief biography of Simeon Perkins, a discussion of the terms which will be used throughout this project such as loyalty and loyalism, which will be used in later chapters. I will then delve into an examination of Nova Scotia during the American Revolution, the historiographical context of the province, and will draw attention to the problems and deficiencies within the discussion of Nova Scotia’s position during the American Revolution. Chapter Two will provide an orientation to the diary itself and will examine the edited version, the men who were in charge of editing, annotating, and transcribing the diary over the course of the thirty years which were required to accomplish this particular task.

Chapter Three, entitled “The Economics of Loyalty: Trade and Trade Connections in Perkins’ Nova Scotia, 1773- 1785”, offers an examination of the economic model used in the Atlantic world during the American Revolution and the ways in which it was vulnerable to outside influences such as privateer attacks and trade restrictions imposed by the government. It provides an examination of the economic system which featured both formal and informal business transactions, which

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<sup>23</sup> T.H Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Marc Engal and Joseph A. Ernst. "An Economic Interpretation of the American Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (1972): 4-32; Marc Engal, *New World Economies the Growth of the Thirteen Colonies and Early Canada* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

were quite common during the time period.<sup>24</sup> I also offer an examination of how business was conducted in the home, with an emphasis on the labour of women and the role which slavery played in the home economics of both Perkins and Liverpool, and offer an extensive examination of what goods Perkins was dealing in over the course of the period under investigation. Chapter Three concludes with an examination of who Perkins was doing business with, both in Liverpool and in Halifax, and what impact these relationships had on his loyalism.

The final researched chapter, entitled “Privateering, Naval Power, and Government in Nova Scotia during the American Revolution” will provide an in-depth examination of privateering and the impact that it had on not only the financial well-being of Simeon Perkins, but the psychological impact on people who were both directly and indirectly impacted by privateers. It discusses how privateers influenced loyalty and how the interplay between the Royal Navy, the American privateers, government officials in Halifax, and the media, came together to create a system in which people in Liverpool were coerced into loyalty to the crown.

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<sup>24</sup> Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1990): 3-29.

## Chapter 2- *Mis-en-scène*: The Diary of Simeon Perkins, in Context

### Introduction

Mi'kma'ki. Acadie. Nova Scotia. The surrounding continental region and the peninsula which extends some two hundred kilometres into the Atlantic Ocean have been inhabited for over 13000 years by the Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik nations. The French were the first European explorers to come to the region in the 16th century and established the first permanent European settlement in 1604 at Port- Royale.<sup>25</sup> Never formally ceded by treaty, the land of the Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik was settled by the French over the course of the 17th century and was slowly turned into farmland, in particular the region surrounding the Bay of Fundy. The colony was later acquired by England after the Treaty of Utrecht was signed in 1713 that formally ended the War of Spanish Succession.<sup>26</sup> France relinquished the peninsular portion of *Acadie* but retained *Île Royale*, modern-day Cape Breton, until the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1763 which formally ended the Seven Years War fifty years later.<sup>27</sup>

The region was primarily inhabited by French settlers, known as *Acadiens*, and various bands of Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik until 1755 when the colonial government expelled the Acadians in an act that became known as *La Grande Dérangement*.<sup>28</sup> Government officials doubted the desire of the Acadians to remain neutral and used this as a justification for the expulsion. This forced exodus left the rich farmland which had been cleared and dyked by the Acadians vacant and ready for re-settlement, this time

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<sup>25</sup> Peter L. McCreath and John G. Leefe, *A History of Nova Scotia* (Tantallon, Four East Publications, 1982), 16.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 272..

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 232- 237.

by groups hand-picked for their protestant religion and anticipated fealty to the King of England.

Attached to the rest of the continent by an isthmus only 24 kilometres wide, Nova Scotia of the 18th century also comprised modern day New Brunswick and extended as far south as the Saint Croix River, close to the current border between New Brunswick and Maine.<sup>29</sup> The two largest groups of migrants to come to Nova Scotia during the 18th century were the New England Planters and the 'Foreign Protestants', who were Protestants who were primarily of French and German extraction.<sup>30</sup> Both groups were given sizeable land grants and while they may have been non-conformers, that is, Protestants who were not members of the Church of England, they were still Protestant and as such, much more desirable settlers than the French Catholic Acadians.<sup>31</sup> These people needed and wanted land as much as the authorities wanted Nova Scotia to be settled, so the system was one which functioned well, at least for the white settlers. New England Planters experienced an acute shortage of land in their home region, the French Protestants, sometimes called Huguenots, were in search of religious freedom, and the German Protestants were keen to have land and live under an English king who was actually of German descent; in all, Nova Scotia represented a golden opportunity for these European Protestants.<sup>32</sup> The province of Nova Scotia was in the process of rebuilding farms and re-building the economy of the rural areas which had been negatively impacted by the deportation of the Acadians and these new inhabitants were

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<sup>29</sup> Roger F. Duncan, *Coastal Maine: A Maritime History*, (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), 94; Maine did not become a separate entity from Massachusetts until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. See *Ibid.*, 366.

<sup>30</sup> Winthrop Pickard Bell and Mount Allison University, Centre for Canadian Studies, *The "foreign Protestants" and the Settlement of Nova Scotia : The History of a Piece of Arrested British Colonial Policy in the Eighteenth Century* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1990), 84- 104.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 84- 104.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 84- 104.

essential for this process. New communities were established all along the coast of the province, some of which were located on the sites of former Mi'kmaq and French villages and trading hubs. It was upon one of these sites which Simeon Perkins landed when he arrived in Nova Scotia.

This chapter will discuss the historical context in which Simeon Perkins lived and in which he wrote his diary. It will begin with a brief biography of Perkins and the Planter movement. It will then be followed by a discussion of Loyalists, loyalism and how these concepts manifested themselves in the context of Nova Scotia and in turn, how these concepts can be applied to Simeon Perkins. This chapter will provide an examination of the greater global context in which Perkins found himself, specifically that of the American Revolution before delving into a discussion of his diary and the editors of the transcription versions of his diary. This chapter will offer an in-depth examination of the historiography tied to Perkins, Nova Scotia, and the American Revolution, focusing in on the popular theories raised by historians since the 1930s concerning the political basis for loyalty such as shared kinship, governmental policies, geographical isolation, the missing decade theory, and the role of the military. This chapter will conclude with a synthesis of these theories and offer an alternative which can be applied to the case of Simeon Perkins and more widely to the rural inhabitants of the province of Nova Scotia.

### **Simeon Perkins: A Brief Biography**

Simeon Perkins was a New England planter, originally from Norwich, Connecticut. Born February 24, 1734 to Jacob and Jemima Perkins, he was their third son and fourth child. Perkins was reasonably well educated as he could read, write, and was well versed in mathematics. Young Simeon was eventually apprenticed to Jabez

Huntington, another prominent Norwich merchant, where he learned the business of global trade. Not much is known about Perkins' early years and life in Connecticut, but it is known that when he arrived in Nova Scotia in 1762, he came as a widower who had already had extensive business experience.<sup>33</sup> His first foray into the Liverpool economy was met with failure and he returned to Connecticut in 1768.<sup>34</sup> In 1769, he returned to Nova Scotia, determined to make a better life for himself in the fledgling town.<sup>35</sup> This time, he was successful and he remained in Liverpool until his death in 1812, leaving only occasionally for business in Halifax and trips back to Connecticut, although his last trip abroad was undertaken in 1775.<sup>36</sup>

Perkins became a pillar in the business community; he was heavily involved in the international commercial life of the town, in particular with staple trade industries of fish and lumber. By the end of his life, Perkins was owner of a successful trading company and had several ships which were engaged not only with traditional trade but also in the lucrative industry of privateering, an industry which he joined during the American Revolution and continued in throughout the Napoleonic Wars. He was also active in the religious life of the town and took an active interest in the poor, sick, and elderly. Perkins makes several entries in his diary in which he describes collecting poor taxes, visiting the sick, and helping orphans.<sup>37</sup> Simeon Perkins had a keen interest in those who were less fortunate than he and this trend is one which is found throughout the whole of his diary. He passed away on May 9, 1812 and was survived by his wife, to

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<sup>33</sup> Perkins makes several difference references to different business ventures such as Perkins and Backus, see Perkins, vol. 1, p. 55; and debts which were held in various ports such as Boston, see Perkins, vol. 1, 56.

<sup>34</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, xi.

<sup>35</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, xiv.

<sup>36</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 93.

<sup>37</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 44; Perkins, vol. 1, 111; Perkins, vol. 1, 140.

whom he had been married for almost 40 years, eight of his nine children, his stepdaughter, and a number of grandchildren.

Simeon Perkins is a key figure in understanding the American Revolution through the eyes of those who lived in Nova Scotia during the event. Perkins was present in every branch of rural society and played a role in politics at the provincial level. Owing to these various roles, Perkins had significant contact with those at all levels of society and two geographic regions of the province. Perkins' thoughts and opinions were shared by many of the common people because he, unlike many other merchants, had significant contact with those of the lower class. It is for this reason that his thoughts and opinions may be applied to the greater context of the rural inhabitants of the province who made up the majority of the population.

### **Planters and Loyalists**

Planters, Loyalists, and the distinction between these two groups has caused no small amount of difficulty in the discussion of the American Revolutionary period within the context of Nova Scotia. As a result, before an examination of the region during this period can be undertaken, definitions must first be established. New England Planters were colonial inhabitants who arrived in the North American colonies prior to the English Civil War. Most fled religious persecution and established themselves in the Massachusetts Bay colony before migrating to other parts of New England. The Planters tended to have large families, such as the case of Simeon Perkins' parents.<sup>38</sup> With these large families came an acute shortage of farm land which resulted in the need for colonial expansion. Quebec, to the north of New England, was still held by the

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<sup>38</sup> Simeon Perkins' parents, Jacob and Jemima Perkins, had no fewer than sixteen children, of which, all but two survived into adulthood.

French which meant that this migration had to either veer towards the south, into Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas, or the north and east, into Nova Scotia. The Planter migration began in Nova Scotia after the expulsion of the Acadians in 1755 and continued until the early 1770s, though most of the Planter communities were established during the 1760s.<sup>39</sup> It is crucial to note that being a Planter did not necessarily make you a Loyalist. The Loyalists started to arrive on a large scale after the end of the American Revolution in 1783 and continued until after the end of the War of 1812, around 1815.<sup>40</sup> While these dates serve well as a general guideline, those who moved during the American Revolution are distinctive still. While some could rightly be called Loyalists in the traditional sense in that they supported the notion of British rule within the colonies, some viewed themselves as Loyalists not because they had a particular affinity for George III but rather that they did not wish to live under American rule. Loyalists who came to Nova Scotia also did so as members of a variety of sub-groups such as political refugees, escaped enslaved people, freed people of color, veterans of both the American Revolution and the War of 1812, and those who were perhaps sympathetic towards the British but were more concerned with having land and making better lives for their families. When classifying 18th century migrants, it is important to keep in mind not only *when* different groups arrived but *why* they came. It is important not to make generalizations about these groups as it does not allow students

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<sup>39</sup> Julian Gwyn, *Planter Nova Scotia, 1760-1815: Falmouth Township* (Wolfville: Kings-Hants Heritage Connection, Wolfville Historical Society, 2010); Julian Gwyn, *Planter Nova Scotia, 1760-1815: Horton Township* (Wolfville: Kings-Hants Heritage Connection, Wolfville Historical Society, 2010); Julian Gwyn, *Planter Nova Scotia, 1760-1815: Newport Township* (Wolfville: Kings-Hants Heritage Connection, Wolfville Historical Society, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> Jane Errington, *The Lion, the Eagle and Upper Canada: A Developing Colonial Ideology, 2nd edition* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 36-37.

of history to challenge what we think we know about our collective past and the full range of voices and experiences.

### **Loyalism and Nova Scotia**

Central to the discussion of Simeon Perkins is the notion of loyalism and by extension, loyalism in Nova Scotia. This concept has experienced an evolution and in recent years, the traditional definition has been challenged and expanded upon. Historian Robert Calhoon puts forward the idea that Loyalists are "...colonists who by some overt action, such as signing addresses, bearing arms, doing business with the British Army, seeking military protection, or going into exile, supported the Crown during the American Revolution."<sup>41</sup> This definition is useful because it allows for a spectrum of loyalism, one which is on a continuum, and one which has the possibility for contingency based on experience. It also allows for multiple forms of loyalism, specifically active, passive, and coercive loyalism which I argue falls under this broader definition. The latter two concepts allow for the consideration of the extenuating factors which must be considered when classifying people as loyalists.<sup>42</sup>

In discussing loyalism in this context, a series of questions emerge: what factors influenced Nova Scotians' decision with regard to joining or rejecting the American Revolution and what kind of loyalism was this choice an example of? From these stem a series of no less important questions: was this allegiance born out of a fierce attachment to England and King George or was it born out of fear, ambivalence or lack

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<sup>41</sup> Robert Calhoon, "Loyalism and Neutrality," in *A Companion to the American Revolution*. Blackwell Companions to American History, ed. Jack P. Greene, J. R. Poole and Wiley InterScience (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 235.

<sup>42</sup> Maya Jasanoff addresses the concepts of active and passive loyalism in her article "The Other Side of Revolution: Loyalists in the British Empire". See Maya Jasanoff, "The Other Side of Revolution: Loyalists in the British Empire," in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (2008): 205-232.

of desire to fight against friends and family, the 'neutrality' which Brebner posits?<sup>43</sup> Can Nova Scotia's absence of action, its 'neutrality', be considered as an act of loyalism? Is it possible for a person to be loyal to their family or town without being loyal to their king? Lastly, can those who have 'shades of loyalty', loyalism which is contingent and on a continuum still rightly be called loyalists and if so, what kind of loyalists are they: active, passive, or coercive loyalists?

Active loyalism, I agree, is comprised of explicit acts of loyalism such as the bearing of arms, going into exile by choice or signing addresses, to use the examples provided by Calhoun. This form of loyalism, as Patricia Rogers points out in her article "The Loyalist Experience in an Anglo- American Atlantic World", is the one which has been taken up by historians in the past and used by both Americans and Canadians as a tool to construct the "idealized image of the Loyalists as a cohesive group."<sup>44</sup> This is the stereotypical form of loyalism which became the dominant example in the historiography of the field. It is crucial to keep in mind that this is but one form of loyalism and while it may be the dominant definition, it is not necessarily the most significant or the definition with the widest application.

Passive loyalism, I argue, consists of acts which are performed, not out of any great love for the cause, but rather as a means to ensure one was left in peace. Rogers emphasizes that this group represented the majority of the population in colonial America and it is readily supported with evidence from Perkins' diary.<sup>45</sup> Perkins did not

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<sup>43</sup> John Bartlet Brebner, *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia: A Marginal Colony during the Revolutionary Years*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969).

<sup>44</sup> Patricia Rogers, "The Loyalist Experience in an Anglo- American Atlantic World" in *Planter Links: Community and Culture in Colonial Nova Scotia*, ed. Margaret Conrad and Barry Moody (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 2001), 167.

<sup>45</sup> Rogers, 167.

express animosity towards the Americans until *after* his shipping interests were raided for the fourth time by American privateers. Had these events not taken place, there is little evidence which suggests that Perkins would have taken a side in the conflict had he not been pushed into action.

Coercive loyalism is a much broader concept and is comprised of both active and passive loyalism but it is distinctive in that the motivating factors are forced. Coercive loyalism, I argue, is born out of the *need* to make a choice not the *desire* to make a choice. Coercive loyalism allows us to describe those who experienced a wide variety of experiences during the revolutionary period and came from an equally extensive set of backgrounds. For these people, their loyalism was born from forces outside of themselves, not from within.<sup>46</sup> People who could be counted as coerced loyalists are religious dissenters and enslaved people, groups which either had a moral objection to war or those who were not in the position to make an independent choice.

In Nova Scotia, the predominant form of loyalism was the latter two varieties, being passive and coercive. Halifax was the seat of active loyalism based on the demographics of the population, proximity to power, and imperial structures, primarily the Royal Navy; however, this sentiment was local. The province's rural inhabitants, at least those who interacted with Simeon Perkins on a regular basis, were more concerned with survival than picking sides in this conflict. This became apparent when Liverpool was attacked by American privateers in 1780 when the inhabitants were quite ready to surrender to the raiders if they could be left in peace.<sup>47</sup> This assertion can be further substantiated by the events which took place in the province after the

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<sup>46</sup> Rogers, 167.

<sup>47</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 41- 42.

Cumberland Raid in 1778. Jonathan Eddy and Benoni Danks, leaders of the American forces which attempted to invade the province, were both certain that their presence in the province would cause an uprising and the inhabitants would join the rebellion, specifically the French and indigenous inhabitants but this was not the case.<sup>48</sup> The people of the Chignecto region were much more concerned with survival than adopting a particular set of political beliefs, much to the surprise of the would-be invaders, and watched the rebellion without lending their support.<sup>49</sup>

Loyalism evolved over the course of the American Revolution. At the onset of the revolution, many were unsure of their position; the revolution was relatively far away and daily life was a struggle, especially for those who lived in the rural regions of the province. Farmers were more concerned with ensuring that their crops were successful so that they had the ability to feed their families than with what their former neighbours were doing. However, those who had money and position were keen observers if not active participants in the budding conflict, especially in the early years of the conflict.

Prominent urban figures such as Malachy Salter supported rebellion but did not support revolution.<sup>50</sup> Rebellion could be justified; anger with taxation, standing armies, and political interference on the part of the British were understandable. Breaking with the British entirely was something which needed to be considered with great caution. Men like Salter were passive loyalists, disinclined to act until their business interests necessitated action. Men like Simeon Perkins, those who lived in the rural communities but were financially stable enough to be able to look beyond their daily survival, appear

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<sup>48</sup> Ernest Clarke, *The Siege of Fort Cumberland, 1776: An Episode in the American Revolution* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 205- 213.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 205- 213.

<sup>50</sup> Barry Cahill, "The Treason of the Merchants: Dissent and Repression in Halifax in the Era of the American Revolution" *Acadiensis* 26, no. 1 (1996): 52-70.

to have been sympathetic towards the rebels at the outset of the war but allowed their loyalty ebb and flow, based on their experiences.

### **Nova Scotia and the American Revolution**

The American Revolution began in small measures within the province of Nova Scotia. It is important to remember that all political policies which were imposed by the British on the soon-to-be colonies of the United States were also imposed on Nova Scotia and the other colonies in British North America. Effectively, all colonies experienced the same base conditions and treatment at the hands of the British with the exception of Massachusetts which also faced the four- fold Intolerable Acts.<sup>51</sup> Mounting tensions in the British Colonies were first reported in the newspaper in Halifax in December, 1774 and into January, 1775 when news of the Boston Tea Party appeared on the pages of the *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*. At the time of its publication, it is clear that the editor and readership were unsure of the significance of the events.<sup>52</sup> By the time the first shots of the American Revolution were fired at Lexington and Concord in April, 1775, Nova Scotians were paying close attention to the events taking place with their neighbours to the west and south and reporting them as front- page news.<sup>53</sup> It seems that the general population was starting to realize that this rebellious movement could radically impact their daily lives. It is important to remember that the colony of Massachusetts was directly adjacent to Nova Scotia and Boston was

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<sup>51</sup> The Intolerable Acts, also called the Coercive Acts, were passed by the British Parliament specifically against the colony of Massachusetts. They consisted of the Boston Port Act, the Massachusetts Government Act, the Administration of Justice Act, and the Quartering Act. See Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750- 1804* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2016), 120- 123,

<sup>52</sup> The weekly publication placed the mounting tensions on the second page of the paper, which is in line with the style of the publication. However, as the tensions continued to mount, the news of the rebellion shifted to the front page. See *The Royal Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*. December, 1774- May, 1775. PANS Microfiche Collection, roll 8155; roll 8156.

<sup>53</sup> PANS, Newspaper Collection, *The Royal Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*. 15 May, 1775; 22 May, 1775; 29 May, 1775. PANS Microfiche Collection, roll 8156.

a major trading partner for merchants in Nova Scotia so when violence broke out, it was taking place in a town with which people were quite familiar.

Halifax and Nova Scotia do not immediately come to mind when discussing the American Revolution. While Quebec, another of the twenty-six British colonies in North America, was of central importance as both a cause of the revolution and in determining the location of several key battles, Nova Scotia is often forgotten. This can likely be attributed to the fact that Jonathan Eddy and Benoni Danks failed in their objective and that the local government in Halifax wanted to sweep it under the rug, metaphorically speaking; they did not want the populous remembering what could have been. The province is forgotten because it was identified as a loyalist region and not significant enough with regard to physical location to warrant another attack from the Americans. Its citizens did not rally to the rebel cause as had been anticipated so the instigators simply retreated to their side of the Saint Croix River. While this is a reasonable conclusion on the part of the American rebels, since after all, there was no overwhelming strategic advantage in holding the province, it does get to the root of the question as to why the Nova Scotians did not rally as expected. Upon examination of the demographics of the province and the state of political leadership, there was every reason to join the rebellion. This inaction pushes 21st century investigators to ask the question of why did Nova Scotia not join the American Revolution and what were the motivating factors behind this position? What makes Nova Scotians different than those who were our family but happened to live in another part of the British Empire in North America?

Scholars have debated Nova Scotia's role in the American Revolution since the 1930s. Historian J.B. Brebner was the first to tackle the question of what he referred to as the "Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia" and his conclusions were generally accepted as definitive for a generation. In fact, early reviewers of his book went so far as to say, "...many will regret his decision not to pursue the colony's story farther, for no one has handled early Nova Scotia history so competently."<sup>54</sup> For Brebner, family ties and geographical isolation were the primary causes for the phenomenon of the "Neutral Yankee". George Rawlyk was the first to challenge this long held concept in his book *Revolution Rejected* which was published in 1968.<sup>55</sup> Most recently, Elizabeth Mancke has added local geographical isolation to the discussion of the themes originally identified by Brebner.<sup>56</sup> The most curious aspect of this gap in the historiography of the field is that even in these three books, none of the authors makes significant use of the example of Simeon Perkins nor do they look to Perkins in hopes of gaining a better understanding of the rationale of this man and his hometown for their experiences during the events of the late 18th century.

### **Perkins as a Loyalist: The Man and the Myth**

The reason I choose to use the lens of Simeon Perkins is threefold. Firstly, he left behind a diary which provides an almost daily account of life in the town during the American Revolution including observations on the current events of the day. Secondly, he was uniquely positioned in Nova Scotian society as both a member of the ruling merchant-class, those who made up the oligarchy of the province, though he can be

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<sup>54</sup> Leonard W Labaree, "The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia. A Marginal Colony during the Revolutionary Years (Book Review)", in *The Journal of Modern History* 10, no. 1 (1938): 108-09.

<sup>55</sup> George A Rawlyk, *Revolution Rejected 1775-1776: Canadian Historical Controversies* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall, 1968).

<sup>56</sup> Mancke, 65-66.

categorized as a 'backbencher', to use modern political nomenclature, but also someone who lived in a rural community and as such, his views and experiences were more in line with the majority of the population who were separated, both socially and geographically from Halifax, and thirdly, because of the characteristics linked to his personal loyalty. Perkins' particular brand of loyalism was a continuum; it changed over the course of the revolution, influenced by a series of events. His loyalism was contingent, based on the threats which existed against him, his business interests, and his place of residence. Perkins' loyalism was also criminal; he broke the law as needed in order to protect the interests of both himself and his family. It is this type of loyalism, I argue, that can rightly be attributed to the people of Nova Scotia who resided outside of Halifax, which represented a large majority of the population, a brand of loyalism which is on a continuum and contingent on experience.

In traditional historiography, Perkins is depicted as a quintessential 'Loyal Yankee'. This is the message of which is purported in popular accounts of his life, including depictions on the part of the government of Nova Scotia and in his entry in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography (DCB)*. Perkins is described in such a way as to highlight the model which was put forward by Rogers; he is the romanticized loyalist. Any of his actions, in particular as described in his *DCB* entry, which could be construed as contrary to this conceptualization of Perkins are glazed over, even his involvement in illegal trade which is described as "clandestine".<sup>57</sup> His actions which could be construed as pro- American are literally omitted in the name of conservative historical narrative,

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<sup>57</sup> Government of Nova Scotia, "Perkins House Museum", available at <https://perkinshouse.novascotia.ca/about-perkins-house/simeon-perkins> Accessed May 2, 2018; C. Bruce Fergusson, "Perkins, Simeon," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed April 20, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perkins\\_simeon\\_5E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perkins_simeon_5E.html).

thanks to the editorial decisions on the part of editors of his diary.<sup>58</sup> These factors have contributed to the creation of a myth surrounding Simeon Perkins and at its heart, the very nature of loyalism in Nova Scotia.

The case of Simeon Perkins highlights the idea that loyalism was fluid, that it was contingent on specific circumstances and that it was on a continuum, much like the brand of loyalism which existed in Nova Scotia. This is a type of loyalism which is diametrically opposed to the traditional, romanticized notion of loyalism. By examining his diary, we see the full extent to which loyalism, at least how it was experienced in the outports of Nova Scotia, was highly dependent on individual experiences and that the evolutionary nature of loyalism was on a continuum.

### **The Diary**

At the crux of any discussion of Simeon Perkins is his diary, a collection over twenty volumes which spans most of his adult life. The surviving document begins in 1766 when Perkins arrived in Nova Scotia and the last entry is dated April 7, 1812, some five weeks before his death on May 9, 1812.<sup>59</sup> Perkins' diary is both typical and atypical of the time period. Historian Daniel Vickers provided an examination of daybooks of other New Englanders who lived during the same time period in his article "Errors Expected: The Culture of Credit in Rural New England, 1750–1800". In this article, Vickers outlines that daybooks were used as an accounting tool which recorded both formal and informal business transactions.<sup>60</sup> In this instance, Perkins diary

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<sup>58</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, ix.

<sup>59</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 1; Perkins, vol. 5, 193; C. Bruce Fergusson, "Perkins, Simeon," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed April 20, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perkins\\_simeon\\_5E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perkins_simeon_5E.html).

<sup>60</sup> Daniel Vickers, "Errors Expected: The Culture of Credit in Rural New England, 1750–1800 " in *Economic History Review* 63, no. 4 (2010): 1032-057.

conforms to the standard which was common of the time period. However, Perkins diary is atypical in that not only does he record his business transactions as well as items of note surrounding his family, as one would expect, he also records the marriages, births, deaths, the shipping news, court rulings, current events, and the local gossip of Liverpool. His diary represents a mix of both formal and informal record keeping as well as personal, professional, and matters of public record.

The other significant aspect of Perkins' diary is the manner in which it is written. Perkins was very direct and matter-of-fact in the manner in which he penned his entries; he was not prone to sentimentality. In fact, news of his engagement is afforded the same tone as his reflections on the weather.<sup>61</sup> For those who wish to use the diary as a tool of history, this is advantageous as his accounts are not emotionally charged and when such sentiments are expressed, they are indicative of genuine emotional difficulty with an event. With the same token, this objectivity is problematic as the reader is not afforded access to his true thoughts on the revolution in the southern thirteen colonies and is left to extrapolate and hypothesize as to his true loyalties as he recounts the events and rarely offers a reflection or opinion.

If one considers Perkins and his attitudes as a reflection of the political and economic attitudes of the time and place, an examination of his diary provides a deeper understanding of his shared attitudes with other Nova Scotians. After all, Perkins recorded the reactions of others in his diary as well, not just his own. This is pertinent when the events in question were significant to other inhabitants of the town such as interactions with American privateers. Through an examination of the diary of Simeon Perkins, it becomes apparent that loyalty and loyalism was not static but rather a fluid

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<sup>61</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 99; Perkins, vol.1, 151.

entity which varied from person to person and was impacted by their personal experiences.

### **The Editions and Editors**

The original version of the diary of Simeon Perkins has traveled the Atlantic world and is currently held by the Queens County Museum in Liverpool, Nova Scotia. After Simeon Perkins passed away, his son Simeon Leonard assumed control of his father's business interests. Upon the death of Simeon Leonard, Elizabeth Perkins, the wife of Simeon the elder, left Nova Scotia to live with her daughter in New York and took her husband's papers with her. It is unclear as to what happened to the papers between her death in 1825 and when they were gifted to the province in 1899 but it is known that part of the original documents are missing, specifically, Perkins' pocket books in which he kept his minutes while he was away from Liverpool.

The original copy of the diary is in a precarious physical state and is sadly not available for research. This means that researchers have the option of either using the microfilm copy held by the PANS which is not whole; it begins in 1774; or the transcribed copy of the diary which was produced by the Champlain Society over the course of thirty years, between 1948 and 1978. This transcription consists of five volumes and includes introductions and footnotes which offer greater explanation of the people and events that are described in the diary. For the purposes of this project, I have used two of the transcribed volumes of the diary of Simeon Perkins which are available both in hardcopy and searchable PDF through the Champlain Society's website. Additionally, I consulted the annotated copies of the diary which belonged to

Thomas Raddall, the notable Nova Scotian writer, which are currently held by Dalhousie University in the Raddall Fonds of the Special Collections.

The two volumes used for this project were edited by three different people: Harold A. Innis; DC Harvey; and C. Bruce Fergusson. Innis was a historian and scholar, focused on political and economic history and based at the University of Toronto while Harvey and Fergusson were both trained archivists in addition to being historians and were both based in Nova Scotia.<sup>62</sup> This difference in editors raises a series of interesting questions: how did one select what to keep and what to discard in an edited work and who is best suited to edit a publication such as the diary of Simeon Perkins?

The first volume of the transcribed diary was edited by Harold A. Innis who specifically omitted the portions which were not related to Nova Scotia.<sup>63</sup> This is detrimental to the study of the diary because it limits its scope to Nova Scotian history when in reality, the diary can and should be used as a tool for those who study a wider range of aspects related to the Atlantic World. While the majority of the diary exists on microfilm, the years between 1766 and 1774 do not. This means that readers are limited in what they can learn from the diary, given the fact that the original is not available for research use.

The other challenge which is derived from using the edited version of the diary is the fact that both volumes used in this project were produced prior to 1968 when George Rawlyk published *Revolution Rejected*. This particular book was the first to challenge long-held notions on the field of Atlantic world scholarship which had been

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<sup>62</sup> Library and Archives of Canada, "Old Messengers, New Media: The Legacy of Innis and McLuhan", available at <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/innis-mcluhan/030003-1000-e.html>. Accessed November 27, 2018; Paul Heyer, *Harold Innis*. Critical Media Studies (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

<sup>63</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, ix.

laid down by J.B. Brebner in 1938. While the footnotes and edition are factually accurate, it is important to keep Brebner's arguments in mind when consulting references which are open to interpretation and evaluation. Brebner and Innis were both based outside of the Atlantic region and one must also keep in mind regional biases when consulting the footnotes. Though Innis did consult other historians located in the Atlantic region, he still had the final editorial control in what was included and what was not.<sup>64</sup>

The second volume was edited by two Nova Scotian historians and archivists, D.C. Harvey and C. Bruce Fergusson but presents a new set of challenges. Free from geographical biases, Harvey and Fergusson faced the challenge of deciding what to keep and what to omit. The clearest example of this conundrum is introductions; Innis' is 26 pages long to Harvey and Fergusson's 50 pages. The total length of the second volume, excluding appendices and references is twice the length of the first volume. On this surface, it seems these two archivists were trying to balance the needs of the historian to be accurate and the need of the archivist to tell the whole story. In the words of archivist Terry Cook, "we are what we keep" and the pair were quite concerned with making good editorial choices.<sup>65</sup>

Harvey and Fergusson had the unenviable job of constructing historical narrative in a time when the acceptable historiography had been in a period of stagnation for almost twenty years. It is difficult to assess if the changes in tone which are present in the second volume are reflective of the undercurrents of change which were present in the field at the time it was edited or if these subtle difference are because Perkins was

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<sup>64</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, p. ix.

<sup>65</sup> Terry Cook, "'We Are What We Keep; We Keep What We Are': Archival Appraisal Past, Present and Future," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 32, no. 2 (2011): 173-89.

entering mid- life when he recorded the events in the second volume, resulting in a shift in his world view. The subsequent three volumes of the diary were transcribed and edited by Fergusson which is useful as it ensures editorial continuity between the majority of the volumes.

### **The Historiographical Context of Nova Scotia**

Nova Scotia has posed a problem for historians for several decades. Early historiography examined Nova Scotia as part of either British Imperial history, French colonial history, or Continental history. British Imperial history uses a framework in which people and events are connected to the British Empire. The continentalist approach, conversely, connects those same people and events to the North American continent. Within the context of the American Revolution, Nova Scotia was traditionally viewed through the lens of British Imperial history.<sup>66</sup> The reason for this is because the most notable contribution of Nova Scotia to the war effort was the fact that the Royal Navy was based in Halifax; the province was rarely discussed as a separate entity in the field.

J.B. Brebner was the first to undertake such an examination and this was the gold standard for almost thirty years. Brebner tended to study Nova Scotia and its history through a continentalist approach, highlighting the province's connections to New England.<sup>67</sup> Brebner was on the cusp of the development of the field of the Atlantic World but it was not until George Rawlyk that the field started to take shape. While Rawlyk still, to a certain extent, viewed Nova Scotia history through a continentalist

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<sup>66</sup> Stephen J. Hornsby and Michael Hermann, *British Atlantic, American Frontier: Spaces of Power in Early Modern British America* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2005).

<sup>67</sup> John Bartlet Brebner, *New England's Outpost : Acadia before the Conquest of Canada* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1965).

context as he presents his book *Nova Scotia's Massachusetts: A Study of Massachusetts-Nova Scotia Relations, 1630 to 1784*, he is the first to re-examine this traditional standpoint.<sup>68</sup> It was Rawlyk who began to look at the Atlantic region through its connections to other regions along the periphery of the Atlantic Ocean and the field of the Atlantic World was born, and it is this particular lens which allows for Nova Scotia to be examined in a more independent fashion.<sup>69</sup>

Atlantic World historiography is broad and encompasses dozens of different regional sub-fields. The two greatest contributions which emerge from Nova Scotia are Planter and Loyalist studies which emerged in the 1980s. Historians such as Margaret Conrad, Julian Gwyn, Elizabeth Mancke, and Keith Mercer have begun a deeper exploration of themes surrounding Planters and Loyalists with the Planters Studies Series but there is still a significant gap in an examination of the revolutionary period.

In order to gain a better understanding of the overlapping historiographical aspects of Nova Scotia during the American Revolution, the following section will identify the major themes raised by continentalist and British imperialist historiographies in the discussion of Nova Scotia during the American Revolution and provide an in depth analysis of the themes which are raised in this literature and apply these findings to the context of Simeon Perkins.

### **Shared Kinship, Geographical Isolation, Politics, and the Question of Neutrality: Brebner Refuted**

The notion of Nova Scotian neutrality, in that Nova Scotia did not join the American Revolution, as being caused by geographical isolation and shared kinship are

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<sup>68</sup> George A Rawlyk, *Nova Scotia's Massachusetts: A Study of Massachusetts-Nova Scotia Relations, 1630 to 1784* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1973).

<sup>69</sup> The Planter Studies series and the journal *Acadiensis* both provide a forum for the discussion of the history of Atlantic world, specifically Canadian Maritimes.

first explored by John Bartlett Brebner in his influential book *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia*.<sup>70</sup> Originally published in 1938, this continentalist account provided just three justifications for the question of Nova Scotian neutrality and it was this text which formed the bedrock of the study of Nova Scotia during the American Revolution for three decades. This book was considered to be transformational in its interpretation of the topic and early reviewers of the book were almost blinded by this. Leonard Labaree went so far as to say in his review that the book was a "...thoroughly useful and satisfactory account of a critical period in the life of this colony and of the influence of New England upon its development" and that "...no one has handled early Nova Scotia history so competently."<sup>71</sup> In fact, of the reviews which are still available online, only that written by Nova Scotian historian Viola Barnes expressed a dissenting voice.<sup>72</sup>

Brebner's understanding of these terms is clear and concise; geographical isolation means that because Nova Scotians were so physically distanced from the fighting we, as Nova Scotians, remained neutral.<sup>73</sup> Shared kinship speaks to the fact that Nova Scotians elected to remain neutral because we did not have the desire to fight against extended family.<sup>74</sup> For politics, Brebner identifies that the province was tightly governed by the merchants and those in power in Halifax and that they were able to exert their influence over the rest of the population. Brebner's first and third arguments are simply, incorrect. His second argument, the notion of shared kinship, does hold

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<sup>70</sup> John Bartlett Brebner, *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia: A Marginal Colony during the Revolutionary Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969).

<sup>71</sup> Leonard W. Labaree, "The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia. A Marginal Colony during the Revolutionary Years (Book Review)," *The Journal of Modern History* 10, no. 1 (1938): 108-09.

<sup>72</sup> Viola F Barnes, "The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia: A Marginal Colony During the Revolutionary Years (Book Review)," *The American Historical Review* 43, no. 2 (1938): 411-12.

<sup>73</sup> Brebner, 299.

<sup>74</sup> Brebner, 310.

some weight but only tells a portion of the story in the discussion of this particular issue. The most recent examination of the question of geographical isolation was raised by Elizabeth Mancke; however, she interprets this issue from a local perspective in that individual communities were isolated from one another and as such, were unable to unify and take cohesive action.<sup>75</sup>

During the age of sail, Nova Scotia was not geographically isolated from the rest of the Atlantic world. While the province may have lacked roads, this was not a significant disadvantage as the majority of the communities in the province were in close proximity to the ocean; ships were simply used instead of horses and wagons.<sup>76</sup> Providing the weather was favourable, a trip from Halifax to Lunenburg, the second most populous town in the province, took about a day. The express ship from Liverpool to Halifax could make the voyage in less than two days.<sup>77</sup> A trip to Marblehead in Massachusetts, located close to Boston and as such a popular destination for trade goods, took about five days.<sup>78</sup> Internationally, ports along the Mediterranean in countries such as Spain, Portugal and the Levant, were also regular destinations for trading vessels which departed from Liverpool and could be reached in three months.<sup>79</sup> These trading patterns allow for not only the free movement of goods but the free movement of ideas. Sailors brought news with their trade goods. As an example, Perkins records that he has learned of General Arnold's trek through Northern Maine on September 27, 1775, about two weeks after Arnold set out on the trip.<sup>80</sup> In short, to say that Nova

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<sup>75</sup> Mancke, 65-67.

<sup>76</sup> Brebner, see insert for map.

<sup>77</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 132.

<sup>78</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 93.

<sup>79</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 53.

<sup>80</sup> Perkins, vol.1, 101.

Scotia was isolated from the rest of the world and the Atlantic world is simply false, as long as you were close to the sea.

The shared kinship argument is one which does withstand a degree of scrutiny though it does not provide an adequate justification for all forms of loyalism. According to the census of Nova Scotia which was taken in 1767, over 75% of the population of the province were of American extraction.<sup>81</sup> As we can see in *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*, there were very strong ties between Nova Scotia and the southern colonies. In the instance of Perkins, his only child, his parents, and several siblings still resided in Connecticut when he relocated to Liverpool. He took a keen interest in the future of his child and he was still obviously close to his family, close enough that he maintained a regular correspondence with them throughout the duration of the war.<sup>82</sup> Given the tone of his entries when discussing family issues, in particular the deaths of his parents, and the deaths of his siblings, readers of his diary can see that any decision to take up arms against his surviving family members would have caused him tremendous torment.

Family relationships during the early modern period were like they are today; complicated. As Patricia Rogers states in her article, "Loyalist Expectations in a Post-Revolutionary Atlantic World", Loyalists "...ultimately sustained and advanced existing relationships between British North America...and New England."<sup>83</sup> There were not wide-spread splits in families, as was seen amongst some prominent American families

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<sup>81</sup> *Census of Nova Scotia, 1767*, accessed February 10, 2018, available at <https://novascotia.ca/archives/census/returnsRG1v443.asp?ID=1>

<sup>82</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, p. 46-47; There are numerous entries related to family matters. These two pages simply offer examples of concerns for Perkins' siblings and his oldest child.

<sup>83</sup> Patricia Rogers, "Loyalist Expectations in a Post-Revolutionary Atlantic World," in *The Nova Scotia Planters in the Atlantic World, 1759-1830*, ed. T. Stephen Henderson and Wendy G. Robicheau (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 2012), 153.

such as the Franklins.<sup>84</sup> I argue that shared kinship during the American Revolution for the residents of Nova Scotia was, at best, ignored and very much a peripheral motivating factor in picking sides in the conflict. There is no universal approach to family relations, not unlike family relationships today. Simeon Perkins made no explicit mention of the political leanings of his family, even those who were in contested territory or members of the Continental Army at any point in his diary. For Perkins, his family was his family, regardless of whether or not he agreed with their actions during the revolution.

A prime example of this are the lack of details offered about the incarceration of his brothers Jabez and Hezekiah at New York.<sup>85</sup> Both were sailors and often entered into business ventures with their brother Simeon, as is seen in Perkins' diary.<sup>86</sup> Little is explicitly stated about why either man was incarcerated, but Perkins does say that Jabez specifically had "...been for some time, and in a poor state of health."<sup>87</sup> Perkins finished the entry with "I desire Mr. Gideon White, who is bound there, via Halifax, to supply him with anything he may need on my account."<sup>88</sup> Secondary literature suggests that the pair were heavily involved in privateering and it is reasonable to assume that they were held in New York for crimes related to this business venture, given that New York was held by the British for the duration of the war.<sup>89</sup> We can ascertain that Simeon

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<sup>84</sup> The split between Benjamin Franklin and his son is well documented in most scholarship about this particular family. See Gordon S. Wood, *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Penguin, 2004), 160- 163.

<sup>85</sup> Jabez and Hezekiah Perkins were both incarcerated in New York City in 1778. Naval records show that both Jabez and Hezekiah were involved in privateering and it is likely that their respective time in jail was linked to this activity. See Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, *Naval Records of the American Revolution*, Edited by Charles H. Lincoln (Washington: Government Print Office, 1906), 532.

<sup>86</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 188; Perkins, vol. 1, 121; Perkins, vol. 1, 123.

<sup>87</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 189.

<sup>88</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 189.

<sup>89</sup> Taylor, 162- 165.

Perkins was prepared to offer aid to his brother, regardless of what he had done to find himself in such a predicament.

Politics in Nova Scotia were disjointed. While merchants in Halifax did enjoy a tremendous amount of power within that city, very rarely did this power extend to the rest of the province. Only one quarter of the province's population lived in Halifax, as per the 1767 census, and there was a documented disconnect between the capital and the out ports, owing to social class and geographical location. In short, controlling Halifax did not mean one controlled the whole of Nova Scotia.<sup>90</sup> As Elizabeth Mancke points out, all parties, both in Halifax and in the outports of the province, enjoyed the 'out of sight, out of mind' approach which the government adopted towards these communities.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, even those merchants who held power within Halifax, the province, and the Atlantic World were not without suspicion, such as in the case of Malachy Salter.<sup>92</sup>

### **The Missing Decade, Underdevelopment, Governor Legge, and American Indifference**

Passive loyalty which can be classed as acts which are performed as a means of survival, is the term which I argue best describes the next three themes which will be addressed in this section, namely the missing decade, the overall underdevelopment of the province and the curious case of Governor Legge, a generally incompetent leader, who saw revolutionary threats where none existed.<sup>93</sup> These three theories are important

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<sup>90</sup> Perkins makes several comments regarding the fact that Liverpool was distrusted by Halifax which indicates that those in power in the city were unable to control those who were in the out ports. See Perkins, vol.1, 98.

<sup>91</sup> Mancke, 12- 15.

<sup>92</sup> Cahill, 52.

<sup>93</sup> Gordon Stewart and George Rawlyk, *A People Highly Favoured of God: The Nova Scotia Yankee and the American Revolution* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1972), 46.

as they aid in understanding the greater context of the province of Nova Scotia during the time period in question.

During the revitalization of the discussion of Nova Scotia Loyalists during the American Revolution, Gordon Stewart and George Rawlyk, both power houses in the field of the Atlantic World, brought forward the notion of the 'Missing Decade'. This theory, simply put, attributes the degree of radicalization to when members of the planters' group left their homes in New England and came to Nova Scotia. They argue that these early settlers who came during the 1760s missed the period in which their homeland became more and more radicalized and were, as such, not as heavily impacted by the revolutionary fervour.<sup>94</sup>

This theory is satisfactory in that it is historically accurate but it only tells part of the story. Radicalization must be considered along with the state of development in Nova Scotia at the time of these events. As stated earlier, Nova Scotia was not isolated from New England; people, goods, and ideas moved freely between the two geographical regions. The inhabitants of Nova Scotia were very much aware of what was going on in the southern colonies through a variety of means. News was transmitted by way of word of mouth as well as in popular media including pamphlets and newspapers. While Perkins does not specifically mention receiving any pamphlets, given the widespread production and distribution of these items in the rebelling colonies, it is reasonable to assume that pamphlets were being brought into the province by those who came to live and trade.<sup>95</sup> Media coverage of this mounting crisis increased and the

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>95</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1992).

*Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle* started to give more and more column inches events taking place in the colonies to the south. People in Nova Scotia were very aware of what was happening but they had much more pressing things to worry about, namely, the state of their new homeland.

The theme of underdevelopment of Nova Scotia is one cause for loyalism which is taken up by most scholars who work in the field. As an example, Elizabeth Mancke and Julian Gwyn highlight the economic challenges faced in Nova Scotia in their respective articles “Corporate Structure and Private Interest: The Mid- Eighteenth-Century Expansion of New England” and “Economic Fluctuations in Wartime Nova Scotia, 1755- 1815”.<sup>96</sup> Both that and economic conditions in the outer settlements were far from stable and very little in the way of financial aid came from Halifax. This can be further corroborated by Simeon Perkins as he highlights the financially precarious state of the inhabitants of Liverpool on several occasions.<sup>97</sup>

When the Planters arrived in Nova Scotia, most found either farm land which had been left neglected since the Acadians were forcibly removed in 1755 or which needed to be carved out and cleared from the vast forests which covered the province so that the land could be converted to profitable farms. Coupled with the uncertain nature of farming and Nova Scotia’s weather, life in the province was unpredictable in the best of circumstances for farmers. Simply put, while the Yankee inhabitants may have been

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<sup>96</sup> Elizabeth Mancke, “Corporate Structure and Private Interest: The Mid- Eighteenth-Century Expansion of New England,” in *The Planted Well: New England Planters in Maritime Canada*, ed. Margaret Conrad (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1988); Julian Gwynn, “Economic Fluctuations in Wartime Nova Scotia, 1755- 1815” in *Making Adjustments: Change and Continuity in Planter Nova Scotia, 1759- 1800*, ed. Margaret Conrad (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1991).

<sup>97</sup> Perkins, vol 1, 43.

concerned with the revolution they were more concerned with ensuring that their families and communities survived until the next season.

The situation with Governor Francis Legge could have caused rebellion; in fact it was only narrowly avoided by the British government through a series of acts of appeasement. Legge was appointed to the position of governor of the province after the position was vacated by Lord William Campbell in 1774.<sup>98</sup> It was a patronage appointment, thanks to Legge's connection to the Earl of Dartmouth and sadly, Legge had very little talent for political leadership or diplomacy, both skills that were much needed given the time and geographical location. Canadian historian J.M. Bumstead who wrote Legge's entry in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* went so far as to point out that even the most sympathetic of Legge's modern supporters thought him to be "basically a stupid man."<sup>99</sup>

Francis Legge was an unremarkable man and is a perfect example of the patronage system which existed in the eighteenth century. Very little is known about Legge's early life but it is known that he joined the British army in 1741 at around the age of 22. It took him a whopping fifteen years before he was able to obtain a captaincy.<sup>100</sup> He was an undistinguished soldier during the Seven Years' War and only advanced because of his connection to the Earl of Dartmouth, the exact nature of which is unknown. He became a major, quite mysteriously in 1767 after he had been considering retirement because of his inability to advance. It was this same connection

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<sup>98</sup> J. M. Bumsted, "Legge, Francis," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed April 22, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/legge\\_francis\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/legge_francis_4E.html).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

which secured his military advancement that secured his later employment in Nova Scotia.

At the crux of Legge's difficulties in Nova Scotia was his lack of understanding or respect for how things were done in the province. The ruling oligarchy consisted of a group of men who were almost exclusively merchants and as such had worked long and hard to secure their fortunes and position within society. They were usually of humble origin and had they been back in England, it is likely that they would have been excluded from political power.<sup>101</sup> Legge showed what could be described as social contempt for these men and their position which resulted in an inability to work together to form alliances between the Crown and the ruling elite, something which was essential for the government back in England. Instead, he was constantly at odds with the merchants and was disconnected from the needs of the people of Nova Scotia. He was replaced in 1776 by Marriott Arbuthnot who set about repairing relationships between the provincial government and the people, clearly understanding that the Crown needed political quiet and not discontent in the months after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.<sup>102</sup>

The merchant class had the money and the power to sway political opinion in Nova Scotia during these early days of conflict and with the removal of Legge, Britain showed that not only were willing to listen to the people of Nova Scotia, they were also willing to institute change when needed. The oligarchy felt respected again and were

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Donald F. Chard, "Arbuthnot, Marriott," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed April 22, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/arbuthnot\\_mariot\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/arbuthnot_mariot_4E.html).

less inclined to move towards rebellion since they had physical evidence that their concerns were being heard and addressed back in England.

The last key component in the discussion of passive loyalism in Nova Scotia during the American Revolution is the lack of interest on the part of the Americans in acquiring Nova Scotia as an ally. When George Washington was approached about sending an army to mount an invasion of Nova Scotia, he responded but not with any great amount of enthusiasm, hence why Eddy and his very small group of men were given permission to mount this attack.<sup>103</sup> The invasion of Quebec had been well planned out and executed by some of the most talented officers that the Continental Army had within its ranks, but the same cannot be said for the Cumberland Raid.<sup>104</sup> Compared to the effort which the Americans put into the campaign to take Quebec, the campaign to capture Nova Scotia was small and led by inexperienced officers; it seemed a lacklustre attempt compared to Arnold's trek over Maine and into Quebec during the winter.<sup>105</sup>

Passive loyalism consists of acts and attitudes which result in loyalism but are achieved through inaction or passive participation. In the instance of the missing decade theory, it was only after the fact that John Adams identified the radicalization period in the run-up to the American Revolution. In short, the Planters had no notion that they missed anything at the time the events took place.<sup>106</sup>

The state of underdevelopment in the province meant that all but the upper echelons of society struggled on some level to be financially competent, to maintain

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<sup>103</sup> G. A. Rawlyk, "Eddy, Jonathan," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed January 22, 2019, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/eddy\\_jonathan\\_5E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/eddy_jonathan_5E.html).

<sup>104</sup> There has been study undertaken on the Cumberland Raid. See Ernest Clarke, *The Siege of Fort Cumberland, 1776: An Episode in the American Revolution* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

<sup>105</sup> George Rawlyk, *Revolution Rejected: 1775- 1776* (Scarborough: Prentice- Hall, 1968), 77.

<sup>106</sup> Stewart and Rawlyk, 3.

their families and households with the necessities. Most people in the province had to concern themselves with the business of daily living and did not have the means or the time to engage in outright actions of rebellion and were disinclined to engage in outright acts of loyalism.

The incompetent Governor Legge was removed by the British which allowed those in power in Halifax to feel as though they had been heard and that their concerns had been addressed; the British successfully removed a potential incitement to rebellion and appeased the mob, that factious and often dangerous aspect of early modern society which those in power feared. The mob had the ability to make demands and to threaten the government with their actions.

The lack of interest on the part of the American invaders was reflective of the state of the province at the time. There was no great sentiment for rebellion and because of economic underdevelopment, people were unlikely to join a rebellion which was unclear in objective and poorly led. Furthermore, even if rebels were able to enter the province via the isthmus of Chignecto, there was no clear way to capture Halifax, the only real prize which the province offered. While the invasion of Quebec may have been clouded in ambiguity because of the lack of an anchoring statement from the American Continental Congress which only emerged after the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the invasion of Nova Scotia did not appear to have a clear plan of attack. The people of the Chignecto region represented the gateway to the province and if that could not be secured by the American invaders, there was no viable option for any further endeavors into the province. In short, the people of Nova Scotia became passive loyalists because there was no real viable alternative. Passive

loyalism, one could argue, was the type which allowed Britain to maintain control of the province because people simply had no other option thanks to poverty and lack of leadership on the part of the would-be American invaders.

### **Active and Coercive Loyalty: The Royal Navy meets the Privateer and the Business of Making Money**

Robert Calhoon argues that seeking military protection is a form of loyalty but what kind of loyalty is such an act? While Calhoon would argue that it is a form of active loyalty, I disagree with his stance as a universal truth. While seeking military protection was often a form of active loyalty, such as instances in the rebelling colonies where private property was threatened, as is presented in the letters of Daniel Leonard, this is not universally the case.<sup>107</sup> I argue that while seeking military assistance *is* a form of active loyalty on its surface but catalyst for this act were often coercive in nature in that something or someone drove an individual to make such a choice. In the case of Simeon Perkins and the town of Liverpool, loyalty was achieved in this forced, coercive manner. His diary offers several examples of this, including the infamous raid in 1780 when townspeople were ready to surrender to the Americans if it meant that they would be left in peace.<sup>108</sup>

Liverpool was under constant threat from American privateers and was directly attacked twice. One of these instances occurred before any substantial aid on the part of the province was offered.<sup>109</sup> Even when this aid arrived, it still took significant organization on the part of Perkins, other militia officers, and town officials to keep the

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<sup>107</sup> "Daniel Leonard Argues for Loyalty to the British Empire," in Michael P. Johnson, ed., *Reading the American Past: Selected Historical Documents. Volume 1: to 1877*. 4th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009), 110-114.

<sup>108</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 41-42.

<sup>109</sup> Privateer raids began in and around Liverpool in 1776. The garrison did not arrive until 1778; See Perkins vol. 1, 225.

government troops in place and to protect the town. This raises the question as to why Liverpool was so low on the list for help from the army and the navy when it was so clearly an objective for privateers? The answer to this question appears to be slightly sinister, at least on the part of the Royal Navy which had the ability to be both stick and carrot for the population of Liverpool.

Thanks to its high percentage of Congregationalist Yankees, Liverpool was already under the watchful eye of the government at Halifax and had been since the early days of unrest in the other colonies. In fact, Barry Cahill argues that the terms 'Congregationalist' and 'revolutionary' became synonyms during the revolutionary period within the context of Nova Scotia.<sup>110</sup> Perkins himself was caught by the Royal Navy in possession of contraband on at least one occasion so the suspicion was not unfounded.<sup>111</sup> This begs the questions as to whether or not the authorities purposely allowed privateering raids in and around Liverpool as a means to ensure that population of the town was thoroughly intimidated *before* offering aid or if they were simply too busy patrolling the area around the province to focus in on one specific town.

There is evidence that suggests this attitude of neglect was purposely undertaken by the British colonial government. Privateering began in earnest in the Liverpool area in September, 1776. Eyre Massey, a British officer in the area, sent a letter in October, 1776 which alerted the Earl of Dartmouth to the issue of privateers in

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<sup>110</sup> Barry Cahill, "The Treason of the Merchants: Dissent and Repression in Halifax in the Era of the American Revolution." *Acadiensis* 26, no. 1 (1996): 58.

<sup>111</sup> C. Bruce Fergusson, "Perkins, Simeon," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed April 20, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perkins\\_simeon\\_5E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perkins_simeon_5E.html).

the area, in addition to several other concerns.<sup>112</sup> It is interesting that this letter went to London and not Halifax and there is no reason given for this which leaves the rationale open to interpretation. Given that the new governor of the colony, Marriott Arbuthnot, was a naval officer, he had the ability to install naval forces and army troops anywhere in the province and while Arbuthnot did eventually send troops to Liverpool, it was a full two years after the raids had begun. Several petitions were sent from the people of Liverpool to officials in Halifax and those requests for aid went unheeded.<sup>113</sup> In short, the government was well aware of the privateer raids taking place in and around Nova Scotia as early as 1776 but did not act on the requests from the people of Liverpool until 1778.<sup>114</sup> Those in power in Halifax seem to have been disinclined to help the people of Liverpool.

The Liverpool merchants, Perkins in particular, suffered repeated privateer losses, some so brazen as to happen in the Mersey River, right in the town of Liverpool. In an unusual outburst of sentimentality, Perkins states in his diary that:

This is the fourth loss I have met with by my countrymen, and are altogether so heavy upon me I do not know how to go on with much more business, especially as every kind of property is so uncertain, and no protection afforded as yet, from Government. In the afternoon I meet my officers, and consult about keeping guard, etc.<sup>115</sup>

Could this have been a purposely staged instance of military ambivalence in order to coerce loyalty from the town of Liverpool and its merchants? Letting Perkins and the other inhabitants of Liverpool suffer privateer losses and harassment at the hands of the

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<sup>112</sup> "Eyre Massey to the Earl of Dartmouth", Colonial Office Papers. Colonial Office 217. Original Correspondence- Secretary of State, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. Vol. 52, October 17, 1775- November 21, 1776. Entry number 308- 309. Public Archives of Nova Scotia. MFM roll number 13859.

<sup>113</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 186; Perkins, vol. 1, 202;

<sup>114</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 225.

<sup>115</sup> Perkins, 134.

Americans could have been a conscious ploy on the part of the British to 'highlight' the advantages of remaining loyal to His Majesty. While the Royal Navy was capable of protecting a town, it was possible for it to act as a menace be it by being absent from a particular region or equally by being present and using the male population as fodder for press gangs.

The Royal Navy was charged with protecting the waters around Nova Scotia but given the size of the province and the length of its coastline, it was a daunting task. Between the usual naval losses due to illness and action, there was a steady need for more sailors which led to an increase in press gang activity in and around Liverpool, a region which had been spared from such activity in the previous decade. Keith Mercer explains that between the need for more sailors now that access to their traditional market had been cut off, and the fact that the town of Liverpool was dependant on maritime activity which meant that merchant sailors were often in close contact with the warships at sea and its proximity to Halifax, there was a very real fear of impressments.<sup>116</sup> While the Navy might offer protection from privateers, they were also a very real threat to any white, English- speaking male in the vicinity.

The very fact that the Royal Navy was a common presence in and around the town had a definite impact on trade, both legal and illegal. In exchange for the protection of the navy, the arm of the British Empire would have the eyes of the navy on them at all times which increased the risk factor of illegal trade that was taking place in Liverpool on a regular basis. Exchanges with the French West Indies and even the

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<sup>116</sup> Keith Mercer, "Planters and Press Gangs: A Social History of Naval Impressment in Liverpool, 1759-1815", in *The Nova Scotia Planters in the Atlantic World, 1759- 1830*, ed. T. Stephen Henderson and Wendy G. Robicheau (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 2012), 215

rebellious colonies were common and lucrative, if the merchant in question had the fortitude to try.<sup>117</sup>

The merchants of Nova Scotia were a serious problem for the British during the Revolutionary period. Not only did they occupy positions of power within government, they were also heavily invested in trade of all varieties, legal, privateering, and illegal; and it was often difficult to distinguish one type of business transaction from the other. It was well known that men such as Perkins and Malachy Salter, a prominent Halifax merchant, were involved in illegal trade. Salter only avoided the noose for high treason because the authorities in London imposed a prohibition on high treason charges, something which was widely known at the time.<sup>118</sup> Perkins appears to have realized that he was going to have to at least appear loyal in order to protect his financial interests and the financial interests of the people of Liverpool, and to avoid the threat of prosecution like Salter who seems to have experienced a remarkable degree of luck on that particular front.<sup>119</sup> For merchants like Perkins and Salter, criminal activity in the form of illegal trade was probably the greatest indicator of what their true and actual sentiments towards the revolution were: outwardly actively loyal which was achieved through coercion but satisfied so long as there was profit to be made.

### **Criminal, Contingent and Continuum: The True Nature of Loyalty and Loyalism in Nova Scotia**

The nature of loyalism in Nova Scotia is often debated and as such, has no clear, single answer. The traditional notion is most closely related to the notion of active

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<sup>117</sup> Patricia Rogers, "Rebels' Property: Smuggling and Imperial [Dis]loyalty in the Anglo-American Atlantic \*," *Journal of Early American History* 2, no. 1 (2012), 34.

<sup>118</sup> Cahill, 55.

<sup>119</sup> S. Buggey, "Salter, Malachy," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed April 23, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter\\_malachy\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter_malachy_4E.html); Cahill, 69.

loyalism which is closest to the definition as presented by Calhoun but what of passive loyalism and coercive loyalism? Should they be included in the discussion of loyalism in Nova Scotia? What would a redefinition of the term 'loyalism' do to our very understanding of our identity and heritage?

English-speaking Nova Scotia is founded on the notion of the Loyalists; it is, in effect, our creation story. We were a people who fled violence and chaos in America in favour of remaining in the bosom of Mother England, G-d Save the King. It is the break in 1783 which creates the 'us' and 'them', British North America and the United States of America, and symbolizes the first step towards the creation of Canada and Canadian identity. Some Loyalists saw themselves in this light but it was by no means universal. There were those loyalists who fit this "romanticized" mold which is laid out by Rogers but that is only one part of our story.<sup>120</sup> The loyalism of Nova Scotia was passive, active, and coercive and the person of Simeon Perkins offers a true embodiment of this trifecta.

Perkins has been adopted as a true loyalist and son of Liverpool but this only tells a portion of his story and, in turn, the story of Nova Scotia. Perkins came to the province with a good head for business, a fine reputation, and a few good business connections, arguably more than most of the early English-speaking settlers. Even with his privileged lot, he recognized that there were those in his community who were not so fortunate. He made sure to not only be an active merchant, whose business success meant financial stability for the other townspeople but also a model citizen. He was heavily involved in giving back to his community, be it through the church, education, caring for the poor and orphaned in addition to dispensing justice and maintaining order in the town.

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<sup>120</sup> Rogers, 166.

Perkins and his criminal behaviour is largely glazed over by historians but this behaviour gives the greatest insight to what it meant to be a Loyalist during the American Revolution in Nova Scotia. Perkins' inclination towards crime was not because criminal acts were his standard *modus operandi* but rather his criminality was contingent on his situation. If he wanted to be economically prosperous during this time frame, he needed to be perceived as loyal to the British Crown. This was essential to his trading business as it meant that he and the town of Liverpool could gain protection from the Royal Navy which would help deter the privateers. This behaviour meets the criteria put forward by Calhoon. Simeon Perkins did not do this because he wanted to, he did this because he had to.<sup>121</sup>

In the context of the rest of Nova Scotia, neutrality was impossible; the province, and in particular, its capital, were located at the very heart of the military and colonial machine in British North America. After the Cumberland Raid, there was no other attack led by the Continental army nor does Perkins make note of any large-scale action on the part of the British to secure the province. This suggests that Americans realized there was no great rebel sympathy in the province and the British realized that they needed to tread lightly to maintain the peace.<sup>122</sup> In order to gain an understanding as to the position of Nova Scotia, we must first challenge the narrative of loyalism and break it down into its composite parts and look at our collective history during this time period through the lens of coercive loyalty. Choices were made which were not necessarily wanted but were necessary, given the time.

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<sup>121</sup> Calhoon, 235.

<sup>122</sup> After the Cumberland Raid, the British did not pursue wide spread charges against those who joined the rebellion. See Clarke, 204.

## **Chapter 3- The Economics of Loyalty: Trade and Trade Connections in Perkins' Nova Scotia, 1773- 1785**

### **Introduction**

During the early modern period, trade, both domestic and international, played an important role in the development of the North American economy. Nova Scotian farms, where most of the white inhabitants of the province lived, were able to produce some of what they required to survive (such as vegetable crops, fruits, and livestock), but staples such as sugar, flour, molasses, and salt, an essential component of the fishing industry, had to be imported from other parts of the world. In exchange for these goods, large quantities of fish and timber, products plentiful in the region, were exported to regions as far away as Europe and the West Indies. These commodities formed the foundation of the staple trade which formed the backbone of the economy of British North America well into the 20th century.

In Liverpool, merchants like Simeon Perkins engaged in trade with others in ports from around the world. As an example, Perkins' trade network extended from South America to the Mediterranean. He typically exported fish and logging products and imported West Indies goods such as molasses, rum, and other staples. Trade was a lucrative business, but it came with a series of challenges which were ever-evolving; storms and illness represented a constant threat during the Age of Sail, as did the threat of privateers, thanks to a series of wars between various European powers. For those who opted to earn their livelihood as merchants, the value of a single cargo could represent an income of over a thousand pounds. Conversely, a cargo which was lost or destroyed, or the loss of the vessel itself, had the ability to financially cripple those concerned in the venture.

As was common in the time period, trade was rarely conducted in hard currency. Instead, merchants often conducted business using a patch work of economic systems. Obligations, exchanging debt for goods, credit, dollars, and pounds sterling paid for the goods which were imported and exported, though the last two types of payment were used the most infrequently. Since payment in hand was rare, letters of introduction and a trustworthy reputation were essential in order to break into trade. This reputation also had to extend to the whole of the Atlantic world. Who a person knew was almost as important as the goods they had to trade, especially given the fact that it could take years to receive payment.<sup>123</sup>

This chapter begins with an examination of the economic model which was used in the Atlantic world, specifically how the system of formal and informal transactions functioned. It will continue with an examination of what goods were imported and exported from Liverpool by Simeon Perkins and will examine five years in greater depth in order to ascertain what factors could have positive and negative impacts on trade. This chapter continues with an examination of Perkins' trading partners during the 1770s and 1780s and will conclude with a discussion of how trade impacted the loyalty of individuals during the American Revolution.

### **The Economic System of the Atlantic World**

The economic basis of the Atlantic world was trade and had been since the days of first contact between the Indigenous Peoples of North America and European explorers. Natural resources, often harvested and produced by enslaved and indigenous peoples, were exported to all corners of the known world. While these goods

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<sup>123</sup> Perkins settled in Liverpool in 1767, after his business partnership with his father-in-law had ended because of the death of his father. Perkins was still settling debt of the defunct company in 1773. See Perkins, vol. 1, 59.

did have set prices, very little trade was conducted with actual currency. Upon examination of the diary of Simeon Perkins, we can see that he held to this particular pattern. For Perkins, very little of his business transactions involved hard currency but rather fell into two distinctive categories: formal and informal trade. As a result, the manner in which those goods were paid for varied.<sup>124</sup>

Daniel Vickers put forward the notion of formal and informal trade in his article entitled “Errors expected: the culture of credit in rural New England, 1750-1800”, in which he defined ‘formal trade’ as goods for money or other goods and ‘informal trade’ as business transactions which did not involve currency.<sup>125</sup> In application, formal transactions were instances in which goods were exchanged for money, payment in kind, credit or by applying the value of the goods being exchanged to the debt of one of the parties involved, often held by a third party.<sup>126</sup> Informal transactions were often labour, barter or favours which effectively were exchanged with the understanding that they would be repaid in kind at some point in the future.<sup>127</sup> Formal transactions were typically used for large- scale business ventures such as trading exchanges and informal were used for small- scale transactions such as labour for goods or the domestic economy.<sup>128</sup>

Keeping records of transactions is the final aspect of the model presented by Vickers. This habit was not just of financial importance but also had the potential to be legally significant. To a modern observer, keeping a record of debts is perfectly

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<sup>124</sup> For an example of an obligation, see Perkins, vol. 1, p. 55; for a cash transaction, see Perkins, vol. 1, 53.

<sup>125</sup> Daniel Vickers, “Errors expected: the culture of credit in rural New England, 1750-1800”, *The Economic History Review, New Series*, Vol. 63, No. (November, 2010), 1032-1057.

<sup>126</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 56.

<sup>127</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 120.

<sup>128</sup> Vickers, 1039.

reasonable. According to Vickers, however, there was another reason for this practice. Vickers states that in the event that an individual entered into a transaction which they did not fulfill, collection through a court of law could only be undertaken if there was a written record.<sup>129</sup> As Vickers points out,

[I]n the early modern period, many of these journals were designed principally to monitor the authors' relationships around the communities and regions in which they lived - that is, as aides-mémoires to help them keep track of their obligations. Some of the debts and credits recorded there were of the formal variety that might just as easily have been recorded in an account book or occasioned an invoice, but others were of a more informal type - gifts, favours, swaps, casual help, and the like.<sup>130</sup>

Simeon Perkins recorded both types of transactions in his diary which helps to support the claim that it was the prevalent business model during the time period and in the region. This practice allows historians and scholars to see not only what he was trading but how each individual transaction was conducted and with whom he was engaging in trade.

Formal transactions, which were dependant on the sale of the cargo before payment was made, meant that it was often several months before Perkins saw a return on his investment. Owing to this standard mode of operation, reputation was a key component in trade; people needed to know that you were an individual who could be trusted to not only keep your word but to pay your debts.<sup>131</sup> Letters of introduction were often exchanged by merchants as a means to gain access to different markets and

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<sup>129</sup> Vickers, 1033.

<sup>130</sup> Vickers, 1035.

<sup>131</sup> The Atlantic world was remarkably small in that people often knew each other or knew of each other. Failing to pay one's debt would be a black mark and make future trading endeavours almost impossible.

being known as an honest and upright merchant was necessary in order to be successful.<sup>132</sup>

For smaller transactions, the informal transactions, things like labour or use of livestock, could be exchanged for goods. As an example, it was quite common for Simeon Perkins to hire men to do logging work for him with the understanding that they could keep a portion of the lumber to either satisfy their own needs or to sell.<sup>133</sup>

Furthermore, sometimes these informal business transactions were obligations, best defined as favours, in that someone would help Perkins with one of the many odd jobs which he needed to have done and he would either assist them in turn or provide the use of tools, horses, or his sawmill. These transactions are harder to detect in his diary but the most consistent link is that they were typically described as unpaid transactions in that no wages were recorded.<sup>134</sup> Perkins had a great many of this type of transaction recorded and they were typically incoming in that he had people do more for him than he did for others. According to Vickers, the whole notion of the obligation is that they eventually balance out but this does not seem to be the case in the instance of Simeon Perkins.<sup>135</sup> This suggests that he may have been dealing in a model where work was exchanged for credit in his store as it was the one thing which he had readily available to him. We know that he was concerned with social welfare in the town and paying people in the form of store credit would be very much in line with his social attitudes.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Perkins often received letters of introduction, both from other merchants and for himself. See Perkins, vol. 2, 13; Perkins, vol. 1, 143.

<sup>133</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 70.

<sup>134</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 63.

<sup>135</sup> Vickers, 1037.

<sup>136</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 11.

Perkins used formal and informal business transactions to accumulate his fortune. He desired to be financially competent, another term coined by Daniel Vickers.<sup>137</sup> Vickers defines 'competency' as 'financially stable' or 'financially comfortable', what modern readers of history might call 'middle-class'. Financial stability was a precarious thing in the colonial period and only one instance of bad luck could destabilize this delicate balance. Financial competency allowed for a financial safety net, something which was essential during the time period. Perkins was able to attain this by being prudent in his trade and by having a diverse trading base. Perkins had enterprises in both the fishery and logging and even if a ship was lost, he still had those investments. Conversely, if fishing was poor one year, he had his logging concerns and trade to rely on.<sup>138</sup> Perkins worked hard to achieve this and once he had attained 'competency', he was unwilling to give it up.

### **The Economics of Hearth and Home**

The one area of Perkins' financial records which feature a pronounced gap is the area of the domestic economy. Even the most basic of household chores such as washing, cooking, cleaning, food preservation, in addition to the areas of farm work that traditionally fell under the purview of women such as poultry concerns and dairies, were labour intensive and it is highly unlikely that he did not have help at home, particularly before his marriage in 1775. He makes no mention of payment for domestic services rendered so who this help was precisely, is a mystery. Perkins makes no note of buying a female slave, having an indentured servant or cohabitating with anyone in the years

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<sup>137</sup> Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America", *The William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1990): 3-29.

<sup>138</sup> Perkins lists town, lumber, and fish lots amongst his possessions throughout the diary. This demonstrates that he had diversified business interests.

before his marriage which leaves several unanswered questions about this aspect of his daily life and in turn, the local economy of the town.

After his marriage, Perkins made several references to bringing in domestic help and these people consisted of both enslaved and freed people. An enslaved child named Jacob, whose name was changed to Frank, joined the household as part of the payment for a business transaction in 1777.<sup>139</sup> An enslaved couple, Anthony and Hagar, came to work for the family in December, 1783 but Perkins purchased their labour and did not buy them outright.<sup>140</sup> Perkins was a slave owner and his diary suggests that he routinely bought the labour of enslaved people, in particular for work related to his logging concerns, though he does not clearly state this practice on a consistent basis. The biggest indicator of the use of slave labour is how he records individual labourers. Perkins names certain individuals by first and last name and others just by their first name but he only ever referred to those who we know were enslaved by a first name so it follows that these individuals were enslaved as well.

There were several orphans who lived with Perkins for various lengths of time but only after he was married. Of the orphans, Perkins writes that they “came to live” at the house but makes no mention of wages or compensation which suggests that these girls and women were either working for their room and board or that their wages were recorded in his wife’s household account.<sup>141</sup> In two instances, these young women came to live with the Perkins family when Elizabeth Perkins was pregnant which suggests that while it may have been out of a sense of charity that they were brought into the household, their labour was much needed to help run a household with which

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<sup>139</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 158.

<sup>140</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 211.

<sup>141</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 140; Perkins, vol. 1, p. 268.

comprised of several adults and small children. Typically, they stayed for a short period of time, less than a year, before moving on to other communities.<sup>142</sup>

Evidence also suggests that Perkins created situations in which these other members of the household or perhaps even his wife or step-daughter, were able to earn money by working for borders and employees who lived in Perkins' house, though there is no concrete evidence of this. There are several instances in which male lodgers came to live with the family and Perkins outlined the terms of their lease in the house, specifically the price and what was included. In at least two instances, washing was not included in the fee which indicates that laundry was supplementary. It is therefore reasonable to assume that this service was negotiated separately with another member of the household.<sup>143</sup>

There was specialized help which was brought into the household when needed as well. A nurse and wet nurse were brought into the house to care for Elizabeth Perkins after a particularly difficult postpartum period during which time she developed serious complications, likely an infection, that left her very ill for 46 days but there is no mention of payment for either of these women.<sup>144</sup> In a culture of obligation and in a small, arguably close-knit town, it is reasonable to say that these two women were friendly with if not friends of Elizabeth and their help was likely a favour to the family or an act of charity, especially for the woman who came to act as a wet nurse for the baby.

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<sup>142</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 140; 169.

<sup>143</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 28.

<sup>144</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 175; Perkins, vol. 2, 176.

Perkins never gave a price for payment of the services of the local doctor or midwife, both of whose services were regularly called upon, either.<sup>145</sup> We know from the account books of colonial midwife Martha Ballard that her fees were fixed so it is reasonable to assume that this was a wide-spread practice and that the local midwife in Liverpool did the same.<sup>146</sup> It is also reasonable to assume that the services of a doctor were similarly fixed and that Perkins did not record these transactions because the service was needed and the price was not one which he felt needed to be negotiated and he simply paid the practitioner their fee for the service rendered.

The reason for such significant gaps in the entries pertaining to the household economics of Simeon Perkins relates to the early modern notion of spheres of influence. Simeon was responsible for bringing money into the household and Elizabeth was responsible for managing the household finances. In order to have a full picture of the economic situation of the Perkins family, we would need the household account book but sadly, this is a picture which will forever remain incomplete as Elizabeth Perkins' daybook has long since disappeared.<sup>147</sup> Things such as medical and midwifery care may have been recorded in Elizabeth Perkins' household accounts but this statement cannot be substantiated because of the missing documents. Both Simeon and Elizabeth were responsible for their own bookkeeping and it was truly an instance of 'never the two shall meet' so it reasonable to assume that if he recorded the even in his diary that

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<sup>145</sup> Perkins used the services of both of these professionals and never mentions payment. See Perkins, vol. 2, 174.

<sup>146</sup> Vickers, 1053.

<sup>147</sup> Cathy Stits, conversation with author, July 1, 2018.

he was the one that paid for the service if for no other reason than he was more likely to have cash in hand than his wife.<sup>148</sup>

## **Simeon Perkins in the Atlantic World**

### **Trade Goods**

Simeon Perkins likely entered the business of international trade at a very young age. As a teen, he was apprenticed to Jabez Huntington, a fellow merchant from Norwich, Connecticut.<sup>149</sup> Perkins maintained his connection with the Huntington family into adulthood by apprenticing his son Roger to Jedediah Huntington, the son of Jabez.<sup>150</sup> By the time he was in his late 20s, he was a partner in the firm of Bacchus [Backus] and Perkins though this firm was defunct by the time Perkins relocated to Liverpool for a second time.<sup>151</sup> Perkins established himself as a merchant almost immediately upon his arrival back in Liverpool in 1766, and by 1773 he had a thriving trading enterprise with over 30 trading partners all over the Atlantic world.<sup>152</sup>

Of the 533 transactions examined for this project, the top five types of goods in which Perkins dealt were: logging products, with 75 transactions; hay, with 47 transactions; fish, with 47 transactions; settling of accounts, which is how Perkins' describes repaying debt and money owed, with 42 transactions; and assorted goods, with 41 transactions. Of these five categories, assorted goods and hay were almost

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<sup>148</sup> Medical services could be paid by way of payment in kind but there is no evidence that suggests that Perkins did not pay cash for such services.

<sup>149</sup> C. Bruce Fergusson, "Perkins, Simeon," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed April 20, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perkins\\_simeon\\_5E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perkins_simeon_5E.html).

<sup>150</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 89.

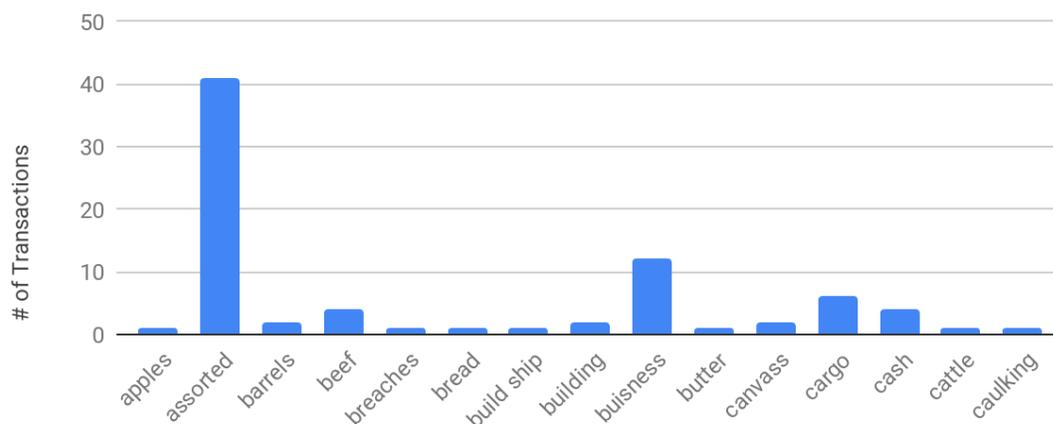
<sup>151</sup> While no date is given for the closure of the firm of Bacchus and Perkins, Perkins mentions the firm several times in his diary as he reconciles the outstanding debt of the company. Perkins was in partnership with a member of his first wife's family but it is unclear as to whether or not he was in partnership with his brother-in-law or his father-in-law. See Perkins, vol. 1, 55.

<sup>152</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, p. 1- 63.

exclusively incoming products whereas fish and logging products were goods exclusively exported. These five categories are reflective of the diverse nature of Perkins' trade and indicate he always had the potential for multiple sources of income at any given time, a crucial factor in maintaining his financial competency. This is significant because it demonstrates that he enjoyed a greater degree of economic stability than ordinary citizens because when one industry was less profitable, he had others he could rely on.

Labour, salt, and ship concerns are the sixth, seventh, and eighth most traded goods noted in Perkins' diary with 32, 31, and 31 transactions, respectively. These three things were needed in order for Perkins to make money from the first five commodities; without labour, salt, and ships, he would be unable to harvest or process the natural resources at his disposal. Tables 3.1 to 3.6 offer a breakdown of the goods imported and exported by Perkins for the period in question, arranged alphabetically.

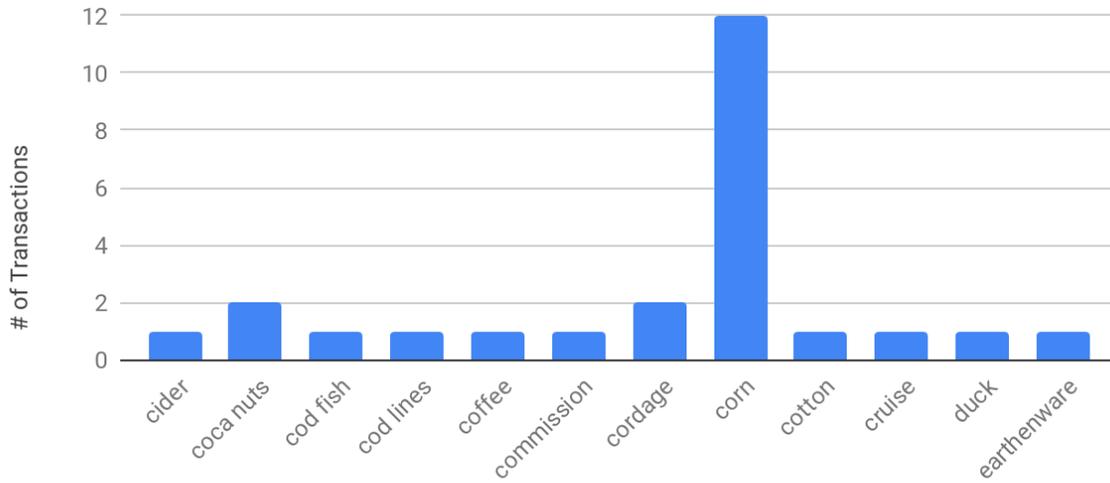
Table 3.1- Trade Goods, A- C  
1773- 1785



Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

Table 3.2- Trade Goods, C- E

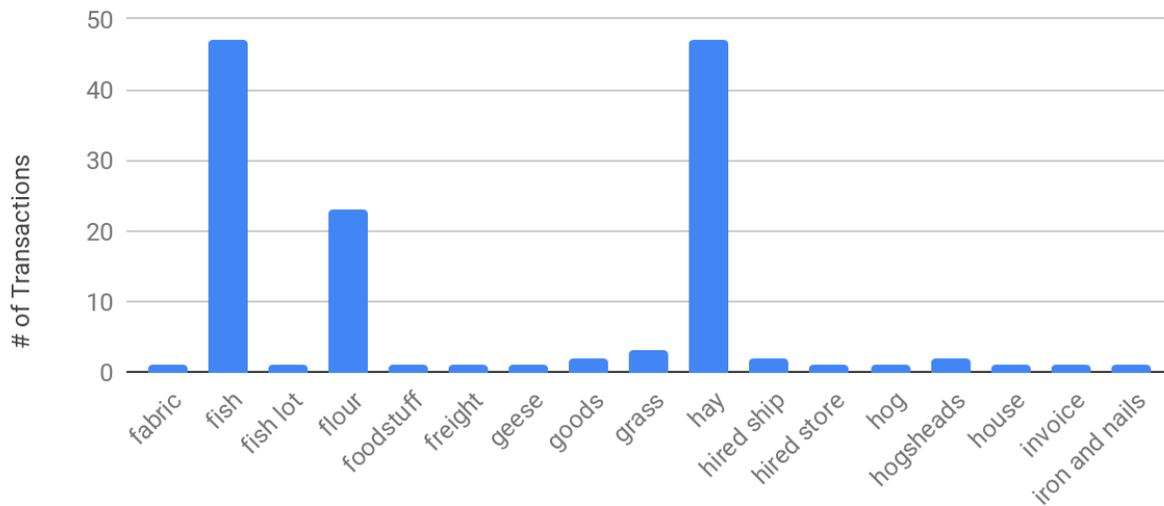
1773- 1785



Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

Table 3.3- Trade Goods, F- I

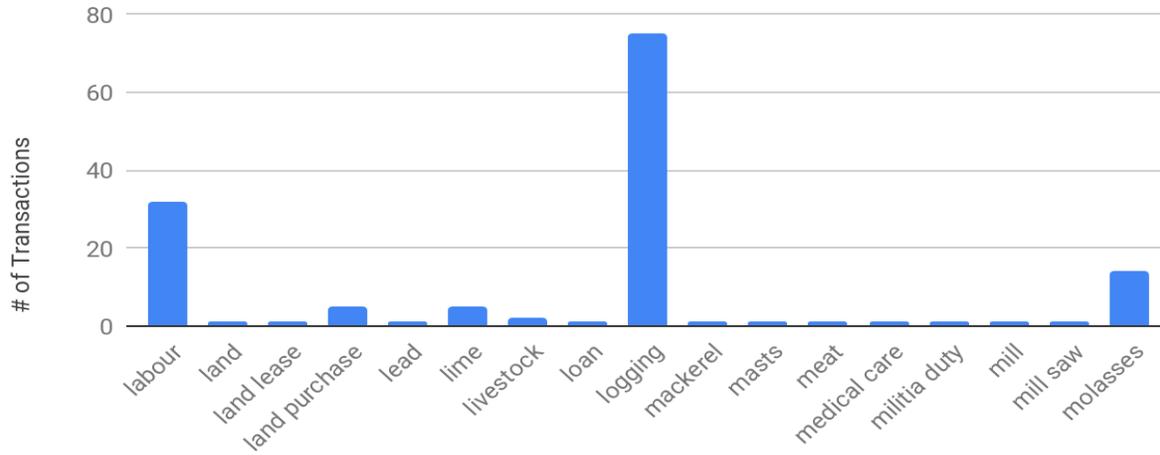
1773- 1785



Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

Table 3.4- Trade Goods, L-M

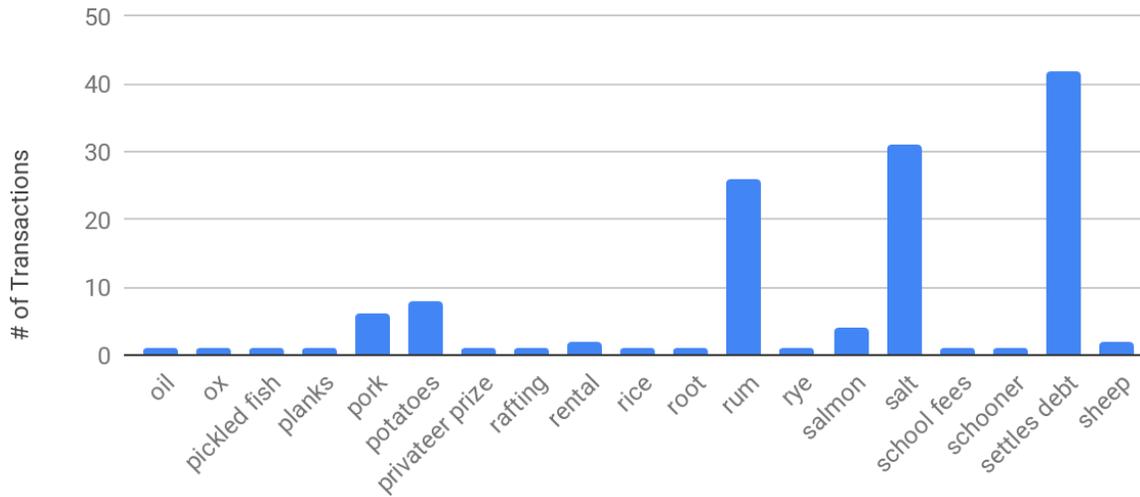
1773- 1785



Source: The Diary of Simeon Perkins

Table 3.5- Trade Goods, O-S

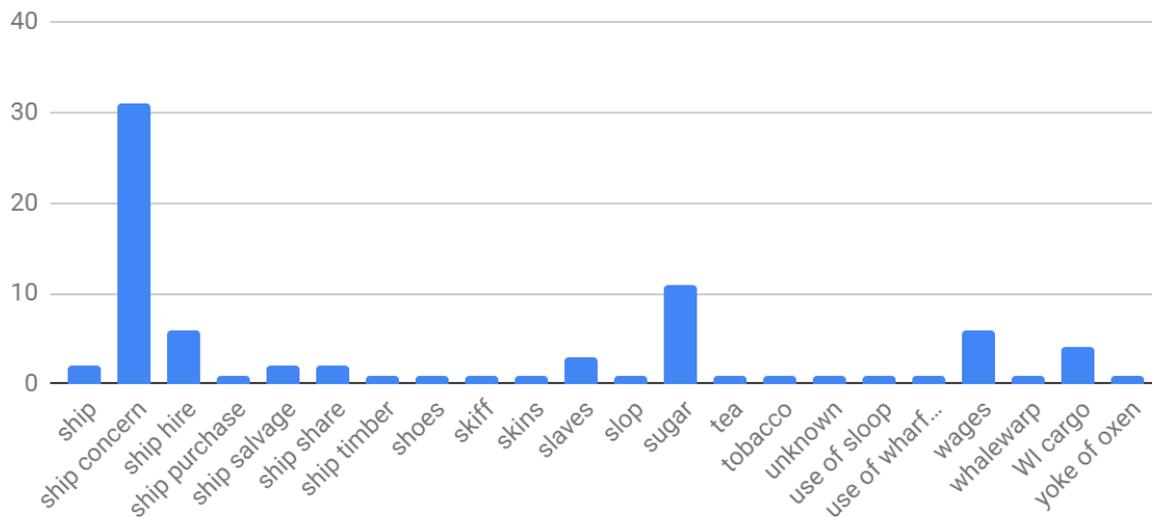
1773- 1785



Source: The Diary of Simeon Perkins

Table 3.6- Trade Goods, S- Z

1773-1785

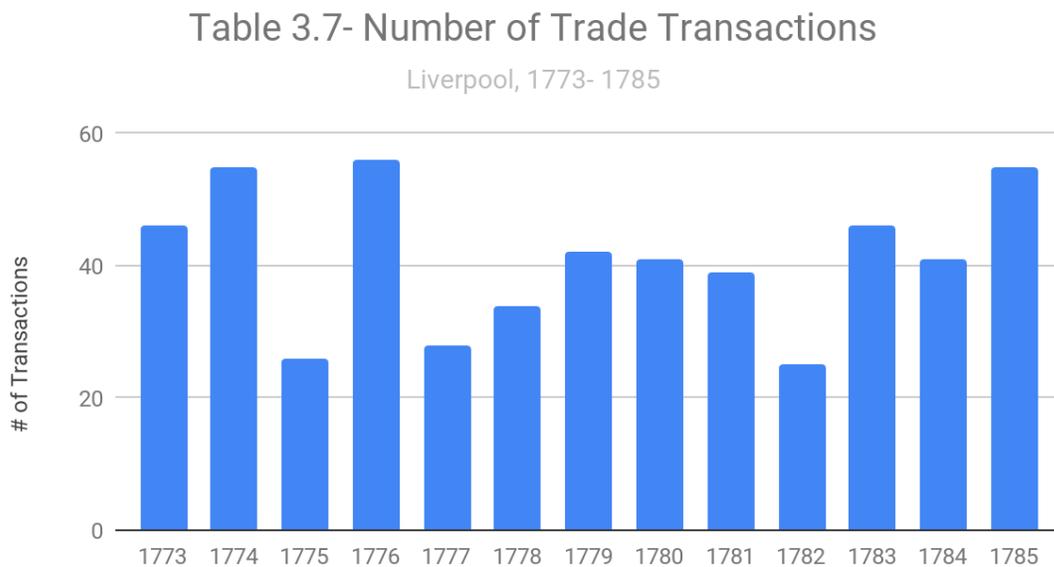


Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

From these tables, readers are able to see that there was a wide variety of goods which were imported and exported from Liverpool and that these goods were not just natural resource-based goods but West Indies goods and manufactured goods. By way of clarification, in Table 3.2, 'commission' refers to commissions paid for services rendered. In Table 3.3- 'hired ship' refers to a rented ship, 'hired store' refers to a rented storehouse, and 'invoice' refers to the payment of a shipping invoice. In Table 3.4- 'loan' refers to a loan which was issued by Perkins to another party, and in Table 3.5, 'school fees' refers to school tuition paid for Perkins' second son John, and 'settles debt' refers to a settling of accounts for a business transaction.

## Trends in Trade: Feast and Famine

Between 1773 and 1785, Perkins noted a fluctuation in the number of his trading transactions. Some of these fluctuations had readily identifiable causes but others did not. Perkins' three best years were 1774, 1776, and 1785. He counted 55 transactions in 1774, 56 in 1776, and 55 in 1785.<sup>153</sup> Perkins' worse years with regard to the overall number of transactions were 1775 and 1782 in which he recorded 26 and 25 transactions, respectively. Table 3.7 provides an examination of Perkins' trading transactions arranged by year.



*Source: The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

This variation represents an approximately 100 % difference in the number of trade transactions between Perkins' worst years and his best year. This difference begs the question of why there was such a noticeable trend in trade and what causes were at the

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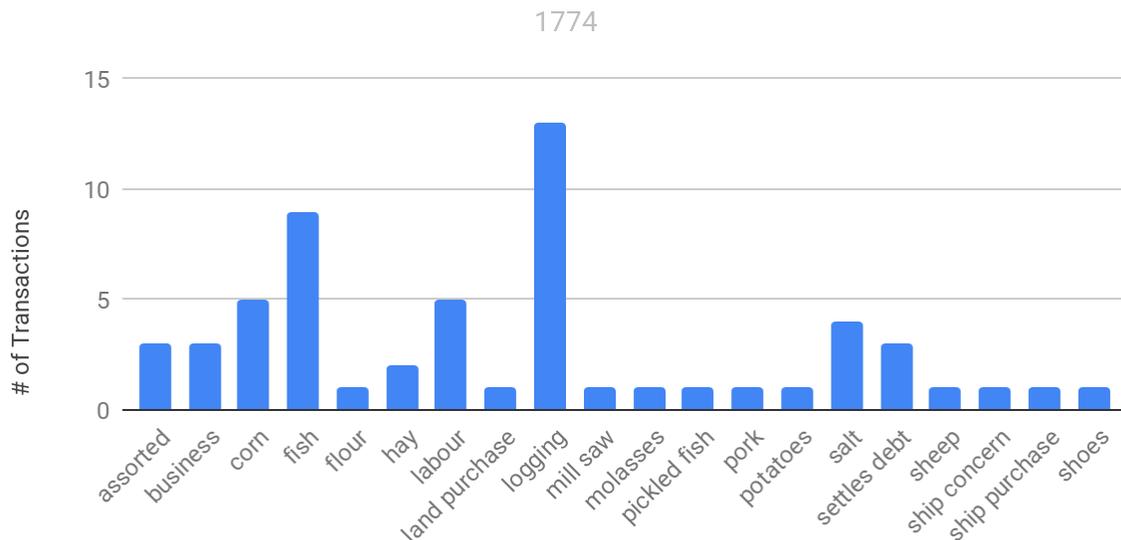
<sup>153</sup> The reason for which the number of transactions are used instead of the dollar value of the cargo is because prices fluctuated amongst the different ports in which the goods were sent and the fact that Perkins used multiple currencies such as dollars, colonial dollars, pounds sterling, and credit to conduct his transactions.

root of this variation? The following section will offer an in depth examination of each of these year, the goods which were imported and exported, and offer suggestions as to why these trends took place.

### 1774

In 1774, Perkins recorded 55 business transactions and these were dispersed over the course of the year, peaking in the summer months and into early fall. From January to March, he recorded fifteen transactions; from April to June, he recorded sixteen transactions; from July to September, he recorded twenty-one; and from October to December, he recorded five transactions. The top two products traded in this year were logging products and fish. Logging products include all wooden products produced by Perkins including boards and shingles. Table 3.8 provides a breakdown of the trade goods and the number of transactions conducted by Perkins in 1774.

Table 3.8- Perkins' Business Transactions



Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

From this data, it is evident that Perkins was dealing in a wide variety of trade goods but that his business transactions for this particular year were still heavily based on natural resources. It is also evident from diary entries that not only was he trading these goods within the province, but that he was actively trading with the other colonies as well, including a firm in Boston.

Trade with New England was very common though once the Intolerable Acts, also called the Coercive Acts, were passed by the British Parliament, things became significantly more challenging. The Coercive Acts were put in place as a response to the Boston Tea Party which took place in December, 1773.<sup>154</sup> Thanks to this particular series of four regulations, people of Massachusetts and Boston in particular, were subject to the closure of the port, the abolition of their colonial government, changes to the justice system, and the forced quartering of the British army.<sup>155</sup> Of these acts, Perkins says “[t]he Act appears to have been made in a hurry, if not in some heat, and I fear will be productive of disagreeable consequences.”<sup>156</sup> When the Boston port closed in mid- June, Perkins was still actively engaging in commerce with the firm of Doggett and Jepson, which was based in Boston, as well as merchants and sailors based out of Marblehead and Salem, both within close proximity to Boston. While the Intolerable Acts made business difficult, it was not impossible, as is evident from Perkins’ entries.<sup>157</sup> This year also represents the last full year of peace between the colonies and the metropole and the data suggests that it was a prosperous one for Perkins.

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<sup>154</sup> Taylor, 120- 123.

<sup>155</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 34- 35.

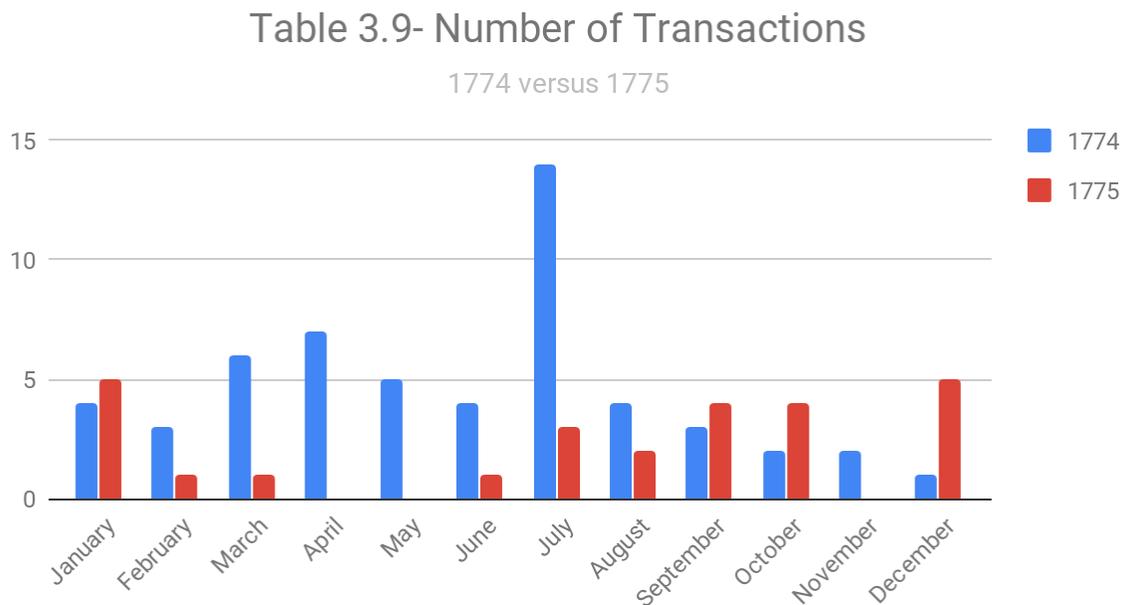
<sup>156</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 74.

<sup>157</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 76- 78.

## 1775

The year 1775 was one of the worst years for Perkins' trade and he recorded only 26 transactions. The immediate reaction to such a statistic is to conclude that his trade was impacted by the onset of the American Revolution; the first battles took place in April, 1775 at Lexington and Concord. While this may be a contributing factor to this trend, there is another reason; Perkins was not in Liverpool for almost four months.

Table 3.9 shows a comparison between the number of transactions recorded in 1774 versus the number of transactions recorded in 1775, broken down by month.



Source: The Diary of Simeon Perkins

Perkins recorded seven transactions between January and March, 1775, approximately half of what had been recorded for the same time period the year before. Perkins left for New England March 20, 1775 and did not return until late May.<sup>158</sup> As a result, he recorded a significantly lower number of trade transactions during the

<sup>158</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 93- 94.

summer, noting only six transactions between June and August, which had been his most profitable season the year before. Perkins recorded the same number of transactions between September and November of both years, eight in total, but did more business in December in 1775 than he had in 1774 with five transactions versus one transaction. It is reasonable to assume that his Summer season was less productive because of his absence from Liverpool during the Spring because Perkins simply did not have the chance to lay the groundwork for those transactions. It is equally fair to state that the early months of the American Revolution had no significant impact on Perkins' trade. By the time the Fall arrived, the number of trading transactions were unchanged from 1774. It should be noted that there is no record of any business transactions undertaken by Perkins while he was away during the Spring of 1775. Perkins stated that he recorded his 'minutes', as he calls them, in his pocket book. His ledgers did not leave the town and likely stayed in the custody of Robert Stevenson, a trusted friend and associate who had charge of his affairs while he was away.<sup>159</sup> The transcribed diary jumps from March 20th to May 29th so it is clear that Perkins did not merge the two documents when he returned to Liverpool.<sup>160</sup> Consequently, it is unknown what, if any, trade Simeon Perkins engaged in during his time in Connecticut. Furthermore, it cannot be ascertained what his thoughts were on the emerging American Revolution which is unfortunate as Norwich is only 100 miles from Boston and he no doubt heard multiple accounts of the events taking place.

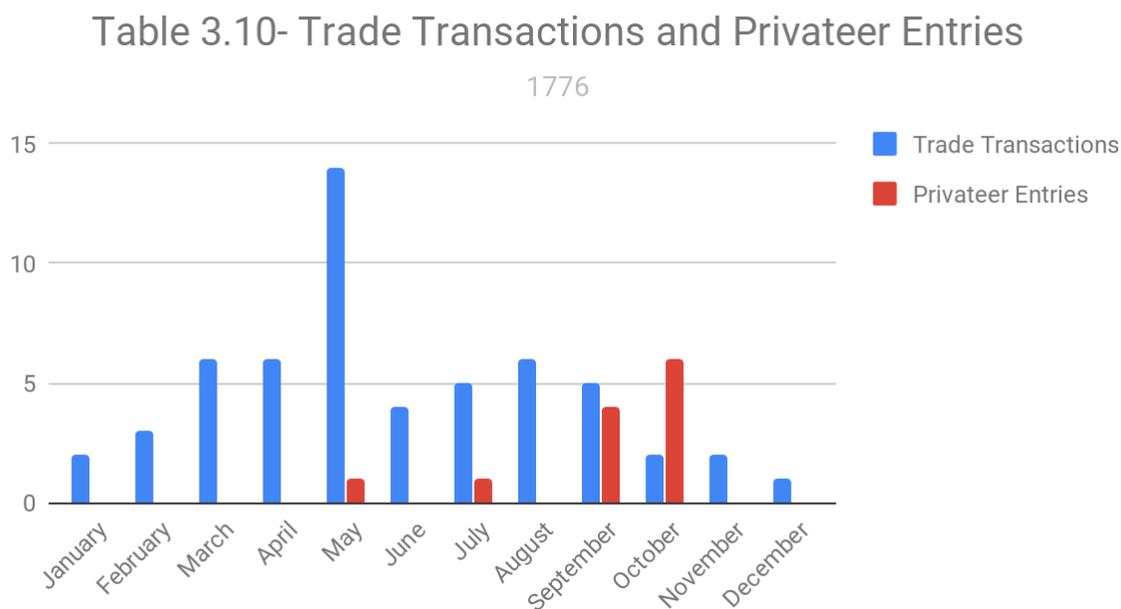
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<sup>159</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 93.

<sup>160</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 97.

## 1776

The year 1776 is without a doubt the most curious of the five under examination. Paradoxically, Perkins records his greatest number of transactions the same year that privateer raiders started to make their presence felt along the coast of Nova Scotia and began their assault on the region. By the end of 1776, Perkins had experienced five separate losses at the hands of privateers, including a ship which represented a significant financial loss, though he does not give a specific value for the *Betsey*.<sup>161</sup> Privateering began in earnest around Liverpool in the summer of 1776 and became more prevalent by September, 1776. Table 3.10 compares the number of trade transactions and the number of entries which mention privateering, arranged by month.



Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

The data shows the emergence of privateers and the initial impact that this had on the number of trade transactions. The first mention of privateers is recorded on May 19,

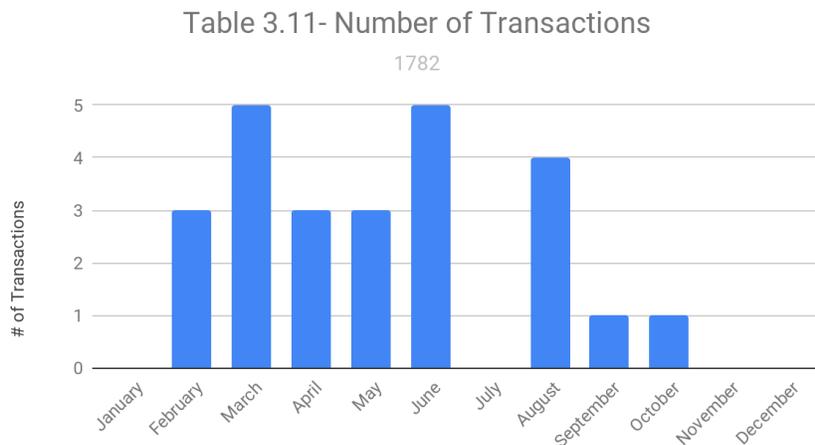
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<sup>161</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 134.

1776 and the second on July 28, 1776.<sup>162</sup> The next ten entries which relate news of privateers all record altercations in the vicinity of Liverpool. October was, by far, the worse. All six of the privateer attacks took place over a span of 18 days, beginning on October 11th and ending on October 29<sup>th</sup>; Perkins himself, lost two ships and a deck-load of hay.<sup>163</sup> There is no doubt that Simeon Perkins was starting to feel the impact of privateering in his business concerns by the end of 1776 but ironically, he does not demonstrate any animosity towards the privateers in his diary.

## 1782

The year 1782 was Perkins' worst year during the time period under examination; he made only 25 business transactions over the course of the year. However, the years immediately before and immediately after were not as financially significant; he recorded 39 transactions in 1781 and 46 in 1783.<sup>164</sup> This, therefore, suggests that 1782 was an anomaly. Table 3.11 shows the number of transactions which Perkins recorded.



*Source: The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

<sup>162</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 121.

<sup>163</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 133; Perkins, vol. 1, 135.

<sup>164</sup> The average number of transactions per year over the course of the time period under examination is 41 transactions which places 1781 and 1783 slightly below and slightly above this average.

From prior data, we can see a marked decline in the number of transactions which occurred over the course of the summer months, a time of the year which was usually much more profitable for Perkins. During the fall and early winter, Perkins did less business but in 1782, it was particularly bad compared to other years. Table 3.12 examines what exactly Perkins was importing and exporting in this particular year.

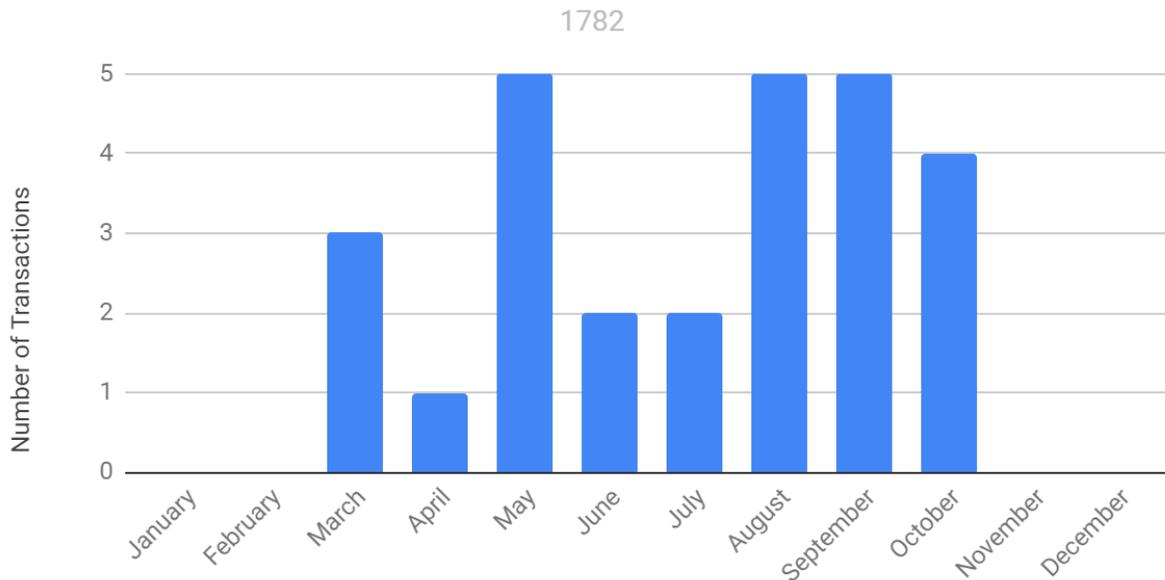


It is evident that Perkins was not importing or exporting anything of great significance in this particular year rather he was dealing primarily in common staples. Perkins and his family did experience several bouts of ill- health during the time period, but even that does not account for the marked reduction in trade. One must examine the global factors at play in order to gain an understanding of this particular year.

The last major battle of the American Revolution was fought at Yorktown in October, 1781. Perkins noted a battle between the French and British fleets off the

Delaware on October 9, 1781, though he had no specific details.<sup>165</sup> He learned of Cornwallis' surrender in December, 1781.<sup>166</sup> The Americans and the British began peace discussions soon after Yorktown but it took almost two years to settle on the terms. There was no ceasefire agreed upon which meant that Liverpool was still vulnerable to her greatest threat: American privateers. Perkins makes note of 26 interactions with privateers over the course of 1782. Table 3.13 shows a breakdown of these entries by month.

Table 3.13- Number of Privateer Incidents



Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

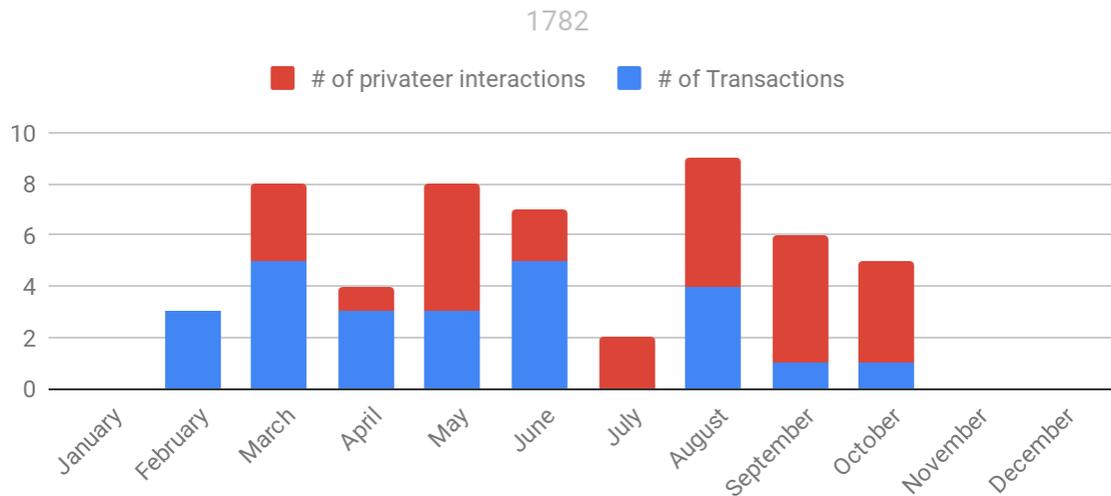
Statistically, privateers were most active between March and October. This correlates with when merchants were more active as little trade was conducted during the winter months, likely due to the unpredictable nature of the weather and the fact that the port at Liverpool partially froze on a regular basis. It is reasonable to assume that if

<sup>165</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 94.

<sup>166</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 104.

privateers wanted to capture more prizes they would be more active during times when trade was more prevalent. Table 3.14 compares the number of privateer altercations with the number of trade transactions.

Table 3.14- Number of Trade Transactions versus the Number of Privateer Interactions



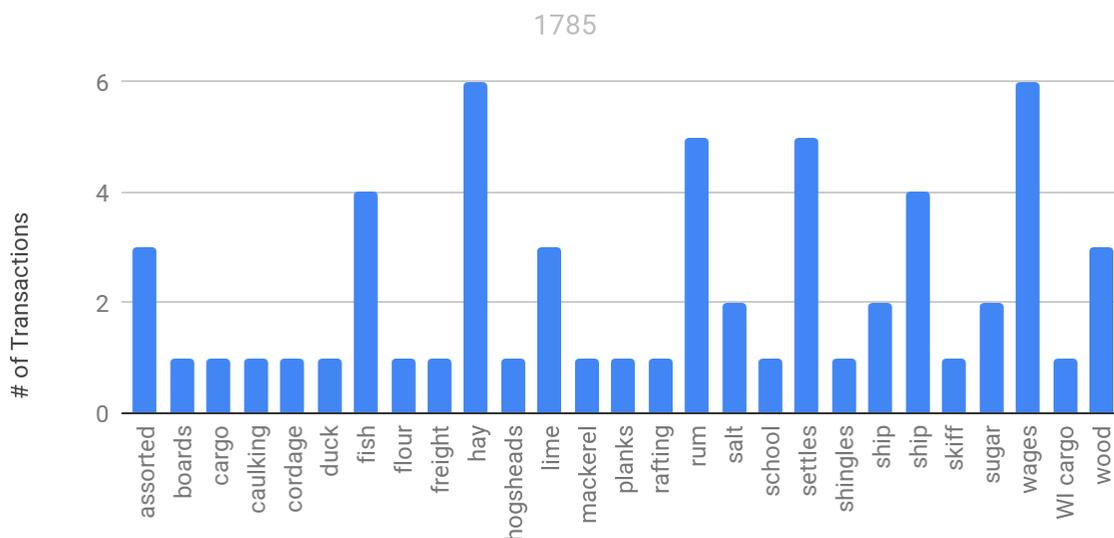
Source: The Diary of Simeon Perkins

From this table, it is evident that as instances of altercations with privateers increased, Perkins' business transactions remained low. During the month of July, Perkins did not record any business transactions, something which was highly divergent from his typical trading pattern. He typically recorded several trade transactions in this month. One can, therefore, hypothesise that Perkins did not do as much trade when there was a marked increase in privateering because he did not wish to lose ships and cargo. This year demonstrates the greatest impact which privateers had on trade in Liverpool, at least for Simeon Perkins.

## 1785

The last year to be examined in this section is 1785, Perkins' most profitable year for the time period under examination. By 1785, the war was over, peace treaties signed, and war refugees and loyalists alike were flocking to the province of Nova Scotia in hope of a better life.<sup>167</sup> The surge in Perkins' trade can well be linked to the surge in population. The communities of Port Roseway and Birchtown were founded and grew which meant that there was an increased need for trade goods. Table 3.15 shows the different types of goods in which Perkins traded as well as the overall number of transactions for 1785.

Table 3.15- Goods Imported and Exported from Liverpool



Source: The Diary of Simeon Perkins

This data shows that Perkins continued to diversify his trading imports and noted transactions involving no fewer than 27 different products and counting no more than six transactions involving any one specific good. Perkins started to deal in building goods

<sup>167</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 186; 203.

such as lime and increased the size of his merchant fleet, including the acquisition of two ships and a skiff. There was a marked shift away from natural resource based goods such as lumbering products and move towards consumer goods, which would be inline with a population influx. The post-war years, it seems, were good for Perkins' legers.

For Simeon Perkins, trade was his way of life. It represented not only his ability to provide for his family but also how he gained political power within the province. Perkins experienced an ebb and flow to his business transactions and we can see that the American Revolution did impact his business ventures, both positively, in the instances of the pre and post-war years, but also negatively in the form of privateer raids. The most inexplicable aspect of Perkins' trade during this period is that he does not record any ill-will towards those who were stealing from him during these raids and attacks, both at home and on the high seas. Evidence suggests that Perkins merely accepted these conditions as the price of doing business during the time period.

### **Socialization and Trade Relations**

Who Perkins was trading with was almost as important as the goods in which he traded. Merchants in Nova Scotia and the Atlantic world occupied a unique position in the context of colonial North America in that they regularly interacted with people from all over the region and with people from all ranks of society.<sup>168</sup> Perkins had a similar experience in Nova Scotia. As a member of the merchant class, Perkins was able to access the elites of the province who were situated in Halifax, and, as an inhabitant of Liverpool, he lived in one of the many rural communities in which most inhabitants

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<sup>168</sup> Perkins routinely engages in trade with people from all over the Atlantic world. See Perkins Vol. 1, 56; Perkins, vol. 1, 80; and Perkins, vol. 1, 99. In order, these transactions occurred between Perkins in Liverpool and Boston, Virginia, and Jamaica.

walked the very fine line between survival and financial ruin. Merchants like Perkins had access to the goods which people needed to survive and had the capital to engage in formal and informal business transactions which were depended upon by rural inhabitants.

Perkins had the opportunity to form trade relations with all racial and ethnic groups within the region. In addition to established Planter communities, he had the ability to trade with the newly arrived European inhabitants as well as the Mi'kmaq, the Acadian, and Black populations. Perkins was licensed to trade with the Mi'kmaq, though this is not something he did with any great frequency. The indigenous people of Nova Scotia are only mentioned nine times in the first two volumes of Perkins' diary, of which, five dealt directly with trade.<sup>169</sup> Neither did Perkins specifically identify Acadian trading or Black trading partners.<sup>170</sup> It is, however, important to note that Perkins relied heavily on the labour of enslaved people, be it in his personal lumber concerns or with the goods which he imported from the West Indies, so while he does not specifically trade with the Black population, this group of people were essential to Perkins' business enterprises. As a result, Perkins' client base was almost exclusively the white, English speaking inhabitants of the province. His diary offers the names of hundreds of different people with whom he engaged in commerce. Most of those listed were passing associates, people with whom Perkins engaged in traded in isolated instances or

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<sup>169</sup> Perkins was licensed to trade with the indigenous people in 1766. See C. Bruce Fergusson, "Perkins, Simeon," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003—, accessed April 20, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perkins\\_simeon\\_5E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/perkins_simeon_5E.html).

<sup>170</sup> Prior to the deportation of the Acadians, there were large French-speaking communities all along the coast of the South Shore, especially around the tip of the province. There were also a degree of inter-marriage between the French settlers and the Mi'kmaq people in the vicinity of Liverpool who hid during the deportation period. Evidence of this is largely confined to oral and family histories. See Marie Rundquist, "Finding Anne Marie: The Hidden History of Our Acadian Ancestors", available at Unama'ki College, <https://www.cbu.ca/indigenous-affairs/unamaki-college/mikmaq-resource-centre/essays/finding-anne-marie-the-hidden-history-of-our-acadian-ancestors/>, accessed January 22, 2019.

infrequently. Very few consistently engaged in trade with Perkins over the course of the time period under examination.

After a close examination of the diary, there are seven names which feature not only as repeat business associates but also in other areas of Perkins' life. Not only was Perkins trading with these men, he was interacting with them in other areas of his life, be it that they were from the same community and socialized with one another, they were part of the militia or involved in politics. These men are: Robert Stevenson; James Cochran; Thomas Cochran; William Cochran; Joseph Tinkham; Elisha Hopkins; and Malachy Salter. Not only do their lives all overlap with Simeon Perkins, they also overlap with each other. Stevenson, Tinkham, and Hopkins were all based in Liverpool and given the size of the town, they would have at least known each other if they were not business partners in their own right.<sup>171</sup> Salter and the Cochran brothers were all based in Halifax and all were members of the merchant- class which would suggest that they interacted with each other, especially given that Thomas Cochran, William Cochran, and Malachy Salter were all members of the House of Assembly, though at different times.<sup>172</sup> Importantly, Thomas Cochran represented Liverpool which gave him a connection to the town, although Perkins does not mention him ever coming to visit or stay. Figure 3.1 highlights the different ties which Perkins shared with these men under examination.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Perkins offers numerous entries in which he states that he purchased concerns in ships, both the physical ship but also ships' cargo. He rarely names the other partners in these ventures but one can speculate that it was likely that his Liverpool contacts were amongst the co-owners.

<sup>172</sup> Salter was the member for Yarmouth. See S. Buggiey, "SALTER, MALACHY," in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed July 11, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter\\_malachy\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter_malachy_4E.html).

<sup>173</sup> As an explanation, military ties signify that the men in question were all part of the Militia. 'Political ties' signifies that the man in question was a member of the House of Assembly and social ties signifies that the man in question was someone with whom Perkins was friends.

**Figure 3.1- Perkins' Connections**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Military Ties</b>	<b>Political Ties</b>	<b>Social Ties</b>	<b>Years Active</b>
R. Stevenson	Liverpool	no	yes	yes	1775- 1782
T, J &W. Cochran	Halifax	no	Yes (William and Thomas)	likely	1779- 1783
J. Tinkham	Liverpool	yes	no	yes	1775- 1783
M. Salter	Halifax/ Liverpool	no	yes	yes	1773- 74; 1777; 1780
E. Hopkins	Liverpool	yes	no	no	1773- 1783

What follows is a series of case studies on each of these men to help gain a better understanding of who they were, what was the nature of their interactions with Simeon Perkins beyond that of business associates, and how they factor into the story of loyalism in Nova Scotia during the American Revolution.

### **The Liverpool Connections**

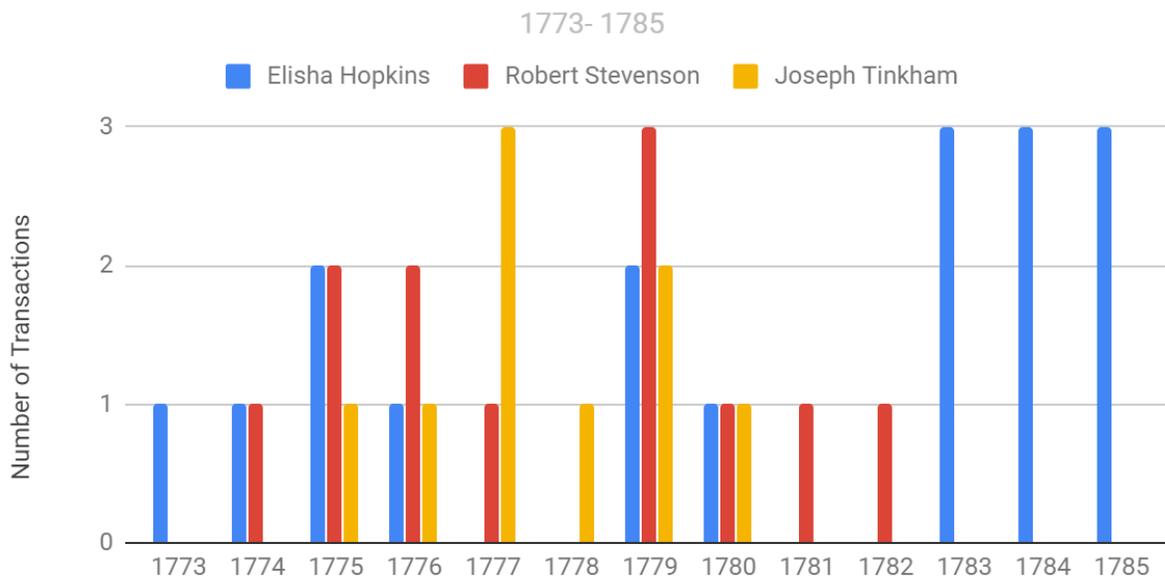
Once Perkins established himself in Nova Scotia, he only left the province twice and not after 1775. He based his businesses and home life in the town and only decamped when the business of the House of Assembly called him to Halifax which even still, was fairly infrequent as Perkins' attendance record was less than perfect and the House of Assembly typically met twice a year.<sup>174</sup> As a result, Simeon Perkins' business and social interactions which were based in Liverpool were the most stable.

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<sup>174</sup> Legislative Library of Nova Scotia, *Journal of the Legislative Assembly, 1774- 1785*. Microfilm collection, Province of Nova Scotia.

By Perkins' account, there was no great shift in the hierarchy of the town, beyond the usual shifts which were brought about by deaths in the community. From Perkins' diary, we can see that there was no influx of wealthy inhabitants over the course of the period in question. Perkins did add to his trading partner base towards the end of this time period when his step-daughter Ruth married Elkanah Freeman in 1784, effectively joining the Perkins family with another trade powerhouse in Liverpool.<sup>175</sup> Table 3.16 shows the three most significant of his Liverpool connections from the years 1773 to 1785 and the frequency in which Perkins engaged in commerce with these men.

Table 3.16- Trade Transactions, by partner and year



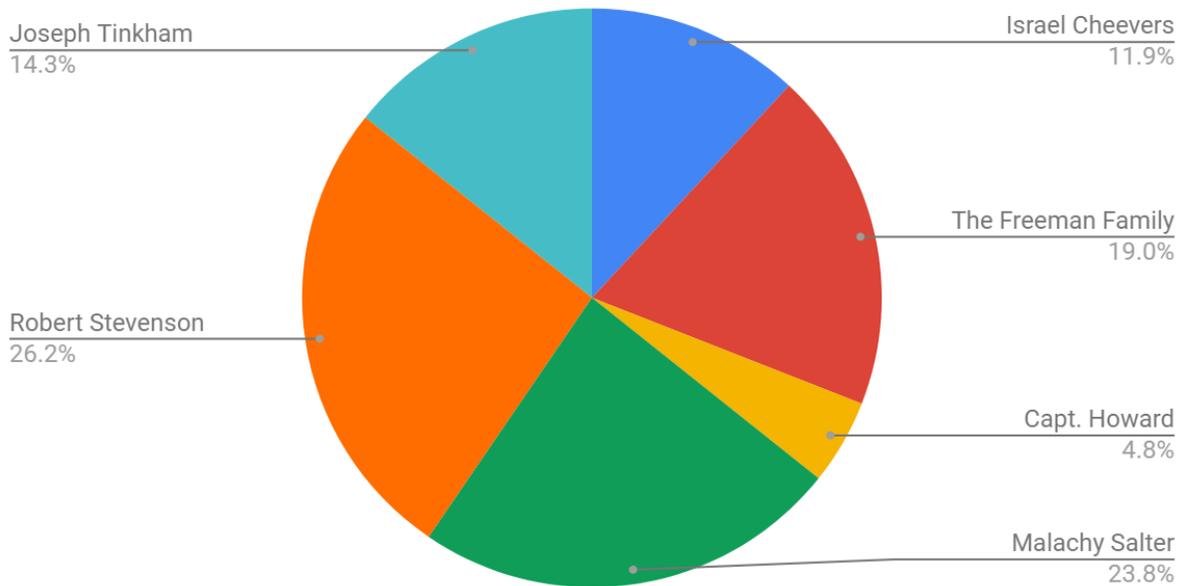
*Source: The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

From this data, a pattern in trading begins to emerge. Table 3.17 highlights the members of Perkins' social circle with which is helpful in understanding who he was trading with and who he was socialising with.

<sup>175</sup> Perkins, vol.2, 248

### Table 3.17- Perkins' Social Circle

Total Count- 42 entries: Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*



The table above mentions the previously established trading partners but also shows frequent socialisation with other members of society in Liverpool. It is unclear who Capt. Howard was, beyond a friend of Perkins, but it is possible to identify both Israel Cheevers and the Freemans' within the historical context of the town. Rev. Cheevers was the local Congregationalist minister and the Freemans' were a large family of merchants with whom Perkins was a close friend of several generations and with whom he would eventually form family ties through marriage. Unfortunately, Perkins had a habit of not identifying the men of the Freeman family by name, often listing them as 'Esq.'. This, coupled with the habit of the time period of using the same first name quite freely in families makes it very hard to identify who was who. For the purposes of this study, only Robert Stevenson, Joseph Tinkham, and Malachy Salter are used as case studies as their connections to Perkins offer the most overlap.

## Robert Stevenson

Robert Stevenson, was, by the nature of the entries recorded in Perkins' diary, one his closest friends. Stevenson was one of the proprietors of the township of Liverpool and lived his adult life in the province. We first encounter Stevenson in an entry dated June 4, 1766, and he received no fewer than 120 mentions in the first two volumes of Perkins' diary. The pair were often partners, both in business and in friendship and the above table reflects this. Stevenson's name appears as a business associate in eight of the eleven years under examination. With regards to social interactions, Stevenson is mentioned in 26% of 42 entries. This represents the largest number of interactions with one person. Their ties were so extensive that the other often went as a chaperone when his friend was courting.<sup>176</sup>

The two had no fewer than eight explicit business ventures, though it is likely that Stevenson was involved in more given that Perkins did not always state who the others 'concerned' in shipping and trading ventures were. Of the explicitly stated business concerns, we know that he co-owned the *Mermaid*, *Abigail*, and *Dolphin* and was a likely co-owner of the *Betsey*.<sup>177</sup> When Perkins left the town for his extended visit to New England in 1775, it was Stevenson whom he left in charge of his affairs in Liverpool.<sup>178</sup> Stevenson was also involved in at least two illegal trading transactions with Perkins; the pair had their respective stores searched and goods seized in 1776 under suspicion of having contraband.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 76.

<sup>177</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 78; 101; 102; vol. 2, 119,

<sup>178</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 93.

<sup>179</sup> Simeon Perkins signed the warrants for the search for contraband for both himself and Robert Stevenson on February 27, 1776; see Perkins, vol. 1, 113.

Robert Stevenson passed away January 7, 1782 after suffering a brief illness.<sup>180</sup>

When he passed, Perkins noted in his diary that "...his days are ended & his work in this world is done. He was a useful[!] member of Society & a Good Neighbour."<sup>181</sup> Given the fact that Perkins was not prone to flowery, this statement is quite high praise.

Stevenson's relationship with Perkins raises one important question: did Perkins and Stevenson share similar views with regard to the events which took place in Liverpool and the rest of the Atlantic world during the 1770s?

From Perkins' diary, we know that Stevenson was not a member of the militia, which in and of itself is significant. It suggests that Stevenson was not a Loyalist in the sense that he was not an ardent supporter of the British crown. Had this been the case, he would have joined up with Perkins and his other associates in the town. Whether or not this lack of support for the British cause equated to support of the revolutionary cause is unclear. Perkins does not indicate if Stevenson was swayed towards a particular side. The biggest indicators of Stevenson's loyalties are the facts that he did engage in illegal trade, did so more than once, and he did not join the militia. This suggests that he, like Perkins, had political allegiances which were contingent on his business interests.

### **Joseph Tinkham**

Joseph Tinkham is by far the member of Simeon Perkins' social and business circles of whom the least is known. We do know that he owned a store, a wharf, and schooners in Liverpool and was a lieutenant in the militia.<sup>182</sup> He was later appointed

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<sup>180</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 12.

<sup>181</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 109.

<sup>182</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 2.

sheriff for Queens County in 1783.<sup>183</sup> Like Perkins and Stevenson, he was involved in trade, privateering and the natural resource-based economy.<sup>184</sup> Unlike the other men linked to Liverpool, however, Tinkham did not stay long-term in the province and records show that he left in 1792 and went to Maine.<sup>185</sup>

Data from Table 3.17 and Table 3.18 shows that he had the fewest years of consistent business interactions with six transactions between 1775 and 1780. When one looks at the nature of the trade transactions, it becomes apparent that Joseph Tinkham was a relatively smaller stakeholder in the Liverpool trade. Perkins' diary states that these transactions between the two men started small; he was sent to Halifax on what appears to be a business trip for Perkins and he was paid for this labour.<sup>186</sup> He moved on to the hay trade, something which was always in demand in Liverpool, and concluded his climb up the mercantile ladder of Liverpool with being a partner in a ship hire. Tinkham, it seems, entered into an informal apprenticeship with Perkins and used Perkins' reputation to break into the trade of Nova Scotia, almost as a standing letter of introduction or a quasi-patronage relationship.

Comparatively speaking, Tinkham had more social interactions with Perkins, earning mention in 14% of the 42 entries, most of which consisted of dinner parties. Dinner parties were often comprised of those of similar social standing which indicates that the pair travelled in the same social circles; they were simply not on par with regard to business power. Given that so little is known about Joseph Tinkham, it is unclear if this is due to age and because Perkins was acting as a sort of business mentor to a

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<sup>183</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 2.

<sup>184</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 2.

<sup>185</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 2.

<sup>186</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 107.

man on the rise or if Tinkham simply lacked the capital to engage in larger scale trade. Regardless of the reasons behind the discrepancy between the number of his trade transactions and the number of his social interactions, it is clear that Tinkham did wish to play a role in the town of Liverpool and perhaps even wanted to impress Perkins.

As a minor figure in both the politics and the trade of Liverpool, Tinkham was, no doubt, heavily influenced by the other leading figures. While he did eventually go back to the United States, it is important to note that it was not until 1793, well after the American Revolution was over and as such, his departure from Liverpool could have had any number of causes and was unlikely indicative of his loyalty.<sup>187</sup>

### **Capt. Elisha Hopkins**

Capt. Elisha Hopkins is one of the earliest business partners and was often an employee of Simeon Perkins. Hopkins was, like Perkins, from New England extraction and like Perkins, is relatively well known in the history of Liverpool and as a mariner in the Atlantic world. Hopkins made his living by the sea as a ship's master, trader, and fisherman and was active in Liverpool for almost four decades. He was born to John and Rebekah Hopkins of Dartmouth, Massachusetts and his father was one of the original grantees of Liverpool. He married a woman named Sarah Dolliver who resided in Liverpool and the pair had at least eleven children. Hopkins remained an associate of Perkins' until he was lost at sea in 1807 while on a voyage back from the Carolinas.<sup>188</sup>

He traded all around the Atlantic world, from the North Atlantic, to the Caribbean, and as far away as Europe. He was often the master of choice of the Liverpool merchants, no doubt because of his experience navigating the waters of the Atlantic

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<sup>187</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 2.

<sup>188</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 5-6.

Ocean and his disregard for the dangers of his field of employment, especially once the war broke out. Perkins was no exception and clearly thought highly of Hopkins' abilities; he served as master on at least two of Perkins' ships, the *Betsey* and the *Dolphin*.<sup>189</sup> Hopkins was also not averse to bringing in trade goods of questionable legality, both in variety and point of origin. Perkins was fastidious in recording money which came in and out of his accounts and there were two transactions in which when Capt. Hopkins arrived in Liverpool with West Indies goods and no mention of having paid the requisite duty for the cargo.<sup>190</sup> Perkins also imported a load of corn from Connecticut with no mention of who it came from which again is an irregularity in his bookkeeping.<sup>191</sup>

The lives of Perkins and Hopkins intersect in three distinct ways. In addition to their business relationship, Hopkins was named by Perkins as a lieutenant in the Queens County Militia, and he was Perkins' next door neighbour.<sup>192</sup> Curiously, it is not explicitly stated if the pair socialized but Perkins does recount a few evenings out with unnamed "gentlemen" of which Hopkins would have been a likely addition to the party.<sup>193</sup> Hopkins was often absent from Liverpool due to the nature of his employment and had a large family so it is entirely reasonable to suppose that he was not able to attend these gathers because he was either needed at home or away at sea and that his absence was not a snub on the part of Perkins or other members of society in Liverpool.

Of the three men discussed in this section, Hopkins was the most dependant on the rest of the townspeople not only for his livelihood but also to watch over his family

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<sup>189</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 5-6.

<sup>190</sup> Perkins, vol.1, 121.

<sup>191</sup> Perkins, vol.1, 107.

<sup>192</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 5-6.

<sup>193</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 5-6.

while he was away. It was Hopkins, more so than the others, who had the most to lose with regard to the war. Being a sailor during this time period was inherently dangerous, not only because of the regular dangers of the trade but also thanks to the war and privateers.<sup>194</sup> If the town was attacked while he was at sea, his family would have been dependant on others for protection. Hopkins' experience most mirrors that of the loyalist population of the rest of Nova Scotia who were coerced into taking a side in the conflict. His views on the conflict were not as significant as what he needed to do to ensure the safety of his family.

### **The Halifax Connections**

Perkins' Halifax connections were similar to those in Liverpool in that they were relatively static during the time period in question; however, it is these four men who offer the greatest insight into Perkins' shifting attitudes during the revolutionary period. As archivist D.C. Harvey points out, "[t]he casual attendance of the local representatives at meetings of the legislature, which can hardly be accounted for by the difficulties of communication alone, would seem to indicate that the people of Liverpool relied more upon their business connections with Halifax."<sup>195</sup> This theory suggests that those who did business with the people of Liverpool were more important than the politicians. As an example of shrewd planning, Perkins' business connections in Halifax were either politicians or related to politicians, something which, no doubt, was advantageous.

During this time period, the House of Assembly sat, on average, twice a year, typically once in the spring and once in the late fall. This can be confirmed by the

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<sup>194</sup> Hopkins was captured by privateers on several occasions. See Perkins, vol. 2, 5-6.

<sup>195</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, vii.

journals of the House of Assembly.<sup>196</sup> According to these journals, the sessions were often marathons in which as much business as possible was conducted, six days a week as the house did not sit on Sundays.<sup>197</sup> When the House was prorogued, Perkins went back to Liverpool, usually within a day or two of the session coming to a close, if he attended in the first place.<sup>198</sup> This means that he was dependant on his contacts in Halifax to keep him apprised of the situation in the city for the majority of the year. For Perkins, having allies in Halifax was essential to ensure that the needs of the town of Liverpool and by extension, his own needs, were kept in the fore thoughts of his fellow assemblymen even when he was not in attendance. Upon examination of these four men, we are able to see that Perkins chose well. Malachy Salter and Thomas, James, and William Cochran were the four Halifax- based business men who feature most prevalently in the diary of Simeon Perkins. Salter represents a connection to the 'old money' of Halifax as he had established himself there in the earliest days of settlement.<sup>199</sup> The Cochran brothers were newer immigrants to Halifax and were heavily involved in both trade and politics and all four had ties to the political elite of the province. What follows is an examination of the lives of these men and their relationships to Simeon Perkins.

### **Malachy Salter**

Malachy Salter, a veritable business tycoon of the Atlantic world, was born in Boston in 1731. He was heavily involved in the fishery as well as international trade and

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<sup>196</sup> Legislative Library of Nova Scotia, *Journal of the Legislative Assembly, 1774- 1785*. Microfilm collection.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 104.

<sup>199</sup> See S. Buggiey, "Salter, Malachy," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed July 11, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter\\_malachy\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter_malachy_4E.html).

he had contacts as far away as London and the Caribbean. In addition to his business interests, he was a member of the Legislature, representing both Halifax and Yarmouth intermittently between 1758 and 1773.<sup>200</sup> Salter was one of the more controversial figures of the time period and interest in this man, his loyalty and the loyalty of the merchant-class has recently come under examination again.

Barry Cahill in his article, “The Treason of the Merchants: Dissent and Repression in Halifax in the Era of the American Revolution”, examines the interactions between the courts, the merchants, and what was done to assure that they remained loyal.<sup>201</sup> In a province whose domestic economy was primarily based on natural resources and trade, the merchants represented money and it was essential that those with financial means to potentially fund rebellion were kept under close watch by the authorities. When this position was coupled with the attitudes of the government, specifically under the term of Francis Legge, the degree of power enjoyed by this group of men becomes much more apparent.

Salter was in legal difficulty on several different occasions and when these situations arose, he had a tendency of decamping to Liverpool. The most serious instance took place in 1778 when he was accused of sedition.<sup>202</sup> Salter had continued to trade, even with the embargo, and engaged in what was labelled by the courts as “treasonous correspondence” with those in New England.<sup>203</sup> According to Cahill, Salter “...declared himself to be against American *independence*, but was not opposed in

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<sup>200</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 1-2.

<sup>201</sup> Barry Cahill, “The Treason of the Merchants: Dissent and Repression in Halifax in the Era of the American Revolution.” *Acadiensis* 26, no. 1 (1996): 58.

<sup>202</sup> See S. Bugey, “SALTER, MALACHY,” in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed July 11, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter\\_malachy\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter_malachy_4E.html).

<sup>203</sup> Cahill, 56; Cahill, 59.

principle to the American *rebellion*, which he saw as the continuation of political protest.”<sup>204</sup> This demonstrates the fluid attitude towards the American situation which existed in the province at the time. This theme is not explored by Cahill but it does connect with the observed contingent attitude which was held by Perkins and it is reasonable to assume that if this contingent and fluid idea was held by two prominent merchants in Nova Scotia, it was likely held by others as well. Salter ultimately escaped punishment for his allegedly ‘treasonous correspondence’ but he died in January, 1781, nine months before the Battle of Yorktown, the battle that effectively ended the war.<sup>205</sup> Sadly, there is no way of knowing how Salter would have reacted to this news and how the transition back to a peace-time economy would have impacted his attitudes and trading patterns.

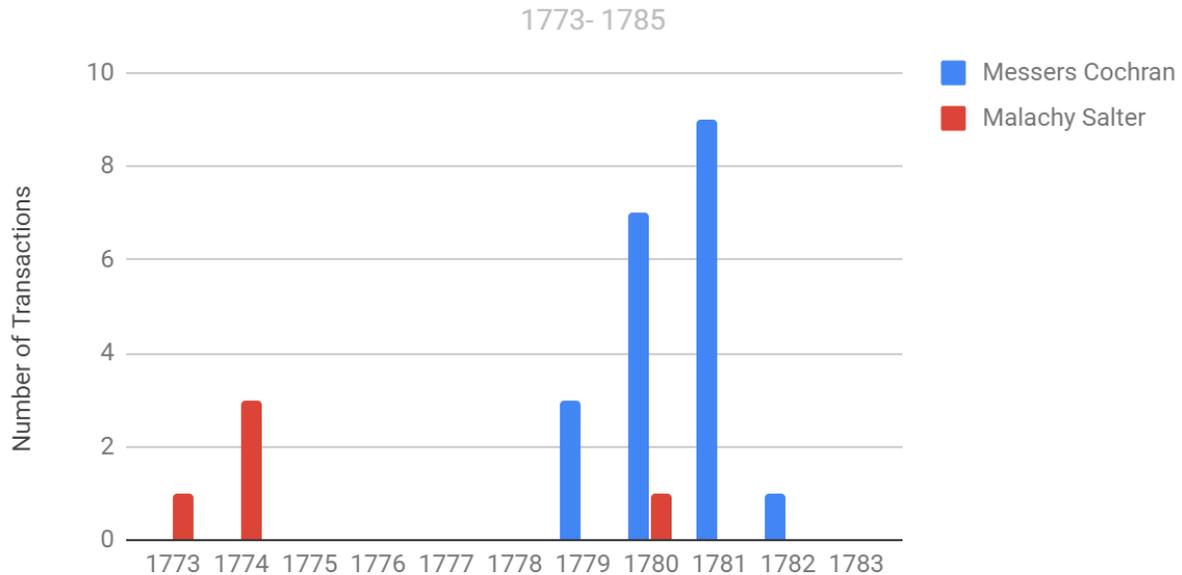
While the volume of Salter’s business transactions with Perkins is low, it is important to look at what this pair was trading and the impact which Salter had on Perkins. It is evident from examination of their social interactions that Perkins and Salter were still in occasional correspondence but they appear to not be engaging in trade after 1774. Table 3.18 shows the pattern of trading transactions between Perkins and Salter and there is a clear break in their trading pattern.

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<sup>204</sup> Cahill, 61.

<sup>205</sup> S. Buggiey, “Salter, Malachy,” in Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed July 11, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter\\_malachy\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter_malachy_4E.html).

Table 3.18- Trade with Halifax Partners



Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

Whether it was due to the fact that Salter was facing criminal charges and Perkins wanted to distance himself or to a disagreement of some sort is unclear. The aspect of this relationship which is the most confusing is that in the last letter exchanged between the pair, Salter provided Perkins with a character reference and credit for £ 100 addressed to one of the merchant firms in London with whom Salter dealt in 1780.<sup>206</sup> This letter and credit would effectively allow Perkins to expand his European trading operation which represented the possibility of a huge financial windfall for him. There is no indication in Perkins' diary which would account for such a generous gift and why Salter felt the need to do this favour for Perkins is unknown.

When Salter died in January, 1781, Perkins made no mention of his death. Their relationship was at a natural end but it was indeed a curious end. With the death of his

<sup>206</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 13.

friend, Perkins needed eyes in Halifax and the most logical choice was a trio of Irish brothers, who in their own right became leading members of Halifax society.

### **Thomas, James and William Cochran**

Without a doubt, the Cochran firm of Halifax was the single most significant trading partner for Simeon Perkins during the revolutionary period and well into the era of the Napoleonic wars. The three brothers, Thomas, James, and William Cochran came with their father Joseph from Ireland to Nova Scotia in 1761.<sup>207</sup> Upon arriving in Halifax, they set up shop close to the harbour and entered into the West Indies and European trade markets.<sup>208</sup> The bulk of the goods which were sent by the Cochran trading firm to Perkins were dry goods such as salt, sugar, flour, and linen. The first transaction with the firm is recorded on July 25, 1779.<sup>209</sup> In total, the Cochran's had at least 30 transactions with Perkins between June, 1779 and December, 1785.

Perkins likely became friendly with the Cochran brothers while on business in Halifax. Thomas Cochran was elected to the House of Assembly to represent the township of Liverpool in 1775 and as such, would have become known to Perkins at that point if he was not already acquainted with him.<sup>210</sup> Thomas Cochran went on to become the speaker of the House of Assembly in 1784 and by June 29, 1785, he was a member of the executive council.<sup>211</sup> By this point, Perkins was likely very glad for the connection as a friend in power was a friend worth having. William Cochran was, for a time, the representative of the Township of Halifax in the House of Assembly, another

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<sup>207</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 1.

<sup>208</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 1.

<sup>209</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 246.

<sup>210</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 244.

<sup>211</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 1.

useful connection for Perkins.<sup>212</sup> In short, the Cochran brothers were undoubtedly the best option for political allies and trade partners in the town of Halifax for the people of Liverpool.

Records on the Cochran brothers are curiously sparse, given the positions they occupied within the politics of Nova Scotia. It is, however, realistic to assume that they were Loyalists because of the positions which they occupied in the province.

Furthermore, Perkins' business connection with the Cochran's came at a time in which Malachy Salter was coming under greater suspicion. If Perkins was nervous of being painted as a traitor because of his association with Malachy Salter, his connections to the Cochran's would have dispelled any such notion.

### **Trade and Loyalism: Contingent Continuum**

In a time, place, and occupation where reputation was essential to success, selecting a side in the political conflict which became the American Revolution was not a matter which could be undertaken lightly. Being depicted as a Loyalist could be good for business but it was equally possible for this position to spell financial ruin, especially if you were located in a region where this was not the dominant political affiliation. While it could be hard to justify a particular standpoint on principle, it was much easier for early modern merchants to allow their individual experiences to inform their decision, for loyalism to be contingent and on a continuum; it could change and evolve over the course of time.

Of the men examined in this chapter, there is no evidence that they declared themselves to be loyal at the outset of the conflict with the thirteen American colonies. The Cochran brothers were likely the most "loyal" of this group of seven men as they

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<sup>212</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 1.

were geographically situated at the heart of loyalist Nova Scotia in Halifax and were insulated from the sentiment of the rest of the province. The family enjoyed political power, something which increased over the course of the period under examination.<sup>213</sup> Malachy Salter was the oldest of these men and this was not his first war; he had set up trade in the province during the Seven Years War, some twenty years prior. He was the one most in tune with how sentiment could swing during a conflict because he had already seen this once before in his lifetime. He was also the one with arguably the closest connection to Boston. He was born in that city and at one point, he petitioned the government to get back one of his vessels which had been seized in the port and it was with the merchants of this city that he engaged in his alleged “treasonous correspondence”.<sup>214</sup> As stated by Cahill, Malachy Salter was pro-rebellion and anti-revolution and his actions were so questionable, even at the time, as to justify the levying of criminal charges against him. From the perspective of Malachy Salter, loyalism was most assuredly contingent on experience.

For the merchants of Liverpool, their loyalism was on a continuum; it ebbed and flowed like the tides that carried their wares in and out of the town. For Joseph Tinkham, being thought at least to be a loyalist was best for his future. After the war, Tinkham came into a substantial windfall in the form of two patronage appointments from the government and it is reasonable to assume that this would never have happened if those in charge of such appointments thought him to be anything but a loyal subject.

For Elisha Hopkins, his loyalism was arguably the most contingent of all the Liverpool

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<sup>213</sup> The following letter, addressed to Thomas Cochran, confirms his position in the House of Assembly. See Letter from William Shaw, M.L.A. to Thomas Cochran, Speaker, excusing himself from attending the House, Nova Scotia House of Assembly, Nova Scotia Archives RG 5 Series A vol. 1b no. 128, accessible at <https://novascotia.ca/archives/assembly/archives.asp?ID=24>.

<sup>214</sup> Cahill, 62.

merchants with whom Perkins interacted and who survived to the end of the war.

Hopkins was, on one hand, in the militia of Queens County but on the other hand, a sailor who did business with whoever was willing to pay. He was captured and faced the wrath of the privateers on several occasions but like Perkins, he did not let his wartime experience color his post-war business opportunities. If Hopkins was a loyalist, he was not so impassioned in his views and was willing to leave the past in the past once the peace was signed.

For Simeon Perkins, his loyalism was informed by his wartime experience and it was contingent on which side was best for business. He surrounded himself with people who could be placed on any point on the continuum of loyalty, one which visibly shifted over the course of the war. Once the war was over, he was quite happy to return to the *status quo* and sought out trading opportunities all over the Atlantic world, almost as if the war had never happened. War time grudges and offences, even those so severe as privateering which had a direct and significant impact on his financial stability during the American Revolution were forgotten as soon as news of the peace reached him, so quickly in fact that his first post-war shipping transaction arrived from the new United States of America thirteen days after his last concern of the war arrived back into port.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Perkins, vol.2, 185- 187.

## Chapter 4: Privateering in Nova Scotia during the American Revolution

### Introduction

Privateering, as defined by Rogers Marsters, is the process by which merchants were licensed by the government so that they could legally attack enemy shipping, seize the ships and cargo, and sell these items for a tidy profit.<sup>216</sup> It was common for merchants to engage in privateering as a sideline to supplement their trade in addition to other forms of legal and illegal activity, shifting like the seas, as their needs changed. Legal trade was dangerous at any time; ships were lost at sea, sailors contracted diseases in distant ports and took them back on board ship, infecting their crewmates; pirates and privateers threatened cargo. All of these possibilities made having the opportunity for extra revenue a sound business practice.

Privateering was dangerous work but lucrative enough that those who had the means to put up the required bond were tempted into the industry. In North America, privateering dates back several centuries to a time when the major empires of Europe were battling for control of the Atlantic trade triangle and robbery on the high seas was common. The targets of British privateers may have changed over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries, from the Dutch, to the French, to the Spanish, and eventually to the Americans, but the objective did not change; making money was the ultimate goal of these men who obtained their letter of marque.<sup>217</sup>

Once the American Revolution forced the break in trade relations between the thirteen colonies, non-rebelling colonies, and England, trade procedures were radically

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<sup>216</sup> Roger Marsters, *Bold Privateers: Terror, Plunder and Profit on Canada's Atlantic Coast* (Halifax, N.S.: Formac, 2004), 6.

<sup>217</sup> Casey Schmitt, "Virtue in Corruption: Privateers, Smugglers, and the Shape of Empire in the Eighteenth-Century Caribbean," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 13, no. 1 (2015): 80-110.

changed. Conditions for privateering emerged for a second time in fifteen years; in fact, some of the privateers who had been in business during the Seven Years War applied for their letter of marque again.<sup>218</sup> The context in North America muddied the proverbial waters in that Britain viewed the conflict with the American colonies as a rebellion, a civil war, but the Americans took another point of view in that they were no longer part of Britain once the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776. As one would expect, privateering did not experience its revival until after that fateful day in July, 1776 and by September of that year, it was a thriving enterprise in the area surrounding Nova Scotia. Once France and Spain joined the revolutionary cause and declared war against England, privateers could legally be active from Newfoundland to the Caribbean and had the ability to destabilize the economy of a given port or region and this was something which was keenly felt by the merchants.

The merchants, who had been engaged in both legal and illegal trade, now had the opportunity to privateer as well. They had the financial means to put up the required bond in order to obtain the licence to privateer.<sup>219</sup> They had ships, access to men to sign on as crew, and the nerve required to enter into the trade. From a legal standpoint, privateering offered those who were engaged in illegal trade a means to work within the confines of the law, or at least the guise of legal business transactions, and offered one of the few means in which a town could mount a defence against American privateers

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<sup>218</sup> S. Buggey, "SALTER, MALACHY," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed October 18, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter\\_malachy\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter_malachy_4E.html).

<sup>219</sup> Privateer bonds ranged in price but were not typically below \$5000. See: Charles Henry Lincoln, *Naval Records of the American Revolution, 1775-1788* (Washington: Gov't Print. Off., 1906). See index.

and the threat of raids led by the Americans.<sup>220</sup> A town with its own privateers did not need to depend on the Royal Navy or a garrison for protection; they had the ability to protect themselves.

Within the context of Liverpool, privateering had a tremendous impact on the town and its inhabitants, financially, politically, and psychologically. Privateers and pirates, for that matter, were both examples of the economics of private violence, and given the frequency of the attacks, this violence was consistent.<sup>221</sup> The Planter town was attacked either indirectly, in that sailors and ships from Liverpool were captured, or directly, in that the town was physically under attack, multiple times. This meant that the townspeople were often apprehensive and fearful when privateers or other unknown ships were spotted in the area. As Simeon Perkins recounted,

I have heard of a Brigantine at Port- mutton, and Several Cannon having been heard there, I was Apprehensive She was a Merchant Vessel which [i]nduced me to Send my Son, & Benj. Parker to gain Intelligence they Set out this morning upon snowshoes.<sup>222</sup>

Port Mouton is approximately 18 km overland from Liverpool and this entry is dated February 26, 1780; Perkins was so desperate for information that he sent his son on an almost 40 km, round trip, through the snowy woods so that he could gain intelligence. This entry represents one instance out of the 125 sightings and direct altercations, being raids on the town and attacks towards ships, between the people of Liverpool and American privateers which Perkins recorded in his diary which took place between 1776 and 1783.

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<sup>220</sup> The citizens of Liverpool opted to outfit a privateer, the *Lucy*, in 1780 after the town had been raided on multiple occasions as the garrison which was installed in 1778 was not enough of a deterrent for the American privateers. See Perkins, vol. 1, 256.

<sup>221</sup> Bryan Mabee, "Pirates, Privateers and the Political Economy of Private Violence," *Global Change, Peace & Security* 21, no. 2 (2009): 139-52.

<sup>222</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 275.

The proximity of multiple targets in the area meant that the sounds of raids against other communities could often be heard in Liverpool. Perkins described many instances when communities, such as Port Medway and Port Mouton, were attacked and the cannons used in those raids could be heard in Liverpool. This begs the question of how privateering impacted loyalty in Liverpool during the American Revolution? Were people scared of the threat of privateer attacks? Was this fear justly founded or simply inflated gossip, founded on the fear-mongering of the press? How did people react when privateers attacked?

Before proceeding, it is important to define the terms in relation to interactions with privateers. Perkins describes two types of interactions with privateers: sightings and attacks, although he does not offer this classification. Sightings were impactful from a psychological perspective, which is why they were recorded in the first place; they served as a reminder that the American privateers were in the area and that vigilance was necessary. In short, the privateer did not have to attack the town to have their presence felt. The direct attacks were those in which men were taken and harassed or goods seized. For the purposes of this chapter, I use the term “altercation” to describe both sightings and attacks.

This chapter examines the impact of privateering on the community of Liverpool. It focuses on four specific entries from *The Diary of Simeon Perkins* that examine key dates in the discussion of privateering and how these attacks impacted loyalism within the context of Liverpool. This discussion will be followed by an examination of the psychological implications of privateering. I will then offer an examination of the actions of the provincial government of Nova Scotia, specifically by offering an analysis of how

the events of the American Revolution and by extension, privateering, were recorded in the Colonial Office papers, the minutes of the Legislative Assembly, the minutes of the Executive Council, and the military dispatches, and follow with an examination of how privateers and privateer attacks were reported in the local newspaper of the day in Halifax, *The Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*. I will conclude with a synthesis of these factors with a view of better understanding Nova Scotia's position during the American Revolution.

## **Privateering**

Privateering is a practice which dates back centuries. In fact, the language which was used in the 18th century to describe the act of privateering finds its roots in the 13th century.<sup>223</sup> This particular line of work garnered significant income for certain individuals and was beneficial to the navies of Europe as it served as a means to add to the military might of each country without having to pay for ships or crews.<sup>224</sup>

In the context of the Atlantic Ocean, it was a time-honoured tradition which dates back to the 17th century when England was at war with the Netherlands, Spain, and France to gain control over trade in the region as colonization and exploration highlighted the economic potential of the natural resources in the Americas. Each time European countries declared war against one another, privateering followed. The Seven Years War, in particular garnered significant income for those who lived in New England and the English-speakers of Nova Scotia as the French garrison at Louisburg on Cape Breton Island required significant supplies, of which the majority had to be imported by

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<sup>223</sup> David J. Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth Century* (Exeter Maritime Studies; No. 4. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1990), 20.

<sup>224</sup> Starkey, 15.

boat.<sup>225</sup> Some of the leading citizens of Halifax, such as John Mauger and Malachy Salter, who both later become major players in the politics and economy of the province, got their start in Nova Scotia thanks to privateering and questionable business dealings during this time period.<sup>226</sup>

During the American Revolution, both the British and the Americans authorized ships by way of a letter of marque to attack enemy shipping as a means to disrupt trade. The American colonies were dependant on trade and privateers were perfectly suited for this purpose, especially for the Americans who lacked a formal navy. Within the context of Liverpool, it was the root cause of significant anxiety as the threat of privateers was real and consistent. Each new ship on the horizon brought with it the possibility of violence and ruin.

Privateering was not a system of piracy, far from it. It was a highly regulated industry, under the control of the Vice- Admiralty which required not only a licence and bond, but documentation that the targeted resource, be it the cargo or the ship itself, was the property of the enemy. If the privateer could prove that the ship or goods were enemy property, they could be confiscated and taken to the closest admiralty court where the papers and cargo were examined and if everything was in order, the cargo was sold and the privateer reaped a tidy profit.<sup>227</sup> Only those goods which could be proven as having originated from an enemy port were owned by either an enemy company or an enemy national could be seized; anything else was returned to the

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<sup>225</sup> Marsters, p. 6.

<sup>226</sup> Donald F. Chard, "Mauger, Joshua," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed October 9, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mauger\\_joshua\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mauger_joshua_4E.html); S. Buggey, "Salter, Malachy," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed October 9, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter\\_malachy\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/salter_malachy_4E.html).

<sup>227</sup> Marsters, 6.

captain, sent to the owner of the ship or the owner of the cargo.<sup>228</sup> Like all policies, application of this strict process was not always followed and was not always enforced by the authorities.

Violation of these terms, as early privateers discovered, could lead to not only the confiscation of cargo, but criminal charges and being forced to pay damages to the aggrieved party. Marsters offers a particular anecdote in his book *Bold Privateers: Terror, Plunder and Profit on Canada's Atlantic Coast*, in which the captain of the privateer *Musketo*, one Matthew Pennell and his second lieutenant John Crowley, were tried and convicted of torturing members of the crew of the *Patience*, a Dutch ship with only a small portion of French cargo which they had taken during the Seven Years' War in the Caribbean.<sup>229</sup> In this instance, failure to follow the rules resulted in losing money instead of making it. This system was truly symbiotic: the Navy was able to increase their numbers while transferring the cost burden away from the Crown by allowing merchants to arm and attack the enemy. Merchants were pleased to do this as it afforded them the ability to recoup some of their financial losses brought about by the war and fight back against those who posed a threat towards their homes.

Piracy, on the other hand, was completely deregulated under maritime law and those who practiced this particular trade were liable to face criminal prosecution if they were caught. Pirates used violence to achieve their end and it is because of this that there is sometimes confusion between pirates and privateers as privateers, too, used violence to achieve their goal and privateering is effectively robbery, an inherently violent crime. Furthermore, some privateers actively broke the prescribed regulations

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<sup>228</sup> Marsters, 6.

<sup>229</sup> Marsters, 6.

related to the industry and in those instances it becomes even harder to distinguish between the two activities.

The threat of privateers was one which was readily identified by the people of Liverpool and Eyre Massey, a military officer who served in Nova Scotia during the American Revolution, as early as 1776. The provincial government received not only requests from the inhabitants for aid but also in Massey's dispatches. Massey's dispatch was sent to London and Perkins' pleas were sent to Halifax.<sup>230</sup> As a result, both levels of government were aware of the situation but it took two years for Liverpool to receive its garrison.<sup>231</sup> The people of Liverpool took several steps to protect themselves from the threat of privateers. The first action undertaken by the people of the town was recorded on March 25, 1778 when Perkins notes that a request for an armed schooner was sent to Halifax.<sup>232</sup> The request went unmet and privateer violence continued to grow. By June, townspeople took up a subscription to pay for a guard to watch over the town. Perkins also recorded in the same month that he wrote, "Our people are much [d]iscouraged, and seem to be looking out to leave the place."<sup>233</sup> It was not until November 25, 1778 that the news arrived that 50 soldiers were to be billeted in Liverpool. The men and their entourage arrived on December 13, 1778,

Capt. George Campbell, with a Detachment of the King's Orange Rangers, Commanded by Capt. John Howard, Consisting of Capt. Howard, Lit. McLeod, Lit. Stuart, Engr. Cameron, 3 [s]ergeants, 2 or 3 [c]orporeals, & 48 Privates. I believe some women & Children.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Letter from John Massey to Lord Dartmouth, dated October 6, 1776. Colonial Office Papers. Colonial Office 217, Original Correspondence- Secretary of State, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. Vol. 52, image 308- 309, October 17, 1775- November 21, 1776. PANS. MFM roll number 13859.

<sup>231</sup> Perkins, vol.1, 225.

<sup>232</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 186.

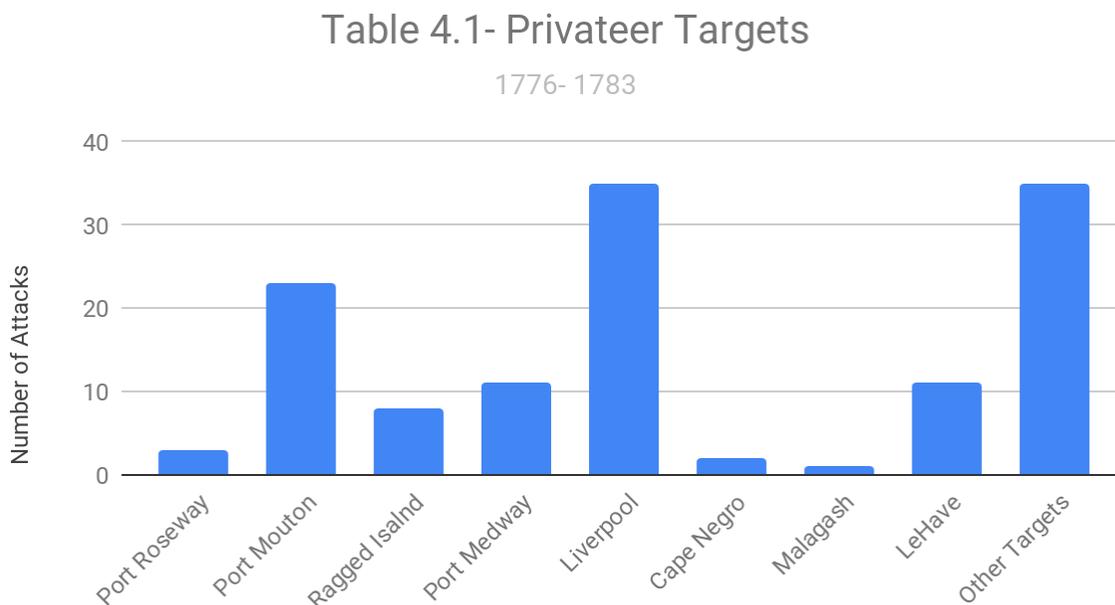
<sup>233</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 203.

<sup>234</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 225.

But were these soldiers the proverbial god-send that the citizens of Liverpool expected? Were they an effective deterrent for privateers to stay away from Liverpool? Evidence provided in Perkins' diary suggests that the soldiers may have been more trouble than they were worth, in that the soldiers stationed there often engaged in crimes which were brought before Perkins in his capacity as magistrate.<sup>235</sup> Additionally, the presence of the garrison had little impact on the instances of privateer raids in the area. Privateers, it seem, were not put off by the presence of troops in Liverpool.

### The Original Privateer Days of Liverpool

In the area of Queens County, there were 125 altercations, being attacks and privateer sightings between 1776 and 1783. Table 4.1 offers a quantitative representation of the number of privateer interactions along the South Shore of Nova Scotia.



Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

<sup>235</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 220.

From this data, we can see that the three most frequently attacked ports were the town of Liverpool, Port Mouton, and Port Medway.<sup>236</sup> These three communities are adjacent to each other; the total distance between Port Mouton to Port Medway is approximately 40 km with Liverpool situated in roughly the middle.

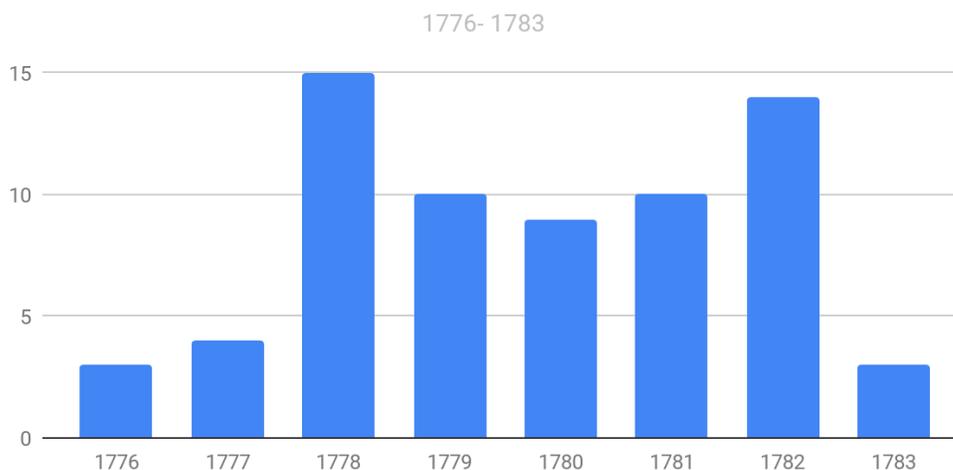
While Port Mouton and Port Medway were first established by the French in the 17th century, these communities grew significantly during the 1760s thanks to the influx of the New England Planters. These two communities and Liverpool experienced a total of 90 of the attacks and altercations documented by Perkins in his diary. To respond to the question raised in the previous section, the soldiers garrisoned at Liverpool were not a significant deterrent to privateers. In total, Perkins noted 45 entries related to privateers before the soldiers arrived and 84 entries related to privateers after the garrison was installed in December, 1778. The garrison was further reinforced in May, 1779, and yet they made no appreciable difference.<sup>237</sup> Table 4.2 shows the number of altercations which directly involved Liverpool, by year.

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<sup>236</sup> The category of “Other Targets” represents the different communities which suffered privateer raids but they were less than two, which would suggest that they were not regular targets for American privateers.

<sup>237</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 238.

Table 4.2- Number of Altercations in Liverpool Proper



Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

From this, the data shows that there was a surge in privateer action in 1778 and that there was no appreciable decline in these occurrences until 1783 when the war ended and the Treaty of Paris was signed. This immediately raises the question as to why? Why did this relatively small stretch of coastline experience such a disproportionate number of attacks and altercations? Why was this town under attack, even after a garrison was installed and reinforced with additional soldiers? What was it about this region which made it such an intense target for privateer raids?

### **Port Mouton and Port Medway: Secondary Targets**

Upon examination of a map of Nova Scotia, Port Mouton and Port Medway are both viable points of attack but why one would want to target these two sleepy coastal communities is at the crux of this discussion; why this region? Two local historians, Janet E. Mullins and Kathy Stitt, both put forward the idea that geography and the date

which the towns were founded are possible reasons as to why they were so heavily targeted by American privateers.<sup>238</sup>

Mullins, a Liverpool school-teacher, put forward her ideas in a publication of the Queens County Historical Society in 1936.<sup>239</sup> She pointed out that vessels of all sizes were used by privateers; some were large schooners or brigs but others were smaller, open vessels. In her view, this accounts for why communities like Port Mouton and Port Medway were targeted; the smaller vessels used by privateers could be used to attack coastal communities which were set on shallow water.<sup>240</sup> Liverpool, which is located on a deeper harbour, was attacked more frequently because it could be accessed by ships of all sizes, not just those with shallower draws.

Local historian Kathy Stitt points out that the privateers were likely familiar with the area. After all, Liverpool and the adjacent ports had been bustling trade hubs before the war. In her view, those communities which were established in the decade before the war were more likely to be targeted as the coastline was difficult to navigate but the captains and pilots literally knew the way.<sup>241</sup> This helps to explain why Ragged Island and Port Roseway, modern-day Lockport and Shelburne, respectively, had relatively few attacks considering their proximity to Liverpool. They had treacherous coastlines and were virtually uninhabited before the war.

Both of these theories presented withstand scrutiny and one need only examine hydrographic charts of the area to see that Port Mouton and Port Medway both sit on relatively shallow portions of the coastline and would require an experienced pilot in

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<sup>238</sup> Mullins, 7.

<sup>239</sup> Mullins, 7-8.

<sup>240</sup> Mullins, 7; Kathy Stitt, discussion with author, July 1, 2018.

<sup>241</sup> Kathy Stitt, discussion with author, July 1, 2018.

order to navigate into the port or at the very least, access to directions of sail.<sup>242</sup> Using charts produced by the Canadian Hydrographic Service (CHS), specifically charts 4211 and 4240, it is evident that there are many marine obstacles such as islands, sandbars, narrow channels, and irregular topography, all of which would limit the ability for ships to navigate into the towns, especially given that these interactions often happened at night.<sup>243</sup>

The point which Mullins fails to clarify is why one would want to attack Port Mouton and Port Medway in the first place. Both of these towns were small, so small that they do not appear on the census of the area.<sup>244</sup> They were obviously involved in sea-based industries such as fishing and trade but the land in the area was not conducive to anything beyond subsistence farming. Timber and other logging industries were also prevalent but none of these were any more lucrative than similar industries in similar communities. There was nothing distinctive about these towns yet they were attacked multiple times. Furthermore, neither town offered a geographical advantage if captured.

The data shows that Port Mouton suffered more altercations, twice as many altercations as were reported in Port Medway, though, arguably, Port Mouton was the hardest port to navigate when compared with Liverpool and Port Medway. Port Mouton is situated on a relatively exposed stretch of coastline; however, there are five islands

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<sup>242</sup> Directions of sail, maps and instructions on how to access ports, were widely produced during the early modern period. Available in multiple languages and compiled by multiple sources, they were readily available to sailors and merchants alike. See "History of Navigation: Navigation in the 18th Century", *Penobscot Maritime Museum*, available at <https://www.penobscotmarinemuseum.org/pbho-1/history-of-navigation/navigation-18th-century> Accessed October 1, 2018

<sup>243</sup> Government of Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Canadian Hydrographic Service, Chart number 4211 and 4240.

<sup>244</sup> *Census of Nova Scotia, 1767*, accessed February 10, 2018, available at <https://novascotia.ca/archives/census/returnsRG1v443.asp?ID=1>

and huge variations in water depths which protected the approach to the town.<sup>245</sup> The intriguing thing about these altercations in Ports Medway and Mouton is the difference between the number of altercations which were simply sightings and the number of altercations which resulted in a loss of property.

In total, Port Medway had ten altercations of which seven resulted in a loss of property. In Port Mouton, there were twenty altercations of which twelve resulted in a loss of property. Mathematically speaking, you had a greater chance of having your property stolen during a privateer raid in Port Medway than Port Mouton. This suggests that while Port Mouton's coastline may have protected it from privateer raids, it did not protect them from the threat of raids. Citizens had no way of knowing if a raiding vessel wanted to steal from them or if a raiding party would be happy with simply threatening them. The notion that privateers were content with simply harassing a community can be substantiated by the fact that the topography of the coast line meant that that not every ship had the ability to enter some of the port, especially those which were on shallow harbours. Some ships were structurally incapable of getting close enough and this would have been well understood by the captains of the privateers.

Ports Medway and Mouton both had harbours that would have required significant navigation to get cannons within a close enough range to even hit the town, given that the weaponry of the day was notoriously unreliable when not used at close range. Even the most sophisticated weapons used by trained artillery companies only

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<sup>245</sup> Government of Canada, Department of Fisheries and Oceans. Canadian Hydrographic Service, Map numbers 4211 and 4240.

had a range of 500 to 600 yards.<sup>246</sup> Both had privateer presence without attacks which suggests that there was some profit to be made in these two communities but the evidence also suggests that privateers were equally content to scare the residents if they were unable to physically get close enough to mount a successful raid.

This does not diminish the psychological impact on the inhabitants of these communities; they were still raided and still experienced a loss of property. There are multiple examples in Perkins' diary which recount the various abuses suffered by the sailors of the area at the hands of privateers, such as Snow Parker who was threatened with death.<sup>247</sup> Evidence suggests that while these two communities were attacked, they were not the primary target. Privateers, it seems, were content to take small prizes at Port Mouton and Port Medway and ensure that the local inhabitants were thoroughly frightened and intimidated but in reality, the real prize on the South Shore of Nova Scotia was Liverpool.

### **Why Liverpool?**

In comparison with other Planter communities, Liverpool is the one that is the least studied, which is curious given the prevalent use of the diary of Simeon Perkins; his name appears in most indexes of books written on the Atlantic world during the American Revolution and has since J.B. Brebner first published *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia* in the 1938. In her book *The Fault Lines of Empire: Political Differentiation in Massachusetts and Nova Scotia, CA. 1760- 1830*, Mancke allots half a chapter to the discussion of the Liverpool wartime experience and this represents the most recent

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<sup>246</sup> Eric Sivilich and Daniel Sivilich, "Surveying, Statistics, and Spatial Mapping: KOCOA Landscape Analysis of Eighteenth-Century Artillery Placements at Monmouth Battlefield State Park, New Jersey." *Historical Archaeology* 49, no. 2 (2015), 55.

<sup>247</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 236.

contribution to the area of study.<sup>248</sup> Mancke chose to ground her work in the discussion of politics, not revolution and as such, leaves the question of ‘why Liverpool’ unanswered and she is not alone in this.

Historians have offered a piecemeal approach to understanding the wartime experience of Liverpool and few have looked at the experience in depth beyond one or two potential causes. I argue that in order to fully understand why Liverpool was so heavily attacked, one must consider six separate elements: population; date of settlement; ethnic composition; pre-Revolutionary trading patterns; defence structures; and the location of the stores of the town. It is only when a broader approach is undertaken that we can see why this relatively small out port had such a unique wartime experience.

### **Population and Date of Settlement**

The last full census of the Province of Nova Scotia prior to the American Revolution was undertaken in 1767. Of the communities which experienced multiple privateer attacks, LaHave, Port Medway, Port Mouton, and Port Roseway do not appear in the records.<sup>249</sup> While it is known that there were settlements in those locations by 1767, it is reasonable to assume that the populations were small enough that they simply were not counted as separate entities and were likely counted in the numbers for the next largest town. Liverpool and Lunenburg both boasted thriving populations in 1767. Settled in 1753, Lunenburg’s population ballooned and by the time the census was conducted, there were 1468 inhabitants in the area representing the second largest

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<sup>248</sup> Elizabeth Mancke, *The Fault Lines of Empire Political Differentiation in Massachusetts and Nova Scotia, Ca. 1760-1830, New World in the Atlantic World* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>249</sup> *Census of Nova Scotia, 1767*, accessed February 10, 2018, available at <https://novascotia.ca/archives/census/returnsRG1v443.asp?ID=1>

community in the province.<sup>250</sup> Liverpool, settled in 1760, was home to half as many people, counting 634 people.

Both communities were settled long before the American Revolution and appeared in such publications as J.F.V DesBarres' *The Atlantic Neptune*.<sup>251</sup> It is reasonable to assume that merchants and privateers alike would have purchased one of these books or charts before setting sail. This suggests that while Lunenburg was an attractive target *vis-à-vis* goods and men which could be captured, the significantly larger population made it less attractive to privateers. One would assume, from the perspective of a privateer, that the most desirable targets were those ports which had a high volume of goods but a decreased ability to mount a defence against a raid.

### **Ethnic Composition and Place of Origin**

The question of ethnic demographics is one which has not been addressed by historians from the perspective of the privateer, though it does form the backbone of the arguments presented by Brebner in *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia*. This begs the question of if shared kinship and similar place of origin were enough to make people not want to fight, could the polar opposite also be the case? From the perspective of the privateer, could these friends and family members be viewed as traitors to the cause and as such, deserve to be harassed, robbed, and taken hostage by privateers? The events of the revolution were polarizing enough that looking to retribution or punishment as a motivating factor for privateer raids seems, on the surface, to be a reasonable train of thought.

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<sup>250</sup> *Census of Nova Scotia, 1767*, accessed February 10, 2018, available at <https://novascotia.ca/archives/census/returnsRG1v443.asp?ID=1>

<sup>251</sup> Des Barres, Joseph F. W. *Plans De La Côte Et Des Ports De L'Amérique Septentrionale, Intitulés: Le Neptune Atlantique, Exécutés, Gravés, Et Publiés Par Ordre Du Gouvernement, Pour L'usage De La Marine Royale De La Grande Bretagne, Par Joseph F. W. Desbarres*. London.

Lunenburg and the surrounding area were settled by German and French Protestants, whereas Liverpool and the communities adjacent to it were settled by New England Planters.<sup>252</sup> Lunenburg only suffered three altercations with privateers, the same number as Port Roseway which saw a surge in population only after hostilities ended. This suggests that the attacks against Liverpool, Port Medway, and Port Mouton were much more personal in nature, that there was a specific reason for attacking these three ports. If being attacked by one's former friends and neighbours was enough to push the inhabitants of Liverpool to join the British, even if the British offered very little in the way of protection from privateers, surely this would be enough for the privateers who had opted to declare their loyalty to America, to view these former brethren as traitors who deserved to be attacked for betraying their homeland and families.

Liverpool was not the lone Planter community to face attacks and the fear of attacks from privateers during the American Revolution. Historian Julian Gwyn produced a series of micro-histories on the Planter communities on the Minas Basin, focusing on Falmouth, Cornwallis, Horton and Newport townships. As coastal communities, these towns were in the same precarious position as Liverpool. In each of these instances, Gwyn highlights that

Whatever sympathy Minas Basin settlers initially felt for the revolutionary cause, they were early enough disabused of such sentiments when Yankee privateers, sometimes acting like pirate vessels terrorized communities all around the coasts of Nova Scotia.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> *Census of Nova Scotia, 1767*, accessed February 10, 2018, available at <https://novascotia.ca/archives/census/returnsRG1v443.asp?ID=1>

<sup>253</sup> Julian Gwyn, *Planter Nova Scotia, 1760-1815: Falmouth Township* (Wolfville: Kings-Hants Heritage Connection, Wolfville Historical Society, 2010), 19.

While Gwyn does not offer specific statistics with regard to privateering raids in these communities, the psychological impact was similar in that people were fearful of privateers in these ethnically similar communities.

### **Pre-revolutionary Trading Patterns**

As discussed in the previous chapter, Liverpool was a booming trade port since it was founded in 1760. Perkins lists no fewer than 450 transactions of goods being shipped in and out of the port during the time period in question.<sup>254</sup> The records kept by Perkins are generally quite detailed. He routinely recorded the ship's name, the captain, the cargo, and the port of destination. If applicable, he included the distribution of shares in the voyage, which he refers to as 'concerns', which outlined who the backers for a given voyage were. Given the typically high volume of trade goods entering and exiting the port, it follows that Liverpool would have been a well-known target.

There are two names of privateers which stand out from all the others: Capt. Cole and Capt. Leach. Most of the privateers who attacked the region were nameless but these two men are the exception. Capt. Cole's point of origin is unknown but Capt. John Leach was from Salem, Massachusetts. A man named John Leach from Salem was the bondor for several privateers who were registered to Salem and it is highly likely that this bondor and captain were one in the same.<sup>255</sup> While there is no evidence that either man traded with Perkins prior to the revolution, this does not mean that they or the crews were not familiar with the town. The fact that both men returned to the area, and not just Liverpool, suggests a degree of familiarity, especially in the instance

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<sup>254</sup> See Simeon Perkins, *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*, A Facsimile ed. Publications of the Champlain Society 29, Etc. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969).

<sup>255</sup> Charles Henry Lincoln, *Naval Records of the American Revolution, 1775-1788* (Washington: Gov't Print. Off., 1906). See index.

of Capt. Leach as he took a ship at Roseway, a much less active target and a treacherous harbour to navigate.<sup>256</sup>

## Defence Structures

During the Revolutionary period, Liverpool was defended by a mix of different military groups. Militia, regular soldiers, subscription guards, royal navy, and privateers all protected the town at various points during the 1770s and 1780s. Prior to December, 1778, Liverpool was defended entirely by militia and subscription soldiers.<sup>257</sup> Regular soldiers were not installed until December, 1778 and Perkins had to fight to keep them.<sup>258</sup> Perkins, in both his military and political capacity, was often called upon to petition the government for more aid and these appeals often fell on deaf ears.<sup>259</sup> Not only does this demonstrate that Liverpool was often in a precarious position, it highlights that it was not a defensive priority for the government for whatever reason. It also shows Perkins' dedication in securing the town, something which serves as an indicator of the changes in his attitude towards the war and his loyalism. Initially, Perkins had quite a bit of difficulty getting the men of the town and area to agree to join the militia but as the war progressed, attitudes changed. Perkins, like the men of the area, was unconcerned with the war in the early years and seems to have had a very *laissez-faire* attitude towards those who refused to join the militia.<sup>260</sup> By the time that the town was under

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<sup>256</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 159.

<sup>257</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 135.

<sup>258</sup> Perkins sent a series of letters to the government when they threatened to remove the soldiers from the town. He was eventually successful in getting to keep them but the number of raids did not diminish. See Perkins, vol. 2, 17.

<sup>259</sup> Perkins started to request an armed vessel in March, 1778. No response came from Halifax. See Perkins, vol. 1, 186.

<sup>260</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 83.

active attack by privateers, he makes no mention of having any difficulty in securing members for the militia.

The fort at Liverpool was small and often lacked essential supplies such as cannons, ammunition, guns, and supplies for the soldiers. Situated at the mouth of the Mersey River, where it empties into the harbour, ships had to be relatively close to the town for the cannons to be of any use. Geographically speaking, Liverpool was very similar to Halifax and when it is compared with that port, it becomes obvious that it is under-defended with poorly placed fortifications. Under the model of government of the time, the people of Liverpool were unable to raise tax monies to pay for civil defence which is precisely what was needed. If aid was not forthcoming from Halifax, the inhabitants of Liverpool needed to find their own solutions to this crisis. As a result, defence of the town was achieved through subscription. This process started in June, 1778, a full six months before the first soldiers arrived.<sup>261</sup>

As the raiding continued, even after the installation of the garrison, it became increasingly clearer to the inhabitants of Liverpool that the *status quo* was not enough to protect the town and as such, a group of Liverpool merchants decided to outfit a privateer. According to local historians Janet E. Mullins and Fred S. Morton, the American privateers had effectively laid down a blockade against Liverpool merchants and seamen which is why such an approach was needed.<sup>262</sup> When the *Lucy* set sail in January, 1780, the citizens of the town were effectively saying that they were willing to

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<sup>261</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 202; 225.

<sup>262</sup> Janet E. Mullins, *Liverpool Privateering: 1756 to 1815*, ed. Fred S. Morton, (Liverpool: Queens County Historical Society, 1936), 7.

fight to protect their homes and town and to try and gain back some of the money which had been plundered.<sup>263</sup>

Clearly, Halifax was disinclined to protect Liverpool. The efficiency of the soldiers sent to Liverpool seems, at best, second rate as their presence did not diminish the number of attacks from privateers. Arguably, the soldiers may well have been more useful as a reminder to the people of Liverpool that the Crown was watching than they were for the actual defence of the town. The privateers, it seems, did not fear the King's Orange Rangers or the cannons at the fort any more than they feared the people of Liverpool. Liverpool, it seems, was an easy target and privateers such as Capt. Cole and Capt. Leach were very aware of these deficiencies and used them to their advantage.

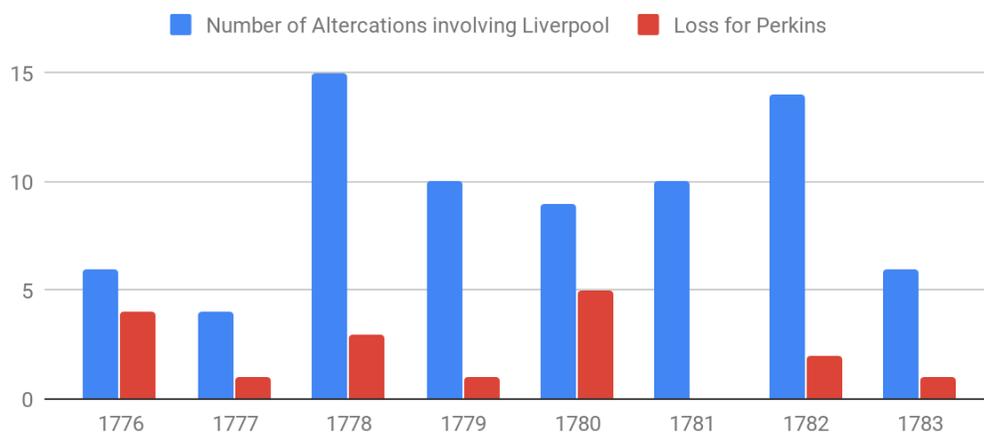
### **Why Perkins?**

Of the multitude of merchants in Liverpool, Simeon Perkins suffered a high number of losses, be it through ships or goods, though he does not offer any great detail about the losses of others. Granted, this may be because he was obviously more focused on his own losses than those of his fellow citizens but the evidence in his diary suggests that Perkins was plagued with a hefty dose of bad luck. Table 4.3 offers a comparison between the altercations involving Liverpool directly and those which resulted in a loss of property for Simeon Perkins.

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<sup>263</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 256; 271.

Table 4.3- Number of Altercations involving Liverpool versus Losses for Perkins, 1776- 1783



Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

While bad luck may have been a factor in Perkins’ losses during this time period, especially during 1776 and 1780, there is a very plausible explanation for this phenomenon. Perkins’ ‘bad luck’ can be attributed to the location of his house and wharf.

There is no map of Liverpool from the time period in question. Fortunately, a local resident recreated a map of the town in the 19th century and it is featured below. Given what was known of the development of the town through oral history, we know that Perkins’ chose a relatively isolated spot for his home, stores, and wharf and that his wharf and store were perpendicular to his house. According to local historian Cathy Stitt, the footings for the store and wharf were located approximately where the x is marked.<sup>264</sup> It is important to note that there were only a few houses between Perkins’

<sup>264</sup> Kathy Stitt, conversation with author, July 1, 2018.

house and the point to the south and east and none of the residents who did live in the area had their wharfs on that portion of the harbour.<sup>265</sup>

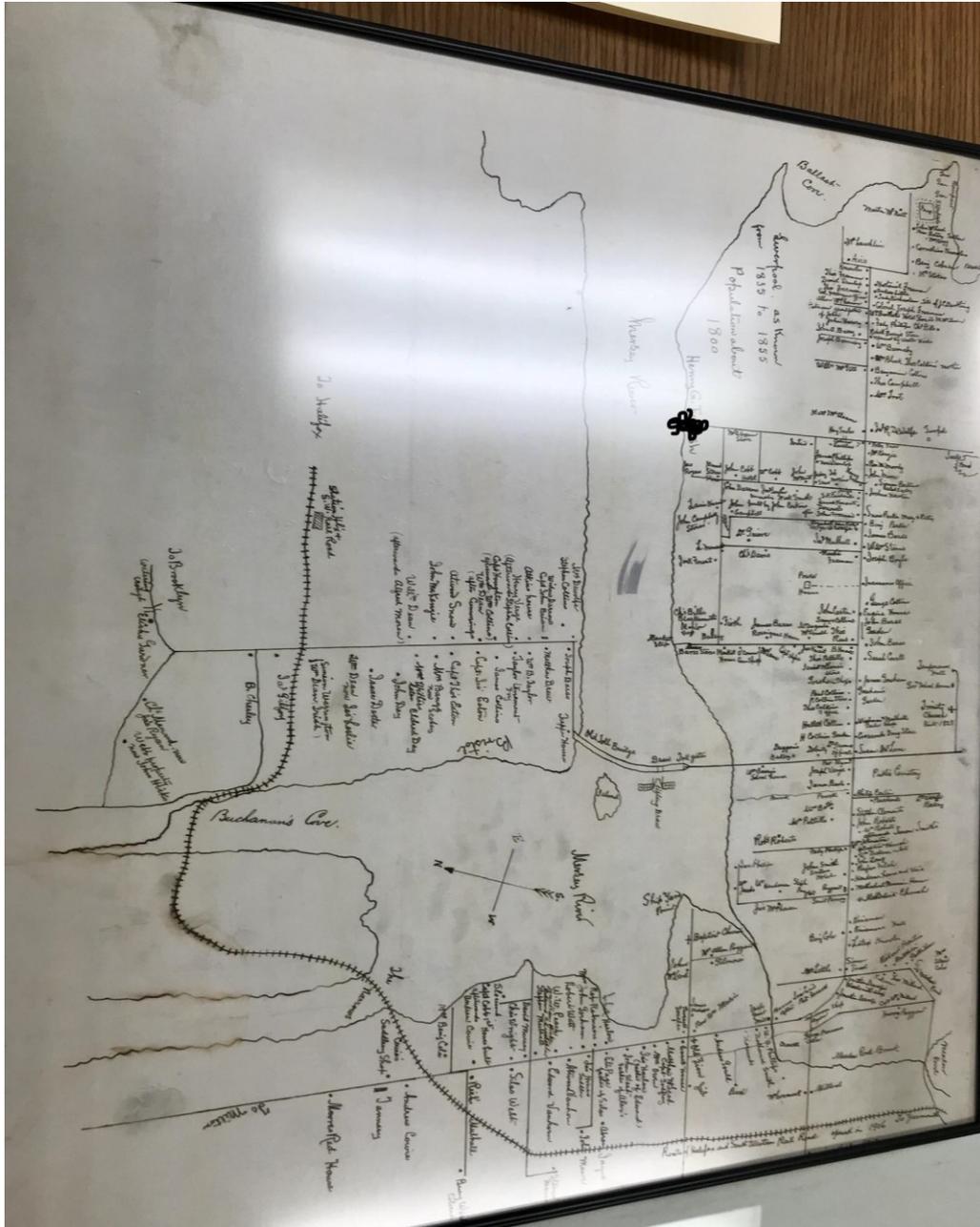


Image 4.1- Drawing of the town of Liverpool, ca. 1940.<sup>266</sup>

<sup>265</sup> Kathy Stitt, conversation with author, July 1, 2018.

<sup>266</sup> Dr. H. Farish, "Hand Dawn Map of Liverpool, circa. 1800" drawn circa. 1940. Property of the Queens County Museum, used with permission.

In short, Perkins had his stores and wares raided so many times because his were the first which a privateer would happen upon after entering Liverpool Harbour. Perkins' success as a merchant would have been well-known in the town and abroad. As a result, his stores would have been a lucrative target for privateers familiar with Liverpool.

The lone period hydrographic chart which exists of Liverpool Harbour, produced by the Royal Navy in the 1770s is featured below.<sup>267</sup>

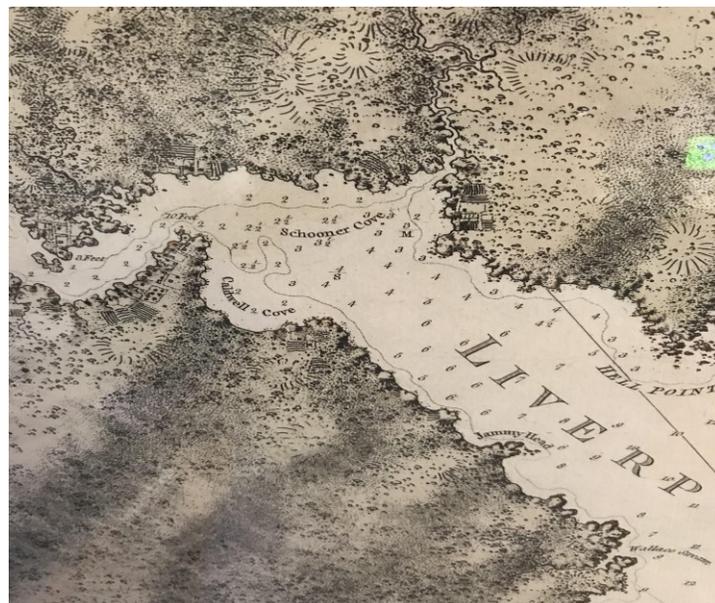


Image 4.2- Hydrographic chart of Liverpool, ca. 1770

This map shows that Perkins' store was situated on a section of waterfront which was approximately two fathoms deep, roughly 12 feet, located to the extreme left of the above image, just as the harbour narrows. This means that most vessels would have had very little difficulty accessing the property of Simeon Perkins, something which was

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<sup>267</sup> Joseph F. W. Des Barres, *Liverpool Harbour*, Royal Navy, circa. 1770.

highly desirable for a trade merchant but a definite disadvantage when being raided by privateers on a regular basis.

Liverpool was a target repeatedly by privateers over the course of the American Revolution. As is stated in Perkins' diary, the perpetrators of these acts of theft and violence were, on occasion, known to the townspeople. The harbour was well known by the captains and crews who likely now sailed under the letter of marque instead of coming to trade and the question of if the raids against the town of Liverpool were facilitated by an inside contact is one which is possible, though if this was the case, those involved were quite careful to hide any connection or collusion. The military forces sent to protect the town were mediocre, at best, which did not inspire confidence in those who lived through the experience. This, again, raises the question of how this wartime experience impacted the people of Liverpool? How was loyalty influenced by these events?

### **Loyalism: An Examination of Events**

From the data, we can see that the two most significant years for privateer activity were 1778 and 1782 with 27 and 25 entries related to the topic recorded in the diary of Simeon Perkins, respectively. Of these, there were 14 for each year which related specifically to the town of Liverpool proper. In 1778, seven of these 14 altercations resulted in the loss of property and nine of 14 resulted in property loss in 1782. When property losses occurred, the items stolen were varied. Perkins recorded losses which included everything from ships to bed ticking. From the diary, it is clear that the privateers were indifferent to what they stole, as long as they could sell it for a

profit.<sup>268</sup> There are four privateer interactions which, I argue, are more significant to the discussion of loyalty within the context of Liverpool. These are the attacks which took place on October 16, 1776, October 12, 1778, September 25, 1779, and September 13, 1780. What follows is a closer examination of the events which took place on these four days, their significance, and a discussion of how they impacted the continuum of loyalism in Liverpool.

### **October 16, 1776**

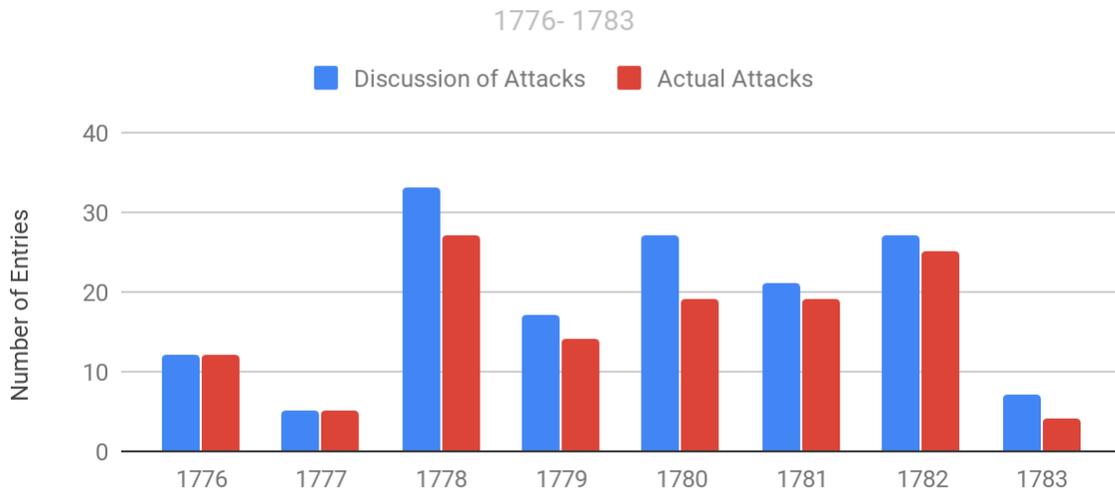
The American Revolution was good for the ledgers of Simeon Perkins. He recorded his best business year between 1773 and 1783, in 1776 with a whopping 71 business transactions, importing and exporting no fewer than 25 different types of goods. It is difficult to ascertain the total value of these goods as Perkins did not consistently record what he paid and what he charged for any given product. Transactions were also conducted in different currencies in that Perkins may use dollars to purchase goods but then sell those goods for funds in a different currency owing to the location of the point of sale. From those transactions where amounts are listed, we can see that he made at least £ 250.

The year 1776 also represents when Perkins begins to take note of privateers. In 1776, there were 12 entries which mentioned privateers. This is also the same number of privateer interactions which suggests that beyond the attacks themselves, people were not yet discussing privateers on a regular basis. Table 4.4 offers a comparison of the discussion of privateer attacks versus the number of actual attacks.

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<sup>268</sup> Perkins made several entries about what was taken by privateers. See Perkins, vol. 1, 210; 236; vol. 2, 152.

Table 4.4- Discussion of Privateer Attacks versus Actual Attacks



Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

From this data, it is evident that the discussion of privateers was not exaggerated. They were discussed only slightly more frequently than the actual number of attacks.

On October 16, Perkins suffered the theft of one of his ships which was stolen by privateers while being loaded. The *Betsey* had an estimated £ 110 worth of boards, staves, and fish on board, not counting the value of the ship itself.<sup>269</sup> For Perkins, this represented his fourth privateer loss and he penned the following entry as an expression of his frustration,

This is the fourth loss I have met with by my countrymen, and are altogether so heavy upon me I do not know how to go on with much more business, especially as every kind of property is so uncertain, and no protection afforded as yet, from Government.<sup>270</sup>

This particular entry is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it shows that Perkins does not yet distinguish himself from the Americans who are perpetrating the attacks as he

<sup>269</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 134.

<sup>270</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 134.

refers to them as 'his countrymen'. Secondly, we see that the government has yet to act on the fact that the out ports are under fairly regular attack. Liverpool, because of its demographics, was already under suspicion on the part of the government.<sup>271</sup> Thirdly, the tone of the entry, which is uncommonly passionate for Perkins, shows the impact that these raids are having on the merchants and inhabitants of Liverpool; he is fearful for his business interests and frustrated that there is no help from the government.

### **October 12, 1778**

By October, 1778, the American Revolution was three and a half years old and there was no end in sight. France had joined the war as an ally of the Americans with the Treaty of Versailles, signed seven months prior and the tone in Liverpool was starting to become desperate. The town and its inhabitants had come under threat 41 times, with 24 events taking place in 1778 alone. Six of these attacks directly impacted the financial interests of Simeon Perkins directly and represent the loss of two ships in which Perkins was invested.<sup>272</sup> The entry of October 12, 1778 unearths a connection between Perkins and one of the reasons which contributed to why Nova Scotia chose not to join the revolution. This particular entry is quite short, "Cold. Wind N.E. we hear of two privateer whale Boats for some days about the mouth of the Harbour. They are Cape Codmen & Known to many People here."<sup>273</sup> Privateer attacks were now being perpetrated by friends and acquaintances which, no doubt, caused the inhabitants of Liverpool to reflect on who they called a friend and who they called a foe.

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<sup>271</sup> Barry Cahill, "The Treason of the Merchants: Dissent and Repression in Halifax in the Era of the American Revolution." *Acadiensis* 26, no. 1 (1996): 58.

<sup>272</sup> Of these two ships, one was under salvage contract to Perkins and the other was a ship which Perkins' had jointly chartered and was loaded with rum; See

<sup>273</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 218.

During the early days of the study of Nova Scotia during the American Revolutionary period, historian J.B. Brebner, a veritable powerhouse in the field, published his book *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia* in 1938. For decades this was a foundational text in the study of the Atlantic world and one of the arguments which Brebner posed and which remained widely accepted well into the mid-20th century was that Nova Scotians remained neutral because they did not wish to fight against their families which had remained in New England, a theory called the 'shared kinship' argument.<sup>274</sup> While Brebner has, in recent years, been mostly refuted, the shared kinship argument should be re-examined but not in the sense which Brebner originally proposed; family connections could drive people to neutrality but family betrayal could equally push an individual towards loyalism.

Family connections were important for the people of the early modern period, just as they are now. Perkins maintained his ties with his family members in his home community of Norwich, Connecticut, in particular, his father, during his lifetime, and his brothers, Jabez and Hezekiah. Jabez and Hezekiah were both in trade, like their brother, and both were in trouble with the Crown on at least one occasion; Jabez, in fact, lost some toes while he was imprisoned in New York.<sup>275</sup> Not much is known about either of these men but the fact that Perkins maintained an active correspondence and sent supplies while Jabez was in jail shows that he was concerned with their wellbeing

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<sup>274</sup> John Bartlet Brebner, *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia: A Marginal Colony during the Revolutionary Years*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969).

<sup>275</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 189.

enough to disregard the fact that he was not supposed to be corresponding with them in the first place.<sup>276</sup> For Perkins, the expression ‘family first’ seems to apply.

For New Englanders, communities were tightly-knit. Perkins, as an example, is quick to offer assistance to his neighbours and friends be it taking in an orphan or making sure the sick were provided for.<sup>277</sup> This attitude was an integral part of the community values of Liverpool during the 18th century. To turn his back on either his family or community would have been unthinkable for Perkins which is what makes the attack of these Cape Codmen who were “known to many” such an affront to the social order of the time period. These men who was attacking the very people who were his friends, who likely attended the same church, who may have been family in the literal sense of the word, was threatening their community.

### **September 25, 1779**

The entry dated September 25, 1779, is not very long, four sentences in total. It speaks of an “extraordinary pleasant day” when nine men arrived from Salem, Massachusetts with quite a detailed story to explain how they came to be in Nova Scotia. It is the last line of this entry which is the most significant to the discussion at hand; “they appear all loyal subjects.”<sup>278</sup> This represents the first time Perkins makes a distinction as someone being a “loyal subject”. By this point in the chronology of the diary, Perkins had his stores raided several times. He has seen the town come under threat, witnessed the installation of troops in the town of Liverpool, and the construction

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<sup>276</sup> All correspondence between those who lived in Nova Scotia and those who lived in the rebellion colonies was forbidden in 1775. See Perkins, vol. 1, 98,

<sup>277</sup> Polly Plaiceway was the orphaned daughter of one of Perkins’ neighbours who came to live with the family for several months. Whenever smallpox was present in Liverpool, Perkins always paid visits to the afflicted to make sure they were well provided for. See Perkins, vol. 1, 140; 119.

<sup>278</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 254.

of a rudimentary block house which was used to protect the town. For Perkins, the loyalty of Liverpool was not something which was open to debate. For Perkins, the line between “us” and “them” had been firmly drawn.

While on the surface, this may seem a trivial distinction in reality, it is the first step towards the break between the United States and the British Empire, at least from the perspective of the inhabitants of Liverpool. This break is significant because it marks the first step in the chain of events that would spur the sentiment of Confederation in Nova Scotia. The very notion of ‘Canadians’ and ‘Americans’ is one which causes no small amount of confusion given the fact that we share language, culture and history, but we are different and it is entries like this which mark the point when we diverged.

### **September 13, 1780**

The entry in the Perkins diary dated September 13, 1780 is, by far, the longest written in the first two volumes of the collection, over two pages once transcribed. This particular entry covers what is arguably the most significant day for the people of Liverpool during the American Revolution; the day which Liverpool was nearly captured by American privateers.

The entry starts with Perkins recounting that he was awoken around 3 or 4 am and that the fort had been taken. The exact number of enemy men thought to be in the town was around 500 and the citizens were effectively ready to surrender. Perkins kept his wits about him and very wisely decided to wait until daylight to ascertain the exact nature of the crisis. This was a very fortunate choice for Perkins because in reality, there were two ships in the harbour and about 80 men. Perkins, enheartened by this news, mobilized the militia and put forward terms and a truce was eventually negotiated

which resulted in no loss of property and no loss of life amongst the people of Liverpool.<sup>279</sup>

Curiously, after this stand, there were still 18 altercations with privateers between September, 1780 and May, 1783, which resulted in a loss of property for the merchants and sailors of Liverpool. Even with this impressive stand, the people of Liverpool were not immune from further harassment, though none of these subsequent attacks were in Liverpool proper.

This particular event is significant as it demonstrates that the people of Liverpool and the leadership of the town were unwilling to surrender to the American privateers and that they had the means and the gumption to withstand the threat of attack by the enemy. Whether or not Capt. Cole, the leader of the raiding party, was serious about capturing Liverpool or was simply trying to see what he could get in return for leaving is unclear, but what is clear is that Simeon Perkins cemented his loyalty to the people of Liverpool and to the Crown which effectively meant that the attitude towards those who lived in the town was that they were no longer viewed as a threat by officials in Halifax.

The threat of privateers was real in the province of Nova Scotia. Not only did they pose a real financial menace, people were constantly on edge as to where and when the next attacks would take place. Perkins recounted several instances when attacks against Port Medway or Port Mouton could be heard in Liverpool.<sup>280</sup> He also recounted horrible treatment suffered by the people of the towns at the hands of these miscreants, including instances when people were stripped of their clothing and threatened with

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<sup>279</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 41- 43.

<sup>280</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 214- 217.

execution.<sup>281</sup> Privateering had, I argue, a deep psychological impact on the people of Nova Scotia and is an aspect which is worthy of attention.

### **The Impact of Privateering on Liverpool**

The economic impact of privateering in Liverpool is difficult to ascertain. Typically, privateers captured ships and cargo and we see examples in Liverpool of ships being targeted, cargo being targeted and both ships and cargo being targeted. Perkins rarely gives the total value of the prize taken from the town but he does provide information on the prizes brought into Liverpool.<sup>282</sup> Sadly for the people of Liverpool, we can also learn from the Perkins diary that there were far more prizes taken than were brought in and that value of prizes ranged dramatically, from £110 to £2000.<sup>283</sup> With no fewer than twelve ships taken, and each ship having a potential value of approximately £400, this alone represents a significant financial loss for those concerned with trade.<sup>284</sup>

The residents of Liverpool were under no misapprehension; they, their property and their homes were under attack from privateers and the government was slow to react. This fear was genuine and Perkins recorded a history which is not exaggerated. Upon examination of the diary, it is possible to collect quantitative data which shows that this fear was well founded. Table 4.5 compares the number of instances which record an altercation with privateers and how many of those resulted in a loss of property.

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<sup>281</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 237.

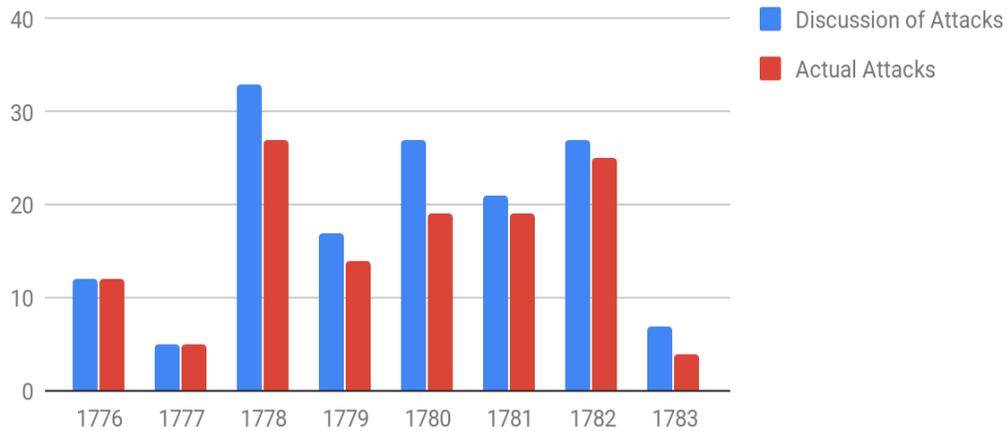
<sup>282</sup> Perkins lists one prize which was brought into Liverpool at £2000. See Perkins, vol. 2, 180.

<sup>283</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 134; vol. 2, 180.

<sup>284</sup> Perkins provides many examples of transactions in which ships were bought and sold. The highest priced vessel listed is valued at over £800, a "monstrous sum". See Perkins, vol.1, 32. The lowest value of a ship suitable for privateering was valued at £110. See Perkins, vol. 1, 134.

Table 4.5- Discussion of Privateering versus Attacks resulting in Loses

1776- 1783



Source: *The Diary of Simeon Perkins*

Privateers did not need to attack in order to interfere with the commerce of a town; their sheer presence was enough to make communities, which earned their living mostly from the sea, on edge; fear of privateers is entirely founded. During times of crisis, one would assume that such actions on the part of privateers would elicit a reaction on the part of the government but in the instance of Liverpool and the province of Nova Scotia, this reaction was not at all what the people of Liverpool expected.

### **Government Assistance?**

There is a wealth of documentation which dates from this period which allows historians to delve into the thought process of the government and try and discern why the government reacted as it did to the events of the American Revolution within the context of Nova Scotia. The Colonial Office Papers, the minutes of the Executive Council, military dispatches, and the journals for the Legislative Assembly paint a curious picture with regard to government and overall political climate of the day. All

branches of British government and military in the province of Nova Scotia were shockingly disinterested with privateers. Even when concern is expressed by members of these echelons of society, the response is quite slow.<sup>285</sup>

The Colonial Office papers have a rich history in and of themselves. This dense collection of documents, with copies housed in Halifax, Ottawa, and London, connected the province of Nova Scotia with His Majesty's government in London and cover almost 180 years of correspondence. The years in question, 1773 to 1785, are surprisingly scarce, consisting of three volumes of the approximately 200 which are kept in Halifax. The omissions tell a more compelling story of the state of affairs in Nova Scotia than what was actually included. If the provincial government was worried about possible rebellion or even unrest in the province, they obviously did not record this in any great detail, as one would expect, nor did they convey this information to the authorities in London.

Within the correspondence of the Colonial Office papers, Governor Legge admits that there are issues with armed schooners around Cape Sable, relatively close to Liverpool. Curiously, this letter, dated December 20, 1775, outlines protection measures, such as the installation of light infantry, which never took place.<sup>286</sup> We know from the Perkins diary that Cape Sable was not an active target, and even taking into account the number of attacks in Ragged Island, Port Roseway, and the smaller ports

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<sup>285</sup> Privateering was first noted by Simeon Perkins in his journal entry dated May 19, 1776. There were five more entries which speak to privateering between May and October 6, 1776, when a military officer named Massey sends a message to Lord Dartmouth, not the governor, about the problem. See Perkins, vol. 1, 121; See Letter from John Massey to Lord Dartmouth, dated October 6, 1776. Colonial Office Papers. Colonial Office 217, Original Correspondence- Secretary of State, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. Vol. 52, image 308- 309, October 17, 1775- November 21, 1776. PANS. MFM roll number 13859.

<sup>286</sup> Colonial Office Papers. Colonial Office 217,entry 47. Original Correspondence- Secretary of State, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton.Vol. 52, image 308- 309, October 17, 1775- November 21, 1776. PANS. MFM roll number 13859.

that they were still fewer than those in even a single year in Liverpool. This is a sign of the overall incompetence of Legge and that he clearly was not listening to those around him. Perkins was a member of the assembly and while he was not a cabinet member, he was certainly friends with them and while there is no proof of exact conversations which took place between Perkins and his associates while he was in Halifax or in his correspondence with his associates, it is unreasonable to think that he would not have discussed the political climate of the thirteen colonies or what was happening in Liverpool with his fellow politicians.

The region of Liverpool was under tremendous suspicion during the American Revolution. Barry Cahill, amongst others, is quick to point out that the loyalty of the region was in question, almost from the outset of the rebellion.<sup>287</sup> This is further corroborated by Perkins' diary entry dated July 26, 1775 in which he states that "[n]ews comes that we have been represented to the Government as a lawless and rebellious people..."<sup>288</sup> To the outside observer, this is a position which is not without foundation or merit. There were close economic and familial ties between the early settlers and the rebelling New Englanders; this was not something which anyone tried to cover up or even, in the instance of Simeon Perkins, to distance themselves from.<sup>289</sup> Cahill also points out that the inhabitants were predominantly Congregationalists and religious

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<sup>287</sup> Cahill, 58.

<sup>288</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 98.

<sup>289</sup> In his diary entry for April 7, 1778, Perkins is informed that his brother has been in jail at New York for quite some time. Given that New York was held by the British for the vast majority of the war, this would suggest that Jabez Perkins may have committed a crime against the British crown. Perkins instructs an associate who is bound for New York "...to supply him with anything he may need on my account." See Perkins, vol. 1, 189.

dissenters were often viewed with suspicion within Nova Scotia.<sup>290</sup> Was the questionable loyalty of the region the reason that the government was so slow to react?

### **Military Dispatches**

The military dispatches from this time period are complicated in that they are not a homogenous entity. Army and navy dispatches were sent between Nova Scotia and England separately. In the army dispatches, there is only one mention of the privateer issue which is dated on October 6, 1776.<sup>291</sup> The army was the one responsible for offering the most aid to Liverpool; the garrison was installed in 1780 but it was the periodic naval presence which was most efficient in deterring privateers.

The HMS *Senegal* was deployed to Liverpool in late 1775 and wintered at Liverpool.<sup>292</sup> The HMS *Rainbow* was also noted to be in the area of Liverpool during July, 1776.<sup>293</sup> In this approximately seven month period, the instances of privateering were significantly lower.<sup>294</sup> Given the demands on the Royal Navy, it was not feasible to have a ship anchored at Liverpool during the whole of the revolutionary period.

Garrisons and soldiers were much more plentiful and much easier to access than sailors and naval ships. From the army dispatches we can see that the government thought soldiers a perfectly satisfactory solution and no one makes mention of approaching the navy for consistent aid.

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<sup>290</sup> Cahill, 58.

<sup>291</sup> Letter from John Massey to Lord Dartmouth, dated October 6, 1776. Colonial Office Papers. Colonial Office 217, Original Correspondence- Secretary of State, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. Vol. 52, image 308- 309, October 17, 1775- November 21, 1776. PANS. MFM roll number 13859.

<sup>292</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 107.

<sup>293</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 125.

<sup>294</sup> There were only two sightings of privateers noted by Perkins between the placement of the *HM Senegal* and the *HM Rainbow* between December, 1775 and July, 1776. See Perkins, vol. 1, 107; Perkins, vol. 1, 125.

## **The Journals of the Legislative Assembly and Minutes of the Executive Council**

During the American Revolution, the Legislative Assembly in Halifax continued to meet, typically twice a year. These sessions were typically conducted in the late Fall and in the late Spring, likely to avoid difficult winter travel and to ensure that landowners could be at home during crucial agricultural times to oversee the planting and the harvest.

The members of the Legislative Assembly were a curious bunch; the residency requirements were odd in that you did not need to live in the community which you represented. Liverpool is a prime example of this in that Thomas Cochran, the long-time representative of the town, does not appear to have ever set foot in the town.<sup>295</sup>

Malachy Salter sat for a term as the representative for Yarmouth when he, like Cochran, resided in Halifax. The members were drawn from the upper strata of society; most were members of the merchant class. While representatives may have come from around the province, the Executive Council was made up almost exclusively of Halifax merchants and as such, laws and debates were driven by this group of men.<sup>296</sup>

This divide, both in social position and geographical location, served to further highlight this disconnect between the urban elite of the province and the rest of the population. Given that travel was difficult even under the best of conditions, rural representatives were often absent from sittings of the House of Assembly and as such,

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<sup>295</sup> Perkins recounts a steady correspondence with Cochran over the course of the time frame under examination but he never mentions a visit to Liverpool by Cochran. See Perkins, vol. 1 and vol. 2.

<sup>296</sup> Executive Office Papers.Minutes of the Council.RG 1.Vol. 189. 1766- 1783. PANS, Nova Scotia Archives Newspaper Collection, MFM roll number 15289; Executive Office Papers. Minutes of the Council.RG 1.Vol. 190. 1783- 1798. PANS, Nova Scotia Archives Newspaper Collection, MFM roll number 15289.

the concerns of outlying regions were often presented in letters to other members of the Legislative Assembly.

From the journals of the House of Assembly and the minutes of the Executive Council, we can see that there is no significant discussion of the privateering crisis within the province by provincial government.<sup>297</sup> In fact, there was very little discussion of the war at all beyond the raid at Fort Cumberland and the issues surrounding the influx of displaced Loyalists.<sup>298</sup> This lack of concern on the part of the government raises the obvious question as to why this was the case and the answer is exceptionally pragmatic; the provincial government did not concern itself with the privateer crisis because it simply did not impact Halifax. Whether it was based on disinterest or the fact that Halifax did not have the means to defend each port, the result was the same; Halifax was safe but the outposts were left to fend for themselves.

The Cumberland Raid had demonstrated that the Americans were not overly concerned with capturing Nova Scotia and that there was no great revolutionary spirit in the province. In short, people were not overly interested in the cause of revolution for a multitude of reasons. There were few overland roads in Nova Scotia during this time period which means that the only viable way to attack the province was by sea. The Royal Navy was based in Halifax as was the Nova Scotia squadron and as such, it is reasonable to say that Halifax was more than adequately protected, even from the most brazen of privateers. The outposts were relatively undefended but given the size of the coastline of the province, the outposts were effectively undefendable. Even if one

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<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

outport were to be successfully sacked by privateers, there was still no feasible way to use one sacked outport as a launching pad for other attacks.

It was much more effective for the government to use the threat which the privateers represented as a means to secure loyalty than it was for the government to arm each individual town and attempt to defend against recurrent raids. By leaving towns vulnerable, such as the situation in Liverpool, the government was able to demonstrate what they could offer to those who remained loyal. There was no mechanism within the law of the town to collect money to raise a military force for the purpose of defence which meant that even if the people of the town wanted to push back against the provincial government, they had no way to express dissatisfaction by show of military force. Given the degree of suspicion with which the residents of Liverpool were already viewed, the government may well have been inclined to ignore requests between the suggestion by Massey and the repeated requests by Perkins two years later to help ensure that the inhabitants of Liverpool were truly loyal members of the fold, through sentiment or coercion.

### **Privateering and the Press in Nova Scotia**

The depiction of privateers in the media is equally curious; the newspaper in Halifax did not report on privateer raids. There was one weekly publication in Halifax during this time period, *The Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*. Published every Tuesday by Anthony Henry, né Anton Heinrich, the publication was four to six pages long and offered readers a wide selection of local, provincial, and international news. Henry was born in France in the Franche- Comté region to German parents, like

many of the German Protestant families who came to Nova Scotia.<sup>299</sup> He had been a soldier during the Seven Years War and eventually settled in Halifax in 1760. He worked for John Bushell and eventually took over the business when Bushell passed away in 1761.

Henry was a profitable newspaper publisher but the bulk of his income came from government patronage; he was charged with printing documents for the province.<sup>300</sup> The press during the revolutionary period was inherently partisan. The *Boston Gazette* is an example of this partisan press, but *The Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle* is remarkably neutral, considering the time period and that Henry was dependant on the government for his livelihood.<sup>301</sup> Over the course of the American Revolution, even during the pre-revolutionary period, Henry resisted the urge to print sensationalized news. Examples of this would be his coverage of the events of the Continental Congress and the Battle of Lexington and Concord. In both instances, he presents the information in a very neutral tone and if anything, is very conservative in his reporting of the details of what took place.<sup>302</sup>

Privateering is represented in a very specific manner in the *Nova Scotia Gazette* in that it lists when local privateers were looking for a crew out of Halifax or if a prize

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<sup>299</sup> Douglas G. Lochhead, "Henry, Anthony," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed October 16, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/henry\\_anthony\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/henry_anthony_4E.html).

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.

<sup>301</sup> "The Boston Gazette and Country Journal" in *The Annotated Newspapers of Harbottle Dorr, Jr. Fonds*. Massachusetts Historical Society. Available at <http://www.masshist.org/dorr/browse-np/title/BGCJ/fYear/1774>;

<sup>302</sup> *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, January 10, 1775; May 9, 1775. On reel labeled September 4, 1770; September 13, 1774- December 28, 1784.PANS, Nova Scotia Archives Newspaper Collection, MFM roll number 8156.

had been brought into port and the spoils were being sold at public auction.<sup>303</sup> Henry makes no mention of the raids which took place with great frequency in and around Liverpool, including the raid of September 13, 1780.

This raid brought Liverpool to the brink of capitulation averted only by way of careful negotiation on the part of Simeon Perkins. Perkins alerted the government officials in Halifax and he eventually received a letter of thanks for his actions during the crisis so it is clear that those in power knew of the details of this particular event. This raises the question of whether this event appeared in the newspaper and the answer is one which is shrouded in mystery.

There was an express boat which sailed from Liverpool to Halifax and could make the trip, in favourable conditions, in a day.<sup>304</sup> It is reasonable to assume that news of the raid would have arrived at Halifax within a few days of the events taking place. The *Nova Scotia Gazette* was published on Tuesdays and went to press on September 12, 1780, the day before the raid. Again, one would assume that any news would have been reported in the edition published on September 19, 1780. Sadly, assume is all historians are able to do in this instance as that particular edition has been lost. What historians and scholars are able to learn from the *Nova Scotia Gazette* is that there is no mention of the raid in the subsequent two editions dated September 26th and October 3rd. This suggests that either the event was not published in the newspaper or that it was published in the edition dated September 19, 1780 and not discussed after the fact.

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<sup>303</sup> NSGW February 1, 1780 on reel *Nova Scotia Gazette and Weekly Chronicle*, September 4, 1770; September 13, 1774- December 28, 1784.PANS, Nova Scotia Archives Newspaper Collection, MFM roll number 8156.

<sup>304</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 132.

Upon examination of trends surrounding how privateering was reported in the media, it is likely that this particular raid was not discussed, though this is speculative. My justification for this stance is that privateers were a real threat and one which the province did not have the means to address on a large scale. Reporting on raids where towns were nearly captured was not something which Anthony Henry may have done because it would have contributed to widespread fear, if not mass hysteria. The skeptics of the province would have thought it sensationalized reporting, something which was common in other publications of the day. The other possible scenario could have been that Henry was under pressure from the government to print specific content and omit things which would paint the government in an unfavourable fashion. Henry later held other prominent patronage positions within the province and this does not seem unreasonable, given the climate of the time.<sup>305</sup> Regardless of the motivating factors, if the major raid against Liverpool was reported in the newspaper at Halifax, it was only reported on for one week and no mention was made of this event in later editions.

Privateering was a real, present, and costly occurrence in Nova Scotia during the American Revolution. Liverpool lost no fewer than twelve ships, faced repeated raids, and lived in fear of what could happen when privateer ships appeared on the horizon. From the data which is drawn from the Perkins diary, we can see that these raids were more prevalent in the Planter communities along the South Shore of the Province; towns where settlers were of French or German origin tended to be less targeted, whether this was due to population size or ethnicity. This trend remained constant, even when other ports were more likely targets.

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<sup>305</sup> Douglas G. Lochhead, "Henry, Anthony" in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed October 23, 2018, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/henry\\_anthony\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/henry_anthony_4E.html).

The reaction of the government to this crisis was strange. On one hand, Governor Legge told officials in London that regions were being targeted and aid was sent but we can see from the Perkins diary that if those regions, were, in fact being raided, they were being raided infrequently. In fact, this dispatch sent by Governor Legge was dated a full six months before Perkins made his first diary entry about privateers. It is unreasonable to think that if privateer raids had taken place in the region that Perkins would not have known about it; he was well informed on the current events of Nova Scotia, but also global affairs. This leads historians and scholars to question the degree of concern with regard to the privateer crisis on the part of the government. Was this a simple situation in which Halifax was safe and therefore it was a situation of 'out of sight, out of mind'? Or was this an instance in which the government was suspicious of the Planter population and opted to let them experience the fear of privateers and in turn, use that fear as a means to secure loyalty from a group whose loyalty was questionable.

The media in Nova Scotia did not feed into an over exaggeration of the war but rather remained relatively silent. Battles in the rebelling colonies were recorded but nothing appeared in the media of the events which were happening in the province. Privateer raids were never mentioned in the newspapers. In fact, the only times privateers are mentioned are when there was a call out for crew members or when the prizes were being brought into port to be sold. The unsavoury middle bit, how those goods were obtained were omitted. By remaining silent about the physical act of privateering, Anthony Henry ensured that people had a neutral opinion of the war and that he did not fan the flames of panic, something which would have arguably happened

had the whole province been made aware of what happened at Liverpool. This was essential to maintaining some level of normalcy in the province for if it was widely known that such raids were taking place, other pockets of the population may have taken up the same attitude of the people of Liverpool and surrendered at the first threat of invasion.

The loyalty of Simeon Perkins evolved over the course of the American Revolution. He began the crisis as a curious observer, sympathetic even, during 1774 and 1775; he had family and a son in Connecticut so this is an entirely reasonable approach to take. He does not take a particular position in his diary but rather recounts the events of the war as they are presented to him and if the accounts seemed far-fetched, he made a habit of corroborating accounts. As he and his new home was attacked again and again, he started to change. He started to express his disappointment with the authorities over their lack of action. He started to question why they were not helping him and his fellow inhabitants. By 1779, he started to differentiate between loyal subjects and those who were rebelling and by 1780, he was fed up with the lack of effective defence on the part of the soldiers stationed in Liverpool. At this point, Perkins, along with his neighbours and business associates in Liverpool, took up arms directly and outfitted a privateer; they would entertain no more abuse from these roving thieves.

Perkins relationship with privateers can best be described as complicated and it was this complicated relationship which drove his loyalism during the American Revolution not the events of the war itself. Perkins had no opposition to privateers or the manner in which they conducted their trade; after all, he along with his fellow merchants

in Liverpool eventually outfitted a schooner and entered the trade themselves. Perkins had brothers who were American privateers and remained in contact with these men over the course of the war. At the root of Simeon Perkins' character is a man who is not concerned with politics beyond how those politics influenced his trade; Perkins is a merchant and making money was his first priority. Anything which had the potential to harm this was not something which he could or would tolerate. Perkins was a businessman who became a loyalist so that he could protect his business interests, not because of the love for a king or the rejection of the Patriot cause.

## Chapter 5- Conclusion

When Simeon Perkins first arrived in Liverpool, Nova Scotia in 1762, he had no way of knowing how intertwined this province would eventually become in his daily life. He came for business and stayed for the rest of his life, remaining in the province exclusively after 1775.<sup>306</sup> He married in the province, added eight children and a stepdaughter to his family in the province, learned of the death of his oldest son, grew his business ventures, and ultimately died in his adopted hometown in 1812. Upon his death, he was remembered as a politician, a judge, a soldier, a merchant, and above all, a loyalist.<sup>307</sup>

The time period in which Perkins lived is arguably one of the most tumultuous in the history of Nova Scotia. He arrived seven years after the expulsion of the Acadians when Nova Scotia was being re-invented as a Protestant, English- speaking colony where those who fit this description had every opportunity to advance and thrive under the protection of the British Crown. As a merchant, Perkins used the sophisticated trade web of the mightiest empire on the face of the earth to expand his fortune. His business ventures expanded and encompassed partners from the coast of New England, extending as far south as Suriname in South America, and as far east as the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>308</sup> He made his fortune in the exploitation of natural resources, fed into the oppression of the Atlantic slave trade, and achieved financial competence, the highest goal of the “middling sort” in the colonies.

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<sup>306</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 93.

<sup>307</sup> “Obituary of Simeon Perkins”. *The Royal Gazette, June 3, 1812*. PANS, Nova Scotia Archives Newspaper Collection, MFM roll number 8172.

<sup>308</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 56; vol. 1, 192; vol. 1, 6.

Perkins, like many early modern merchants, maintained a day book, a diary in which he recorded his financial transactions, as was the custom of the time and the trade.<sup>309</sup> Unique to Perkins is the other quality of his diary in that he recorded daily events as they occurred and not just those in which he was directly involved. He made note of all the events which transpired in Liverpool: births, deaths, marriages, war activity, court proceedings, trade transactions, the weather; all recorded in objective detail. Perkins made a point to corroborate certain stories from multiple sources when they seemed exaggerated which allows readers not only to ascertain what information was circulating the Atlantic world but also gain insight to the impression of others and the distance that information travelled. While the diary has been edited and entries not related to province removed, it still serves as a wonderful way to understand not only the experiences of Simeon Perkins but the experiences of those around him, in particular, during the American Revolution. With this lens in mind, Perkins' diary allows us to see the evolution of loyalism in the province of Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia, Loyalism, and the American Revolution are three concepts which come together infrequently. Loyalism is often paired in the study of the American Revolution such as in the work of Maya Jasanoff, Alan Taylor, Robert Calhoon, Elisha Gould, and Jack P. Greene. This particular combination has been a favourite of not only continentalist scholars but those of the Atlantic world. Nova Scotia and loyalism are regularly paired in the work of Elizabeth Mancke, Julian Gwyn, and Margaret Conrod, but beyond the work of Ernest Clarke, the three concepts, being the American

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<sup>309</sup> Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1990): 3-29.

Revolution, Nova Scotia, and Loyalism, rarely merge. The diary of Simeon Perkins is especially useful because it helps to bridge the gap in the secondary scholarship between these three fields. The examination of these three concepts helps to not only identify the causes for Nova Scotia not joining the American Revolution as the fourteenth state, which evidence suggests was entirely plausible given the demographics of the province at the time and the state of the provincial government, but it allows modern readers to see how this split came about. This is significant because it is at the genesis of the development of Canada as an independent nation. The story of the Loyalists is at the very root of Canadian identity and how Canadians perceive themselves.

Loyalism in Nova Scotia had three distinctive flavours: active, passive, and coercive, and it is important to understand and be able to distinguish between the three. Robert Calhoon introduces active and passive loyalism with the help of Patricia Rogers but both fall short of the discussion of coercive loyalism.<sup>310</sup> Active loyalism consists of the overt actions undertaken by a person which demonstrate their support of the British Crown. Passive loyalism is the expression of loyalism which is inactive, in that it happens by chance and not design on the part of the individual.<sup>311</sup> Coercive loyalism is comprised of expressions of loyalism which are forced. They are not motivated by choice or in action but rather they are the result of an individual being pushed to make a choice which they would, in other circumstances, not have made. It is indisputable to

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<sup>310</sup> Robert Calhoon, "Loyalism and Neutrality," in *A Companion to the American Revolution*. Blackwell Companions to American History, edited by Jack P. Greene, J. R. Poole and Wiley (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000); <sup>310</sup> Patricia Rogers, "The Loyalist Experience in an Anglo- American Atlantic World" in *Planter Links: Community and Culture in Colonial Nova Scotia*, ed. Margaret Conrad and Barry Moody (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 2001), 167.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

say that Nova Scotia is a loyalist province; it is. The tiny outcrop in the Atlantic Ocean remained as part of the British Empire and did not join the American Revolution. By its very definition, this is loyalism. But what *type* of loyalism is it? What factors were at play in the province which guided the inhabitants to make this choice?

Upon examination of the diary of Simeon Perkins, we see the usual factors which are ascribed to the loyalism of the province such as shared kinship, issues with the management of the province, and the presence of the British navy.<sup>312</sup> We also see that the people of Nova Scotia maintained close ties to their kin in New England and the other American colonies which were engaged in rebellion.<sup>313</sup> We are able to see that there is a clear political disconnect between Halifax and Liverpool, between the city and the rural communities, and that this disconnect can be reasonably applied to the other communities which were removed geographically from the seat of power.<sup>314</sup> We can also see that the mighty British navy was both stick and carrot; it had the ability to protect communities from threats via the sea but also had the ability to leave a community vulnerable, either by being absent or by pressing sailors and fishers into the depleted ranks of the navy.<sup>315</sup>

Conversely, we also see that some of the long held notions about the province and its position in this conflict are inaccurate such as that of the “missing decade” and

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<sup>312</sup> John Bartlet Brebner, *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia: A Marginal Colony during the Revolutionary Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969); <sup>312</sup> Elizabeth Mancke, *The Fault Lines of Empire Political Differentiation in Massachusetts and Nova Scotia, Ca. 1760-1830*, New World in the Atlantic World (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>313</sup> Perkins maintained a steady correspondence with his family during the time period the following entries offer a few examples. See Perkins, vol. 1, 104; 138; 151; 178; 189; 214; vol. 2, 61.

<sup>314</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 98.

<sup>315</sup> The *Senegal* wintered at Liverpool in 1775/ 1776. See Perkins, vol. 106- 108

geographical isolation.<sup>316</sup> Some scholars claim that because the Planter migration took place in the 1760s, this large portion of the population of Nova Scotia missed the period of radicalization which took place during that decade in New England.<sup>317</sup> This idea is predicated on the notion of geographical isolation, the idea that Nova Scotia was separated from New England. While there may be distance between the two regions, because of the free movement of goods and in turn, ideas, it is inaccurate to say that those who lived in Nova Scotia did not know what was going on in New England nor that they did not have exposure to the radical ideas which were widely circulating.

There are multiple instances in Perkins' diary in which we see the free movement of information and ideas throughout the Atlantic world.<sup>318</sup> Perkins had an extensive trading network and with sailors came not only trade goods but ideas, newspapers, books, and conversations with differing points of view. He maintained an active social life within Liverpool and frequently dined with people from all over the region.<sup>319</sup> While there is no recorded evidence that demonstrates what was discussed at the dinner parties, it is unreasonable to say that topics such as literature, politics, religion, and business conditions were not discussed over dinner.

Simeon Perkins' diary identifies two other possible causes for Nova Scotia's position during the American Revolution which formed the foundation of this project and those were the twin concepts of trade and privateering. Trade was the very backbone of

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<sup>316</sup> John Bartlet Brebner, *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia: A Marginal Colony during the Revolutionary Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969); Elizabeth Mancke, *The Fault Lines of Empire Political Differentiation in Massachusetts and Nova Scotia, Ca. 1760-1830, New World in the Atlantic World* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> As an example, the following entries relate to news of the American Revolution: Perkins, vol. 1, 66; 95; 101; vol. 2, 29; 94; 183.

<sup>319</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 64; 68; 76.

life in Nova Scotia because of the deportation of the Acadians. Farm land had been neglected after the forced exodus of a large portion of the province's farmers and they had to be reclaimed and made to work again. There was very little in the way of manufactured goods available in the province which meant that trade was essential to the survival of the province and its inhabitants. Threats to trade, such as privateers, were something that had the potential to financially cripple the province and leave its inhabitants in a state of privation and want.

The intersection of trade, privateers, the British navy, and loyalism is something which is not discussed by scholars but which I feel is at the heart of Nova Scotian loyalism during the American Revolution. The people in the rural communities were left to their own devices by the politicians in Halifax which meant that they had to find solutions to the threats to trade on their own because of how they were perceived by those in power.<sup>320</sup> These threats were real and for people who struggled to survive, privateers represented a threat to their very existence. In the case of Simeon Perkins, we see a man who was sympathetic to the American cause- Rebels and those not engaged in Rebellion shared the same base conditions, after all- but he was not so moved as to take up arms with those engaged in rebellion. Perkins, in particular, had a greater opportunity than most to take up arms for the American cause as he was in Connecticut when the fighting began at Lexington and Concord in April, 1775.<sup>321</sup> He was content to go about his business concerns and stay out of the fighting until such time as he was pushed into taking sides, thanks to repeated raids against his town and

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<sup>320</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 98; Barry Cahill, "The Treason of the Merchants: Dissent and Repression in Halifax in the Era of the American Revolution" *Acadiensis* 26, no. 1 (1996): 52-70.

<sup>321</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 93- 94,

his shipping interests. The catalyst for this change in attitude was American privateers and ambivalence of the colonial powers towards the plight of the people of Liverpool.

No doubt the politicians in Nova Scotia were concerned about the state of loyalism and sympathy towards the patriot cause throughout the American Revolution. They were well aware that there was no great sentiment towards either side during the conflict but were constantly on edge that this position of ambivalence could, at any time, change. This is why politicians in England were so quick to remove Governor Legge when he proved to be incompetent in his post as a way of appeasing those in power at the provincial level.<sup>322</sup> Installing the British navy in Halifax guaranteed that the seat of power remained loyal but what of those who did not have the advantage of military protection and who lived through the fear of impressment?

Liverpool received intermittent protection from the Royal navy and militia protection from the army until 1778 and even then, they were not the most intimidating soldiers in the colonies.<sup>323</sup> The town, one of the largest on the South Shore, was routinely raided by American privateers between 1776 and 1778. They suffered indirect and direct raids. Sometimes privateers were so brazen as to enter the harbour and sabotage ships which could be used in their pursuit.<sup>324</sup> It is these repeated attacks which helped to secure loyalism from the people of Liverpool. They were coerced into loyalism because privateers were a constant threat, one which was real, and the only solution in obtaining aid was to show that you were, in fact, loyal to the British Crown.

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<sup>322</sup> This policy of appeasement was arguably came to a head in the spring of 1776 when Francis Legge was removed from his post as governor. The Cumberland Raid followed in November of that year which was unsuccessful in securing the province for the American cause. See J. M. Bumsted, "Legge, Francis," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed January 28, 2019, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/legge\\_francis\\_4E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/legge_francis_4E.html).

<sup>323</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 225.

<sup>324</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 31.

This shift is perceptible in Perkins' diary. He does not begin to change his attitude towards the cause until he suffers multiple shipping losses, some at his own wharf.<sup>325</sup> For Perkins, loyalism is a matter of business. His loyalism is contingent and on a continuum, shifting over the course of several years and informed by his personal experiences during the war and this is a trend which is shared amongst his associates in both Liverpool and Halifax. Perkins maintained his connections with his family and business associates in New England and when the American Revolution ended, he wasted no time in resuming his trade, this time without the threat of privateers.<sup>326</sup> In fact, when his first parcel of letters arrives after the end of hostilities, he states that he is quite glad to hear from his family and associates.<sup>327</sup> For Perkins, being a loyalist was not born out of a desire or support of the cause but rather of a means to protect his business interests, a thread which he shared with a large portion of the population of his adopted hometown and province.

In the wider context of Nova Scotia, the situation was similar. Regular people wished to live in peace, uninterested or perhaps unwilling to commit to the cause. This is evident in both Liverpool, when the inhabitants were willing to surrender at the first major threat of invasion and in the instance of the Cumberland Raid, when people, who had every reason to join rebellion, refrained from doing so.<sup>328</sup> After hostilities ended, Nova Scotia continued to receive refugees and migrants from the newly formed United States of America, well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, much in the same manner that Simeon

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<sup>325</sup> Perkins, vol. 1, 129.

<sup>326</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 186- 187.

<sup>327</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 190.

<sup>328</sup> Perkins, vol. 2, 41- 43; Ernest Clarke, *The Siege of Fort Cumberland, 1776: An Episode in the American Revolution* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995).

Perkins resumed his trade with the former British colonies. People in Nova Scotia were unconcerned with the actions of these newcomers in a post-war world but rather focused on forging a future in the small outcrop in the North Atlantic.

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### **Charts and Images**

*Des Barrs, Map of Liverpool Harbour*, Royal Navy, circa. 1770.

Farish, Dr. H. "Hand Dawn Map of Liverpool, circa. 1800" drawn circa. 1940. Property of the Queens County Museum, used with permission.

Government of Canada. Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canadian Hydrographic Service. Chart Number 4211.

Government of Canada. Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canadian Hydrographic Service. Chart Number 4240.

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