

George A. Rawlyk

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AND NOVA SCOTIA RECONSIDERED

ON THE EVE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, Nova Scotia was little more than a political expression for a number of widely scattered and isolated communities. These stretched from Halifax to Maudslow on the St. John River and to the tiny outpost of Passamaquoddy on the St. Croix. At the end of the Seven Years War many land-hungry settlers from Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut pushed up into the fertile regions bordering the Bay of Fundy which had been abandoned by the Acadians when they were expelled from the peninsula in 1755. In 1775 Nova Scotia had a population of only approximately 20,000 inhabitants,¹ three-quarters of whom were New Englanders with strong economic, cultural, and family ties with their former homeland.²

In spite of the fact that Nova Scotia was virtually New England's northeastern frontier and was peopled by a majority of recently arrived New Englanders,³ the colony refused in 1775 and 1776 to join in attempting to shatter the framework of the British colonial system. Instead, most of the inhabitants, especially the New Englanders, endeavoured to pursue a policy of neutrality, even though their moral support was firmly behind the "rebels". It is interesting to note that this policy of neutrality was exactly the same policy that the New Englanders severely condemned when it had been adopted by the Acadians two decades earlier. However, toward the end of the Revolution, the sympathies of the neutral New Englanders, largely as the result of serious depredations committed by American privateers throughout Nova Scotia from 1777 to 1782, shifted towards Great Britain.⁴

Why did Nova Scotia not join the Thirteen Colonies in attempting to break away from Britain in 1775 and 1776? Three distinct schools of thought have emerged in the effort to answer this question. First, the proponents of the "Halifax-merchant" school have stressed that the influential Halifax merchants were directly

responsible for keeping Nova Scotia loyal to the Crown.⁵ The merchants, believing that the Revolution was a Heaven-sent opportunity to supplant the New England colonies in the West Indian trade, and also that in the long run their colony would gain more than it would lose in retaining political and economic ties with Britain, were able to impose their will upon the other inhabitants. This is indeed an interesting interpretation, but one without any real foundation, since in 1775 the population of Halifax was only 1800 and the influence of the Halifax merchants was largely confined chiefly to the area of the Bedford Basin.⁶ It is clear that their economic ties with Britain were strong, but it is just as clear that they were in no effective position to impose their will upon the other Nova Scotians, who in actual fact reacted violently to the merchant clique that was attempting to manipulate the economic and political life of the colony.

Second, W. B. Kerr, who has written far more about Nova Scotia during the Revolutionary period than any other historian, has strongly argued that as early as 1765 it was inevitable that Nova Scotia would remain loyal to George III. Kerr maintains that there was an almost total absence of "national sentiment"⁷ among the New Englanders of Nova Scotia and that, because of this lack of "nationalism",⁸ there was very little popular support for the Revolutionary cause in Nova Scotia.⁹ It appears that Kerr has clearly underestimated the general significance of the widespread sympathy for Revolutionary principles. This feeling was prevalent throughout Nova Scotia, with the notable exception of Halifax, in 1775 and 1776. Moreover, he has failed to draw sufficient attention to the profound impact that the isolation of most of the Nova Scotian settlements and the British control of the North Atlantic had upon seriously weakening the indigenous Revolutionary movement.

Third, J. B. Brebner, in his excellent work, *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia*, has asserted that the Revolutionary movement failed in Nova Scotia because "the sympathizers with rebellion among the outlying populace could make no headway because their friends in the rebellious Colonies had no navy and because they themselves could not assemble from the scattered settlements an effective force for unassisted revolt."¹⁰ Brebner's is certainly the most satisfactory answer to the original question regarding Nova Scotia and the Revolution. A careful and critical examination of events in the Chignecto region of Nova Scotia in the years 1775 and 1776 will not only serve to prove the validity of Brebner's thesis, but will also cast a considerable amount of light upon the relations between Nova Scotia and the colonies to the south during a most critical period.

The Isthmus of Chignecto provided the stage upon which a somewhat inconsequential scene from the American Revolutionary drama was played. The Eddy Rebellion of 1776 had most of the characteristics of a tragic comedy; a glorious failure, it was nevertheless accompanied by death and destruction.

The Chignecto Isthmus is a narrow neck of land joining the peninsula of Nova Scotia to the North American mainland. Roughly ten miles in width and twenty in length, the Isthmus is bordered on the north-east by Baie Verte, on the south-west by the Cumberland Basin, and on the north-west and south-east by the Sackville and Amherst Ridges respectively. J. C. Webster, one of New Brunswick's outstanding historians, has asserted that "no area of its [Chignecto's] size anywhere in America has a greater or more varied wealth of historical memories and traditions."¹¹ There is much evidence to support Webster's sweeping generalization.

The vacuum created by the expulsion of the majority of the Acadians from the fertile Isthmus in 1755 was quickly filled at the end of the Seven Years War by settlers from New England.¹² Unlike the Acadians, these men energetically began to clear and to cultivate the ridge lands which had a heavy forest cover.¹³ Only after many frustrating failures were the New Englanders able to master marsh agriculture.¹⁴ From 1772 to 1775 they sullenly observed the arrival of over 500 Yorkshire immigrants seeking "a better livelihood"¹⁵ in the New World. These newcomers had been recruited by the aggressive Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia, Michael Francklin.¹⁶

Thus in 1775 the general Chignecto Isthmus region contained three important elements within its population. The New Englanders were the most numerous, but the Yorkshiremen were not too far behind. Together these two groups numbered 220 families.¹⁷ The third element was the Acadian; there were thirty Acadian families, most of the members of which worked on the land belonging to the English-speaking farmers.¹⁸

There was considerable friction and ill-feeling between the New Englanders and the newcomers from the north of England on the one hand, and between the former and the Halifax government on the other. Most of the New Englanders detested their new neighbours, not only because the Yorkshiremen had settled on land that the New Englanders had long coveted and considered to be rightfully theirs, but also because the outlook of the Englishmen was almost diametrically opposite to that of the Americans. The Yorkshiremen were Methodists closely tied to the Mother Country and all she represented, while the New Englanders were Congregationalists who had been greatly influenced by the North American environ-

ment and whose ties with the Mother Country were extremely tenuous. The Old World was in conflict with the New on this narrow neck of land.

The New Englanders, moreover, were greatly dissatisfied with the Halifax government. Had not Francklin encouraged the Yorkshiremen to settle in the Isthmus? Furthermore, the New Englanders reacted violently to the fact that a small clique of Halifax merchants controlled the legislative and executive functions of government,¹⁹ stubbornly refusing to grant to the New Englanders the right of "township form of government" which Governor Lawrence had promised them in 1758 and 1759.²⁰

A spark was needed to set the kindling discontent ablaze. The American Revolution provided the spark, but the fire was quickly and easily extinguished before it could spread and result in any serious damage.

The centre of organized activity against Nova Scotia during the first years of the Revolution was the tiny lumbering outpost of Machias, a few miles west of the St. Croix River.²¹ Most of the inhabitants wanted to grow rich by sacking the prosperous Nova Scotian settlements, particularly Halifax. These freebooters, these eighteenth-century filibusters, unsuccessfully endeavoured to hide their real selfish motive beneath a veneer of concern for Revolutionary principles.

In the summer of 1775 they proposed to General Washington to invade Nova Scotia if supported by a force of 1000 soldiers and four armed vessels.²² When Washington was asked to act upon this bold plan in August, he tactfully refused; all available men and supplies were needed for the proposed Quebec invasion. His reasoned arguments justifying his refusal are of considerable consequence since they explain why Washington refused to mount any kind of offensive against Nova Scotia in 1775 and 1776:

As to the Expedition proposed against Nova Scotia by the Inhabitants of Machias, I cannot but applaud their Spirit and Zeal; but, after considering the Reasons offered for it, there are Several objections . . . which seem to me unanswerable. I apprehend such an Enterprise inconsistent with the General Principal upon which the Colonies have proceeded. That Province has not acceded, it is true, to the Measures of Congress; and therefore, they have been excluded from all Commercial Intercourse with the other Colonies; But they have not Commenced Hostilities against them, nor are any to be apprehended. To attack *them*, therefore, is a Measure of Conquest, rather than Defence, and may be attended with very dangerous consequences. It might, perhaps, be easy, with the force proposed, to make an Incursion into the Province and overawe those of the Inhabitants who are Inimical to our cause; and, for a short time prevent the Supplying the Enemy with Provisions; but the same Force must continue to produce any lasting Effects. As to the furnishing Vessels of Force, you, Gentlemen, will anticipate me, in pointing out our weakness and the Enemy's Strength

at Sea. There would be great Danger that, with the best preparation we could make, they would fall an easy prey either to the Men of War of that Station [Halifax] or some who would be detach'd from Boston.²³

Washington was no doubt right in the long run, but the inhabitants of Machias almost intuitively realized that in the summer of 1775 Nova Scotia was ripe for plucking from the British colonial tree. American economic pressure had resulted in a serious recession,²⁴ Governor Legge was alienating leading elements of the population, and the exploits of the Revolution had captured the imagination of the New Englanders.²⁵ In addition, there were only thirty-six British regulars guarding Halifax,²⁶ and Legge, who seriously believed that the New Englanders "were rebels to the man", sadly observed that "the fortifications [of Halifax] were in a dilapidated state, the batteries . . . dismantled, the gun-carriages decayed, the guns on the ground."²⁷ If the men from Machias had had their way, the invading force would have been enthusiastically welcomed and openly supported by the vast majority of "Yankees" and would have easily gained control of the colony. However, the lack of suitable land communications between the various settlements in Nova Scotia, as well as between Nova Scotia and the other colonies, together with the British control of the Atlantic, would have probably forced the American troops to abandon Nova Scotia after a brief occupation. Washington's refusal to attack Nova Scotia when it was ripe for conquest and the arrival of military reinforcements in Halifax in October²⁸ virtually made certain that the Colony would remain within the framework of the British colonial system during the war years.

In the summer months an indigenous revolutionary movement came into being in the Chignecto region.²⁹ It was led by John Allan, a Scot who had been won over to the American revolutionary cause, and Jonathan Eddy, who had left Massachusetts to settle in the Isthmus after the Seven Years War. Sam Rogers, Zebulon Rowe, Obadiah Ayer, and William Howe, among others, all respected and prosperous New Englanders, supported Allan and Eddy. These men were greatly encouraged by the successful sacking in August of Fort Frederick, a tiny British military outpost at the mouth of the Saint John River, by a small Machias force,³⁰ and also by the bold pronouncement of the inhabitants of Maugerville in favour of the Revolution. The Maugerville settlers declared that they were willing "to submit ourselves to the government of the Massachusetts Bay and that we are ready with our lives and fortunes to share with them the event of the present struggle for liberty, however, God in his providence may order it."³¹

Towards the end of November, Allan, Eddy, and their not insignificant following were given an excellent opportunity to precipitate a crisis that could have

conceivably led to a successful rebellion. The long-simmering discontent with the government authorities finally boiled over when the assembly, controlled by the small Halifax merchant clique with strong commercial ties with Britain, passed two acts, one to call out a fifth of the militia, the other to impose a tax for its support.³² Almost immediately the two bills were loudly denounced throughout the colony, but especially in the Chignecto region. Allan and Eddy, instead of quickly harnessing the deep dissatisfaction within the framework of armed rebellion, decided to widen first the popular basis of their support by sending a rather mildly-worded yet firm protest against the two bills to Governor Legge. In the protest, which was eventually signed by almost 250 inhabitants including many Yorkshiresmen, the Chignecto settlers objected to the new tax and to the possibility of being forced to "march into different parts in arms against their friends and relations."³³ Allan and Eddy had succeeded in gaining much popular support for their attack upon the Halifax government, but at the moment when they attempted to use this support to emulate the example of the colonies in revolt, Legge suddenly pulled the rug from under their unsuspecting feet. Realizing the seriousness of the discontent as reflected in the Chignecto petition, the governor promptly suspended the two contentious acts. In so doing, Legge had removed the catalyst from the potential revolutionary situation not only in the Isthmus but throughout Nova Scotia.

Failing to grasp the significance of Legge's clever manoeuvre, Allan and Eddy decided during the first weeks of January, 1776, that the time was propitious for fomenting an insurrection. Nothing could have been further from the truth. Having won the support of the Acadians, but the equally enthusiastic disapprobation of the Yorkshiresmen, Allan and Eddy decided that before taking any further steps on the road to rebellion it was first imperative to sound out carefully the general feeling of the mass of New Englanders towards the proposed vague plan. The two leaders were genuinely shocked to discover that the vast majority of New Englanders, even though they "would have welcomed an army of invasion",³⁴ stubbornly refused to support the planned insurrection. Ground between the millstones of contending forces, most of the Chignecto New Englanders, as well as those throughout the colony, had decided to walk the tightrope of neutrality until it was clear that a strong rebel invading force would be able to gain effective control of Nova Scotia. Allan and Eddy were forced to alter drastically their proposed policy; they decided to petition General Washington and the Continental Congress to send an

"army of liberation" to Nova Scotia. The Machias plan of August 1775 had been resurrected.

Jonathan Eddy, with a band of fourteen men, had set out in February from Chignecto to persuade Washington and the Continental Congress to invade Nova Scotia. On March 27, Eddy met with the American general at Cambridge.³⁵ Washington carefully considered Eddy's often illogical arguments, but believing that the British forces that had abandoned Boston³⁶ ten days earlier were now in Halifax, the General informed the ambassador that "in the present uncertain state of things . . . a much more considerable force [than Eddy had even requested] would be of no avail."³⁷ Washington reaffirmed the policy he had first enunciated on hearing of the Machias plan in August of the preceding year.³⁸ The disillusioned Eddy next went to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, but as he expected, here too his urgent appeal fell on unresponsive ears.³⁹ After his return to the Isthmus in May it was decided that, as a last resort, the government of Massachusetts should be approached for military aid. The persistent Eddy, accompanied by Howe, Rogers, and Rowe, immediately set sail for Boston.

During the months of January and February the Halifax government had been strangely indifferent to developments in the Chignecto Isthmus. The loyalist leaders, Charles Dixon and the Rev. John Eagleson, had bombarded the Governor and his Executive Council with frantic letters.⁴⁰ A delegation had been sent to General Washington by the New Englanders;⁴¹ and on hearing a rumour that the American army had captured Bunker Hill, the supporters of Allan and Eddy had procured "a chaise and six horses, postillion and a flag of liberty, and drove about the isthmus, proclaiming the news and blessings of liberty."⁴² Dixon and Eagleson demanded immediate government action. In March the Executive Council resolved "that the lieutenant-governor [Francklin] be desired to proceed, as soon as possible to [Chignecto] . . . and there make a strict inquiry into the behavior and conduct of the inhabitants, and to make report thereof to the governor; also, that he will apprehend all persons, who, on due proof, shall be found guilty of any rebellious and treasonable transactions."⁴³ Francklin, however, was able to accomplish absolutely nothing. It was not until June that the government exerted some semblance of authority on the troubled Isthmus. This delay was at least partly the result of the recall of Legge in May and his replacement by Lieutenant-Colonel Arbuthnot.⁴⁴ In June, 200 Royal Fencibles⁴⁵ under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Joseph Gorham were sent to occupy Fort Cumberland, which had been abandoned by the British eight years earlier.⁴⁶ Fort Cumberland, the reconstructed French Fort Beauséjour, was strategically located at the extreme southern tip of the Fort Cum-

berland Ridge which, together with the Fort Lawrence Ridge, cuts through the Chignecto marshlands until it almost touches the waters of the Bay of Fundy. Gorham found the fort in a state of serious disrepair. He reported that "the face of the Bastions, Curtains, etc., by being so long exposed to the heavy rains and frost were bent down to such a slope that one might with ease ascend any part of the fort."⁴⁷ Gorham set about repairing the fort, and he went out of his way to overlook what he considered to be the harmless activities of the energetic American sympathizers. He hoped that a simple show of strength would completely undermine the position held by the Eddy-Allan faction.

It was not until July that the Halifax authorities, at last convinced of the seriousness of the revolutionary movement in the Isthmus, considered it necessary to strike against the leaders of the "American Party". A proclamation was issued offering a reward of £200 for the capture of Eddy and £100 for Allan, Howe, and Rogers.⁴⁸ On hearing that he was a man with a price on his head, Allan decided to join his friends in Massachusetts and left a committee in charge of "the revolutionary interests".⁴⁹

Eddy was unsuccessful in his attempt to persuade the General Court of Massachusetts to send a military expedition "supplied with some necessaries, as provisions and ammunition . . . [to] destroy those [Nova Scotian] forts and relieve our brethren and friends".⁵⁰ Nevertheless, he had not entirely failed. He was promised sufficient ammunition and supplies to equip properly whatever force he himself could muster. Eddy immediately rushed off to Machias, where he knew there was a group of men still vitally interested in attacking Nova Scotia. By carefully playing upon their cupidity Eddy was able to recruit twenty-eight men from Machias.⁵¹ On August 11, just as the invading army was embarking, Allan arrived. Fully aware of the weakness of the revolutionary movement on the Isthmus, Allan endeavoured in vain to dissuade Eddy from carrying out his rash and hopeless plan. Eddy refused to come to grips with the hard facts of reality; he hoped that his force would build up like a giant snowball at Passamaquoddy and Mauderville and that the Chignecto New Englanders would eagerly rally to his banner. He seemed to believe that it would be only a matter of time before his liberating army would force the British to abandon "New England's Outpost".

At Passamaquoddy, a few miles to the east of Machias, Eddy added seven new recruits and then sailed to Mauderville in three whale boats.⁵³ At the settlement on the upper Saint John River he found the inhabitants "almost universally to be hearty in the cause",⁵⁴ but was able to enlist only twenty-seven settlers and sixteen Indians.⁵⁵ Eddy's liberating army, now numbering some eighty men, returned to the mouth of

the Saint John River to await the arrival of the promised ammunition and supplies from Boston.⁵⁶ There was an unexpected prolonged delay, and the force was unable to move eastwards until the last week of October. On October 29, Eddy's men easily captured fourteen of Gorham's troops who were stationed at the military outpost of Shepody, to the south of present-day Moncton.⁵⁷ The invaders⁵⁸ then swung sharply to the north and made their way up the Petitcodiac and Memramcook Rivers to the Acadian settlement of Memramcook, where Eddy had no trouble whatsoever in persuading a number of Acadians to support him.⁵⁹ From Memramcook, on November 5, Eddy and his men marched eastwards towards their immediate objective—Fort Cumberland.⁶⁰

The supporters of Allan and Eddy on the Isthmus loudly "expressed their Uneasiness at seeing so few [invaders] . . . and those unprovided with Artillery."⁶¹ They vehemently argued that, taking everything into consideration, there was no possible chance of success. Even if Fort Cumberland were captured, and this was highly unlikely, British reinforcements would readily rout Eddy's motley collection of undisciplined freebooters, Indians, and Acadians. Eddy was forced to resort to outright intimidation and to false promises in order to win the unenthusiastic support of his friends. His policy was objectively described by his associate Allan:

That they [Chignecto New Englanders] had supply'd the Enemys of America which had much displeas'd the States. That the Congress doubted their integrity, that if they would not rouse themselves and oppose the British power in that province [Nova Scotia] they would be look'd upon as enemys and should the country be reduced by the States they would be treated as conquered people and that if they did not Incline to do something he [Eddy] would return and report them to the States. But if they would now assert their rights publickly against the King's Govt, he was then Come to help them and in Fifteen days Expected a reinforcement of a large body of men.⁶²

These reinforcements existed only in Eddy's active imagination.

Only fifty New Englanders, against their better judgment, rallied to Eddy's banner, and they were joined a short time later by twenty-seven men from the Cobequid region of Nova Scotia.⁶³ The invading army now numbered roughly 180 men.⁶⁴ Eddy must be given a considerable amount of credit for using his relatively small force to gain virtual control of the entire Chignecto Isthmus, except, of course, for Fort Cumberland. Most of the Yorkshiremen, fearing the destruction of their property if they supported Gorham, quickly surrendered their guns and ammunition to the invaders.⁶⁵ It should be noted that well over half of the New Englanders supported neither Eddy nor Gorham, but instead carefully pursued a policy of neutrality.

Eddy was not a demagogue, nor was he a megalomaniac. He was convinced that all ties with Britain should be severed, and his fanatical enthusiasm for the Revolutionary cause seriously dulled his already undeveloped sense of military strategy. In spite of fantastic rumours regarding the size of Eddy's invading force which spread like wildfire throughout Nova Scotia during the months of October and November, the inhabitants could not be aroused from their lethargic neutrality.

As early as August, Gorham had heard of Eddy's invasion plans, but it was not until the beginning of November that he learned that Eddy was in the Chignecto region.⁶⁶ With fewer than 200 troops at his command⁶⁷ and believing that Eddy had at least 500 men,⁶⁸ Gorham was of the opinion that he was in no position to attack the invaders.⁶⁹ Therefore he felt that the only alternative was to adopt a defensive policy and to wait for reinforcements from Halifax. This was the right policy at the right time.⁷⁰

During the early morning hours of November 7, Eddy's forces experienced their only real victory in the futile Chignecto campaign. Taking advantage of a thick fog which had settled over the coastal region, Zebulon Rowe and a handful of men thirsting for excitement and possible loot set out to capture a sloop filled with supplies for the Fort Cumberland troops.⁷¹ Because of the low tide the sloop lay on the broad mud flats to the south-west of the fort. Eddy's description of this most humorous incident of the rebellion makes fascinating reading:

After a Difficult March, they arrived opposite the Sloop; on board of which was a Guard of 1 Sergt and 12 men, who had they fir'd at our People, must have alarmed the Garrison in such a Manner as to have brought them on their Backs. However, our men rushed Resolutely towards the sloop up to their Knees in Mud, which made such a Noise as to alarm the Centry, who hailed them and immediately called the Sergt of the Guard. The Sergt on coming up, Ordered his Men to fire, but was immediately told by Mr. Row[e] that if they fired one Gun, Every Man of Them should be put to Death; which so frightened the poor Devils that they surrendered without firing a Shot, although our People Could not board her without the Assistance of the Conquered, who let down Ropes to our Men to get up by.⁷²

As the working parties from the fort arrived to unload the sloop, they too were easily captured.⁷³ Altogether thirty-four of Gorham's troops, including Captain Barron, Engineer of the Garrison, and the bibulous Rev. Eagleson, were seized by Rowe's detachment.⁷⁴ The captured sloop was sailed away at high tide in the direction of the Missiquash River, but not before the Royal Fencibles "fired several cannon shots"⁷⁵ at the brazen enemy.

Only two attempts were made to capture Fort Cumberland, one on November

137⁶ and the other nine days later.⁷⁷ Both were miserable failures. Before Eddy could organize a third attempt, British reinforcements arrived.

On November 27 and November 28, the British relieving force, consisting of two companies of Marines and one company of the Royal Highlanders, finally landed at Fort Cumberland.⁷⁸ The relieving force had sailed from Halifax and Windsor.⁷⁹ On the 28th Gorham ordered Major Batt, an officer who had accompanied the reinforcements, to lead an attack on Eddy's camp, one mile north of the fort.⁸⁰ At five-thirty in the morning of the 29th, Batt marched out of Fort Cumberland with 170 troops, hoping to surprise the "rebels."⁸¹ If it had not been for an alert young Negro drummer who furiously beat the alarm when he sighted the enemy,⁸² Eddy's men would have been slaughtered in their sleep. Wiping sleep from their eyes, Eddy's confused followers ran into the neighbouring woods in search of cover.⁸³ In the skirmish that followed only seven "rebels" and four British soldiers were killed.⁸⁴ Seeing the hopelessness of the situation, Eddy ordered his men to retreat westwards "to the St. John River . . . and there make a stand."⁸⁵ Batt refused to pursue the "rebels"; instead he had his men put to the torch every home and barn belonging to those inhabitants of the Isthmus who had openly supported Eddy.⁸⁶ The billowing dark clouds of smoke could be seen by the defeated invaders as they fled in panic towards Memramcook.⁸⁷

Eddy's rash attempt to capture Fort Cumberland failed not only because he lacked artillery, but also because his men were poorly trained, undisciplined, and badly led. With British control of the North Atlantic firmly established, with Washington's refusal to support the invasion, and with the great majority of Nova Scotians desperately trying to be neutral, Eddy's task was hopeless. Even though the Eddy Rebellion, by any broad strategic standards, was quite insignificant in the larger Revolutionary context, it is of some importance as an illustration of the fact that in 1775 and 1776, under their superficial neutrality, the New Englanders tacitly supported the Revolutionary movement. Moreover, the Eddy Rebellion helps to indicate how effectively British naval power and the isolated nature of the settlements of Nova Scotia had "neutralized the New England migrants."⁸⁸

From 1777 to 1782 almost every Nova Scotian coastal settlement (with the notable exception of Halifax) from Tatamagouche on Northumberland Strait to the Saint John River was ravaged by American privateers.⁸⁹ As a result of these free-booting forays many New Englanders in Nova Scotia, who had originally been rather sympathetic to the Revolution, became increasingly hostile to their brethren to

the south. In 1775 and 1776 most of the Nova Scotians "divided betwixt natural affection to our nearest relations, and good Faith and Friendship to our King and Country";⁹⁰ had decided to walk the tightrope of neutrality even though they appeared to lean precariously in the direction of their "nearest relations". By the closing years of the conflict, however, as the "Neutral Yankees" reached the end of their hazardous journey, they had begun to lean towards the opposite extreme, towards the King.

What real impact did the Revolution have upon the inhabitants of Nova Scotia? Of course most of them resolved to adopt a policy of neutrality; many suffered because of the depredations of the American privateers; while a few, especially the Halifax merchants, grew rich from the usual profits of war. But was there nothing else? M. W. Armstrong has convincingly argued that probably the most important impact of the Revolution upon Nova Scotia was in precipitating the "Great Awakening of Nova Scotia."⁹¹ In addition, Armstrong has emphasized that the "Great Awakening" encouraged the development of neutrality:

Indeed, the Great Awakening itself may be considered to have been a retreat from the grim realities of the world to the safety and pleasantly exciting warmth of the revival meeting, and to profits and rewards of another character . . . an escape from fear and divided loyalties . . . an assertion of democratic ideals and a determination to maintain them, the Great Awakening gave self respect and satisfaction to people whose economic and political position was both humiliating and distressing.⁹²

The prophet and evangelist of the spiritual awakening was Henry Alline who, when he was twelve, had moved from Rhode Island to Falmouth, Nova Scotia.⁹³ An uneducated farmer, Alline had experienced an unusual "Conversion",⁹⁴ and in 1776 he began to preach an emotional Christian message that has been described as being a combination of "Calvinism, Antinomianism, and Enthusiasm."⁹⁵ The flames of religious revival⁹⁶ swept up the Minas Basin in 1777, across the Bay of Fundy in 1779, and to the South Shore in 1781.⁹⁷ All Protestant Churches in Nova Scotia were in one way or another affected by the "Great Awakening", and largely as a direct result the evangelical wing of the various Protestant Churches was able to dominate Maritime religious life throughout the nineteenth century.

British sea power, the isolated nature of the settlements, the refusal of Washington to mount an offensive against Nova Scotia, and perhaps the religious revival, all combined to keep the "Yankees" neutral during the Revolution.

NOTES

1. W. B. Kerr, "Nova Scotia in the Critical Years, 1775-6", *The Dalhousie Review* (April, 1932), 97.

2. S. D. Clarke, *"Movements of Political Protest in Canada, 1640-1840"* (Toronto, 1959), 63.
3. It should be borne in mind that there was a significant German-speaking population in the Lunenburg region and that there were pockets of Highland Scots, Yorkshiremen, Acadians, and Scots-Irish scattered throughout the peninsula of Nova Scotia. Most of these settlers (a few Acadians and Scots-Irish are the exception to the rule) also remained neutral during the Revolution even though their sympathies lay with the Crown.
4. J. B. Brebner, *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia* (New York, 1937), 329-337.
5. V. Barnes, "Francis Legge, Governor of Loyalist Nova Scotia, 1773-1776", *New England Quarterly* (July, 1931), 420-447. See also a convincing criticism of this view in W. B. Kerr, "The Merchants of Nova Scotia and The American Revolution", *Canadian Historical Review* (March, 1932) 21-34.
6. A. L. Burt, *The United States, Great Britain, and British North America* (Toronto, 1940), 13.
7. W. B. Kerr, *The Maritime Provinces of British North America and the American Revolution* (Sackville, n.d.), 59.
8. *Ibid.*, 60.
9. *Ibid.*, 53-60.
10. Brebner, *Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia*, 352.
11. J. C. Webster, *The Forts of Chignecto* (Sackville, 1930), 5.
12. W. C. Milner, *History of Sackville, New Brunswick* (Sackville, 1955), 14-21.
13. B. J. Bird, "Settlement Patterns in Maritime Canada, 1687-1876", *The Geographic Review* (July, 1955), 398-9.
14. *Ibid.*
15. W. C. Milner, "Records of Chignecto", *Collections of the Nova Scotia Historical Society*, Vol. XV (Halifax, 1911), 41-45.
16. *Ibid.*, 40.
17. W. B. Kerr, *The Maritime Provinces . . . and the American Revolution*, 68.
18. *Ibid.*
19. J. M. Beck, *The Government of Nova Scotia* (Toronto, 1957), 22-25.
20. D. C. Harvey, "The Struggle for the New England Form of Township Government in Nova Scotia", *Canadian Historical Association Report* (1933), 18.
21. D. C. Harvey, "Machias and the Invasion of Nova Scotia", *C.H.A.R.* (1932), 17.
22. J. C. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *The Writings of George Washington* (Washington, 1931), III, 415.
23. *Ibid.*, III, 415-416.
24. The Petition of the Chignecto Inhabitants, December 23, 1775, *Nova Scotia Archives*, A 94, 330-8.
25. Kerr, "Nova Scotia in the Critical Years 1775-6", 98.
26. Governor Legge to the Secretary of State, July 31, 1775, *Canadian Archives Report for 1894* (Ottawa, 1895), 334.
27. E. P. Weaver, "Nova Scotia and New England during the Revolution". *American Historical Review* (October, 1904), 63.

28. B. Murdoch, *A History of Nova Scotia* (Halifax, 1860), II, 554.
29. Kerr, *The Maritime Provinces*, 69.
30. *Ibid.*, 63.
31. Quoted in F. Kidder, *Military Operations in Eastern Maine and Nova Scotia During the Revolution* (Albany, 1867), 64.
32. Kerr, *The Maritime Provinces*, 70.
33. The Petition of the Chignecto Inhabitants, *Nova Scotia Archives*, A 94, 330-8.
34. Quoted in Kerr, *The Maritime Provinces*, 73.
35. Fitzpatrick, IV, 437.
36. H. Peckham, *The War For Independence* (Chicago, 1959), 32.
37. Fitzpatrick, IV, 438.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Kerr, *The Maritime Provinces*, 73.
40. See *Canadian Archives Report for 1894*, 345.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Kerr, *The Maritime Provinces*, 74.
43. Quoted in Murdoch, II, 568.
44. In the administrative shuffle Francklin was demoted to Indian Agent.
45. The Royal Fencibles were mostly recruited from the Loyalists in the Thirteen Colonies.
46. W. B. Kerr, "The American Invasion of Nova Scotia, 1776-7", *Canadian Defense Quarterly* (July, 1936), 434.
47. Gorham's Journal, *C.A.R.*, 1894, 360.
48. Kerr, *The Maritime Provinces*, 78.
49. Kidder, *Military Operations in Eastern Maine and Nova Scotia During the Revolution*, 12.
50. Petition of Jonathan Eddy, Aug. 28, 1776, in P. Force (ed.), *American Archives, Fifth Series* (Washington, 1851), II, 734.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Kidder, *Military Operations in Eastern Maine and Nova Scotia During the Revolution*, 12.
53. Gorham's Journal, 355.
54. Quoted in Harvey, "Machias and the Invasion of Nova Scotia", 21.
55. Kerr, "The American Invasion of Nova Scotia, 1776-7", 434.
56. *Ibid.*, 435.
57. *Ibid.*
58. The description of the Rebellion is to be found in Gorham's Journal, *C.A.R.*, 355-7 359-365 and in Eddy's Journal, Harvey, "Machias and the Invasion of Nova Scotia", 22-24.
59. Eddy's Journal, 22.
60. *Ibid.*
61. *Ibid.*
62. Allan's Journal, Harvey, "Machias and the Invasion of Nova Scotia", 24.

63. Kerr, "The American Invasion of Nova Scotia, 1776-7," 435.
64. Eddy's Journal, 23.
65. Kerr, "The American Invasion of Nova Scotia, 1776-7", 436.
66. Gorham's Journal, 355.
67. *Ibid.*, 360.
68. *Ibid.*, 356.
69. *Ibid.*, 360.
70. For the opposite point of view see Kerr, "The American Invasion of Nova Scotia", 441: "A well-directed sortie could at any time have broken up Eddy's camp."
71. Eddy's Journal, 22.
72. *Ibid.*
73. *Ibid.*, 22-3.
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid.*, 23; Gorham's Journal, 356.
76. Gorham's Journal, 361-362.
77. *Ibid.*
78. *Ibid.*, 362.
79. *Ibid.* This point must be emphasized especially, after examining Stanley's inaccurate reference to an overland march. See G. F. G. Stanley, *Canada's Soldiers, 1605-1954* (Toronto, 1954), 118.
80. Gorham's Journal, 362.
81. *Ibid.*
82. C. E. Kemp, "Folk-Lore About Old Fort Beauséjour", *Acadiensis* (October, 1908), 301-302. Also see Kerr, "The American Invasion of Nova Scotia", 440.
83. Gorham's Journal, 362.
84. Kerr, "The American Invasion of Nova Scotia, 1776-7", 441.
85. Eddy's Journal, 23.
86. Gorham's Journal, 362.
87. The contest for present-day western New Brunswick continued until the end of the Revolutionary War. In the summer of 1777 Allan's invading force of some 100 men from Machias was compelled to retreat overland from the St. John Valley towards the St. Croix when confronted by a strong British military expedition led by Major Gilford Studholme and Francklin. For the remainder of the war Allan unsuccessfully attempted to persuade the St. John River Indians to join the Revolutionary cause.
88. Brebner, *The Neutral Yankees of Nova Scotia*, 353.
89. *Ibid.*, 324-335.
90. Petition of the Inhabitants of Yarmouth, Dec. 8. 1775. Quoted in Brebner, 291.
91. M. W. Armstrong, "Neutrality and Religion in Revolutionary Nova Scotia", *The New England Quarterly* (Mar., 1946), 50-61.
92. *Ibid.*, 57, 58, 60.
93. *Ibid.*, 55.
94. See W. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York, 1958), 134-135: "My sins seemed to be laid open; so that I thought that every one I saw knew them,

and sometimes I was almost ready to acknowledge many things, which I thought they knew; yea sometimes it seemed to me as if every one was pointing me out as the most guilty wretch upon earth."

95. Quoted in Armstrong, "Neutrality and Religion in Revolutionary Nova Scotia", 58.
96. The following is Aline's description of the Liverpool revival of 1776: "We had blessed days, the Lord was reviving his work of grace. Many under a load of sin cried out, what shall we do to be saved? and the saints seemed much revived, came out and witnessed for God. In a short time some more souls were born to Christ, they came out and declared what God had done for their souls and what a blessed change had taken place in that town."
Quoted in Armstrong, 55-56.
97. *Ibid.*, 55.