

QUEEN CITY REGISTER.

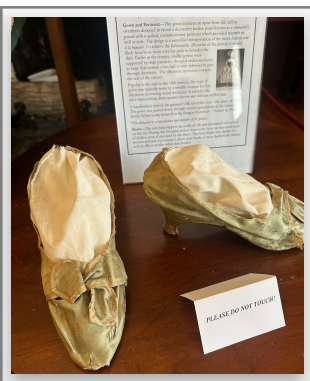
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250
ISSUE

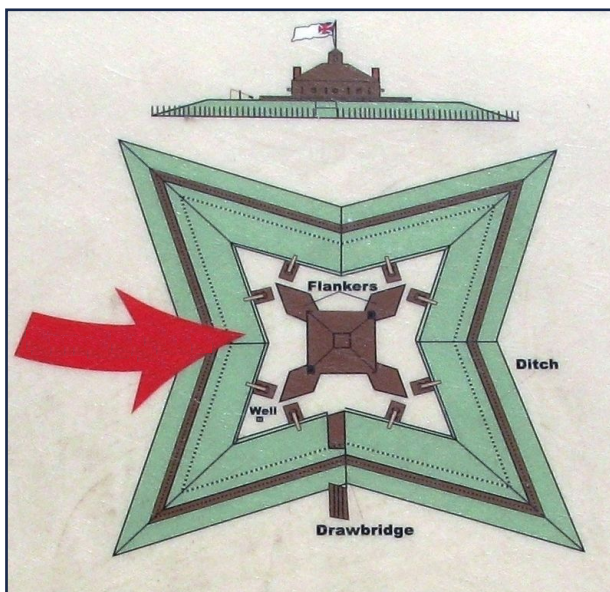
The Bangor Historical Society's Quarterly Newsletter

Brothers, Patriots, and The Fort That Made Bangor Possible

There is a story about Bangor that begins not on the Kenduskeag Stream but thirty miles downriver, on a narrow peninsula jutting into Penobscot Bay. It is the story of a fort that never fired a shot in anger, and of the men whose lives it shaped, men who carried the Revolution to the

northeastern frontier and then stayed to build a city. In 1759, Massachusetts Governor Thomas Pownall sailed north from Boston with 400 men and built a fort at the mouth of the Penobscot River. (Today's Fort Point State Park). Fort Pownall never fired a shot in anger. Its walls of squared timber, its moat fifteen feet wide and eight feet deep, its forty-four-foot blockhouse with diamond-shaped flankers at each corner stood for sixteen years without once being tested in battle.² What it did instead was more lasting: its protective presence opened the Penobscot River valley to settlement, giving the men and women who pushed upriver the security to believe the frontier was safe enough to call home. Fort Pownall did not win a war. It made the city of Bangor possible.

Among the first men to come north to serve the new fort was Lieutenant



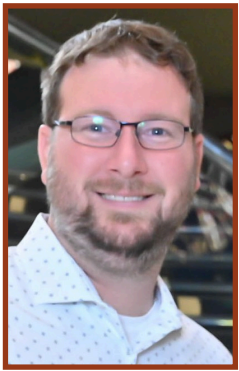
The design of Fort Pownall - Protecting the mouth of the Penobscot River

Reference 1

Joshua Treat of Boston, born in 1726, who arrived in 1759 as the fort's armorer and Indian language interpreter. He had learned the gunsmith trade from his father and was already a skilled negotiator with Native communities, one of thirty-two men who witnessed the Treaty with the Indians in 1752.³ Joshua would

serve at Fort Pownall for sixteen years, becoming the first permanent English settler on the Penobscot River.

Ten years after Joshua arrived, his much younger half-brother followed him north. Robert Treat was seventeen years old when he left Boston in 1769 (not coincidentally the same year Jacob Buswell became the first white settler in what would become Bangor) to join Joshua at Fort Pownall, twenty-three years his senior, where he too served as armorer and Indian interpreter.⁴ The younger Treat learned his trade from the man who had been doing it for a decade, and when the Revolution came and the fort was destroyed, first by the British who stripped its cannons and powder in 1775, then by Colonel Cargill of the Continental Army who destroyed the blockhouse by fire and filled the moat to deny it to the enemy, Robert Treat (See "Treat" page 3)



Curator's Corner **Happy August, and what a July we had!**

Over 250 people visited us in Downtown Bangor for the exclusive viewing of our William Stone copy of the Declaration of

Independence on July 4th, and it was a truly extraordinary way to celebrate the 250th anniversary of independence and the birth of our country! Our rare Tyler copy of the Declaration will continue to be on display at the Hill House, Tuesdays-Saturdays from 10 am-4 pm, until the end of October. We cannot thank Versant Power and the City of Bangor's Commission on Cultural Development enough for sponsoring our Declaration events and our exhibit in the Hill House this season. Upcoming events include our annual Mount Hope Movie Night (This year is Stephen King's "IT"!) and our walking tours continue through August and September. Ghostly Bangor (tickets available soon) and Darker Mount Hope tours will return in October, and save the date for our annual awards gala, *Liberty and Legacy*, which will be taking place on Saturday, October 3rd.

We hope to see you at these great events and anytime at the Hill House. Thank you for your continued support of the Bangor Historical Society

- Matt Bishop

Special Thanks To Our Sponsors!



CITY OF BANGOR

Exhibit, Events, and New Tour Celebrate 250

This summer, the Bangor Historical Society features one of the most ambitious exhibits in its 160-year history. *Words That Made a Nation: Maine, the Declaration, and the War for Independence* runs through October 30 at the Thomas A. Hill House, and at its heart are two extraordinary documents: a Tyler copy and a Stone copy of the Declaration of Independence, both owned by the Bangor Historical Society. The Stone copy is one of fewer than 48 surviving examples of the engraving that



University of Maine Political Scientists Robert Ballingall, Ryan LaRochelle, and Mark Brewer discuss the impact of the Declaration at a BHS panel in June

appears in every American history textbook. The exhibit tells the story of how Maine's northeastern frontier was woven into the founding of a nation, from the capture of the British schooner *Margaretta* at Machias, to the catastrophic Penobscot Expedition of 1779, which ended in Bangor's harbor. It introduces the founding generation of Bangor and their connection to the struggle for independence, and it grapples honestly with the Declaration's unfinished promises: to the Penobscot Nation, to the women who fought for suffrage, to the mill workers who called themselves "freemen's daughters" on the picket lines of Lewiston and Auburn. Complementing the exhibit is *Founders and Freedom: A Revolutionary Walk Through Mount Hope*, a new guided walking tour connecting the graves of Bangor's founding generation to the Revolution, and a series of events and lectures featuring area historians and academics. The story that began in Philadelphia came here, to Bangor, to Maine, and this summer and fall, you can walk through it.

Visit us at The Thomas A. Hill House Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and find special tour times and upcoming events online at www.bangorhistoricalsociety.org.

Treat Brothers and Fellow Patriots Help Establish Bangor

(Continued from Page 1)

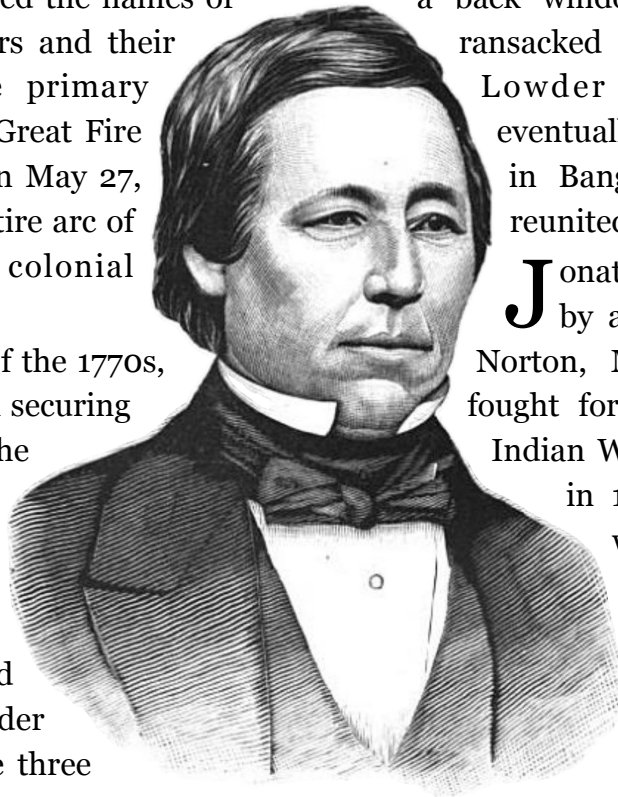
was already established upriver.⁵ He had arrived in Bangor around 1773, opened a shop near the Penjejawock Stream, and planted himself firmly in the community the fort had made possible. He would never leave. He rose to the rank of Major in the local militia, owned mills in Bangor, Orland, and Frankfort, and kept a Day Book from 1786 to 1790 that recorded the names of dozens of early Bangor settlers and their transactions, an invaluable primary source later destroyed in the Great Fire of 1911.⁶ He died in Bangor on May 27, 1824, having witnessed the entire arc of Queen City history from colonial garrison to incorporation.

In the small colonial world of the 1770s, the Treats were not alone in securing a future for the Queen City of the East. Jonathan Lowder had served alongside the Treat brothers at Fort Pownall as the garrison's gunner. Where the Treats maintained and repaired the weapons, Lowder operated the artillery, and the three men formed the professional core of the installation's military capability. When the Revolution came, Lowder's story became one of the most dramatic on the Penobscot. Appointed Massachusetts Truckmaster (the colonial official in charge of trade with local Native peoples) to the Penobscot Indians in 1776 and 1777, he set up a government trading post on the riverbank just below what is now Mount Hope Cemetery, placing him at the center of the alliance with the Penobscot Nation that Chief Joseph Orono had pledged at Watertown in June 1775. The site was later confirmed by archaeological excavation conducted by Dr. Alaric Faulkner of the University of Maine in 1987 and 1988.⁷ In October 1779, Lowder was captured by a

British-led party while carrying dispatches for the American Superintendent of Eastern Indians. He was held as a spy in Quebec, then moved to Halifax and St. John, imprisoned for three years. While he was imprisoned, Penobscot Indians came to his Truckhouse to reclaim pawned goods; his wife Deliverance passed their baby daughter out through a back window to safety while the Indians ransacked the front room. After the war, Lowder came home to Maine and eventually clerked at Robert Treat's store in Bangor, two Fort Pownall veterans reunited on the peacetime Penobscot.⁸

Jonathan Eddy came to Bangor's story by a different path entirely. Born in Norton, Massachusetts in 1726, he had fought for the British in the French and Indian War before moving to Nova Scotia in 1763 as a New England Planter, where he served in the Nova Scotia House of Assembly from 1770 to 1775.⁹ When the Revolution began he openly supported the patriot cause and in 1776 led a force of roughly 180 men in a daring attempt to seize Fort Cumberland and bring Nova Scotia into the Revolution as the

fourteenth American colony. The attempt failed, his property was destroyed in retaliation, and he could never return.¹⁰ He spent the remainder of the war defending Machias, then came to Maine after the peace, settling with his fellow Nova Scotia exiles on a land grant in what is now Eddington, just upriver from Bangor. He served as judge, registrar of probate, and justice of the peace, and chaired the committee that called Seth Noble to the ministry at Kenduskeag Plantation, the act that led directly to Bangor receiving its name.¹¹ What these four men share is a story that is easy to overlook in the broad sweep of Revolutionary history (See "War Heroes" page 4)



Revolutionary Colonel Jonathan Eddy helped establish Bangor and becomes the namesake for the town of Eddington - Reference 10

Did You Know? - There's Revolutionary Fashion On Display at The Hill House Now!



1765 Fashion on Exhibit at The Hill House

The Bangor Historical Society is in possession of more than 1000 historic garments from multiple eras. Our current exhibit, *Words That Made a Nation*, features several pieces from our collection of historic clothing, including items from the Revolutionary era. One fascinating piece is a silk taffeta gown worn by Eliza Salmon around 1765, reflecting the fashionable silhouette of colonial America's merchant class in the decade before the Revolution.

The choice of imported silk over homespun was itself a political statement, one that would become increasingly fraught as tensions with Britain escalated toward independence.

War Heroes Establish Queen City

(Continued from Page 3) but essential to understanding the Queen City. Bangor did not rise because settlers wandered north. It rose because a fort made the river safe, because two brothers came to serve that fort and stayed when it was gone, because a gunner imprisoned for three years in a British jail and a Nova Scotia exile who could never go home made choices that built something permanent from the chaos of a revolution. The fort that made it all possible was destroyed in 1775. The men who served it, or who came in its wake, stayed and built a city.



Eddy's assault on Fort Cumberland made him a Revolutionary hero
- Reference 12

The grave of Robert Treat and the Eddy Family monument are at Mount Hope Cemetery, and their stories are told on the Bangor Historical Society's new guided walking tour, *Founders and Freedom: A Revolutionary Walk Through Mount Hope*. Tour times and registration are available at bangorhistoricalsociety.org. Their full stories, along with the Declaration of Independence that gave the Revolution its ideals, are told inside the Thomas A. Hill House this summer in *Words That Made a Nation*, open through October 30, 2026.



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