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# **Making War Part II: "He has plundered our Seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our Towns, and destroyed the Lives of our People"**

**Tiffany Link 00:07**

And so, in the morning, some townspeople see the ships out in the harbor. They're worried that maybe someone's going to kind of be causing some trouble, but they don't know quite what to expect, and so they go out and they find out that it's Captain [Henry] Mowat and they're like, 'Oh, great. Like, we don't have to be concerned, because he's our friend.' Captain Mowat's like, 'Well, guess what, I am here with orders to bombard your town, essentially destroy your town, and, you know, head back to Boston.'

**Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai 00:37**

[Intro music fades in] This is Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai.

**Lauren Gray 00:50**

This is Lauren Gray.

**Cassie Cloutier 00:51**

This is Cassie Cloutier.

**Lauren Gray 00:53**

And this is The Object of History, the podcast of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

**Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai 00:59**

Since 1791, the MHS has sought to collect, preserve and communicate the building blocks of history.

**Lauren Gray 01:06**

Each episode examines an object, document or set of items from the society's millions of manuscript pieces and artifacts.

**Cassie Cloutier 01:14**

We take you on a behind the scenes tour of our stacks to explore the incredible stories held within our collections.

**Lauren Gray 01:20**

We are dedicating the entirety of season five of The Object of History to topics related to the American Revolution.

**Cassie Cloutier 01:27**

This is part two out of a three part look at the geography, characters, and events that shaped the first years of the American Revolution. In this episode, we discuss Revolutionary era Maine and the burning of Falmouth in 1775. We visited the Maine Historical Society to discuss the bombardment of present-day Portland by Captain Henry Mowat and the Royal Navy, as well as how residents viewed the conflict. We are joined by Tiffany Link, Collections Curator at the Maine Historical Society and cohost of the Mainely History podcast. We also examined two documents in the MHS collections relating to the Revolution in Maine, one by John Allan, a Scottish born officer in the Massachusetts militia, and another by a crew member on a scientific expedition.

**Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai 02:18**

So, Lauren, we are here at the MHS, and we are looking at some documents in our collections related to the district of Maine, then a part of Massachusetts Bay, relating to the Revolutionary War.

**Lauren Gray 02:33**

We have some wonderful pieces from Maine, and we have one that we're looking at right now. It is a proclamation by a Colonel John Allan dated June 23, 1779, which is encouraging men to enlist with the Continental Army. It's a wonderful document, not least of all because of the language that he's using to compel soldiers to engage in this conflict to join the Continentals. And he has this wonderful line about the British he's saying that men should enlist to prevent 'the bloody and horrid designs of our enemy, whose tenderest mercies are cruelty.' So, I mean, you just don't see language like that anymore.

**Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai 03:19**

That you do not and it is really an us against them, a really demonization of the enemy. And I think that the mindset of the time, at least, to people who lived there, would probably warrant that to a certain degree. I mean, this is after the burning of Falmouth, right? And the British, although they have evacuated Boston, they are not going to come back to Boston itself. During the war, they do control areas along the Rhode Island coast and certainly areas of Maine and there are some hard feelings.

**Lauren Gray 03:57**

Absolutely, the war still is very much present in these parts of the country, even though the battles that we hear most often have shifted to the south in that time. But John Allan is encouraging his fellow colonials, or Americans at this point to take up arms against Britain and reassuring them that you know, they are not invincible. They are men like ourselves. And experience repeatedly has convinced the world that the sons of America in their lowest estate were equal to Britons, and that is just really reassuring, I think, for people who are leaving their homes and joining the Continental Army to know that they are fighting for the good cause and that they don't have to fear.

**Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai 04:41**

And there's actually a lot of need for some defensive force in this part of what would become the United States, or was proclaimed as the United States at that point already, because the bulk of the army that had formed around Boston during the Siege of Boston had gone south with George Washington as the Continental Army, the main body of it to fight the battles in New York and Philadelphia and further south. That leaves, of course, huge areas that are still under threat of British naval and land forces. And that is what John Allan is attempting to recruit here for.

**Lauren Gray 05:19**

As you go through the document, he ends it with talking about their indigenous allies, and that there need not be under any apprehension of danger from the 'eastern Indians' and as to the 'Canada Indians', there is very few who will join Britain. But of course, the war, in this time, in the entirety of the war is happening very much in the heart of the homelands of the indigenous peoples, and they're engaged in the conflict, whether they want to be or not, the war really resulted or compelled these complex inter and intra tribal conversations are out what participation would look like. What was to be benefited by siding

either with the British or the Americans, and especially early on, you know, tribes really tried to avoid siding with one or the other, and very actively worked to remain neutral. But just over time, that became really impossible, especially as individuals in these communities made personal choices to join with one side or the other. So, there was a lot of pressure on indigenous nations during the war. And then, of course, afterwards, there was once the Americans emerged victorious, there was massive land dispossession from indigenous people, even those who had served with the Americans. You see the initial conversations around that appearing in this document.

**Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai 06:43**

So, historians have talked about, or tried, rather to figure out, the proportion of people in North America who would have sided with the rebels/patriots, or who were loyalists, or those who were neutral, right? And they have come down roughly to say that they're probably a third in each category. Now in places like Massachusetts, the proportion of rebels or patriots is probably higher given the fact that the war started here, that there was lingering animosity going back to the 1760s and whatnot. But of course, there were still people who remain loyal to the crown. And in Allan's proclamation here, it seems like he is making a clear distinction between the two sides. He's talking about how the actions of the British should, quote, convince every rational mind what they must expect by giving up tamely their all into the hands of such beings, and that nothing else is intended but to wrench from this free country all that is dear, humane and sacred. And then he pivots, and he's talking about those who are still loyalists. And he says, quote, still some who are actuated from principles of fear, attachment to Britain's self and other lucrative views, seems willing to comply themselves and endeavor to lead others into the same snare. I mean, that is in my reading that he is just demonizing. He's just pointing to the self-interest only those who are self-interested can continue to support the British government at this point. This is very much a civil war.

**Lauren Gray 08:28**

Absolutely and it is a time for picking sides, and you must choose. And this is very much like what we see for advertisements today for joining the armed forces. It's a call to arms. It's plays on the imagination, and there's this very powerful language about committing oneself to the cause of liberty, but also wrenching yourself from the identity of being British and what that means.

**Cassie Cloutier** 08:54

Let us turn to our conversation with Tiffany Link, Collections Curator at the Maine Historical Society, to learn about what prompted John Allan to make this proclamation in 1779. So, can you give us a little bit of context about Maine before the Revolution? I understand it was part of Massachusetts.

**Tiffany Link** 09:16

Always gets pointed out that Maine was part of Massachusetts until statehood in 1820 and as part of Massachusetts, the way our towns were structured was very similar. You know, town meetings, militias, required education was important. So, in those ways, Maine was very similar to Massachusetts. A lot of people who were living in Maine had, of course, started their family journeys, immigrating first to Massachusetts and then coming north. So, I think a lot of the cultural and belief structures and things of that nature were very similar between the two states. And that was true, you know, when the Revolution started as well. So, we had in Maine, there were people who were very pro revolution and very anti revolution. I think where the big shift is that, unlike in Massachusetts, where a lot of your coastal communities like Boston or Salem, Newburyport might have been a little more on the pro side early on, coastal communities in Maine were a little bit more hesitant and tried to ride the fence a bit more. They were very dependent on trade with Britain, so especially when the non-importation agreement started coming into effect in 1774 and '75 you know, that was really going to hurt their livelihood. These places, even the coastal areas, were still very much frontier territory. And so, I think survival was maybe a little bit more tenuous, or just really dependent on a continual income coming in, and maybe some of the more established places that had a little bit more wealth behind them in Massachusetts. The inland portions of Maine specifically, like Gorham or sort of coastal but inland places like Brunswick, who maybe weren't as dependent on ports and trade, they were heavily more leaning towards Revolution, and so they kind of viewed Falmouth and Kittery and York as, like these coastal elite places that were rich people who were siding with the British and the king, and they were like the country folk that were working hard and like trying to secure their liberties. And so, there was kind of that tension going on in the early days of the war in especially southern Maine. But it really all kind of starts with 1774 and the provincial Congress, and then the early Continental Congress putting out these non-importation agreements, which is asking all of the colonies to please not do business with Britain. But what that meant was, as a colony, you didn't really have the option to do business with other countries. You were expected to only trade with Britain. So, if you weren't trading with Britain, and you were, say, a

merchant or a ship owner or someone who was dependent on that kind of business, you were really going to take a hard hit. Falmouth in particular, was experiencing that. And I guess I should say Falmouth is present day Portland, and we're talking about just sort of the today mostly, we're talking about the peninsula portion of Portland. So, the part that sticks out into the water, that's primarily where the settlement was, and that part of the town is and was like still pretty exposed to deep water. So, it's very easy for large ships, even today, to get very close to shore. So, they knew that they were kind of vulnerable, both from land and sea. And a merchant ship came into town he wanted to unload. He also needed to repair. The townspeople didn't want that to happen, although they were a little shy of saying you definitely can't, until some Brunswick militiamen under Samuel Thompson came in and they started causing some trouble. And so, Captain Mowat was dispatched from Boston. He came up and he was trying to protect this ship, allow it some time to repair itself, basically do some business and violate the non-importation agreement. And Falmouth itself was sort of turning a blind eye to this. You know, they weren't really too concerned about it. Really didn't want to rock the boat or cause too many waves. But Brunswick, Gorham, Scarborough, surrounding towns like that were not okay with what was happening, and so Thompson and his group develop a plan that they're going to kidnap Captain Mowat as he's going to church. So, they do this, and they actually take him to Greele's tavern which is where the militiamen often met, and a lot of town business occurred. They held him there for a couple of days, and then some town representatives from Falmouth were like, 'What are you doing? Did the did the provincial Congress, which was like the rebel ruling body of Massachusetts, did they allow you to do they command you to do this?' Because he had been asked to deal with a similar situation further north in Maine, but had not been asked to deal with this situation happening in Falmouth, and so he didn't really give a great answer. They eventually do release Mowat. The town profusely apologizes to him, you know, just falling all over themselves, saying how sorry they are. He accepts the apology and just says, 'We're good,' and the town thinks great. So, all of that happened in May of 1775. Flash forward a few weeks up in Machias, there is a similar situation with a ship going north. They are trying to obtain some lumber to take back down to Boston, because the British are besieged in Boston. They have no natural resources. So, they can't build any homes for the 1000s of new soldiers that have arrived from England. They also have no firewood, and they can't go out into the countryside to get it, because there's like 25,000 militia after Concord and Lexington that are just surrounding the town. So, they strike a deal with a merchant who has connections to Machias to go up and get some lumber, take some provisions up there, because they really need it after a failed crop season the year before, and take the

lumber back down to Boston. But the townspeople are wise to the fact that he's acting on behalf of the British. Even though his name was Jones, even though Jones was a familiar face in Machias. They knew that this time he was working with [Thomas] Gage and the British in Boston, and so they're hesitant to do business with him. But he brought a British ship with him from Boston, the Margaretta, and it had arms on it to kind of force compliance, should that be necessary. And that really set the townspeople off. And so, to make a long story short, there was a famous militia leader named Jeremiah O'Brien and he led a group of men. They captured the Margaretta, they captured Jones's two merchant vessels, and they kind of used them to harass the British up in northern Maine in their supply routes that are coming down from Canada. So that that didn't set very well with the British. So that had happened, Concord and Lexington had happened, Bunker Hill happened, which they did win, but it didn't go particularly well for them. So, there was, like a string of not-so-great things happening for Gage and the British in Boston. And so then they really wanted to get a handle on these coastal towns that were supporting the Revolution and so Gage issues in order that Captain Mowat can leave Boston and destroy all towns east of Boston, which, if you look at the map of Maine, is most of Maine and that are Patriot leaning towns. So Mowat has a bit of a list. Things like Salem, Newburyport, Boothbay, Machias and Falmouth are all on this list. So, he heads past most of them. It seems like he's probably going to Machias, obviously, but there's a really bad storm in the Boothbay area, and so he anchors there for a bit and has to turn around. And at that point, he's headed right past Falmouth. It's easy pickins'. He can get up close to the shore. All of the houses and businesses are pretty much on the side of the hill that face the ocean. So, it's just sort of laid out right in front of him. There's not a lot of trees, not a lot of particularly tall homes. It's very easy for him to just bombard the town and fire into the town and destroy everything. And so, in the morning, some townspeople see the ships out in the harbor. They're worried that maybe someone's going to kind of be causing some trouble, but they don't know quite what to expect. And so, they go out and they find out that it's Captain Mowat, and they're like, 'Oh, great. Like, we don't have to be concerned, because he's our friend.' Captain Mowat's like, 'Well, guess what. I am here with orders to bombard your town, essentially destroy your town, and, you know, head back to Boston.' And so, they ask for a reprieve. They say, 'Let us try to, you know, do something to, you know, calm the situation down.' And he says, 'Well, if you can get the town to turn over all of its arms by, like, 9am tomorrow, we can talk.' And so, they go back and they bring him, like, 10 guns. And I don't know, it just says guns in the in the sources I have read. So, I don't know if there's like muskets or cannon, but 10 weapons, and they say that they're working on getting the rest. But in the meantime, Samuel Thompson finds out

what's happening, and so he and militia from the surrounding towns again, show up in Falmouth and kind of prevent this deal from going forward. So, the next morning comes, there's been no further movement on this, handing over your weapons agreement. And so Mowat I think, gives him, like, an extra 45 minutes or something, but then he starts firing incendiary shot into the town. So, he bombards the town for at least six hours because he doesn't have to save ammunition for anywhere else you know, like his plans are after this to just go right back to Boston, so those other towns are not on his list anymore. It's just Falmouth gets everything. And when the incendiary shot isn't enough, he actually does send Marines into the town to set fire to some of the homes that are still standing. And so essentially, most of the buildings burn. Alice Greele's tavern that we mentioned before is still standing at the end, and then the First Parish church as well. So, it's very, very little for people to come back to. A lot of people were really hurriedly packing up their possessions into carts like whatever they could find to get out of town. A lot of people in Falmouth had connections to outside communities like Windham or Gorham and or Hiram, and so they were able to go either to second residences or family homes or farms. And that's what most people did, so and then Mowat went on his way. And, you know, a year later, there's the Declaration of Independence. And there's the line in there about burning our towns, and Falmouth is one of those direct references. But the town itself can't really come out as like a patriotic hero, but they also can't be like a defender of the crown. So, it's just sort of like, where does it fit? But it is good propaganda for things like the Declaration to say that the king's troops are, like, burning this poor town, but when you get into the facts of like, telling, like, a great story about it, that's when maybe it loses a little of its patriotic luster.

**Cassie Cloutier** 20:30

Can you tell us about some of the items that you pulled out related to this event?

**Tiffany Link** 20:34

So, one of the other items we pulled is a sketch by Charles Quincy Goodhue, and he drew many early buildings in Portland that no longer exist. So, we're really happy to have his drawing of Alice Greele's tavern. The tavern itself was auctioned in the like 1850s and was actually at that point, broken apart into two different buildings and moved to another area of town and then pretty much gutted for residential properties before it was, you know, finally torn down altogether. So, it's excellent that we were able to get his interpretation of that building, as well as many other early buildings in Portland. And some of

that he, you know, did himself from what he was able to see, and other things he did from accounts or what they suppose that that might have looked like. Another item we have is a floorboard from a garret of a home that was right across the street from the tavern that was probably mostly destroyed. You know that part of Portland might not have been quite as open to the area of the bombardment as other locations. There's also accounts that Alice was trying pretty hard to pour water on her roof and shovel off hot shot and things like that before it could catch fire. Whatever she may or may not have done, she was obviously successful, because that building didn't burn. And then the house across the street must have been somewhat stable, because it was also sold in like the 1860s and at that point, the floorboard was cut out of it. So that's a really interesting piece that we have. That and then some cannonball that are on display in the First Parish Church are probably the only sort of physical items that I know of that exist related to the bombardment. And then we have some accounts of the bombardment as well, one that was written in the 19th century by someone who experienced the bombardment. He was writing some histories for his daughter. And so, we have, like, about a 40-page account of his Daniel Tucker, that's available on the Maine Memory Network, both a digital image and then transcription that the full 40 or so pages. And then there's also an excerpt from a bible where someone was writing down just that it happened. You know, not, Daniel gets pretty descriptive, but some of our other accounts don't. Particularly this bible entry is kind of talks about, it's like a small paragraph, and then Stephen Longfellow was present, and his journal just has a one-line entry on the 18th 'Falmouth burnt by the king's troops.' like done. That's it. We have some, some items like that in the collection, manuscript wise, that are related to the bombardment, but object wise, there's not a lot.

**Lauren Gray** 23:16

How were indigenous communities in Maine affected by the Revolution?

**Tiffany Link** 23:20

It was a mixed bag in terms of their response. I think that for the most part, a lot of indigenous communities in Maine did support the war or at least didn't support the British. I think that there was healthy suspicion of what might come after. But I do think for the most part, at least in the Machias area, which is where I found sort of the most documentation about back and forth between Patriot militia forces and the indigenous is that the feeling was the British had done them no favors. And so there really was this view that the British were the aggressors in this instance, and that probably not much good

would come if the British were the victors in this situation. There was back and forth between various tribes and groups throughout the war in terms of like agreeing to mostly just agreeing to not take up arms against one or the other sides. And again, John Allan was sort of instrumental in orchestrating some of these agreements. And sometimes he was successful and sometimes he wasn't. But in Maine, at least, that's more of the involvement, you know. And then the Penobscot were more involved with like the Penobscot expedition areas and but in terms of after the war, you know, I mean, probably much like other places, there's a lot of new settlement happening in Maine, although less than I think some people expected. There was this idea that after the Revolution, Maine would sort of be the new frontier, and people would be moving north and settling but really you had the west, which was a little easier to get to, and much for more fertile farmland. And so that didn't really pan out, but you did have things like the Pejepscot and the Kennebec proprietors and other townships that are being developed further north that are obviously encroaching on indigenous territory.

**Lauren Gray 25:21**

And if I recall, after the burning of Falmouth, Maine, kind of stays out of the conflict. The British are there, and they do send troops. But if I'm understanding correctly, there wasn't a lot more action that happened on Maine soil outside of the Arnold expedition passing through. Is that a correct assessment?

**Tiffany Link 25:40**

I think there's more that happens up and down the coast of Maine. Machias stays pretty active throughout the whole war. I think they continue to be a bit of a thorn in the side of the British. They are constantly trying to figure out ways to incite the French residents across the border into rebellion and kind of get Canada in on the conflict. They're not very successful. So, there's actually, like a battle of Machias later on in the war where the British are trying to prevent this from happening. It may be a little bit of like overzealous intel on their part, but they were, you know, trying to figure out ways that they could bring the Canadian the especially the French Canadians, in on the war, which was sort of the theory for Arnold's expedition to Quebec as well, was the thought that the French would rise up in the city, and they didn't. They didn't help the British. They just weren't willing to really take up arms against them, either. And then the other major thing that happens in Maine is the Penobscot expedition. So, the British decide that they're going to create a little area called, 'New Ireland,' which is in the area of Castine, present day Castine and they Massachusetts and New Hampshire find out about this, and so

they rustle up quite a number of ships to go up there and stop this from happening. There's a lot of famous people who are involved, like Paul Revere and, of course, close to our heart, Peleg Wadsworth, who's Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's grandfather. And then you have Generals [Solomon] Lovell and [Dudley] Saltonstall, who are in charge of the land and sea forces that are kind of trying to protect the Castine area from becoming New Ireland. And when they get there, the if they had attacked right away, they probably would have been successful. Mowat is again involved, but they wait too long, because they're kind of trying to develop, well, if you're being kind, they're probably trying to develop a strategy that will work out best for them. Really, they just end up wasting a lot of time. And some reinforcements of British ships are able to arrive, and they kind of box in all of these American ships that have been rounded up, mostly privateers or private vessels that were commissioned just for this purpose. And they chase them up the Penobscot River. Eventually you know, they're large enough that they can't go any further, so they run aground, or they kind of scuttle their own ships. Militiamen are fleeing into the woods. It's kind of chaos. Peleg Wadsworth actually is able to, kind of round up some people and get them in order, and probably got a lot of them to safety. Becomes known as the greatest naval disaster, you know, up to Pearl Harbor at that point. And New Ireland does exist until the end of the war, and then Castine is again well, Castine and Machias you know, they both sort of experienced some British occupation again during the War of 1812 and Peleg Wadsworth himself is captured and held at Castine for a time after this. And actually he and a comrade escape through like a hole in the ceiling. And so, we have some really wonderful letters that he wrote to his wife during his imprisonment at that time. And so, there's not a lot of other major epic battles you know, that are happening in Maine, at least none that are ones we sort of want to remember. But there is other activity happening because, mostly because of the connection to the coast and the supply routes that are trying to get things from like British held Canada down to their ports in the southern United States further down in the war.

### **Cassie Cloutier 29:13**

Back at the MHS, we examined another item within our collections that is related to Maine and the Revolution. This diary kept in 1780 depicts a special scientific mission during wartime.

### **Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai 29:28**

In the midst of all of this, there is also another strain of thought which one of the most remarkable items, I think in our collections, really gets at. We may forget, on occasion, as we talk about the battles and the

political debates of the Revolutionary period, that this is still the Age of Enlightenment, and there is an understanding on both sides, among certain people on both sides, of course that science, the exploration of nature of the universe, is far more important than what is happening among nations or peoples, even. And so, what we are looking at here, what we are turning to next, is a just remarkable diary. It's a very short diary, but it's the diary by a man named John Davis and Davis had accompanied a Harvard professor named Samuel Williams to Penobscot Bay in the district of Maine in Massachusetts Bay in October of 1780 to witness a solar eclipse. And this is a territory that is behind enemy lines. The British are in control of this region, and there is this agreement that allows these astronomers, this team of scientists, to go behind enemy lines, to observe this for the greater benefit of all mankind. And as we record this today, in 2026 Artemis II has just gone and taken for humans farther than any living human has ever gone in the galaxy. And that is just a really marvelous moment for mankind. Back on planet earth, there are so many conflicts and wars and death and destruction that it just seems to mirror this moment from 1780 when the fate of empires is resting in the balance of what happens on the battlefield. And yet, there is this urge by scientists at the time to say we need to understand the universe that is greater than all the concerns we have here. And I think that's embodied in this document, in this diary. And so, I'm just going to go through some of the most powerful parts of this diary, I think, and share this with our listeners. So, we'll start with this passage from the 18th of October in 1780 and the crew and the ship have just arrived in Penobscot Bay. So this is John Davis, writing in his diary, 'Spent the afternoon in search of a proper situation, and finally determined to remain where we lie at present, as it is nearly in the center of Penobscot Bay, within the latitude of total observation and most agreeable to the gentleman at Fort George, who it seems as unwilling to suppose us so harmless as we declare ourselves. Colonel Campbell objects to our landing upon the continent and to make men uneasy is not the purpose of our voyage. It is no compliment, I think, to the boasted rationality, the good sense and the liberality of man that such should be the regulations established such as to prevent a company of harmless astronomers from using their instruments of science and of peace and from observing the darkness as well as the light of the sun, which the more benevolent author of the universe has made common to all. Later on however, it seems that the restrictions against this company of astronomers is lifted to a certain extent, and so the following day, on the 19th of October, some of the crew are actually allowed to land on the mainland, and this allows Davis to then give his observations about the people, the civilians who are living behind enemy lines. So, here's Davis again, from the 19th of October in 1780, 'Part of the company landed early this morning to fix upon a situation. Make choice of the barn,

which is a large, convenient building situated upon an eminence and facing the south. Spend the evening at the landlords. It is now about 10 years since he first landed upon this then dreary shore. Heaven has crowned honest industry and constant labor with wealth and stores are full and a hale and hearty progeny adorn his little dwelling. The fate of war has unhappily separated him from his western friends, and the oath of allegiance has bound him to the British interest in the neighborhood, but he still considers himself as a friend of his American brethren, and the kindness and hospitality he exhibits towards us convinces us of his sincerity.’ So here again, his observations about someone who is living behind enemy lines, and I think it brings to light just how difficult it was for someone to choose a side. If they lived in an area controlled by one side over the other, they really had very little choice but to swear allegiance to that side, even if they had sympathies for the other. This gives a sense this poor farmer feels separated. From his western friends, and he’s torn by the fact that this is where he lives, this is where his farm is, this is where his family is. And he may have sympathies for the American cause, but he has to swear allegiance to the British because these are the circumstances he’s in.

**Lauren Gray 35:17**

I think simultaneously, that’s why it’s so hard for the Continentals to get support for the Army is that they have to rely on goods, on food, on products that are created by people who are, in effect, living behind enemy lines. And you know, there’s issues around taxation and funding and colonial governmental controls. So, you see all of this kind of coalesce just through this document and these complex responses to the war on the home front.

**Kanisorn Wongsrichanalai 35:45**

And Davis and others are actually invited to join Mowat on his ship, and they dine together, and there is this moment of camaraderie, of this connection between humans, and maybe that’s fueled by the alcohol they’ve consumed, or maybe it is also just this moment where two warring sides have come together and understand that they are about to witness a phenomenon taking place in the heavens that will affect them all in some way and give them a better sense of the universe in which they live. So here is Davis writing about his encounter with Captain Mowat and his crew. It’s Saturday the 21st of October in 1780.

‘Captain Mowatt receives us on board the Albany with great politeness. The lieutenant and Doctor of the ship and a number of the officers from the forts favor us with their company at dinner. The table was plentifully and elegantly furnished, and the wine was handed out briskly. The heart grew worn. The

affections all played kindly. The unsocial passions were all asleep, all animosity was buried, and an hour of sociability converted enemies to friends. If the contending powers of the earth could thus amicably assemble, banish each hateful feeling from their bosoms and forgetting all distinction of party considered themselves merely as men and as brethren, reason and benevolence would soon do their perfect work. The din of arms, the sound of war, would torture our ears, no more innocence would meet with protection, merit with encouragement, peace and plenty would furnish all their blessings and all the pleasing fictions of the golden age be realized.’ And the observation of the solar eclipse goes very well. They have slightly miscalculated this, or the leader of an expedition has miscalculated this, so they are actually not in the path of totality, but they do see the eclipse, of course, and take readings and consider their mission to have been a success. I just really like this document, and I like talking about it and reminding people that even when it seems like a most dire situation as parties war against each other, there are still broader and bigger events transpiring and at work, and it is hopeful, perhaps to think that mankind can come together in peace to try to understand better their place in the universe and perhaps themselves.

**Lauren Gray** 38:40

They don’t call it the Enlightenment for nothing.

**Cassie Cloutier** 38:42

[Outro music fades in] This episode was produced in collaboration with Mainely History the podcast hosted by Ian Saxine and Tiffany Link. We encourage you to listen to their upcoming episode featuring items from the Massachusetts Historical Society’s collections. See our show notes for details. To look at the items discussed in today’s episode visit our show website at [www.masshist.org/podcast](http://www.masshist.org/podcast). The Object of History was produced by the research department at the Massachusetts Historical Society. We would like to thank Tiffany Link Collections Curator at the Maine Historical Society, and Sam Hurwitz, Podcast Producer at the MHS. Music in this episode is by Ketsa Music and Podington Bear. Thank you for listening, and please rate, review, and subscribe to both the MHS produced shows wherever you listen to podcasts.