New Voices

"A MEANS OF REMOVING THEM FURTHER FROM US": THE STRUGGLE FOR WATERPOWER ON NEW ENGLAND'S EASTERN FRONTIER

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MUCH of Brunswick, Maine's history, like that of most old New England mill towns, revolves around waterpower. Brunswick holds the distinction of being the site of Maine's first cotton mill, built in 1809. At the turn of the twentieth century, mills hugging the Androscoggin River employed hundreds of residents, dwarfing nearby Bowdoin College in both size and importance. All of this was made possible by a forty-one-foot waterfall the Wabanaki Indians called Pejepscot, or "extended-rapids-rock-place." Dams channeled the Androscoggin's flow through millwheels which converted Pejepscot's falling water into the mechanical energy that spun spools and saws. As a testament to waterpower's importance to the community, over half of Brunswick's residents in the mid-twentieth century were descendants of French-Canadian immigrants attracted to the employment in the town's textile and paper mills.[1]

The history of waterpower in New England usually follows that of Brunswick because it coincides with the Industrial Revolution. Scholars have deemed the preindustrial use of waterpower with saw or grist mills as largely insignificant because the amount of energy culled from New England's steep rivers was miniscule in comparison to that which

[1] George Augustus Wheeler and Henry Warren Wheeler, *History of Brunswick, Topsham, and Harpswell, Maine* (Boston: Printed by A. Mudge & Son, 1878), 564; Fannie Mae Eckstorm, *Indian Place-Names of the Penobscot Valley and the Maine Coast* (Orono: University of Maine Press, 1941), xix–xx, 114. Pejepscot probably referred to that particular stretch on the Androscoggin River from Lewison to Merrymeeting Bay, not the falls in Brunswick. "The Indian Perepole's Deposition," July 19, 1793, *Collections of the Maine Historical Society* (Portland, ME: 1853) 3:33–34 (hereafter referred to as *Coll. of Maine Hist. Soc.*); Federal Writers' Project, *Maine: A Guide "Down East"* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1937), 139.

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kept the factories of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century humming.[2] However, evaluating the significance of waterpower in people's lives simply by measuring the amount they consumed overlooks the variety of ways people interacted with river energy. In addition to turning millwheels, waterpower was harnessed to propel people across space with a canoe or capture fish calories with a net. In any instance, a river's flowing power accomplished work or labor which people otherwise had to expend with their own muscle.[3] Places such as the Androscoggin River's Pejepscot Falls should be understood as a significant energy source in the colonial period as well.

Historians have recently come to appreciate the impact of energy use on the environment and geopolitics. Their scholarship identifies struggles across the world between empires, workers, and capitalists to control the extraction and transportation of fossil fuels. Episodes in Britain, Iran, and Egypt, among other places, reveal that political power for the past two centuries has been intertwined with controlling the flow of coal and petroleum from its source to consumers. With a few notable exceptions, the historical analysis of energy is limited to the use of fossil fuels during the Industrial Revolution.[4] Much of the reasoning behind this industrial-preindustrial distinction is that the term "energy" itself only emerged in the early nineteenth century; however, the notion that preindustrial people did not grasp the labor-saving power of wind, water, and muscle is false. Historian Jennifer Coopersmith states that "energy was always energy even before it was understood as such—a force for making things happen." New England, blessed as it is with the abundance of waterpower which

[2]Theodore Steinberg, *Nature Incorporated: Industrialization and the Waters of New England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 23–32; John T. Cumbler, *Reasonable Use: The People, the Environment, and the State, New England 1790–1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 24–26.

[3]Richard White, *The Organic Machine: The Remaking of the Columbia River* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 15–19.

[4]On the connection of energy to environment and geopolitics see, for example, Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (London: Verso, 2004), and Peter A. Shulman, *Coal and Empire: The Birth of Energy Security in Industrial America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015). For the preindustrial exceptions see Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Politics of Grass: European Expansion, Ecological Change, and Indigenous Power in the Southwest Borderlands," *William and Mary Quarterly* 67 (2010): 173–208; George Colpitts, "Food Energy and the Expansion of the Canadian Fur Trade" in *Powering Up Canada: A History of Power, Fuel, and Energy from 1600,* ed. R. W. Sandell (Montreal & Kingston, CDN: Mcgill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 363–402; Joyce Chaplin, "The Other Revolution," *Early American Studies* 13 (2015): 285–86.

spawned early American industry, is an ideal place to examine the importance of energy in preindustrial life.[5]

The history of Pejepscot Falls in Brunswick during the colonial period points to a connection between energy and political power before factories lined the Androscoggin's banks. Rivers were the highways of the preindustrial era: drifting in a canoe or other vessel was almost always preferable to traipsing overland since harnessing moving waters decreased physical exertion and the duration of a journey. Caloric energy in the form of fish could be captured during the seasonal spawn runs of alewives, salmon, and other species. Anadromous fish migrations up rivers was an essential part of colonial and Indian diets. Indeed, Pejepscot was well known to colonists in the seventeenth century "for multitudes of mighty large Sturgeon" and Indians considered the Androscoggin "the best salmon river in all the Eastward parts of the country."[6] Access to a river made the difference between ease and discomfort, sometimes even life or death in the unforgiving northern climes of New England. Waterfalls such as Pejepscot were the choke points for these two forms of energy extraction. Rocks obstructing a river's path forced fish to surface in their quest to reach spawning grounds in lakes, leaving them vulnerable to spears and well-placed nets. The sudden drop of a waterfall or the hazards of hull-crunching boulders hidden under rapids similarly left human travelers vulnerable to harm. The roaring impasse forced voyagers to abandon the safety of open water to portage their vessels. The masters of these frothing water sites dictated both who could fish from and travel on the region's rivers.

When Massachusetts proprietors erected a stone fort next to the Pejepscot Falls in 1715, Wabanakis challenged the legality of its presence more than British claims to territory in their ancestral home, the Dawnland.[7] The ensuing struggle for control of the waterpower at the falls became a crucial flashpoint in the larger struggle between the British and Wabanakis for sovereignty across the Eastern Country, now the state of Maine. The failure of the Wabanakis and British

[5]Jennifer Coopersmith, *Energy, The Subtle Concept: The Discovery of Feynman's Blocks from Leibniz to Einstein* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5. In 1880, New England possessed over one third of the United States' waterpower despite covering only two percent of the nation's surface area. *Reports of Water-Power of the United States* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1885), 1:xiv.

[6]John Josselyn, *An Account of Two Voyages to New-England* (London: Giles Widdows, 1675), 204–205; *Coll. of the Maine Hist. Soc.* (1853), 3:330, 333.

[7]Wabanaki is translated as people of the dawn.

to find a workable solution to share access to the Androscoggin River eventually triggered war in 1722. Traditional interpretations of these events identify abstract land treaties as the source of discord,[8] and although land certainly mattered, surviving documents recording the voices of people around Pejepscot suggest something more tangible was also at stake.

In the decades preceding the 1715 construction of Fort George, Pejepscot had been a place of repeated British defeats and Wabanaki victories. Warfare plagued the region ever since the outbreak of King Philip's War in 1675. In that conflict, as well as in King William's War (1688–1699) and Queen Anne's War (1703–1713), Wabanakis repulsed settlers from the Eastern Country. Pejepscot was the scene of much of the action since it was the first falls on the 164-mile Androscoggin River and was a valuable fishing spot and well-worn portage for several Indian routes. Sometime around 1628, Thomas Purchase built a trading post beside the falls near the future location of Fort George and traded for furs with Wabanakis drawn to the Androscoggin's fish calories and propulsion. Removed and isolated from other British settlements, the trading post was quickly destroyed during King Philip's War.[9]

When conflict returned to the Eastern Country in 1688, places like Pejepscot became central to British strategy to conquer the region. Wabanakis prevailed in King Philip's War largely by moving along river routes in their ultra-light birch canoes or atop snowbanks in snowshoes. Their mastery of the Eastern Country's snowy terrain and steep waterways allowed them to outmaneuver, surprise, or evade colonial forces.[10] When Governor Edmund Andros marched from Boston to quell the Wabanaki threat in 1688, he "blockaded all the

[8]Lois Kimball Mathews, *The Expansion of Colonial New England* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1909), 48–49; Colin G. Calloway, *The Western Abenakis of Vermont, 1600–1800* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 53; Charles E. Clark, *The Eastern Frontier: The Settlement of Northern New England, 1610–1763* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1983), 70; and Kenneth M. Morrison, *The Embattled Northeast: The Elusive Ideal of Alliance in Abenaki-Euramerican Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 102.

[9]William Hubbard, *A Narrative of the Indian Wars in New-England* (1677; repr., Boston: Printed by John Boyle, 1775), 197; James Sullivan, *History of the District of Maine* (Boston: I. Thomas and E. T. Andrews, 1795), 14; Wheeler, *History of Brunswick,* 789, 50.

[10]Emerson W. Baker and John G. Reid, "Amerindian Power in the Early Modern Northeast," *WMQ* 61 (2004): 90–3; Thomas Wickman, "'Winters Embittered with Hardships': Severe Cold, Wabanaki Power, and English Adjustments, 1690–1710," *WMQ* 72 (2015): 73–77.

Rivers" with forts, including one at Pejepscot. He hoped that "the Indians might be kept from their usual Retreats, both for Planting, and for fishing, and lye open also to perpetual Incursions from the English in the fittest Seasons thereof." Previous British fortifications were defensive in nature—crude garrison houses or refuges built for beleaguered colonists fleeing oncoming Indian attacks. Six of the eleven forts Andros constructed were to be tactically offensive, in that they held key river portage points or waterfalls rather than explicitly defend an English settlement. Henceforth, hostile Indians could no longer use their favored river routes to attack and elude colonists without passing British eyes and muskets. Andros's forts circumscribed Indian mobility, deprived them of food, and expanded sightlines far into their settlements. As winter set in, Andros's army marched 120 miles through "deep snow" targeting "their forts and settlem'ts, corne, provision, ammunicion and canoes," reducing recalcitrant Wabanakis "to the use of their bows and arrows that they could not much longer hold out." Without conquering land, and simply by holding what chronicler Cotton Mather characterized as "several Convenient Places" on rivers, colonial forces found themselves masters of the physical landscape. Mather's use of the word convenient refers to "saving of trouble," in the form of physical exertion which control of waterpower lent Andros and his army.[11]

Andros's river blockade strategy was not given the chance to succeed. Rumors of a Catholic conspiracy to overthrow New England had been swirling in Boston for months prior to his march to the east. Many of the governor's political enemies grew impatient with his river strategy and bruited that Andros's real purpose was to weaken the military to ensure the success of the aforementioned conspiracy. Back in Massachusetts, a "great cry among the people" emerged upon hearing reports of "Sick and week Souldiers" stationed on the frigid eastern frontier.[12] Nathaniel Byfield echoed the rapidly diminishing patience among the people, noting that for all their soldiers' sacrifices

[11]Cotton Mather, "Decennium Luctuosum. An History of Remarkable Occurances in the Long War, Which New-England hath had with the Indian Salvages, from the Year 1688. to the Year 1698," in *Magna Christi Americana* (London: Thomas Parkhurst, 1702), 64; Sir Edmond Andros's Report of His Administration in *Andros Tracts* (Boston: Prince Society, 1874), 3:22, 3:231–32.

[12]Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of the Colony of Massachusets Bay* (London: M. Richardson, 1765), 1:370; "A Letter to Gersom Bulkeley," in *Andros Tracts,* 2:103; D. Davison to Edmund Andros, April 1689, *Documentary History of the State of Maine* (1900), 6:472 (hereafter referred to as *Doc. Hist. of Maine*).

"not one Indian killed all the while." The soldiers under Andros's command also failed to comprehend their governor's river blockade strategy since there was "no plantation in many miles" of the new forts.[13] After Massachusetts successfully overthrew Andros in April 1689, they ordered most of the soldiers to return.[14] Soldiers abandoned eight of the eleven of Andros's "trifling forts" entirely, which to their estimation were "unnecessary" and "defended nothing." At Fort Pejepscot, soldiers seized their commanding officer Colonel Patrick Macgregory for his alleged "cruelty to them" and hastily abandoned their post.[15] Once many of the river forts were abandoned, Wabanakis again enjoyed a free hand in the Eastern Country. That summer, the undermanned English coastal stronghold at Pemaquid fell to Wabanakis. With Andros's line of river fortifications shattered, English settlements as far south as the Merrimack Valley were subject to French and Indian raids for the next eight years.[16]

By 1692, the Eastern Country looked much as it did after King Philip's War: devastated and devoid of colonists. Unchallenged along rivers, Wabanakis held the advantage of mobility which they used with devastating effect by attacking across a wide front from their canoes. New Englanders understood their sorry predicament as a matter of being sapped of energy. Cotton Mather described New England's forces as "quite out of Breath! A Tedious, Lingring [*sic*], Expensive Defence, against an Ever-approaching and Unapproachable Adversary, had made it so."[17] In retrospect, some begrudgingly must have seen the wisdom in Andros's river blockade strategy. Militia commander Elisha Hutchinson reached such a conclusion by 1692. From Portsmouth, he observed that "the use of Souldiers here is only for defence & preservation of the towns." Frustrated, he wrote that in such an arrangement "there is no way to do any Spoyle to the Enimy (they being light of foott, no abiding place & not to be found) except at their fishing, or planting places." Wabanaki "fishing, or planting places" lay along waterways. Hutchinson suggested reoccupying the "garison at Pegipscott . . . to Range the woods in a body from

[13]"An Answer to Sr Edmund Andross' Account," in *Andros Tracts,* 3:36. Settlements had in fact been much closer to the forts before the first Indian attacks in autumn 1688.

[14]"Letter from council to Colonel Tyng," in *Doc. Hist. of Maine,* 6:476–77.

[15]*Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1901), 13:274–75 (hereafter referred to as *CSP, Col.*).

[16]Randolph, "A short account of the loss of Pemaquid Fort," in *CSP, Col.,* 12:115; "Petition of the Inhabitants of Maine," in *Andros Tracts* 1:176–78.

[17]Mather, "Decennium Luctuosum," 64–65, 68, 73, 76–78, 86.

one planting place to another to distroy their foode & give them no Rest."[18] Massachusetts seemed to follow Hutchinson's suggestion when forces under James Converse erected a stone fort in view of the Saco Falls in 1693. When military engineer Wolfgang William Romer inspected the fort seven years later, he remarked on its watery orientation, observing that it was "not so much a frontier as a place for defence for the salmon fishing."[19] Contemporaries framed the conflict in the East not as one to hold territory or win battles, rather as a contest of physical strength, or endurance. Aided by the energy boost derived from rivers in food and mobility, Wabanakis repeatedly prevailed in this contest.

A 1699 treaty between the English and Wabanakis ended a decade of war in the Eastern Country; however, peace only lasted four years. The 1713 Treaty of Portsmouth concluded another ten long years of war. Shortly after the peace, a group of well-heeled New England merchants known as the Pejepscot Proprietors bought the land titles held by the former settlers who had long since fled the horrors of the area.[20] These men saw a business opportunity in selling land to the steadily growing population of southern New England. Of all their land claims, they believed two townships "one on each Side Pejepscot Falls . . . on Ambroscoggen River" to be of the best "convenience," meaning the "convenience" of labor-saving energy in the form of fish, transportation, and mill power that could be acquired at the site.[21]

The resettlement of Pejepscot marked a significant shift in British strategy in the Eastern Country. Massachusetts Governor Joseph Dudley, a protégé of Edmund Andros twenty years earlier, sought to resurrect his mentor's strategy of focusing military effort on the region's rivers. The committee organized in Boston to oversee the repopulation of the Eastern Country endorsed the proprietors' application because it would "make a Strong Frontier for our Out-Towns" and particularly because a fort on the Pejepscot Falls would "greatly tend to dislodge the Indians from their Principall Fishery, keep them from their carrying Places, & possibly be a Means of removing them

[18]"Letter from Elisha Hutchinson to the Governor and Council," in *Doc. Hist. of Maine,* 5:337.

[19]Mather, "Decennium Luctuosum," 84; "Memorial of Col. Romer to Lord Bellomont touching the Five Rivers. April 11, 1700," *CSP, Col.,* 18:367.

[20]John G. Reid, "The Sakamow's Anger and the Governor's Discourtesy: Negotiated Imperialism and the Arrowsic Conference, 1717," in his *Essays on Northeastern North America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 156–57.

[21]Committee's Report, May 17, 1715, *Doc. Hist. of Maine,* 24:238–39.

further from us, if another War should happen." Previous English communities in the Eastern Country anticipated that they would live beside local Indians with their only defenses being fortified houses and walls to which they could retreat. At Pejepscot, British fortifications would guard the waterfall to control nearby Indians. The General Court ordered the name of the place be changed from Pejepscot to Brunswick and the fort be called Fort George. Pejepscot henceforth was to be a European place without Indian neighbors or names.[22]

The Pejepscot Proprietors were well aware of the consequences of their fort's aggressive location and its importance for the larger colonial project. When requesting funds, they anticipated the penny-pinching General Court "inclinable to a Wooden Fort on account of the Cheapness of it." The proprietors had seen many a wooden British wall put to flame in Maine and knew such an edifice would not likely withstand an Indian attack: "We being sensible that as this Fort is set so, as to be a Bridle to the Indians; So if a War should arise . . . they will leave no means untryed to become Masters of it." They proposed building a stone fort and offered to foot the extra cost themselves.[23] The association of the fort with "bridle" repeatedly invoked another preindustrial metaphor for energy worth pausing over. Bridles channeled the power of animal muscle toward human designs. Fort George would guard the energy at Pejepscot Falls and if necessary keep it from hostile Indians. The result would have the effect of making Wabanakis submit, like bridled animals, to the designs of British imperial rule. The Pejepscot Proprietors knew that local Indians would bristle at such a new type of fort, and try to shrug off that bridle as quickly as possible.

In August 1715, the Pejepscot Proprietors appointed John Gyles to direct the construction of Fort George. Gyles was uniquely qualified for the task. The Maliseets, a member of the Wabanaki Confederacy, had captured Gyles at age eleven after their successful 1689 attack on Pemaquid. Over the next six years, he had become fluent in Wabanaki before being redeemed by the French at seventeen. Gyles's language skills made him an invaluable asset to the British who enlisted his services as an interpreter and scribe during conferences

[22]Guy Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 90–92; *Doc. Hist. of Maine,* 24:238–39, 245–46.

[23]*Doc. Hist. of Maine,* 24:249–51.

and treaty sessions. The proprietors anticipated Fort George's location would immediately provoke local Indians and would require his unique diplomatic skills. As Gyles would later recount,

> Soon after our Arrival there, the Indians came in the Night, and forbid our laying one Stone upon another. I told them I came with Orders from Governour DUDLEY to build a Fort, and if they dislik'd it they might aquaint him of it: and that if they came forceably upon us they or I should fall on the Spot: After such hot Words they left us, and we went on with our Building.[24]

The soldiers who later garrisoned at the fort completed construction that November without incident.

Three years after the Treaty of Portsmouth, the state of affairs between Wabanakis and the British was not that envisioned in 1713: colonists occupied new lands, Massachusetts had neither built trading houses nor sent Protestant ministers as promised, and an intimidating fort commanded a crucial Indian travel route and food source. Indians responded to these transgressions by killing cattle and threatening settlers. When the newly minted Governor Samuel Shute arrived in Massachusetts, "A treaty or conference was thought expedient" to strengthen Wabanaki "friendship with the English." Specifically, they were troubled by the influence of a French Jesuit missionary named Sebastian Rale who proselytized among the Wabanakis at Norridgewock on the Kennebec River. Tellingly, of all the treaty violations, the primary complaint in 1717 concerned the new fort guarding the Androscoggin's Pejepscot Falls.[25]

Shute had never set foot in North America before assuming the governorship and consequently had little appreciation for the delicate contexts in which previous Wabanaki treaties were forged. In contrast, his predecessor, Joseph Dudley, a native of the colony well acquainted with the tenuous nature of British claims to the Eastern Country, realized that British claims to sovereignty in the Eastern Country could not be enforced. Where Dudley had appeased Wabanaki peoples with guarantees of trade and military support, Shute saw the Indians as simply subjects of his king. When Shute arrived to meet with Wabanaki sagamores on Arrowsic Island on the Kennebec River in

[24]John Gyles, *Memoirs of Odd Adventures and Signal Deliverances in the Captivity of John Gyles, Esq.* (Boston: S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1736), 43–44.

[25]Samuel Penhallow, *The History of the Wars of New England with the Eastern Indians* (Boston: S. Gerrish, 1726), 83; Thomas Hutchinson, *The History of Massachusetts Bay* (Boston: Thomas & John Fleet, 1767), 2:218.

August 1717, his intent was to exercise British power over those supposed subjects.[26]

The British delegation planned to intimidate the Wabanakis before they stepped onshore to negotiate the treaty. Shute sailed from Boston in the HMS *Squirrel,* a sixth-class frigate from the Royal Navy. Upon reaching the entrance of the Kennebec River, a few British diplomats left the *Squirrel* and boarded a smaller sloop to convey them up the shallower river to the treaty site on Arrowsic Island. Instead of following in a like manner, Governor Shute ordered Captain Thomas Smart to sail the *Squirrel* upriver directly to the island to impress the Wabanaki delegation. Smart, as did the local pilot Cyprian Southack, warned that the river was too shallow for the vessel. Refusing to heed these concerns, Shute insisted that the ship's presence was necessary "to keep the Indians in more Subjection at the Place of the Conference." To everyone's initial relief, the *Squirrel* reached Arrowsic. Then suddenly, just as the ship hove to, a change in the current hurled the *Squirrel* aground on the shore. As the tide flushed back into the ocean, Shute found himself mired in the riverbed. Frantically lightening the ship by unloading heavy items like its cannon, the crew extricated the maimed *Squirrel* once the tide returned. Needless to say, the Wabanakis watching from the opposite shore were not awed by the might of the British Empire. The entire incident was an apt metaphor for the gap between British claims to power and the practical realities in the Eastern Country.[27]

Shute shook off the awkward nature of his arrival by handing the Wabanakis a Union Jack then bluntly asserting their subjugation to the British Crown, scolding them to "remember at all times that they are King George's Subjects," and dealing with the French violated past treaties. The next day, the Wabanaki delegation responded. Wiwurna, Sagamore of the Kennebecs, stepped forward and observed that Shute had never left Europe before and gently inquired whether he was "Acquainted with the Affairs of New-England." Wiwurna continued that in previous conversations "Other Governours have said to us that we are under no other Government but our own." Shute, clearly confused, quickly responded "How is that?" Oblivious, Shute had just stumbled onto the fundamental misunderstanding of the

[26]Morrison, *Embattled Northeast,* 174–75.

[27]Reid, "The Sakamow's Anger," 154–55; "Journal of the Rev. Joseph Baxter, of Medfield, Missionary to the Eastern Indians in 1717," *New England Historical & Genealogical Register* 21 (1867): 47.

previous three decades in English-Wabanaki relations. Wiwurna further elaborated the conditions of the previous treaties as the Wabanakis understood them, reminding Shute that the colonists currently settled in their Dawnland did so only because Indians consented to it. The rush of New Englanders to the region troubled the Wabanakis who feared "We shan't be able to hold them all in our Bosoms . . . if it be like to be bad Weather, and Mischief be Threatned." Wabanakis would be obedient to King George only "if we like the Offers made us."[28]

Things became tense when Wiwurna mentioned the *Squirrel* debacle from the day before, remarking "Your Excellency was not sensible how sick we were Yesterday to see the Man of War ashoar . . . we sent our Young Men early this Morning to see if the Ship was well." Shute, embarrassed that he was failing to command the respect he reckoned owed him, became short with Wiwurna, quickly responding that the Wabanakis "must be sensible and satisfied that the English own this Land, and have Deeds that shew, and set forth their Purchase from their Ancestors." The Wabanaki delegates concurred with this premise, then asserted that positively no land had been sold east of the Kennebec River where some Englishmen now lived. Shute dubiously replied, "we desire only what is our own, and that we will have."[29] This seemingly straight-forward promise belied the ambiguity and obscure origins of these British claims. Wiwurna chose not to confront the governor directly on the land ownership issue, choosing instead to focus elsewhere. It is likely that he understood that the British would never resolve their differences with Wabanakis on land ownership because their conceptions of property were so different.[30] As the previous four decades had shown, force alone determined the legitimacy of these claims.

[28]"A Conference of His Excellency the Governour, with the Sachems and Chief Men of the Eastern Indians," [Arrowsic Treaty] in *Coll. of the Maine Hist. Soc.* (1853) 3:363, 366-67; The Wabanaki claims that they had been repeatedly assured of their independence by previous governors and the absence of such understandings in the treaties of 1693, 1699, 1703, and 1713 gives credence to David Ghere's theory that the British consciously manipulated written records. "Mistranslations and Misinformation: Diplomacy on the Maine Frontier, 1725 to 1755," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 8 (1984): 3–26.

[29]Arrowsic Treaty, *Coll. Of the Maine Hist. Soc.*, 3:367–68, 369.

[30]William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (1983; repr., New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 54–81; Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

Power in the Eastern Country had little to do with the names and lines etched on parchment. Wabanaki military success had demonstrated that. Wabanaki power instead rested on the ability to move about their country, outmaneuver their enemies, and acquire food. Indian mobility in the Eastern Country was synonymous with rivers because they "went by water whenever possible" and is seen in the ubiquity of canoes in historical records and the preponderance of toponyms providing directions along or between waterways.[31] Instead of pushing Shute on land claims, Wiwurna focused his diplomatic energies on a more pressing matter: the free access to rivers which the new fort at Pejepscot denied them.[32]

After butting heads on property, Wiwurna turned the conversation to Fort George. He asserted "it was said at Casco Treaty [of 1701], that no more Forts should be made." Shute sidestepped confirming this violation of a treaty stipulation by reassuring the Wabanakis, saying "The Forts are not made for their hurt, and that I wonder they should speak against them, when they are for the security of both, we being all Subjects of King George."[33] This was a lie. Shute wrote three years later, "This last fort [Pejepscot] was originally intended for the hindring the Indians Fishing by the ffalls in that River and their carrying their Cannoes."[34] The Indians were clearly keen to maintain their right to traverse their country freely since Wiwurna had raised those very issues, asking "We shall have Fishing and Fowling wherever we will?" and promising "We will be very Obedient to the King, if we are not Molested in the Improvement of our Lands." Wiwurna responded forthrightly to Shute's explanation: "We should be pleased with King George if there was never a Fort in the Eastern Parts." Attempting to reassure the Wabanakis, Shute asked "Are any People under the same Government afraid of being made too strong to keep out enemies?" Wiwurna, sensing the hard bargain Shute was driving, conceded "We are a little uneasy concerning these Lands, but are willing the English shall possess all they have done, excepting Forts." While the Wabanakis were willing to cede nominal ownership of land,

[31]Wheeler, *History of Brunswick,* 6; Brooks, *Common Pot,* xxxv; David S. Cook, *Above the Gravel Bar: The Native Canoe Routes of Maine* (Solon, ME: Polar Bear, 2007), 18–19.

[32]Arrowsic Treaty, *Coll. of the Maine Hist. Soc.,* 3:367.

[33]Arrowsic Treaty, *Coll. of the Maine Hist. Soc.,* 3:369. Unfortunately, there is no extant copy of the 1701 treaty, only a transcript of the negotiations.

[34]Account of unknown treaty; Wm Tailer, Jo Dudley, John Stoddard, July 15, 1720, Massachusetts State Archives, 29:60, Massachusetts State Archives, Boston.

but not the river, Shute would not budge. The forts would stay. Upon hearing this, the Wabanaki delegates "rose up at once & withdrew, in a hasty abrupt manner without taking leave," refusing to take the British flag Massachusetts officials had given them.[35]

The next day Shute boarded the *Squirrel* and loosed the fore topsail. Thinking that Shute might be leaving on such an ugly note, the Wabanaki delegation paddled to the ship and tried to strike a different tone. Wiwurna was not among them. The Wabanakis did not raise the fort issue, but instead pressed Massachusetts to live up to their earlier promises to "Settle as far as they have done," build a trading post, and provide them with a gunsmith.[36] Father Sebastian Rale in letters to Quebec indicated that Wiwurna, although barred from that day's negotiations, had represented the opinion of most of Wabanakis at Arrowsic. The remaining Wabanaki delegation accommodated Massachusetts' transgressions and Governor Shute's non-answers because they needed British supplies and could ill afford another war. French trade goods were expensive, and New France was unwilling to support Wabanaki resistance to the British, as they too wished to avoid another costly conflict. Despite many past difficulties, the people of the Dawnland wanted to work with the British.[37]

But by refusing to bend on the fort issue at the Arrowsic Conference, Shute invited future confrontation. Settlers continued to pour into the Eastern Country. Confident of their growing strength, proprietors claimed even more territory. These new claims were legitimized by land sales with Indians from the previous century—sales the British never would have dreamed of citing and enforcing twenty years earlier. The land claim that most infringed upon Wabanaki territory was the Muscongus Patent which was granted in 1630 and extended east of the Kennebec fifty miles to the Penobscot River. Citing seventeenth-century deeds with long-dead Indians, John Leverett

[35]Arrowsic Treaty, *Coll. of the Maine Hist. Soc.*, 3:367, 370; The Wabanaki conception of owning the rivers which passed through English territory is demonstrated in the 1688 Saco Indian complaint that the English took river fish. "This they were greatly affronted at, saying They thought (though the English had got away their Lands as they had, yet) the Fishery of the Rivers had been a Priviledge reserved Entire unto themselves." Mather, "Decennium Luctuosum," 61.

[36]Arrowsic Treaty, *Coll. of the Maine Hist. Soc.*, 3:371–73; Bruce J. Bourque, *Twelve Thousand Years: American Indians in Maine* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 184.

[37]Douglas Hay, "Wowurna," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 2 (University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–) http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/wowurna_2E.html (accessed Aug. 30, 2016).

and his associates opened the land to colonists and even fortified an old trading post located on the St. George River in 1720.[38] Shortly after the Treaty of Arrowsic, Shute's reply that "we desire only what is our own, and that we will have" made it clear to Wabanakis that the British intended to expand untrammeled into their Dawnland.[39]

Exasperated Wabanakis were at a breaking point. Although seeking peace, the pressure of unceasing migration from New England forced them to choose between violent resistance or submission. In 1719, settlers along the Kennebec River complained of their Indian neighbors "manifesting a very hostile Disposition" toward them, killing their cattle and terrorizing colonists who occupied new outlying plots. Several families got the message and "forsook their habitations." By August 1720, Richard Waldron reported in an express letter to Boston on the "Malancholly State of the eastern parts," that all of the Eastern Country from the Kennebec to the Piscataqua "are all entering into garrison" and warning that "unless they are Speedily covered, The new Settlements will be totally overthrown." Nervous proprietors saw their investment at risk and pleaded with Massachusetts for military assistance.[40]

In July 1720, Massachusetts ordered fifty soldiers sent to the Kennebec region to defend colonists and enforce proprietors' claims. Just like Fort George in Brunswick, soldiers were garrisoned away from the harassed settlers and "plac'd at Thwit's Point in Kennebeck River, a place Represented most advantageous [*sic*] to Encourage and Cover the Eastern Settlements."[41] Thwait's Point lay upriver of the settlements at a bend of the Kennebec where the river narrows considerably because the British realized that no canoe or other vessel could float up or down the Kennebec without passing by that bottleneck. By 1721, a structure named Fort Richmond was in place with

[38] *Acts and Resolves, Public and Private, of the Province of Massachusetts Bay* (1902), 9:440–41 (hereafter referred to as *Acts and Resolves*). On the complicated nature of Indian lands sales in Maine, see Emerson Woods Baker, "Trouble to the Eastward: The Failure of Anglo-Indian Relations in Early Maine" (PhD diss., College of William and Mary, 1986), 148–77. The location of the fort was at a point where the St. George River narrows considerably, which likely made it an ideal portage and fishing site.

[39] Bourque, *Twelve Thousand Years,* 184–85; Penhallow, *History of the Wars,* 91–92.

[40] Nov. 5, 1719, *Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts* ([Boston]: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1921), 2:176, 249 (hereafter referred to as *Mass. House Journals*; Morrison, *Embattled Northeast,* 180; Richard Waldron to Lt Gov. Dummer & Council, Aug. 25, 1720, *Doc. Hist. of Maine,* 24:238–39, 245–46, 9:458.

[41] *Mass. House Journals,* 2:249.

cannon aimed across the quickest, or most energy-efficient, highway in the Eastern Country.[42]

The fortification of yet another crucial river point pushed the Wabanakis into open confrontation with the British. On July 28, 1721, an armada of ninety canoes carrying 250 Wabanakis floated down the Kennebec to the British fort on Arrowsic Island. First, they deposited a ransom of two hundred beaver skins for four of their sagamores held captive in Boston. Then they announced to the garrison that settlements east of the Kennebec River had three weeks to vacate before "they would burn their Houses and kill them as also their Cattle."[43] Reasserting their claim to sovereignty over their homeland, Wabanakis reminded the British that they had no right to their territory and that the Wabanakis stood undefeated in war against them. In this declaration, Wabanakis coupled the occupation of the new lands with the construction of forts, which in their minds were separate, yet major offenses. The letter read at Arrowsic on that July day accused the British of "establishing and fortifying thyself therein against my will, as thou hast done in my River of Anmoukangan, of Kenibekki . . . where I have been suprised to see a fort which they tell me is built by thy orders." The few legitimate land sales the Wabanakis also voided "because of the abuse which thou hadst made of them," again citing British construction of forts "in their River." The Indian delegation sought the unrestricted mobility and fishing which new British forts such as George and Richmond denied them and barred settlement from all waterways, or "adjacent where my canoe can go."[44]

Five years of war followed the ultimatum delivered at Arrowsic. British strategy echoed Andros's plan of garrisoning the forts on the Eastern Country's major rivers to check Wabanaki mobility. Samuel Shute outlined this plan to the General Court, saying "I have nothing more to Recommend to you, but the enlarging the Fort at Richmond, and building another at Cushnock [rapids upriver on the Kennebec River], which, tho' the Expence will be but inconsiderable, yet will very much annoy the Indians, and prove of Great Service to the Forces when any March shall be made towards their head

[42]Conference with Indians at Georgetown, Nov. 25, 1720, *Doc. Hist. of Maine,* 23:100–105.

[43]Penhallow, *History of the Wars,* 85; Messrs. De Vaudreuil and Begon to Louis XV, October 8, 1721, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York* (Albany: Weed, Parsons, 1855), 9:903–905.

[44]James Phinney Baxter, *The Pioneers of New France in New England* (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1894), 111–18.

Quarters, or any other parts of the Eastern Country." Once secured, the second aim was to push Wabanakis off these river spaces. The Massachusetts General Court ordered that one-third of the soldiers being raised for the Eastern Country "be Constantly Employed, to make discovery of the Indians & to Observe, their Motions, & to acquaint themselves, with their Fishing & Carrying places."[45] By concentrating on rivers instead of land, Massachusetts would either force Wabanakis into direct confrontation or starve them out.

Formal hostilities began in June 1722 when Wabanakis erupted across the Eastern Country. They directed their attacks at the source of their rage: the river Forts George, Richmond, and St. George. Although they succeeded in capturing scores of settlers and razing surrounding homes, the bulwarks withstood the attacks which crashed around them. As a result, the British maintained their stranglehold overlooking the respective river corridors.[46] The Wabanakis reverted to the strategy which had worked so well in times past: retreating deep into the wilderness to their own river forts at Penobscot, Norridgewock, and Pequawket. Redeemed British captives reported that the Indians at these places subsisted on seals and "great Quantitys of Sturgeon Bass and Eels" caught in the nearby rivers. In searching out these Indian "Head Quarters" during the winter of 1722–1723, the British initially had little success. Massachusetts outfitted their troops with snowshoes in anticipation of a harsh New England winter. Instead, there was "no Snow in ye woods, nor the Rivers frozen" and soldiers "Could not go far" in the mucky terrain. The slow pace compounded British ignorance of the land beyond the coast. In his pursuit of Wabanakis up the Androscoggin River, Johnson Harmon "found the river was wholley broke up & ye Designed march frustreat." Wabanakis once again outpaced colonial troops thanks to the waterpower which distended their ability to traverse Maine's otherwise mucky or icy space.[47]

1723 was a slow year for the colonial troops, who expected to defeat the Indians handily. Experience gave them confidence in their

[45]May 20, 1722, *Mass. House Journals,* 4:102; Vote on the Committees [*sic*] Report on About the Eastern Affairs, July 6, 1722, *Acts and Resolves,* 10:200–201.

[46]William Blake Trask, ed., *Letters of Colonel Thomas Westbrook and Others Relative to Indian Affairs in Maine, 1722-1726* (Boston, 1901), 43 (hereafter referred to as *Westbrook Letters*).

[47]John Penhallow to Dummer, Feb. 28, 1723, Johnson Harmon to Dummer, Feb. 25, 1723, Westbrook to Dummer, Sept. 23, 1722, Westbrook to Dummer, Feb. 27, 1723 in Trask, ed., *Westbrook Letters,* 14, 11, 8, 12–13 respectively; *New England Courant,* Mar. 18, 1723.

river blockade strategy. In an address to the General Assembly, Governor William Dummer thanked it for sending more soldiers to the Eastern Country, who, although lacking a decisive victory, "have penetrated far into the Enemies Country, to their great Terror, and by the favour of God has also prov'd the best Protection to our Frontier Towns."[48] As Dummer's speech testifies, repeated defeats at the hands of Wabanakis had shown the British that simply garrisoning their settlements did not produce the desired protection. The best defensive strategy was to keep their Indian opponents harried while depriving them of the food and water energy required for their style of warfare.

The rivets in this British defensive strategy were the new river forts which resupplied their soldiers. In prior conflicts, Wabanakis attacked in devastating bursts, then waited for disease or starvation to finish off the remaining British who had not fled in horror. During a parlay at Fort St. George, Wabanakis revealed they were following that proven tactic as they attempted to cajole the British into surrendering, asking "What you stay, You can do nothing but lose men, and it is not worth your while only for the sake of keeping that house." The Indians noticed that soldiers in the fort were falling from disease as in times past, "telling us we had lost a great many men already, and shou'd lose more." The English commander replied with the trite, yet effective answer, "Here is a good Harbour." For from within the holds of sea-borne ships, the British received new recruits as well as "Molasses, meal, Rice &c."[49] In a 1723 order from Dummer to patrol the Androscoggin and Saco Rivers "to surprise the Indians at their Fishing and Fowling," he specified that the scouting parties "carry a Months Provision & not return . . . till it be spent."[50] With outside supplies, the river forts kept Indians from their fishing, fowling, and planting grounds and turned the fifty-year war of attrition in favor of the British.

The failure to destroy any of the new British forts weighed heavily on Wabanakis. Father Sebastian Rale, who lived among them at their village at Norridgewock, complained two years into the war

> . . . that the English still keep their forts, and the Indian arms not being able to do any thing against them, they remain still masters of the land, and

[48] *Boston Gazette,* Nov. 8, 1723.

[49] Treaty with the Indians, July 21, 1724, Dummer to Westbrook, Apr. 25, 1723 in Trask, ed., *Westbrook Letters,* 66–67, 33 respectively.

[50] Mar. 20, 1723, Trask, ed., *Westbrook Letters,* 45.

unless the French joyn with the Indians the land is lost. This is what now discourageth the Indians for which reason they have left Norridgewalk fort for to people the villages of Canada.[51]

By holding these river spots, the British effectively secured the land from Indian raids. Like many other Wabanaki villages, Norridgewock sat near a waterfall on the Kennebec River, which, like Pejepscot, was valued as an important portage and fishing spot. During a 1724 attack scores rushed into the river to escape, but the current was "so rapid" and "so great, that many of them drowned."[52]

Weary of war and seeing little prospect of victory, several bands of Wabanakis sued for peace in the summer of 1725. The agreement ending the Fourth Wabanaki War, known by historians as Dummer's Treaty, was hammered out in three separate signings in 1725, 1726, and 1727. It only protected Wabanaki lands "not by them conveyed or Sold to or Possessed by any of the English Subjects," and provided legal imprimatur to the controversial and open-ended British land titles which started the conflict and would legitimize land grabs in the years to come. Upon reading the proposed terms of the new treaty, the first thing the Wabanakis asked—to ensure future goodwill—was for the British to quit their forts at St. George and Richmond; a request which they emphasized sagamores of all their tribes had asked them to make. Just as in the 1717 meeting at Arrowsic, Wabanakis were more immediately concerned with river forts than details concerning titles to land. Like Samuel Shute eight years earlier, Dummer recognized that the river forts were essential for controlling the surrounding land and "bridling" the nearby Indians. Consequently, he refused the request to abandon Forts Richmond and St. George. The treaty signed that December securing British rights to the land included a new and important clause. Previous treaties guaranteed colonists a *status quo antebellum* to "former settlements and possessions within the eastern parts" as before the first conflict in 1675. The threatening presence of forts beside crucial river junctures made it plain to Wabanakis that the British were ready and willing to enforce those land claims on the Eastern Country's rivers.[53]

[51]"Intercepted Letter from Ralle, 1724" in *Coll. of the Mass. Hist. Soc.* 8 (1826): 267.

[52]Rale was killed shortly after writing the above letter when colonists sacked Norridgewock. Penhallow, *History of the Wars,* 105.

[53]Penhallow, *History of the Wars,* 120; At a Conference with the Delegates of the Indian Tribes, Nov. 16, 1725, *Doc. Hist. of Maine* (1916), 23:197–98; Submission and

Between 1725 and 1744, the Eastern Country experienced a sustained period of peace not enjoyed in fifty years. The river forts fell into disrepair as they took on an alternate function as trading posts for local Wabanakis. English colonists, still scattered and relatively few in number, regularly mingled with Indians in their daily lives; however, the shadow of five decades of war cast a pall of distrust and resentment on many colonists and Wabanakis. The Eastern Country's bloody reputation was difficult to shake, deterring hordes of prospective immigrants pouring into historically safer colonies to the south.[54]

After a decade of peace, politicians in Boston sought to decommission Fort George at the Androscoggin River's Pejepscot Falls. Brunswick residents described the leery state of Indian relations in a 1737 petition to Governor Jonathan Belcher. The people huddled around the fort in Brunswick and Topsham protested their colony's assessment. They described their Indian neighbors as looking upon them "as unjust usurpers & intruders upon their rights and priviledges, and spoilers of their idle way of living." Despite begrudgingly accepting British land titles, Wabanakis still claimed "not only the wild beasts of the forest, and fowls of the air, but also fishes of sea & rivers," casting a particular "ill eye . . . upon our salmon fishery, and no doubt would disturb our fishers weren't not under the imediate protection of the fort, as several can witness who have fished in undefended places." Wabanakis interpreted treaties surrendering land to colonists as only restricting them from the crops and livestock behind English fences. They displayed little inhibition in killing game, walking the trails, or cruising the water that happened to travel through that land they deemed essential elements of their mobile lifestyle. Treaties protected these usufruct rights. When Wabanaki sagamores in 1699 invited the English to reoccupy "their former rights of Lands possessions and improvements," they stipulated "that all Fishermen improve and enjoy the Fishery . . . as they have been anciently

Agreement of the Delegates of the Eastern Indians, Dec. 15, 1725 in Penhallow, *History of the Wars*, 124. The prior treaty of 1713 guaranteed English rights to land as of "the year of our Lord God One thousand six hundred & ninety-three," which in turn guaranteed "former possessions and settlements going back to 1675. Mather, "Decennium Luctuosum," 85.

[54]Ian Saxine, "The Performance of Peace: Indians, Speculators, and the Politics of Property on the Maine Frontier, 1735–1737," *New England Quarterly* 87 (2014): 387–93; David L. Ghere and Alvin H. Morrison, "Sanctions for Slaughter: Peacetime Violence on the Maine Frontier, 1749–1772," in *Papers of the 27th Algonquian Conference*, ed. David H. Pentland (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 1996), 105–16.

accustomed." The final draft of Dummer's Treaty in 1727 also guaranteed "the Priviledge of Fishing, Hunting, and Fowling as formerly." The experiences of Brunswick settlers attest to the fact that Wabanakis were unwilling to surrender or share their favorite fishing holes. Fortunately for colonists, Fort George provided an important peacetime presence ensuring a toehold on one of the Androscoggin River's premier fishing spots.[55]

The Massachusetts General Court disagreed and decommissioned Fort George. Although the fort would be regarrisoned during King George's War and the Seven Years' War in the 1740s and 1750s, Pejepscot saw little action.[56] Fort George had accomplished its purpose of "removing them further from us" as conflicts with Wabanakis had moved east. The British imitated the success of Fort George by building future fortifications along crucial waterways, usually far from their settlements. Besides Forts Richmond and St. George, the British secured their dominion over the Eastern Country during the Seven Years' War in the 1750s with Forts Western and Halifax on the Kennebec River and Fort Pownall on the Penobscot River. Each of these forts sat on an important portage, with Western and Halifax also being located in view of rapids or falls that were lucrative fishing spots. These structures guarded the energy manifest in calories and propulsion found in the region's rushing waterways. The British had learned that controlling such waterpower sites—places which they described with words such as "convenience" or "advantagious"—was more important than defeating enemies in battle or defending abstract lines on a map.[57]

The ruins of Fort George stood as late 1802, until they were built over by the numerous sawmills already crowding around the site. Today the large mill building which employed hundreds of people in

[55]*Mass. House Jour.,* 14:186; Petition of the Inhabitants of Brunswick about Fort George, April 25, 1737, Box 6, Folder 4, Pejepscot Proprietors Papers, Maine Historical Society, Portland; Memorial of Sagamores, Sept. 8, 1699, *Doc. Hist. of Maine,* 23:27; *Coll. of the Maine Hist. Soc.,* 3:418.

[56]*Mass. House Jour.,* 15:33; *Acts and Resolves,* 13:474, 612, 15:344.

[57]*Mass. House Jour.,* 14:186–87; Gordon E. Kershaw, *The Kennebeck Proprietors: Gentlemen of Large Property and Judicious Men* (Somersworth: New Hampshire Publishing Company, 1975), 126–36; Daniel J. Tortora, *Fort Halifax: Winslow's Historic Outpost* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2014), 10–12; "Journal of the Voyage of Gov. Thomas Pownall, from Boston to the Penobscot River, May, 1759," *Coll. Maine Hist. Soc.* 5 (1857): 377, 383; Fannie Mae Eckstorm, "The Indian place-name Wasaumkeag," Speech at Bangor Historical Society, Jan. 1932, Box 2, Folder 32, 2–3, Eckstorm Papers, Raymond H. Folger Library Special Collections, University of Maine, Orono.

view of the Pejepscot Falls has been rebranded "Fort Andross," in reference to the short-lived 1688 structure and rents "office, retail, art studios, light manufacturing and warehouse space."[58] Although tenants probably most value the location for its view of the falls, the longer history of the site is a story of power, both in the energy and political senses of the word. When Wabanakis and colonists struggled for supremacy in the region during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, controlling the falls gave a stranglehold on trade, food, and communication for miles around. People could have found food at or traveled to places besides Pejepscot, but it would have taken much more effort to accomplish the same tasks. They described their relationship to Pejepscot's waterpower as "convenience." And although energy would replace convenience to describe this relationship, and large mills would replace trading posts and forts, the same force pulled people toward the "extended-rapids-rock-place."

[58]Wheeler, *History of Brunswick*, 72–73; Edward Augustus Kendall, *Travels through the Northern Parts of the United States* (New York: I. Riley, 1809), 3:140; Historic Fort Andross Mill Complex in Brunswick, http://www.waterfrontmaine.com/ (accessed July 20, 2017).

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