

In actual fact, although not given much space in the history books, the King's Broad Arrow policy did more to cause the American Revolution than the Stamp Act and the tea tax put together. The first and chief malcontents in Colonial days were New Englanders, and nowhere were they more malcontent than in New Hampshire, where the pine-tree law hit them hard and often. The backwoodsmen of the Granite State flouted the law openly, profanely, and perennially. As early as 1721 a Deputy Surveyor-General reported that he had found some twenty-five thousand logs in New Hampshire, all of mast diameter. He estimated that for every mast sent to England, five hundred were destroyed. The scofflaw backwoodsmen sawed them into boards. And since it was illegal to own boards over twenty-four inches wide, they made boards twenty-three inches wide and threw away the residue of the big logs. In 1736 a seizure by Surveyor-General Dunbar enraged the inhabitants at Exeter so mightily that they disguised themselves slightly as redskins and beat up Dunbar's party, sank their boat, and chased them into the woods, where they hid all night.

In William Little's *History of Weare, N.H., 1735-1888*, we read that

in 1772, when Sheriff Benjamin Whiting called on one Ebenezer Mudgett to arrest him for making free with the king's white pine, he was told that bail would be put up the next morning. After spending a busy evening with his friends and fellow-citizens, Mudgett went to the inn at dawn, woke up the sheriff, burst into the room and told him bail was ready. Whiting rose, chid Mudgett for coming so early, and began to dress. Then more than twenty men rushed in, faces blackened, switches in their hands, to give bail. Whiting seized his pistols and would have shot some of them, but they caught him, took away his small guns, held him by his arms and legs up from the floor, his face down, two men on each side, and with their rods beat him to their hearts' content. They crossed out the account against them of all logs cut, drawn and forfeited, on his bare back, much to his great comfort and delight. They made him wish he had never heard of pine trees fit for masting for the royal navy. Whiting said: "They almost killed me."

Quigley, his deputy, showed fight; they had to take up the floor over his head and beat him with long poles thrust down from the garret to capture him, and then they tickled him in the same way.

Their horses, with ears cropped, manes and tails sheared, were led to the door, saddled and bridled, and they, the king's men, told to mount; they refused, force was applied; they got on and rode off down the road, with jeers, jokes, and shouts ringing in their ears.

Eight of the offenders were later caught and brought to trial. Each was fined twenty shillings and the cost of the prosecution. This light penalty indicated clearly the court's sympathy with the offenders, a reaction that was characteristic of Colonial courts generally and that made en-

forcement of the law doubly difficult. When to the physical difficulty of ferreting out and apprehending offenders was added the hostility of their friends and neighbors and of the courts, the agent's task of protecting the mast timber became impossible.

As early as 1700 it was necessary to go twenty miles into the woods on the Piscataqua for a good mast. In another half century the Portsmouth supply had been noticeably affected. The solution lay in going farther eastward. It was the quest for lumber that colonized Maine. The first sawmill in New England was built in that state in 1623, and a considerable part of the lumber and masts shipped from Portsmouth came from the western part of the province.

Despite Indian scares, lumbering prospered in Maine, and Falmouth gradually gained on Portsmouth in the volume of lumber shipped, though Wentworth influence kept the larger part of the naval-contract business at the older port, which shipped five cargoes of masts to the Navy for every one sent from Falmouth. Not until 1772 did Falmouth forge into the lead.

The size of the great masts required a special type of cargo ship, and soon production began, principally in New England, of ships expressly made to carry masts. Usually they were of four hundred to six hundred tons burden, and one is known to have reached a thousand tons, a fabulous size for merchant craft in those days. They were built with oversize ports in the stern for taking in the unwieldy cargo, and had a capacity of from forty to a hundred of the largest sticks, together with lesser pieces such as bowsprits, spars, yards, and the like. They were handled by a crew of twenty-five men, and in time of war were attended by armed convoys. A frigate, often several, protected them from pirates, French privateers, or Dutch cruisers. They also carried passengers, and at times were used as troop transports.

The masting business was what colonized Maine, but while it was a great thing for the economy of the province, it was also harmful in certain ways. For the industry was so profitable, even to the lowliest worker, that many of the new settlers spent time masting to the detriment of their farms. They slacked off on their fishing, not bothering to dry cod or pollock for their own winter use. When winter came they found themselves in the odd position of men with hard money in their pockets and no food, nor any place to buy it. But being Yankees, they just tightened up their belts another hole and kept right on masting and building up their hoards of gold and silver, while their families existed on the fine edge of starvation.

The Government paid ship-owners a bounty of one pound a ton, the ton consisting of fifty cubic feet of rough or forty of hewn timber ("ton" timber). The price paid for the largest masts in 1770 was £110.