

1912

The liberty pole: a tale of Machias

Charles P. Illsley

Follow this and additional works at: https://digicom.bpl.lib.me.us/books_pubs

Recommended Citation

Illsley, Charles P., "The liberty pole: a tale of Machias" (1912). *Books and Publications*. 70.
https://digicom.bpl.lib.me.us/books_pubs/70

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Collections at Bangor Community: Digital Commons@bpl. It has been accepted for inclusion in Books and Publications by an authorized administrator of Bangor Community: Digital Commons@bpl. For more information, please contact ccoombs@bpl.lib.me.us.

73.351.929

P 11/13/17

5370

THE LIBERTY POLE.

A TALE OF MACHIAS.

[From *Misley's Forest and Shore.*]

MACHIAS, ME. :
C. O. FURBUSH & CO.
1857.

REPRINTED BY REPUBLICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION,
CONCORD, N. H. :
1890.

REPRINTED BY THE SANBORN PUBLISHING CO.,
MACHIAS, MAINE.
1912.

59474

THE LIBERTY POLE.

A TALE OF MACHIAS.

P. 11/13/17

[From Illsley's *Forest and Shore*.]

MACHIAS, ME. :
C. O. FURBUSH & CO.
1857.

REPRINTED BY REPUBLICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION,
CONCORD, N. H. :
1890.

REPRINTED BY THE SANBORN PUBLISHING CO.,
MACHIAS, MAINE.
1912.

10705

THE LIBERTY POLE.

A TALE OF MACHIAS

CHAPTER I.

On an evening in the latter part of April, 1775, a number of persons were collected in a small tavern in the town of Machias. A day or two previous the inhabitants had received the proclamation of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, authorizing and requiring preparations and efforts to be made incident to a state of hostility. The people of Machias had, from the first, been strenuously opposed to the usurpation of the British government; and the sole topic of conversation, whenever a few met together, was this exciting subject. On the evening in question a much larger number than usual had assembled to talk over the stirring news recently received from Boston.

Conspicuous among the rest were two young men, brothers, by the name of O'Brien, sons of Morris O'Brien, who came to this country from

Cork, in Ireland. Seated around the ample fireplace, enjoying their pipes and cans, the all-engrossing topic of the hour was canvassed by one and all.

At last the elder of the brothers, Jeremiah O'Brien, spoke out: "Well, neighbors, what do you think of this rumor that is flying about?"

"What rumor do you allude to?" asked a man by the name of Foster, who sat near by, and who held the dignified office of colonel in the militia.

"Why, that the first blow has been struck, colonel, and American blood spilt at Lexington and Concord."

"Where did you get that news?" was the immediate inquiry of nearly all present.

"I know not how the news reached us, but such is the report."

"And what followed?" rejoined Col. Foster, in a tone of great earnestness. "Did our people submit to the outrage? Were they so dastardly as not to retaliate?"

"You must mistake the spirit of the people of Lexington and Concord, colonel, if you think they patiently submitted to such an act of violence. Not they; many a red-coat bit the dust in consequence. Men, bowed down by age, forgot the weight of years, and boys, scarcely able to hold a musket, rushed forth to avenge the blood of their countrymen; and all along, so says the report, the road was strewn with dead bodies of the retreating enemy."

"God grant it may be true!" was echoed from several parts of the room.

"I move," said O'Brien, when the agitation which this news had excited had subsided, "that to-morrow we raise a Liberty Pole in front of the town house."

"Agreed!" "Agreed?" was the animated response from every quarter.

"And that a Committee of Safety be appointed," he added, "who shall have supervision of all the affairs relative to the proclamation lately received from the Provincial Congress.

"You will pardon me, gentlemen, for interfering, as I am not an inhabitant of the place," remarked a gentleman present, by the name of Jones, who belonged to Boston, but who had a store in Machias, and exercised in consequence considerable influence. "While I cordially approve the spirit manifested on the present occasion, yet permit me to suggest if it would not be more advisable to call a town meeting, to act on the propositions that have been made this evening. To give weight to acts of this character, they should be legally sanctioned; and from what I know of the good people of Machias, I doubt not they will unanimously coincide with your views."

This seasonable proposition won the assent of all; for it is a noted fact, that the men of the Revolution were a law-and-order-loving people, and all the acts which preceded that great movement were in conformity to a previously authorized vote.

Accordingly, the next day a public meeting of the inhabitants was called, at which it was voted to comply fully with the requisitions of the proclamation of the Provincial Congress. A Committee of Safety was forthwith appointed; and, as a symbol of their resolutions, it was by acclamation voted that a Liberty Pole should be immediately erected.

On the adjournment of the meeting, the O'Briens and a number of the more active spirits set about the work. Selecting the tallest tree they could find, they stripped it of its branches, leaving a tuft of verdure at the top. In the meantime a deep hole had been dug in which to plant it; and long before sunset, amid the shouts of the assembled inhabitants and the discharge of muskets, the lofty pole was set and secured: This work accomplished, the people gathered around it and solemnly pledged themselves to resist the opposition of the mother country, and, if occasion called, to sacrifice their property and shed their hearts' blood in defence of the colony. After this exciting scene they gradually dispersed, firmly but anxiously awaiting the course of events.

CHAPTER II.

A few days after the occurrence of the events related in this chapter, two merchant vessels, in British employ, arrived from Boston, for the purpose of obtaining pickets and plank, to be used by the English in the defence of that city. By this arrival, confirmation was received of the battle at Lexington, and the people of Machias were made acquainted with the actual state of affairs in that quarter, regarding which there had existed a great degree of uncertainty and anxiety.

The merchant vessels were convoyed by a British armed schooner, named the *Margaretta*, mounting four four-pounders and sixteen swivels. She was commanded by a spirited young Irishman, by the name of Moore, who, notwithstanding his coming in the character of an enemy, by his gallantry and gentlemanly conduct won largely the esteem of the inhabitants. Immediately on his arrival, observing the Liberty Pole, Captain Moore landed, and demanded of a group who had collected around the landing place, who had erected it.

"That pole, sir," answered John O'Brien, "was erected by the unanimous approval of the people of Machias."

"Well, sir," rejoined the officer, "with or without their approval, it is my duty to declare it must come down."

"*Must come down!*" repeated O'Brien with some warmth. "Those words are very easily spoken,

my friend. You will find, I apprehend, that it is easier to make than it will be to enforce a demand of this kind "

"What! Am I to understand that resistance will be made? Will the people of Machias dare to disregard an order, not originating with me, gentlemen, but with the government whose officer I am?"

"The people of Machias," replied O'Brien, "will *dare* do anything in maintenance of their principles and rights."

"It is useless to bandy words," rejoined the officer, a little nettled at the determined spirit manifested around him; "my orders are peremptory and must be obeyed. That Liberty Pole must be taken down, or it will be my painful duty to fire on the town "

As the young officer turned to reenter his boat he was accosted by Mr. Jones, the merchant we have alluded to, who prevailed upon him to suspend his determination until the people could assemble in town-meeting, when perhaps the town would agree to remove the objectionable object. During this conversation, the group around dispersed, with the understanding that the Committee of Safety would meet that afternoon and consult about this new and exciting state of things. At an early hour in the afternoon the committee met. Being composed of such men as the O'Briens, Foster and like spirits, it may readily be imagined what their opinions were in regard to taking down

the pole. Instead of discussing that question they busied themselves in forming plans to repel an attack should one be made. They advised that a town-meeting should be called, to take the sense of the inhabitants on the subject of removing the pole, feeling perfectly sure that they would vote to keep it up. In the meantime they made arrangements to send off next morning to Pleasant River Village, distant about twenty miles, and to a few other villages, requesting the people to come to Machias to help them defend the symbol of liberty. The next day, which was Saturday, the town-meeting was held, and the subject laid before it. It needed not much discussion. There was the demand and the threat.

"Let those," said the chairman, "who are disposed to obey the one through fear of the other say, Aye."

A silence as of death prevailed throughout the hall, until the chairman interrupted it by submitting another question.

"Those who are opposed to taking down the Liberty Pole will please say, No."

With the suddenness and almost with the force of a thunder clap, one loud No! seemed to spring simultaneously from every lip.

"The Noes have it," quietly remarked the chairman, whose voice had unconsciously mingled with his fellow-citizens' when the vote was determined.

Captain Moore was somewhat exasperated on learning the vote of the town, and would have put

his threat into immediate execution but for the interference a second time of Mr. Jones. That gentleman represented to him that the meeting was not fully attended, and that the vote was not a fair expression of the sentiment of the town. By urgent persuasion he succeeded in obtaining a respite until another meeting was called, which was to be held on the following Monday.

"It will grieve me, Mr. Jones," said the officer, on taking leave, "to resort to extreme measures; but you may assure the people that, unless they vote to remove the pole, in one hour after this meeting breaks up I will open on the town."

With this understanding, and with expressions of mutual respect, they parted,—the one to pace the quarter-deck of his little craft, the other to report the result of the errand.

CHAPTER III.

That same evening a party of five met at the house of Captain Lambert, consisting of the two O'Briens, Colonel Foster, Mr. Wheaton. and the gentleman at whose house they met.

"Well, gentlemen," said the elder O'Brien, "Mr. Jones informs me that unless the tree is taken down on Monday, the town is to be fired upon."

"So we were threatened yesterday," rejoined Captain Lambert, significantly, "and yet the tree stands."

"Yes," added Colonel Foster, "and will stand in spite of the king's authority."

"Have you heard from the messengers sent to Pleasant River and the other settlements?" inquired Wheaton of O'Brien.

"One of them returned this afternoon."

"And what word does he bring?"

"Every man who can possibly leave will be here to-morrow, or early Monday morning."

"I hope they will come well provided with ammunition," remarked Col. Foster.

"I am afraid not," said O'Brien; "the messenger says there is a great scarcity of powder at Pleasant River. However, they are coming, and those who can't obtain muskets will come armed with pitchforks and scythes. They are all fired with the true spirit, and swear the pole shall not be taken down."

"You said you had a proposition to make," remarked Captain Lambert, addressing John O'Brien, who as yet had kept silent.

"Mr. Jones informs me," said the person addressed, "that it is the intention of Captain Moore to attend religious worship on shore to-morrow. About that time our friends from abroad will have arrived, and my proposition is that a number of us carry concealed arms to meeting, and when services are over, seize upon the captain and after that capture his vessel."

"It will be a bold measure, an open act of rebellion," remarked Mr. Wheaton.

"I am aware of that," continued O'Brien, "but we have the example of the old colony people to back us. The king and parliament may call it rebellion if they please, but we who are engaged in it know but one name for it, and that is—*Revolution*."

"Well, gentlemen, what do you say to my project," said the same speaker, breaking the silence which followed his bold declaration.

"I say aye to it with all my heart," said Colonel Foster, in which assent all the rest joined.

"But who will be the one to seize the captain?" asked Lambert.

"I claim that privilege," said John O'Brien. "I will have an eye on him, and place myself in his near neighborhood. You, gentlemen, will stand ready to aid me."

"We must make the people acquainted with our design," said Lambert, "so that we may act in concert."

"And I propose," said Mr Wheaton, "as we compose a majority of the Committee of safety, that between this and morning we ascertain what quantity of powder and balls we may rely on."

"You need not trouble yourself about the balls," said Jeremiah O'Brien. "All the women in the village have been the whole afternoon melting lead to cast them. My mother, I know, in her zeal, melted up an old pewter teapot for that purpose, in spite of our remonstrances, for it was a sort of heirloom. The women, if possible, are more crazy

about keeping the pole erect than are the men."

A long conversation followed these remarks, having reference to their future proceedings, after which the company separated.

The next morning, before the usual hour for religious worship, here and there men could be seen straying along singly, and in pairs toward the church, each bearing a musket, so carried as least to expose it to view, for the church stood a short distance from the shore, and directly opposite the church the *Margaretta* lay at anchor. As the men reached the church, they immediately concealed their weapons in various parts of the house, ready for use, and then disposed of themselves in such a manner as not to excite suspicion.

At the appointed hour Captain Moore came ashore and entered the church. John O'Brien was on the lookout for him, and entered the house soon after, taking a seat directly behind him. There were no pews in the church, the house being unfurnished, but temporary seats had been fitted up, without backs, for present accommodation. The weather being somewhat sultry, the windows of the church were thrown open, and from where the English captain sat he commanded an extensive view of the river. The services commenced. The prayers and the singing were gone through with, and the sermon was commenced, which, like a majority of the sermons of those stirring times, resembled more a political harangue than a discourse on ethics,—a mistake sometimes made by

ministers in modern times, although in those days it was expected, and chimed in with the views of the people. In the course of the sermon, happening to glance his eyes through the window, Captain Moore was surprised to see, at the distance of half or three quarters of a mile up the river, men crossing the river on logs, with guns in their hands. These were the men the people of Machias had sent for, coming to take part in the affray. Realizing at once the peril of his situation, but without betraying alarm, or appearing to notice the strange sight, the young captain again turned his eyes upon the speaker, apparently deeply engrossed in the sermon.

Little did he heed, however, the impassioned words of the speaker. His mind was fully intent on escaping the snare which he felt was set for him; for now that suspicions were aroused, he could see furtive glances bent upon him in all directions. Near where he sat was an open window, the height from which to the ground was trifling, Taking advantage of a more than commonly stormy sentence in the discourse, which served to rivet the attention of the congregation, he started from his seat, and leaping across the intervening benches, dashed through the window, and made his way directly to his boat.

In a moment the whole church was in an uproar; but, in the crowding and confusion that ensued, instant pursuit was prevented; and by the time the men had secured their guns and were ready to

follow him, he had succeeded in getting on board his boat and pushed off into the stream. A few minutes' rowing carried him on board his vessel, when he commenced firing on the town, the men on shore briskly returning the compliment. After a few discharges the vessel made sail down the river, followed by the people who kept up an incessant fire of musketry until she soon was beyond their reach. Very little damage was done on either side in this affray, but the excitement of the people was aroused to the highest pitch. The church was wholly deserted in the afternoon, and during the remainder of the day men might be seen collected in groups earnestly discussing the affair, and proposing plans for future action.

CHAPTER IV.

During the day and evening, straggling parties from out of town continued to arrive in the village, some with muskets, some armed with pitchforks, and some with scythes fastened on poles—formidable weapons and used with much effect, as we are informed by a Polish officer, during the Polish Revolution. On Monday morning Machias was a scene of great excitement. Men paraded the village with their various weapons, while the women searched every nook and corner for powder and lead. As a proof of the spirit which animated the latter, an incident is related, which, as the writer declares, is worthy of being recorded.

It seems that the men who came from Pleasant River settlement were greatly in want of powder, having but two or three charges each. The wife of one of the party, having found a horn of powder after they were gone, followed them twenty miles through the woods (there being at that time no roads) to bring it to her husband, and arrived with it next day after the party had reached Machias. Early in the forenoon it was decided to take possession of a lumber sloop in the river and go in pursuit of the schooner. About sixty volunteers mustered on board, among whom were six brothers by the name of O'Brien,—Jeremiah, Gideon, John, William, Dennis, and Joseph. The father of this heroic family also insisted upon accompanying them, but he reluctantly yielded to the wishes of his sons and remained on shore. The sloop, which was afterwards called the Liberty, started in pursuit, and overtook the schooner, which was becalmed and about two leagues distant from the head of Machias Bay. When they came in sight of the Margareta, the pursuing party were without any organized head. But before coming up with the enemy, Jeremiah O'Brien was unanimously chosen captain. On taking command his first exercise of authority was to give permission to all who were afraid to follow him at all lengths to go on shore. Three men who had blustered the most when on the land availed themselves of this offer and, amid the contempt of the rest of the crew, took a boat along side, and

left the vessel.

"Now, my brave fellows," said Captain O'Brien, "having got rid of those white-livered cowards, our first business will be to get along side of the schooner yonder, and the first man who boards her shall be entitled to the palm of honor."

By the aid of boats towing ahead and the use of sweeps, the sloop was soon brought along side of the schooner, but, having no grappling irons, they almost immediately separated, yet not before John O'Brien, who stood in the bows of the sloop ready for a spring, had leaped upon the schooner's deck. On looking around he found the sloop had drifted off some twenty or thirty yards, leaving him alone standing on the quarter deck of the enemy. Before he had much time to reflect on his situation, seven of the English discharged their guns at him, almost at the same moment, but not a ball touched him. They then charged upon him with their bayonets, when, to save his life, he jumped overboard, and swam towards the sloop, and soon stood, to the wonder of himself as well as his companions, unharmed on deck.

"Brother John, you have won the palm!" said Jeremiah, shaking him affectionately by the hand.

"But man the sweeps, by hearties, and lay us along side once more, and stand ready to fasten on to him when you reach him."

Twenty men, armed with pitchforks, were now selected to board the schooner, and when the vessels were again brought in contact, amidst a fierce

discharge from the enemy, they rushed over the schooner's side followed by the rest of the crew. A sharp contest ensued. The English bravely stood their ground, but they could not withstand the impetuous onset of the Americans, and, after a spirited struggle, they were forced to submit, having lost about ten killed and the same number wounded. Among the latter was Captain Moore, who in the early part of the action was shot through with a brace of balls, from the effects of which he died next day, much lamented. The loss of the Americans was four killed and eight or nine wounded.

When the sloop appeared in the river, with the Margaretta as a prize, those on shore were perfectly wild with excitement. Men, women, and children gathered on the banks, shouting, and exhibiting every demonstration of joy. The Liberty Pole was decorated with evergreens, and throughout the day and long into the night might be heard the sounds of revelry and rejoicing. As a mark of the distinction for the bravery he had displayed, the Committee of Safety appointed John O'Brien as bearer of dispatches to the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, at Watertown, to report what had been done, and to receive directions for the future. The news was received with the most lively interest, and Congress gave their approbation to the conduct of the people of Machias in the highest terms, and passed a vote of thanks to the individuals concerned in the battle.

June 12, 1775

CHAPTER V.

If the news of the capture of the *Margaretta* was received with a lively interest at the head-quarters of the Provincial Congress, not less lively, although of a different nature, was the excitement caused on its reception at Nova Scotia. Two schooners were immediately fitted out at Halifax for the purpose of retaking her. These vessels were called the *Diligence* and *Tapnaquish*, the former mounting eight or ten guns, with a crew of fifty men, the latter sixteen swivels, with a crew of twenty men. About a month had elapsed after taking their prize when the people of Machias were notified of these vessels coming up the Bay. Instead of being alarmed at the news, preparations were immediately made to give them battle. The armament was taken out of the *Margaretta* and placed on board the *Liberty*, which, with a full crew, under command of Jeremiah O'Brien, proceeded down the Bay to meet the enemy. As they entered the Bay they met a coaster coming in, which they took possession of, placing thirty-five men board under command of Colonel Foster. It was agreed that O'Brien should attack the *Diligence* and Foster the *Tapnaquish*. In accordance with this arrangement, they bore down upon the enemy, and each at about the same time boarded. Five minutes were not required to settle the matter. Both of the English vessels surrendered at the first attempt at boarding, with-

out making the least resistance. On his return with his prizes, Capt. O'Brien fell in with a boat containing his father and a surgeon whom the old man had brought off. Happily there was no occasion for his services.

The news of this second capture created intense feeling at Halifax, and to wipe off the stigma of former defeats, and to punish the authors of them, in the course of three weeks another expedition was fitted out from that place, consisting of a frigate, a twenty-gun ship, a brig of sixteen guns, and several schooners, containing about a thousand men. The news of this formidable flotilla being on the way caused not a little apprehension in Machias, and some of the more timid advised that the place should be abandoned. This proposition was, however, immediately scouted, and the O'Briens, with about one hundred and fifty volunteers, determined to resist the approach of the enemy, overwhelming as they were in numbers. About three miles below the town, on the eastern side of the river, at a place called Scott's Point, a breastwork was hastily thrown up. They had no cannon to defend it; all they had to rely on were common muskets.

Hearing that the fleet was coming up the Bay, the brave little band, under the command of Jeremiah O'Brien and Col. Foster, took up the line of march for Scott's Point, resolved, if they could not check the advance of the enemy, they would pour out the last drop of blood in the attempt.

All the inhabitants had gathered in the vicinity of the Liberty Pole to see them start. Mothers and wives were there with heavy foreboding hearts, but there was no shrinking on their part,—no urging a son or a husband to remain. On the contrary, struggling with the emotions that filled their hearts, they exhorted them not to falter in their duty, and without a sign of weakness bade them farewell. Such were the women of the Revolution.

Soon after taking possession of the redoubt, a party of observation was sent out, which shortly returned, bringing intelligence that the squadron had anchored in the Bay, with the exception of the brig and a number of boats filled with men, which were advancing towards the town. It was not long before they came in sight, and when opposite the breastwork, a large body of men, about five hundred, landed. As this formidable number drew up on the banks, their bright arms glistening in the sun, O'Brien and Foster made their preparations. At this juncture Captain O'Brien addressed his men.

"You see, my lads, what you have got to contend with. The odds are greatly against us; therefore, if there is one man here who is sick of his bargain and wishes to leave, in heaven's name let him be off!"

Not a man moved.

"You will find no skulkers this time," said a voice from the centre. The light laugh which pass-

ed through the ranks at this remark was the best proof the captain could have of the coolness of his men. It gave him confidence in their stability.

"They are stirring," exclaimed Colonel Foster, pointing towards the moving mass coming up in a compact body. "Be careful, men, and don't waste your powder," he added. "Be cool and steady, select your men, and do not fire until the word is given."

The Americans were drawn up in double rank, O'Brien having charge of the front and Foster of the rear division. The front rank were to deliver their fire, and then fall back, giving place to the rear rank, while the former reloaded, the second rank going through the same manœuvre. The enemy pressed on at double-quick time, and seeing the small number opposed to them, they burst into a cheer of anticipated triumph, while they commenced an irregular firing.

"Steady, my lads, steady!" said O'Brien, as the balls began to whistle around them. "Let them come a little nearer,—we can't afford to throw away powder."

The men stood firm as though hewn from the solid rock, patiently waiting the word. At last, when the English had arrived within one hundred feet of them, the command was given. A sheet of flame ran along the breastwork, and, as the leaden shower fell among the assailants, a terrible gap was made in their number. Immediately, as the report of the first volley rang in the air, the stern

voice of Colonel Foster was heard above the din:

"Rear rank, advance! Present! Fire!" and another death-dealing discharge poured from the breastwork

In spite of the efforts of their officers, the English broke and retreated towards the bank of the river. Here, after a while, they succeeded in forming them, and again they advanced towards the handful of men. But this time no triumphant cheer accompanied their onset. On this occasion the assailants rushed on at a charge, with the evident intention of carrying the breastwork at the point of the bayonet. Not a shot was fired until they arrived within point blank distance, when again the fiery storm was hurled upon them, and again they broke, while another well directed volley threw them into perfect disorder. A general rush for the boats immediately ensued, and while crowding into them, the Americans left their cover and poured discharge after discharge into their disordered ranks. During the action the British brig had caught aground within musket shot of the shore, and when the retreating foe had gained her decks, they were exposed to and experienced severe loss from the Americans, who continued to throw their fire into her until she floated and was removed down the river.

In this battle three Americans only were killed and a small number wounded, while the killed and wounded of the British amounted, as near as could be ascertained, to one hundred. After this repulse

the British did not make a second attempt, but, hastening to get their wounded on board, they weighed anchor and stood out of the Bay on their return to Halifax.

We will not attempt to describe the joy of the inhabitants of Machias at the unexpected result of this battle. They made up their minds for the worst, and they had looked upon the little band that had gone forth to cope with the adversary as a forlorn hope. When the tidings of the overwhelming defeat of the enemy reached them, they could scarcely credit the report; but when the little band marched back to the village, with apparently undiminished numbers, their joy knew no bounds. After this decided repulse, the people of Machias rested in perfect security, feeling confident that another attempt at invasion would not be made. But they were mistaken. About six weeks after this a third expedition left Halifax, and landed a thousand men at Passamaquoddy, with the intention of marching through the woods and attacking Machias by land. On learning this fact the people again mustered, and preparations were again made to waylay and resist the enemy. From the prowess they had already exhibited, there was no doubt that they would for the fourth time come off victors. The British, however, on the second day of their march, meeting with so many obstacles, became disheartened, and retreated.

After this the town remained unmolested. The Liberty Pole, which first drew on them the ire of

the British, remained a long time standing, a cherished memento of their unyielding firmness and heroic bravery. We cannot close our story without alluding to the O'Brien family, whose noble patriotism should have immortalized their names. After the transactions we have recorded, the Liberty and Diligence were commissioned by the State of Massachusetts and sent out on a cruise. Jeremiah O'Brien commanded the former, his brother William being lieutenant. Captain Lambert commanded the latter, with John O'Brien for first lieutenant. For two years they did service on the northern coast, affording protection to our navigation, after which they were laid up. After this, John O'Brien, with a number of others, built at Newburyport an armed ship, letter of marque, called the Hannibal, mounting twenty guns. On the completion of one voyage she was fitted out as a cruiser, manned with one hundred and thirty men. Unfortunately, off New York, she fell in with two frigates, and after a chase of forty-eight hours was taken. O'Brien was detained in the famous guard-ship Jersey about six months, suffering many privations, when he was taken to Mill Prison, England, whence he escaped after a number of months of confinement. His brother in the meantime was not idle. He had command of one or two armed vessels, and in a number of successful combats did the state good service, and proved himself worthy the name which he bore.

Among the many interesting articles on exhibition at the Burnham Tavern are the following:

Chest of Drawers.

Winged chain covered with blue and white "Copperplate"
Door Knocker

Tavern Sign—First sign hung east of the Penobscot River,
painted in Boston and used before the Tavern of Mrs.
Olive Longfellow.

Piece of ballast from the "Margaretta."

Leather Trunk once owned by Job Burnham.

Cards for carding wool and used in the Burnham family.

Light Stand made by Major Bowker and used by his family living in the Tavern.

Cape worn by Betsy Bowker wife of Major Bowker.

Ancient grain chest for bedding and used in the Tavern in early days.

Horse Pistol used in the first naval battle.

Piano—The first piano bought by a citizen of Machias.

A Warming-pan.

Pestle and Mortar used in the Tavern by Mrs. Job Burnham.

First Contribution box used in Machias. Used in Parson Lyon's Church which stood on the present site of Libby Hall.

A Spinning Wheel.

Carve high posted bedstead.

Knapsack, Holsters, Cartridge box, Sword: All from the O'Brien Homestead.

Oil Portrait of Parson Steele the second Minister of Machias.

Drawn rug representing the first naval battle and made by Mrs. Sabrina Watts Hall at the age of 94.



5370
5

PUBLISHED BY
THE HANNAH WESTON CHAPTER
D. A. R.

MACHIAS,

MAINE.