

The Province of Massachusetts Bay requests aid from Queen Anne, 1708

Introduction

Queen Anne's War (1702–1713) was the second of four great wars for empire fought among France and England and their Indian allies. This struggle broke out when the French raided English settlements on the New England frontier. Fighting then spread south, where English colonists in the Carolinas attacked Spanish territory in Florida. An English invasion of Quebec in 1710 failed, but in the Treaty of Utrecht ending the conflict, France ceded Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and the French territory around Hudson Bay to England, and abandoned its claim to sovereignty over the Iroquois.

In this memorial to Queen Anne in 1708, the Massachusetts colonists recounted the many economic losses they had suffered during the twenty years of warfare. They also suggested that the only way to combat the Indians, who had a different style of fighting than the colonists, was to enlist “the service of the Mohawks, and other Nations of the Western Indians that are in Friendship and Covenant with you.”

EXCERPT

It's nothing short of Twenty years, That your Ma.tys good Subjects of this Province, have been wasting under the Calamity's of a Distressing and Expensive War, taking the Commencem:t thereof from the Rebellion and Eruption of the Eastern Indians in the year 1688. - save onely the Intervention of Three or four years Cessation after the peace of Reyswick, during the Continuance whereof they forbore to commit their Bloody Villanies and Outrages. The french not dareing then openly to Avow, Assist and protect them therein, Yet in those years we were put to a very Considerable Charge, in keeping Constant Guards & Espyalls over them to prevent Surprizals by their perfidy and Treachery's -

And very Soon upon the New Declaration of War wth. france, they broke out again, in open Rebellion and hostility, Committing divers barbarous Murders, just after a Repeated and fresh Recognition of their Duty and Allegiance to your Majesty -

We have been sharers in Common with other our fellow Subjects to a great Degree in Losses, both of men and Estate, at home and at Sea, both in the former & the present War, our Trade is greatly diminished, and we are very much Exhausted; our yearly Expencc for our necessary defence, and to prevent the Incursions of the Enemy is vastly great. But by the good Providence of God, In the Early Advice from time to time given, of the Motions of the Enemy, and the prudent Methods taken by your Ma:tys Captain General; to Observe them, and preparations

The Province of Massachusetts Bay requests aid from Queen Anne, 1708

made for their Reception in their Descents upon us, has prevented those Impressions, which probably we might otherwise have felt, and they have been forced to Return back Ashamed, not without Loss on their part. -

But we have no prospect of the End of these Troubles, & of being Eased of our heavy and Insupportable Charge and burthen, whilst we can Act only Defensively, and have to do with Enemy's and Rebels within our very Bowells.

Questions for Discussion

Read the introduction and transcript and examine the document image in order to answer the following questions.

1. Using the information available, locate the areas mentioned on a physical map of North America. Shade, in different colors, areas under English, French, and Spanish control.
2. The English authors of this document frequently used a lower case "f" when they referred to the "french" or the "french king." Do you think that this was simply a mistake or a deliberate insult against a long time rival? Explain your answer.
3. According to the document, how did the French get and keep the loyalty of their Native American allies?
4. What information can you locate in this document that explains why it was so difficult for the English to defend themselves against Native American attacks? How did they suggest this problem could be solved?

The Province of Massachusetts Bay
requests aid from Queen Anne, 1708

Image

A Memorial of the State of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, to the most Excellent Majesty, by the Council and Assembly of your Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, convened in General Court the Twentieth of October 1708.

May it please your Majesty

It's nothing short of Twenty years, that your Majesty's good Subjects of this Province, have been awaiting under the Calamity of a Destroying and Expensive War, taking the Commencement thereof from the Rebellion and Eruption of the Eastern Indians in the year 1688. — save only the Intervention of three or four years Respite after the Peace of Breda, during the Continuance whereof they forbore to commit their Bloody Villanies and Outrages. The French not daring then openly to Avow, Assist and protect them therein. Yet in those years had we ever put to a very Considerable Charge, in keeping Constant Guards & Espyalls over them to prevent Surprizes by their perfidy and Treachery.

And every soon upon the New Declaration of War with France they broke out again, in open Rebellion and Hostility, Committing divers barbarous Murders just after a Repeated and fresh Recognition of their Duty and Allegiance to your Majesty.

We have been sharers in Common with other our fellow Subjects to a great Degree in Loss, both of men and Estate, at home and at sea, both in the former & the present War, our Trade is greatly diminished, and we are very much Exhausted, our yearly Expence for our necessary defence, and to prevent the IncurSIONS of the Enemy is vastly great. But by the good Providence of God, in the Early Advice from him to him given, of the Methods of the Enemy, and the prudent Methods taken by your Majesty's Captain General to Observe them, and preparations made for their Reception in their Descents upon us, has prevented those Impressions, which probably we might otherwise have felt, and they have been forced to return back Ashamed, not without Loss on their part.

But we have no prospect of the End of these Troubles, & of being eased of our heavy and Insupportable Charge and burthen, whilst we can Act only Defensively, and have to do with Enemies and Rebels within our very Dwells, who like Beasts of Prey seek their Living by Rapine and Spoils, and are such Monsters that their Barbarity and Cruelty is horridous to Human Nature, And they are Animated & Encouraged to such Barbarity by the French setting the heads of your Majesty's Subjects, at a price upon bringing in their Scalps, and they kill many in cold blood after they have received them to Quarter. They have the Advantage of Retiring for Shelter, to the Obscure recesses of a vast rude Wilderness, full of Woods, Lakes, Rivers, ponds, swamps, Rocks and Mountains, whereto they make an Easy and quick Passage, by means of their Cherry or birchen Canoes of great swiftness and light of Carriage; the matter whereof they are made being to be found almost every where and their Skill and dexterity for the making and Using of them is very extraordinary, which renders our Pursuit marches after them Ineffectual.

These Rebels have no fixed Settlements, but are Ambulatory & make frequent removed

A Memorial of the State of the Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England to Queene Anne, October 20, 1708. (Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC04891)

The Province of Massachusetts Bay
requests aid from Queen Anne, 1708

Removes, having no other Houses, but Tents or huts made of Bark or Rinds of
Trees, Mats &c. which they soon provide in all places where they come, so that it is
Impracticable to pursue or follow them with any Body of Regular Troops, they are
Supported and Encouraged by the French, who make them yearly Presents of
Clothing, Armes and Ammunition, besides the Supply they afford them for the
Beaver and Furs, which they take in hunting, and constantly keep their Priests
& Emperies among them, to steady them in their Interests, and the bigotries w^{ch}
they have infused into them. The French also oft times join them in their Marches
on our Frontiers.

We humbly conceive wth Submission, that the most probable Method of doing
Execution upon them & reducing them, is by men of their own Colour, way & manner of living.
And if yo^r Majesty shall be Graciously pleased to Command the Service of the
Mohawks, and other Nations of the Eastern Indians that are in friendship and
Covenant with your Ma^{ty}s several Governments, against these Eastern Indian Rebels,
for which they Express themselves to stand ready, and to whom they are a Terror,
they would with the Blessing of Gods in short time Extirpate or Reclaim them,
and prevent the Incursions made upon us from Canada or the East. The force of
the Enemy is chiefly bent against this yo^r Ma^{ty}s Province, and Province of
New Hampshire, whilst we are a Barrier to the others.

A Letter from Mont^r. Caudecaul Govern^r. of Canada to M^r. de Brionillay, late
Govern^r. of Port Royal, was some time since happily Intercepted, and came to our
Governours hand, wherein he writes thus, I will try, that he Endeavour to keep all
quiet on the Side of Orange or Albany, having Command from the King his Master,
not to have any Quarrel with your Ma^{ty}s Subjects on that Side, or with the Mohawks,
which he hath strictly Observed, and they are in a profound Peace, having met with
Little or no loss on the Land Side either in men or Estates this Year, which has proved
So very Chargable and grievous to us, in respect of both which, we made bold humbly
to Represent in our humble Address to your Majesty in the year 1704. And the
Original French Letter was then Transmitted by your Ma^{ty}s Govern^r. to the R^t.
Hon^{ble} the Lords of your Council for Trade and Plantations.

In the former War when your Ma^{ty}s Subjects of Albany wth their Dependant
Indians Acted Offensively against the Enemy, by Partys frequently Issuing forth
into the Woods, they greatly distressed the French & the Indians in their Interest,
made considerable Spoyle upon them, and prevented the descents from Canada upon
these Plantations, which now are frequent.

We pray leave in most humble manner further to Offer to your Royal
Consideration, the very great Disadvantage this your Ma^{ty}s Province is at all times
under, more Especially in time of War, by reason of Port Royal remaining in the
hands of the French, which was Originally a Scotts Colony Granted and begun, and
is Included in the Royal Charter or Letters Patent of this Province, Granted by their
late Majestys King William & Queen Mary; the Situation whereof makes it a
Quarrel to us, wth respect to Navigation, It lying so Apt and Propitious for the
Intercepting of all Shipping coming to or going from hence to the Eastward, and
is a fit receptacle for Privateers, who can soon find out thence and are near hand to
send in their Prizes, w^{ch} also to Annoy our Fishery, whereof we have had frequent Experience
So the very great hurt of the Trade of our Nation, & the Diminution of your Ma^{ty}s Revenue.

If

The Province of Massachusetts Bay
requests aid from Queen Anne, 1708

If your Majesty shall be Graciously pleased, during the Continuance of the present War by your Royal Armes to Reduce that Country, and take it by force out of the french hands, or if by the Blessing of God the just Armes of your Majesty & your Allies, be followed with Reported Glorious Successes as of late they have been, so that the french King find himself under a Necessity of Vising for Peace, And a Treaty be thereupon Negotiated, And your Majesty in your princely Wisdom shall thinke fit, that place may have a Consideration in the Treaty, to be restored to your Ma^{ty}s Obedience And settled by your Ma^{ty}s British Subjects.

It will be of the last Importance to your Majesty's good Subjects Trading to & from these Provinces, and a General Security to them, And also of singular Benefit and Advantage for the providing of Masts for the Use of your Ma^{ty}s Royal Navy - whereof that Country Affords great plenty, which are now grown scarce neerer hand, And prevent the french King of that Yearly supply he has from thence of Naval Stores.

All which is humbly Submitted by

Madam

Your Majesty's

Most Loyal Obedient and
Dutiful Subjects.

In the name & by Order of
the Council

J. Addington Secy.

In the name and by Order of
the House of Representatives

Thomas Oliver Speaker

The Province of Massachusetts Bay requests aid from Queen Anne, 1708

Transcript

A Memorial of the State of the Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England to Queene Anne, October 20, 1708. (Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC04891)

[*draft*]

A Memorial of the State of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, with Reference to the War, humbly Offered to your most Sacred Majesty, by the Council and Assembly of your Majesty's Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, convened in General Court the Twentieth of October 1708. –

May it please yo^r: Majesty.

It's nothing short of Twenty years, That your Ma.^{ty's} good Subjects of this Province, have been wasting under the Calamity's of a Distressing and Expensive War, taking the Commencem:^t thereof from the Rebellion and Eruption of the Eastern Indians in the year 1688. – save onely the Intervention of Three or four years Cessation after the peace of Reyswick, during the Continuance whereof they forbore to commit their Bloody Villanies and Outrages. The french not dareing then openly to Avow, Assist and protect them therein, Yet in those years we were put to a very Considerable Charge, in keeping Constant Guards & Espyalls over them to prevent Surprizals by their perfidy and Treachery's –

And very Soon upon the New Declaration of War wth. france, they broke out again, in open Rebellion and hostility, Committing divers barbarous Murders, just after a Repeated and fresh Recognition of their Duty and Allegiance to your Majesty –

We have been sharers in Common with other our fellow Subjects to a great Degree in Losses, both of men and Estate, at home and at Sea, both in the former & the present War, our Trade is greatly diminished, and we are very much Exhausted; our yearly Expence for our necessary defence, and to prevent the Incursions of the Enemy is vastly great. But by the good Providence of God, In the Early Advice from time to time given, of the Motions of the Enemy, and the prudent Methods taken by your Ma:^{ty's} Captain General; to Observe them, and preparations made for their Reception in their Descents upon us, has prevented those

The Province of Massachusetts Bay requests aid from Queen Anne, 1708

Impressions, which probably we might otherwise have felt, and they have been forced to Return back Ashamed, not without Loss on their part. –

But we have no prospect of the End of these Troubles, & of being Eased of our heavy and Insupportable Charge and burthen, whilst we can Act only Defensively, and have to do with Enemy's and Rebels within our very Bowells, who like Beasts of prey seek their Living by Rapine and Spoiles, and are such Monsters that their Barbarity's and Cruelty's are horrendous to humane Nature, And they are Animated & Encouraged to such Barbarity's by the french setting the heads of your Ma.^{tys} Subjects, at a price upon bringing in their Scalps, and they kill many in cold blood after they have received them to Quarter, They have the advantage of Retiring for shelter, to the Obscured Recesses of a Vast rude Wilderness, full of Woods, Lakes, Rivers, ponds, Swamps, Rocks and Mountains, whereto they make an Easy and quick Passage, by means of their Wherry's or burchen Canoes of great Swiftnes and light of Carriage; The matter whereof they are made being to be found almost every where, and their skill and dexterity for the making and Using of them is very extraordinary, which renders our Tiresome marches after them Ineffectual. –

These Rebels have no fixt Settlements, but are Ambulatory, & make frequent removes [2] Removes, having no other Houses, but Tents or hutts made of Barque or Kinds of Trees, Matts &c. which they soon provide in all places where they come, So that it is Impracticable to pursue or follow them with any Body of Regular Troops, they are supported and Encouraged by the french, who make them yearly Presents Gratis, of Clothing, Armes and Ammunition, Besides the Supply they Afford them for the Beaver and Furrs, which they take in hunting, and Constantly keep their Priests & Emissaries among them, to steady them in their Interests, and the bigotries w:^{ch} they have Instilled into them. The French also oft times join them in their Marches on our Frontiers./ –

We humbly Conceive w.th Submission, That the most probable Method of doing Execution upon them & Reduceing them, is by men of their own Colour, way & manner of living.

And if yo^f Majesty shall be Graciously pleased to Command the Service of the Mohawks, and other Nations of the Western Indians that are in friendship and Covenant with your Ma.^{tys}

The Province of Massachusetts Bay requests aid from Queen Anne, 1708

Several Governments, against these Eastern Indian Rebels, for which they Express themselves to stand ready, and to whom they are a Terrour. – They would with the Blessing of God in Short time Extirpate or Reclaim them, and prevent the Incursions made upon us from Canada or the East. The force of the Enemy is Chiefly besot against this yo^r. Maj:^{ty}s Province, and Province of New Hampshire, whilst we are a Barrier to the others./ –

A Letter from Mons:^r Vaudreuil Govern:^r of Canada to M^r Brouillan, late Govern^r of Port Royal, was some time since happily Intercepted, and came to our Governours hand, wherein he writes thus, Namely, That he Endeavours to keep all quiet on the side of Orange (or Albany) having Command from the King his Master, not to have any Quarrel with your Ma:^{ty}s Subjects on that side, or with the Mohawks; which he hath strictly Observed. And they are in a profound peace, having met with Little or no loss on the Land Side, either in men or Estates this War; which has proved so very Chargable and grievous to us, in Respect of both which, we made bold humbly to Represent in our humble Address to your Majesty in the year 1704. And the s^d Original French Letter was then Transmitted by your Ma:^{ty}s Govern^r to the R.^t Hon^{ble} the Lords of your Council for Trade and Plantations. –

In the former War, when your Ma:^{ty}s subjects of Albany w.th their Dependant Indians Acted Offensively against the Enemy, by Party's frequently Issuing forth into the Woods, they greatly distressed the french & the Indians in their Interest, made Considerable Spoyles upon them, and prevented the descents from Canada upon these Plantations, which now are frequent. –

We pray leave in most humble manner further to Offer to your Royal Consideration, the very great Disadvantage, this your Ma:^{ty}s Province is at all times under, more Especially in time of War, by reason of Port Royal remaining in the hands of the french, which was Originally a Scotts Colony Granted and begun, and is Included in the Royal Charter or Letters Patent of this Province, Granted by their late Majesty's King William & Queen Mary; The situation whereof makes it a Dunkirk to us, with Respect to Navigation, It lying so Apt and Commodious for the Intercepting of all shipping comeing to or going from hence to the Eastward, And is a fit Receptacle for Privateers, who can soon Issue out thence and are near hand to send in their Prizes. As also to Annoy our Fishery, whereof we have had frequent Experience. To the very great hurt of the Trade of our Nation, & the Diminution of your Ma:^{ty}s Revenue. If

The Province of Massachusetts Bay
requests aid from Queen Anne, 1708

[3] If your Majesty shall be Graciously pleased, during the Continuance of the present War by your Royal Armes to Reduce that Country, and take it by force out of the french hands, or if by the Blessing of God the just Armes of your Majesty & your Allies, be followed with Repeated Glorious successes as of late they have been, so that the french King find himselfe under a Necessity of Sueing for Peace, And a Treaty be thereupon Negotiated, And your Majesty in your princely Wisdom shall think fit, that place may have a Consideration in the Treaty, to be Restored to your Ma:^{ty}s Obedience And settled by your Ma:^{ty}s British Subjects. –

It will be of the last Importance to your Majesty's good Subjects Tradeing to & from these Provinces, and a General Security to them, And also of Singular Benefit and Advantage, for the providing of Masts for the Use of your Ma:^{ty}s Royal Navy whereof that Country Affords great plenty, which are now grown Scarce nearer hand, And prevent the french King of that Yearly supply he has from thence of Naval Stores./–

All which is humbly Submitted by
Madam

Y:^r Majesty's

Most Loyal Obedient and –
Dutiful Subject. –

In the name & by Order of
the Council –

[Js:^ae] Addington Secry.

In the name and by Order of
the house of Representatives –

Thomas Oliver Speaker

[*docket*]

Memorial. 20. Oct^r. 1708