

representatives to the general court), there was less violence, and a larger proportion of the people, to use a cant phrase of the time, were "well-wishers of the government." Especially was this true in the neighbourhood of Penobscot, and the old fort, or military post, at that place was abandoned because its commander, a Loyalist, would not hold it in the interest of the Massachusetts authorities.

Some time in the spring of 1779, orders reached Halifax for the despatch of troops to Penobscot Bay to build and garrison a fort at that place. Brigadier-General McLean, an experienced officer, and a man of education and refinement, was placed in command of the expedition; his force consisting of the Seventy-fourth Highlanders and six companies of the Hamilton Regiment, about 700 men. His proclamation, on taking possession of the territory, expressly states that to afford a place of refuge and protection for the friends of the Crown in Maine was the principal object in establishing a military post.

A frigate and three small sloops of war convoyed the transports from Halifax to Penobscot. The landing safely made, the frigate departed, leaving orders for two of the sloops to return to Halifax.

The crest of a ridge on the peninsula of Bagaduce, or Majibaquia-duce (now Castine), lying on the east side of Penobscot River, where it widens to the Bay, was the site chosen for a fort and town. The landing took place on the 17th of June. About one hundred of the inhabitants volunteered to help in clearing the land of wood, and the work of planning and building the fort and outworks was commenced without delay.

When the people of Boston heard of the occupation of Penobscot, and learned that the British were few in number, they at once resolved to overwhelm them with a superior force.

By great exertion they quickly gathered a fleet of eighteen armed vessels, with a larger number of transports and storeships, and embarked an army of 3,000 men. This expedition reached Penobscot on the 23rd of July, just five weeks after the British had laid the foundations of their fort. Confident of success, the New Englanders laid siege to the unfinished works, and rejoiced in their anticipated victory.

General McLean was not wholly unprepared. Timely warning had caused the retention of the three war sloops for the protection of the harbour, instead of only the one that had been allotted to him. The attack, however, had come much earlier than was expected, and in much larger force.

As the forty or fifty New England ships paraded before the little harbour, they seemed indeed a formidable fleet. But the British general was not one to yield to a mere show of force. Though he had but one gun mounted, and his walls half raised, he would try to hold the fort. Changing the plan of his fortifications, therefore, to