

Introduction

- East Florida was governed by the British during the American Revolution. The capital of East Florida during this period was Saint Augustine, and its governor was Patrick Tonyn. Tonyn sought to fight back against the revolution, however, this never happened to the extent he desired. Why?
- The answer is internal dissension in East Florida's chain of command. The person most responsible for this dissension is Royal General Augustine Prévost. Prévost believed that he had full authority over the militia in East Florida. But Tonyn had his own militia, called the East Florida Rangers, and he would not relinquish control of these troops.
- My research looks at the relationship between Tonyn and Prévost and the power struggle for control over the East Florida militia and Rangers. By looking at the findings that have been published by authors researching East Florida under British governance and analyzing many primary sources, particularly a letter between Tonyn and Prévost, I was able to find two specific examples that illuminate the conflict between these two men.
- These findings can be used to explain other conflicts between Tonyn and Prévost. These conflicts include the movement of troops.
- These findings can also help us paint a clearer picture of what British East Florida looked like during the Revolutionary War and how citizens of St. Augustine were affected by the actions of royal officials.

Methods

- I did a lot of source analysis and found a huge database of primary sources, all digitized, called *Colonial America*. My research focused on letters digitized in *Colonial America*.
- I looked through diary entries, letters, and newspapers—anything I thought would give me insight into how Augustine Prévost and Governor Tonyn communicated with each other.
- I kept a journal or a “specialization log” to record all my findings and any important links. I transcribed a hard-to-read, handwritten letter from Tonyn to Prévost in my specialization log.

References



with fresh provisions, that the burden of providing these necessaries, and the expense of the expedition should not be put upon me. You are invested with sufficient authority to

Section of the letter that I reference, showing Tonyn's grievances towards Prévost and how the Governor has to feed the General's troops (page 2, paragraph 1).

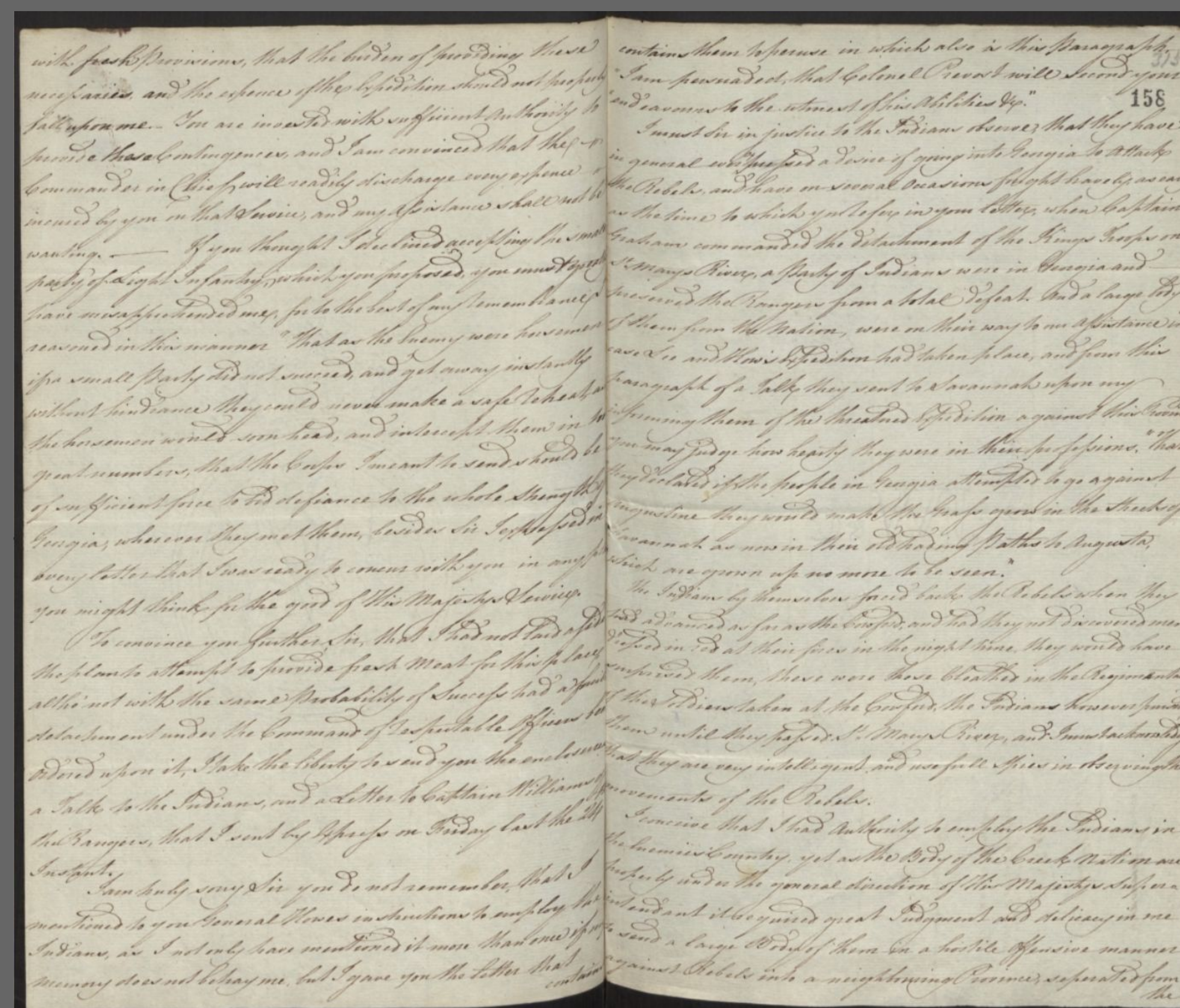
By: Cassius D'Elena,
 Dr. Benjamin Gunter, and
 Idy Codington



Painting of Governor Patrick Tonyn (1774)



Painting of Major General Augustin Prévost (c. 1770)



Letter between Tonyn and Prévost dated 27 January 1777. This official copy of the letter is digitized in *Colonial America*.

Principal Findings

- My research resulted in insight into Tonyn and Prévost's relationship. Specifically, it gives evidence and direct examples that illuminate conflict between the two men.
- In the main letter, we see Tonyn making playful jabs at Prévost - for example, making fun of how Prévost's memory doesn't serve him well. Tonyn writes, *"as I not only have mentioned it more than once if my memory does not betray me, but I gave you the letter that contains them [General Howe's Instruction to Prévost]."* (Transcription, page 2, paragraph 3)
- We also see Tonyn complain that he has to supply a majority of the supplies for all the troops despite those troops not being under his control. He says, *"that the burden of providing these necessaries, should not properly fall upon me. You are with sufficient authority to provide these contingencies (?), and I am convinced that the Commander in Chief will readily discharge every expense (?)"* (Transcription, page 2 paragraph 1)

Conclusion

- We now have evidence for the many grievances of Tonyn. We see that he isn't happy that he has accrued the responsibilities of caring for troops that aren't under his control.
 - This give us insight on how Prévost acted; his attitude is irresponsible.
- We also gain evidence of the clear communication gap between the two men.
 - Tonyn points out that he has already informed Prévost of this information and he is effectively repeating himself.
- Using this letter as evidence it seems that Prévost didn't listen to Tonyn and as a result of that many of his responsibilities fell onto Tonyn.

Limitations

- The database where all of my scanned letters were was very slow.
- It was also quite hard to understand the fancy cursive that these men (and their secretaries) used.
- It's quite hard to step into the mindset of these military officials, especially ones that lived 250 years ago. Some things still won't make sense.