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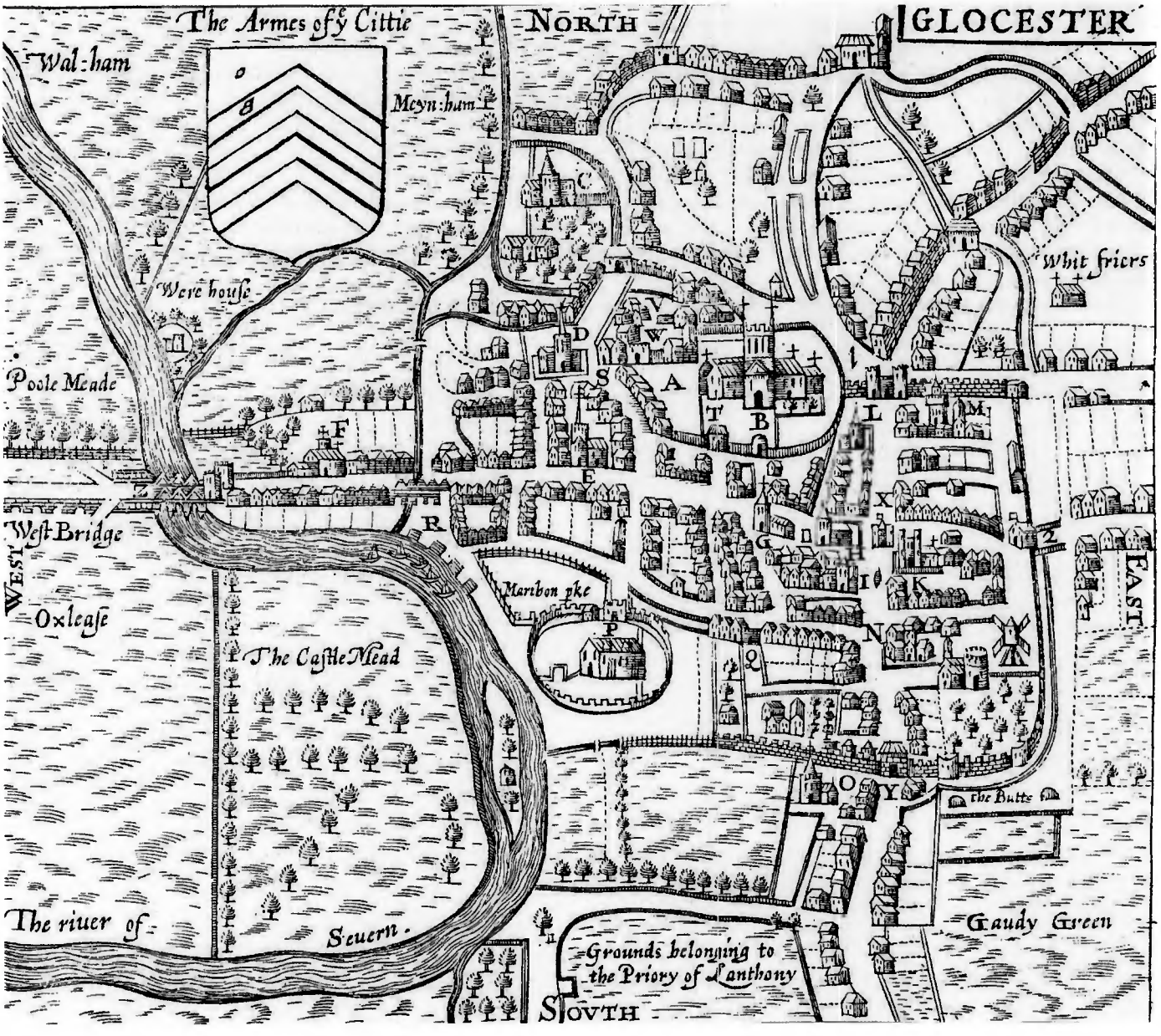
The Garrison of Gloucester in the Civil War

by Russell Howes

The garrison of Gloucester kept numerous records, and this article attempts to describe its activities chiefly from these documents. They are at the National Archives in the Commonwealth Exchequer Papers. The most interesting and comprehensive record is the account book, running from April 1643 to September 1644, of Captain Thomas Blayney, who was 'treasurer at war' or treasurer of the garrison. Scores of papers were signed by Edward Massie, the governor of Gloucester; clearly he had an office somewhere. This may have been at his lodging at the Old Crown Inn in Westgate Street (and not the magnificent old house in Westgate Street at the corner of Maverdine Lane, now a book shop). But it may have been at the 'Main Guard' at the Wheatmarket, which was in Southgate Street.[1]



John Speed's plan of Gloucester, 1610

The garrison of Gloucester at the time of the siege in 1643 comprised two regiments of foot, known as Lord Stamford's regiment and the governor's regiment. The earl of Stamford marched through Gloucester in about November 1642 and left a regiment there to secure the city for Parliament. Lieutenant Colonel

Edward Massie was appointed military governor of Gloucester and arrived on 8 December. The city had already taken measures for its own defence and formed a 'city regiment', probably by adding volunteers to the trained band; it was commanded by Colonel Henry Stephens. This appears to have become the governor's regiment and a number of its officers were local men. One of these was Captain Thomas Pury, who was an alderman and a member of parliament for the city. In 1644 a regiment was raised for Colonel Thomas Stephens, the sheriff of Gloucestershire. Massie complained bitterly in 1645 that Stephens was surrounded when he marched his men to Chippenham without the knowledge of Massie, who had to send a relieving force. Both the King and Parliament used impressment of soldiers. A note records a payment to Thomas Harte, constable of Stroud, for conducting soldiers pressed by him.[2]

Gloucester also engaged some Scottish officers and their men, Colonel Arthur Forbes, Major James Carr and Major John Davidson. Colonel Forbes recovered Berkeley castle for Parliament after its small garrison abandoned it when Prince Rupert captured Cirencester in February 1643. Major Carr sent in a claim for arrears in June 1643, which recorded that he had been taken prisoner at Cirencester, when he lost £9 in gold 'out of his pocket', a watch worth £6, a suit of Spanish cloth with silver lace and other clothes. Davidson was asked to train the city soldiers. The soldiers of Forbes and Carr shared in the defence of Gloucester during the siege, as did the regiment of Colonel Nicholas Devereux. He was a kinsman of the earl of Essex, lord general of Parliament's army, and first commanded a regiment of dragoons; after the siege he was colonel of a regiment of foot. When Massie captured Malmesbury on 24 May 1644 he appointed Devereux its military governor.[3]

Portrait of Colonel Massie in 1645 presented to Gloucester City Council

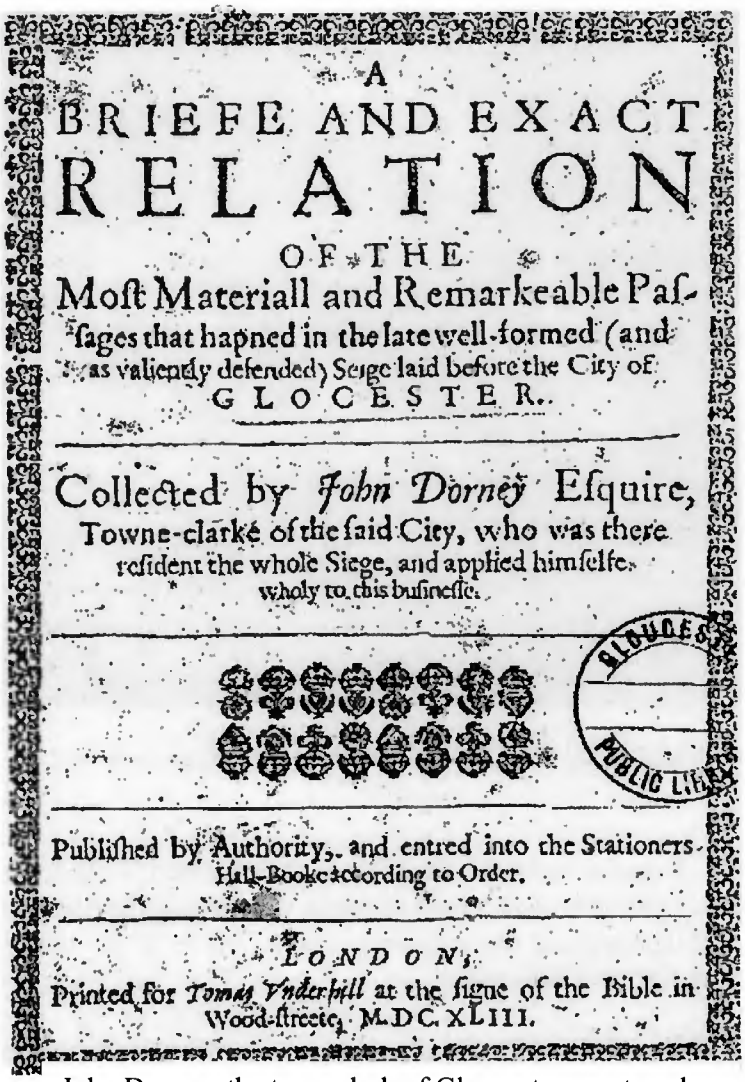
Other soldiers served in the garrison of Gloucester. Captain Robert Backhouse led a troop of horse. He was killed in the fight at Ledbury on 22 April 1645. Massie apparently had another troop of horse under his own command. Captain Richard Bannaster commanded a troop of dragoons, foot soldiers who travelled on horseback. Dragoons were used to bring in and guard prisoners. The River Severn was guarded by Lieutenant John Allerdine and his watermen. They were 56 in number at one point, and they possessed a 'frigott', which was built at Gloucester.

There was a dedicated team of 16 'canoneers' and 24 assistants called 'matrosses', under the master gunner Ellis Powell. A prominent member of the team was John Hatton who deserted to the enemy during the

siege. These men were presumably stationed in Gloucester, whereas 'the train of artillery' under Captain Catchmay was a mobile unit.

The soldiers were paid three shillings a week at the beginning of the war, but their pay went up to four shillings a week in 1644. The pay of officers was often in arrears but every effort was made to pay the soldiers, or they would desert. Lieutenant Colonel Constance Ferrer of Lord Stamford's regiment reported that officers had three or four months' pay due, but the private soldiers were 'even'. A note in the account book about the canoneers said, 'here doth begin their weekly pay, without which they would have been gone'. It was a struggle to find the money, and there were desperate cries from Massie: 'I want money exceedingly', 'my officers cry out', and 'I have not any money at all'. A widow complained that her husband John Harris kept garrison at Tewkesbury all winter, for which £15 was due, but he 'never had a penny'; later he was killed at Roundway Down. Captain Mallory wrote in December 1643, 'I have not so much as a candle to light me to bed, neither is there any servant to do anything for me without ready money, and credit is very cold in Gloucester, and besides I have soldiers unbilleted that wanteth meat'.[4]

A few surviving accounts record pay company by company, and from these the number of soldiers can be deduced. In the first week of October 1644 802 men in Lord Stamford's regiment were paid £160 10s., and 731 men in the governor's regiment were paid £146 18s. A regiment should have had about 1,200 men. Each regiment comprised nine companies, and they varied from 86 to 117 men. In 1647 Massie submitted a pay claim; as a lieutenant colonel he was entitled to 30s. a day, as a major general 66s. a day. He was promoted to colonel on 4 November 1643. He was made commander in chief of the Western Association and raised to the rank of major general on 16 May 1645, and left Gloucester. His total pay claim was for £6,871. He also claimed £8,168 for such charges as clothing, billeting and maintenance of prisoners. Of all this £7,736 remained due to him.[5]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BRIEFE AND EXACT
RELATION
OF THE
Moſt Materiall and Remarkeable Paſ-
ſages that hapned in the late well-formed (and
as valiently defended) Seige laid before the City of
GLOCESTER.
Collected by *John Dorney* Eſquire,
Towne-clarke of the ſaid City, who was there
reſident the whole Siege, and applied himſelfe
wholy to this buſineſſe.
GLOUCES
PUBLIC LIB
Publiſhed by Authority, and entred into the Stationers
Hall-Booke according to Order.
LONDON,
Printed for *Tomas Vnderhill* at the ſigne of the Bible in
Wood-ſtreete, M.DC.XLIII.

John Dorney, the town clerk of Gloucester, wrote a day by day account of the siege in 1643

Gloucester was an isolated parliamentary garrison. Royalist forces held Bristol and most of Wales, and the king's headquarters at Oxford separated Gloucester from the Parliament in London. So the garrison was thrown upon its own resources for arms and ammunition; although a convoy of supplies was after much delay and with great difficulty conducted by Lieutenant Colonel Ferrer from London through Warwick to Gloucester and arrived on 4 April 1644. Muskets were not made in Gloucester, but there were gunsmiths who could repair them. Giles Reeves was paid for 'fixing' them and was described as 'gunsmith to the garrison'. Bullets had to be made locally and payments for them were made to a pewterer and a bell founder; the latter was John Barnwood, who threw a grenade into the royalist mine at the end of the siege; for his service during the siege he was admitted as a freeman of the city. Cartridges were made up separately, and paper was provided by Toby Jordan, bookbinder and common councilman.[6]

Gunpowder was made in Gloucester; the chief ingredients were saltpetre, sulphur or brimstone, and charcoal. The accounts mention a saltpetre works but do not say where it was. Thomas Davis was powder maker and Thomas Barnes saltpetre maker during the siege. Saltpetre came from disagreeable sources, such as liquor from Mrs. Boyle's pigeon house. She was probably the lady of Maisemore. The saltpetre works consumed great quantities of wood, and much came from Llanthony, where Mr. Knowles was 'overseer of the wood-cutters'. The majority of muskets were matchlocks, where the charge of gunpowder was ignited by a slow burning match. This was a length of cord soaked in saltpetre. The garrison made its own match; one of the makers was John Williams, a roper. Hemp for match was grown in Gloucester, and there were payments for sowing hemp, pulling hemp and work at the hemp garden.

The other principal weapon was the pike. John Welstead, blacksmith, made 64 pikes at Bearland; by 1662 he had become a Quaker. The most unexpected weapon named in the accounts was a 'great crossbow'; perhaps it was used to shoot back a defiant reply to a summons to surrender during the siege, as described in the narratives of John Dorney and John Corbet.[7]

As Colonel Massie extended his authority in the area around Gloucester 'out-garrisons' were established, manned by small detachments of soldiers. They are mentioned at Eastington, Boddington and Churcham Captain Devereux was in charge at Prestbury. There was a garrison at Frampton-on-Severn, which was later moved to Slimbridge. The parliamentary garrison at Painswick was forced to leave by the royalists. Garrisons were put in Beverstone castle and Sudeley castle after those places were captured from the royalists. Usually the soldiers occupied the chief house of the place. John Chamberlain of Prestbury said that his house was made a garrison for Parliament, and the soldiers made use of the grass and hay from adjoining grounds which he leased from a neighbour, who sued him for rent. Anthony Clifford attempted to sue Edward Morse for damage done by soldiers when they occupied Frampton Court. Tewkesbury changed hands several times; Sir Robert Cooke, who was member of parliament for Gloucestershire, was at first in charge of Parliament's garrison there.[8]

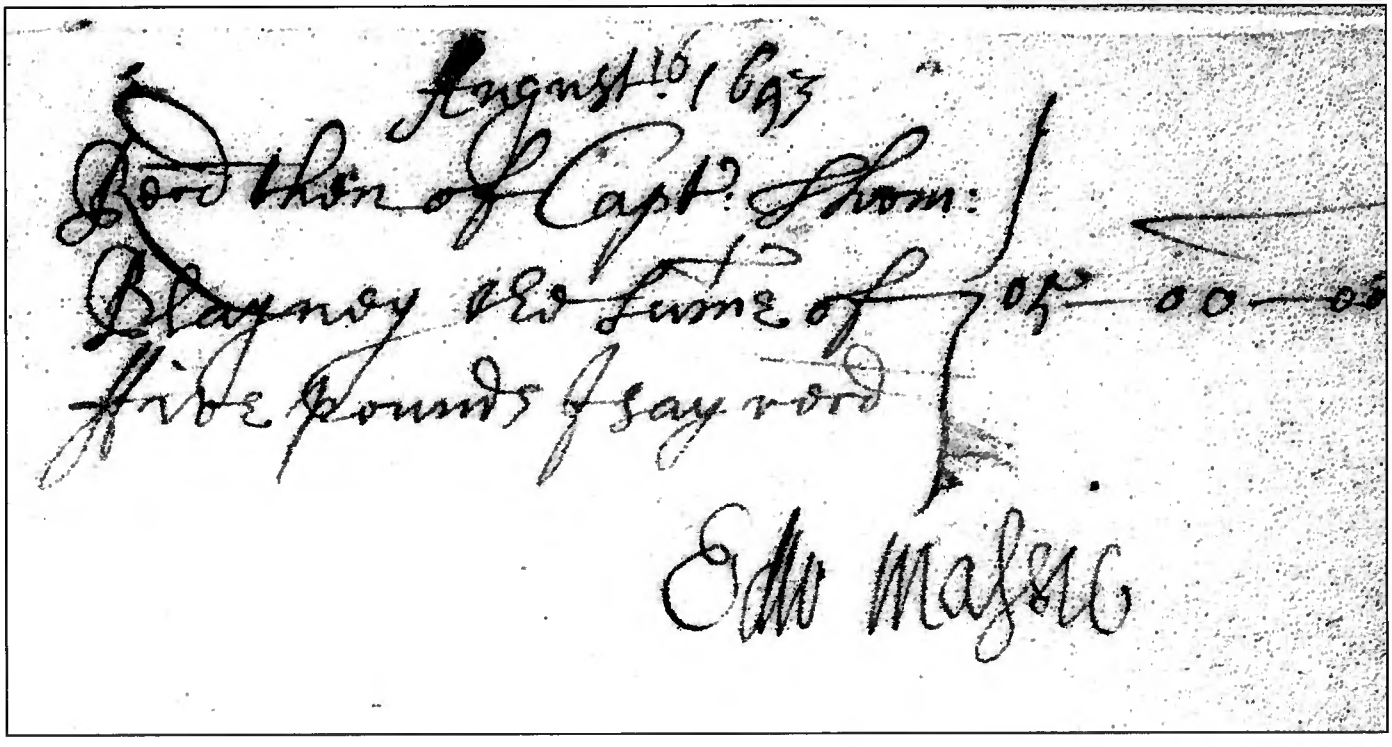
Scouts and messengers kept Massie in touch with Parliament and other commanders, and gave warning of royalist operations. About a dozen scouts and 'intelligencers' are named, under the authority of Edward Donne, scoutmaster. One messenger carried letters from London apparently concealed in bags of salt. Two women, Margaret Jelly and Elizabeth Beesley, took messages to Warwick. Roger Davies was mentioned frequently. He seems to have been twice captured by the royalists, and on one such occasion had his riding coat taken. Ralph Wallis, who later became a schoolmaster in Gloucester, was early in the war betrayed to the royalist scouts of Sudeley, and carried thence to Oxford; Dorothy his wife petitioned that he might be exchanged for a prisoner in Gloucester.[9]

William Bell of Sandhurst used his servants to gain intelligence for Colonel Massie. Edward Kemett who lived on a farm of Bell at Coberley, got intelligence of the designs and motions of the royalist garrisons of Sudeley and Radcot; and he was sent by night into Gloucester to Colonel Massie or Captain Backhouse; he gave notice that the king's army was marching towards Painswick. Robert Lovett of Twigworth said that Bell sent him and Bell's clerk John Madocke at 8 or 9 o'clock at night 'to scout up and down the country to spy until the break of day'.[10]

The scouts were very active at the time of the siege, when nine men were named in the accounts. During the period from 4 August to 27 October 1643 scouts went to Cricklade, Cirencester, towards Newbury, to Berkeley, Minchinhampton, Tetbury and Nympsfield, while Roger Davies was 'scouting in the hills'. Messengers got away from Gloucester during the siege. Two men were sent forth to 'his excellency', the earl of Essex. William Clarke went twice to London. Thomas Prince of Hartpury 'adventured his life to go out through the king's army, creeping upon his belly, to make known the state of things in Gloucester, and brought joyful news of relief coming'. Davies and Prince were made freemen of Gloucester for their services.[11]

Sick and wounded soldiers at Gloucester were in the care of Jasper Clutterbuck, one of the aldermen. There was a hospital, but its whereabouts was not specified; in it were two surgeons. Payments were made to nurses, and for 'physic', for example, a vomit, a purge and cordial juleps. Sheets, canvas and flock were bought for beds. John Barrett, a corporal in Captain Cotton's company, was in the party which went to Painswick in March 1644; the soldiers were put to flight, and in the pursuit Barrett was badly wounded. He was left for dead, and stripped 'stark naked to the very skin'. He recovered under the care of the surgeon, and petitioned Massie, 'I, being able to rise, cannot for want of clothes'. Massie ordered him to be paid £1. Massie ordered payments to wives and widows of soldiers captured or killed. He paid Mary Birckett and Anne Morgan whose husbands were slain in the siege.[12]

Royalist prisoners were detained in Gloucester at the castle, which had long been used as a prison, and was on the site of the present prison; at the Northgate, which served as the city gaol; and at the marshalsea, which was in buildings belonging to the college or cathedral. Stephen Holford was in charge of the castle, Walter Holman at the Northgate, and William Grace at the college; others were also involved. After the fighting at Highnam in March 1643 prisoners were kept in St. Mary de Lode church, and afterwards poor people were paid to clean up the inevitable damage. A meagre allowance of 3d. each a day was granted towards prisoners' maintenance. This money was not always forthcoming. There was a petition from 'the poor, miserable and distressed prisoners' in the castle, which acknowledged that 'the marshal having strained himself to his uttermost power', was now 'utterly disinabled to yield us any more succour'. Captain Devereux, when authorising Blayney to pay for maintenance of prisoners, said it was better to allow no quarter than let them perish. At one time there were 160 prisoners in the marshalsea. Armies did not like to hold - and pay - prisoners for long, and they were often exchanged for men held by the other side. There is a record of ten men exchanged from Minchinhampton. Some prisoners were wealthy enough to pay for their release. Sir Edward Bathurst (who had paid £170 to the king for his baronetcy) paid a ransom of £80.[13]



Colonel Massie signed a receipt for £5 which Captain Blayney lent to him during the siege of Gloucester

Soldiers were quartered for the most part in private houses. An order required Dorothy Dennis to receive four men of Captain Lower; they stayed ten weeks and she was paid 3s. a week for each man; her payment of £6 was entered in Blayney's account book. Soldiers were often accommodated at inns. Captain Cockayne's troop was lodged at the New Inn, whose landlord, Mr. Snell, was classed as a 'malignant' or royalist. There was a payment for two horses at the Bell. Other inns cited were the Sun, the Sergeant's

Head, the Falcon, the Star and the White Hart. Sir William Waller, when he was in Gloucester, was careful to see that citizens were paid for quartering soldiers, and several of his orders have been preserved. There is mention of a 'billeter'.[14]

The soldiers were too numerous for all to be accommodated within the walls of Gloucester, though presumably this had to be done during the siege. At other times many were billeted in the villages around Gloucester; when the two regiments were disbanded some soldiers were as far away as Frocester and Winchcombe. A detailed account for part of the hundred of Whitston showed that the parish of Longney paid £179 10s. in providing quarters for Captain Backhouse's 60 troopers with 70 horses during 10 weeks, at the rate of 5s. a week for each man and horse, plus £15 for 200 bushels of beans. The parish also quartered 300 soldiers of Sir William Waller with 400 horses for two days and two nights, and 50 soldiers of Captain Baylis with 60 horses for two days and two nights. The whole charge was £255. Other parishes of the hundred which paid for quartering were Saul, Fretherne and Quedgeley. The total cost to the hundred was £1041 10s. 4d. This large sum could be offset against the charge in taxation, which was in fact smaller, being £1010 12s 6d.

All Civil War armies followed a similar policy of deducting the cost of 'free quarter' from taxation. In 1646, when attempts were made to settle accounts, Thomas Pury wrote to the committee for accounts in London, explaining how in 1643, when there were complaints about levying £50,000 in Gloucestershire, the county was 'grieved' and yet the soldiers were unpaid. He and fellow member of parliament John Stephens were sent to Gloucester and effected a remedy. This was to make allowance for all contributions where free quarter was taken or provisions issued to parliament's forces. Pury mentioned Whitston; £1010 was assessed on its inhabitants, but not above £100 was paid by them, since they made allowance to themselves of £900.[15]

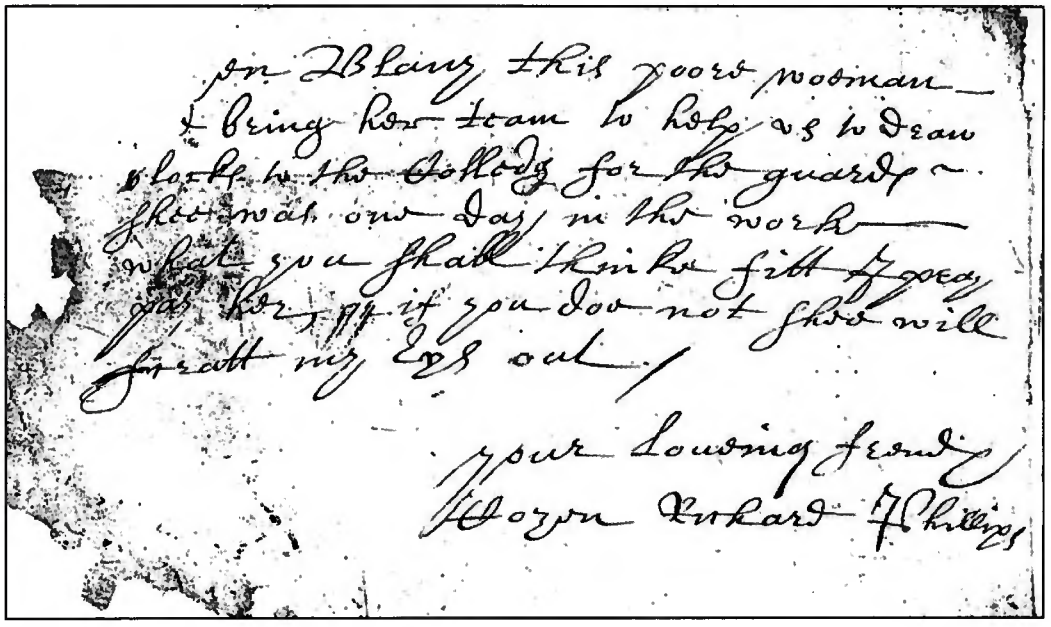
The siege of Gloucester was vividly illustrated by the accounts. Very eloquent was the gap in Blayney's account book from 9 August to 9 September 1643, when there were no entries, except on 16 August, 'lent unto the governor £7 10s.' and 'lent unto Serjeant Major Ferrer £5'. Immediately before the siege all the captains paid their companies. On 5 August workmen were paid for pulling down houses. As soon as the siege was over many people had to be paid. The powder makers and saltpetre men were paid, as was a cooper for work on saltpetre tubs and powder barrels. Payment was made for bringing great bullets into the magazine. Baker, a bellfounder, was paid for casting 236 pounds of bullets at 2d. the pound. The earl of Essex commanded the army which relieved Gloucester, and on his arrival he authorised a special payment to Massie of £100. A poignant paper noted that Widow Langley of Ealing had quartered three soldiers until they 'went to relieve Gloucester'; only two of them came back.[16]

The garrison of Gloucester depended much upon the local people. In 1642-43 the chamberlains bought 40 muskets, two cannon, 500 pounds of lead for bullets, and other munitions. Christ Church (St. Mary de Crypt), St. Nicholas church and St Bartholemew's hospital were used as magazines. From the beginning of the war the city magistrates agreed among themselves to keep watch at the gates and the main guard. Rotas of watchmen were organised, including people from country parishes around Gloucester. The medieval fortifications were strengthened, and citizens and inhabitants had to maintain them. In 1644 property owners had, themselves or by 'an able workman', to do one day's work a week or pay 8d. a day; inhabitants of country parishes had to work one day every five weeks; and inhabitants of the city to work weekly or otherwise 'as shall be appointed'. Gloucester magistrates were sometimes disturbed by the behaviour of the soldiers. Alehouse keepers who allowed soldiers to be tippling after the beating of 'tapptoo' had to pay 5s. A soldier was fined 6s. 8d. for playing skittles on the sabbath. Massie's relations with local leaders became strained; an agreement in 1644 provided that, when the city gates were closed, the mayor should have one key and the governor the other.[17]

Some may have done well from the employment and pay provided by the soldiers. Work done by some tradesmen for the garrison has already been mentioned. Caesar Godwin and other carpenters did work on carriages. William Woodward, blacksmith, did work 'for the ordnance'. The services of the hauliers

Augustine Loggins and Robert Cugley were frequently required. Trowmen transported men and goods, especially hay, upon the River Severn. Hay was brought from Standish, Elmore and many other places. Captain Edward Cooke, son of Sir Robert Cooke, bought hats for his troopers from John Cooke, haberdasher, probably another relation.

Other local people suffered from the demands of the garrison. Four horses of the widow Joan Phelps were pressed by Sir William Waller's men for his march into the Forest of Dean and left at Beachley; she was paid £24 compensation. Grass was taken from a man's mowing ground; two 'husbandmen' viewed the ground and judged the damage to be 10s., which was paid to him. Elizabeth Taylor of Hempstead sustained losses 'by our own garrison'. An eloquent little note was addressed to Captain Blayney: this poor woman brought her team 'to help us to Dean and back to the College what you think fit, I pray pay her, or she will scratch my eyes out'.[18]



An officer begged Captain Blayney to pay a poor woman or she would scratch his eyes out

In 1645 Colonel Massie was succeeded as governor by Colonel Thomas Morgan, who took command of the governor's regiment. The earl of Stamford's regiment was taken over by Lieutenant Colonel Blunt, formerly a captain. By 1648 the regiment was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Kempson; it was then disbanded. In that year Sir William Constable was made governor of Gloucester and brought in his own regiment, upon which Morgan's regiment was disbanded. Constable was one of the men who signed the death warrant of Charles I. Order was given in 1653 for Gloucester garrison to be dismantled and the works slighted; but some soldiers remained in the city until the Restoration in 1660.[19]

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[13] SP 28 129/5, ff. 6, 9, 16, 37, 54, 81. SP 28 228, ff. 74, 88, 352. *Calendar of the Committee for Advance of Money,* p. 824.

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