

George Fenwick

George Fenwick & Berwick-upon-Tweed at the time of the Civil Wars



George Fenwick's Coat-of-Arms

A memorial on the wall of the south aisle of Berwick Parish Church is dedicated to Colonel George Fenwick, Governor of Berwick-upon-Tweed at the time when Oliver Cromwell was Lord Protector. He played a central role in the construction of the church, one of only a handful of Church of England parish churches built in that period.

George Fenwick was born in about 1603. His father was George Fenwick of Brinkburn in Northumberland.

He was a member of a group of Puritan nobles and “men of quality” led by William Fiennes, Viscount Saye and Sele who invested in a scheme for colonising Connecticut in America with the aim of establishing a safe refuge for English Puritans fleeing the autocratic rule of King Charles I.

In 1639 George Fenwick settled with his young wife Alice in the colony of Saybrook at the mouth of the Connecticut River, as magistrate for the settlement and governor of Fort Saybrook.

Alice Fenwick died in 1645, shortly after giving birth to their second daughter. George sold his interest in Saybrook to the Connecticut Colony and returned to England.

Civil War had broken out in 1642 and George threw his support behind the fight against King Charles. In October 1645 he was elected to Parliament as Member for Morpeth.

During the summer of 1648 George Fenwick was in command of a regiment in the Parliamentary army led by Oliver Cromwell that was campaigning against the Royalists in the north of England.

Berwick was occupied briefly by Royalists from April until September 1648, but they abandoned the town as the Parliamentary army approached. Cromwell entered Berwick on 30th September and garrisoned it with some 2,500 soldiers of Parliament's New Model Army.

The influx of Parliamentary troops resulted in substantial privation for the townsfolk. Rations for the soldiers were levied from the local people and they were billeted free in their houses.

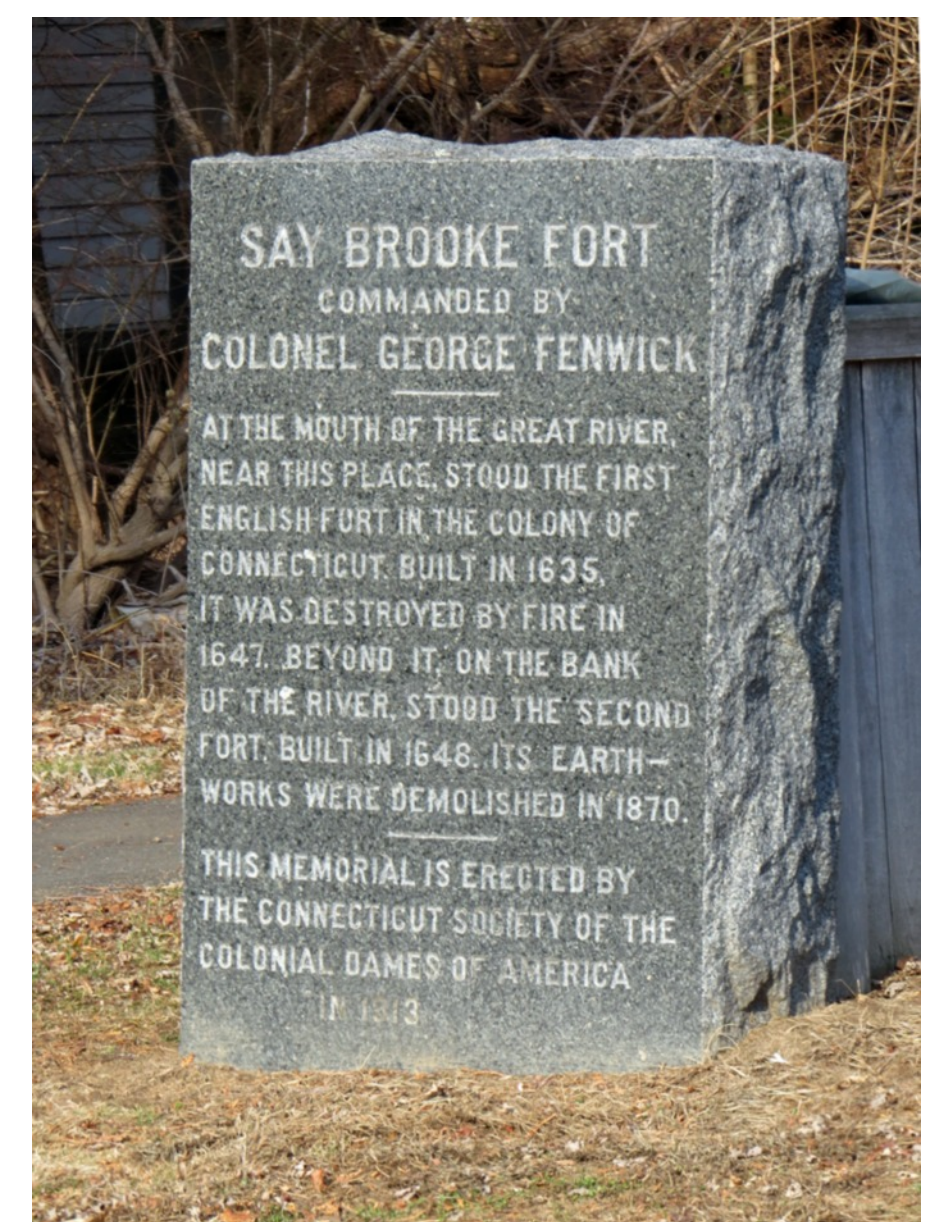


Sir Arthur Haselrig

In November 1648 the Mayor, Andrew Crisp, wrote: *“We have since the joining of this garrison maintained them at free quarter. Surely our poverty of late is much increased not only many of the poor are enforced to pawn their clothes, but likewise many have already cast up house. Indeed our condition is more lamentable than can be expressed. It can scarce be imagined the misery we are fallen into.”*

Sir Arthur Haselrig was made Governor of Berwick with his future son-in-law, George Fenwick, as his deputy.

Fenwick replaced Haselrig as Governor in the autumn of 1649.



Fort Saybrook Memorial, Connecticut