

= William Dummer =

William Dummer (bapt . September 29 , 1677 (O.S.) [= October 10 , 1677 (N.S.)] ? October 10 , 1761) was a politician in the Province of Massachusetts Bay . He served as its lieutenant governor for fourteen years (1716 ? 1730) , including an extended period from 1723 to 1728 when he acted as governor . He is remembered for his role in leading the colony during what is sometimes called Dummer 's War , which was fought between the British colonies of northeastern North America and a loose coalition of native tribes in what is now New Hampshire , Maine , New Brunswick , and Nova Scotia .

Dummer was born into a wealthy Massachusetts merchant family , traveling to England as a young man to participate in the business . Upon his return to Massachusetts in 1712 he entered provincial politics , gaining a royal commission as lieutenant governor through the efforts of his brother Jeremiah . He served during the turbulent tenure of Governor Samuel Shute , in which Shute quarreled with the assembly over many matters . Shute left the province quite abruptly at the end of 1722 , while it was in the middle of a war with the natives of northern New England .

The war was brought to a successful conclusion by Dummer . He negotiated a treaty with the Abenakis which formed the basis for a succession of later treaties . In 1728 Shute was replaced by William Burnet , whose 1 1 / 2 years in office were consumed by a vitriolic fight over his salary . Burnet died in office , and was eventually replaced in 1730 by Jonathan Belcher , who selected William Tailer to be his lieutenant .

Dummer then retired , dividing time between his farm in Byfield and his home in Boston . A proponent of education , he bequeathed funds for the establishment of a preparatory school in Massachusetts , and donated his Byfield estate for its use . For many years it was known as either the Dummer Academy or the Governor Dummer Academy , but is now called The Governor 's Academy .

= = Early life = =

William Dummer was born in Boston , the capital of the Province of Massachusetts Bay , to Jeremiah Dummer , the first American born silversmith , and Anna (Atwater) Dummer . His grandfather was Richard Dummer , an early Massachusetts settler and one of the colony 's wealthiest men , and he was also related to the magistrate Samuel Sewall . Dummer was the oldest of nine children , only four of whom survived to adulthood . He was baptized at Boston 's Old South Church on September 29 , 1677 (O.S.) [= October 10 , 1677 (N.S.)] .

Little is known of Dummer 's early years . Given the family 's wealth , he probably attended the Boston Latin School , but he did not attend Harvard . His younger brother Jeremiah did go to Harvard , after which he went to Europe , studying at Leiden and Utrecht .

In 1702 Dummer was elected to the membership of Boston 's Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company . He went to England , most likely in the early 1700s , where he joined his extended family 's merchant business . He returned to Massachusetts in 1712 . While in England he is reported to have married a cousin in the Dummer family , whose death may have prompted his return to Massachusetts . This marriage produced no children . He then married Katherine Dudley , daughter of Massachusetts Governor Joseph Dudley , on April 26 , 1714 . In a gift that may have been made in anticipation of his wedding , his father in November 1712 gave him a substantial tract of land in the Byfield section of Newbury . The property became the couple 's country home . Dummer divided his time between the Newbury property and the family home in Boston .

Upon the death of Queen Anne in 1714 , commissions issued during her reign were set to expire . This resulted in a political scramble for appointments to the leadership of Massachusetts between Dudley 's supporters and proponents of a land bank proposal designed to deal with inflationary issuance of colonial currency . Dummer 's brother Jeremiah was in London representing the Dudley faction . Although he was unable to secure Dudley 's reappointment , he and Jonathan Belcher were able to bribe the successor chosen by the land bank faction , Elizeus Burges , to give up his commission . The commission for governor was finally issued in June 1716 to Samuel Shute , a land

bank opponent , with William Dummer as lieutenant governor . Shute arrived in the colony the following October , at which time both assumed their offices .

= = Lieutenant governor = =

Dummer 's role during Governor Shute 's turbulent administration is not well documented . Shute had a difficult relationship with the provincial assembly , which refused to pay crown officials a regular salary , and objected to other policies Shute was instructed to implement . In 1720 , during these ongoing disputes , the assembly reduced the grant it made to the lieutenant governor from £ 50 to £ 35 . Dummer returned the funds , observing that his out @-@ of @-@ pocket expenses for his office even exceeded the £ 50 amount .

The assembly also complicated Shute 's negotiations with the restive Abenaki , who occupied lands on the province 's eastern borders (now in the state of Maine) and objected to the encroachment of settlers on their lands . Even though there was some desire on the part of the French and the Abenaki for a peaceful resolution to the dispute , the Massachusetts assembly , over Shute 's objections , took a hard line , cutting off trade with the Abenaki , and authorizing a militia expedition against Norridgewock , one of the main Abenaki towns . Relations deteriorated into open warfare in 1722 , and Shute declared war on the Abenaki that July . Because of the ongoing disputes with the assembly , Shute abruptly left the province for London on January 1 , 1723 , leaving Dummer to act as governor and commander @-@ in @-@ chief . Prosecution of the conflict was left to Dummer , and it has since become known as Dummer 's War (among other names) .

= = = Western frontier war = = =

Dummer 's tenure as acting governor has been described by historian John Ragle as " unspectacular but able " . In the first half of 1723 Dummer made concerted efforts to recruit the Iroquois (of what is now upstate New York) as allies against the Abenaki , and sought to avoid the participation of bands of western Abenaki (based in what is now Vermont) in the conflict . In both of these he was unsuccessful : the Iroquois , despite significant financial inducements , refused to take up arms against tribes seen to be allied with New France , or to engage in a conflict in which they had no stake . The Massachusetts embassy to Grey Lock , the principal leader of the western Abenakis , failed to find him .

In August 1723 Grey Lock began raiding Massachusetts frontier communities in the Connecticut River valley , taking captives and inflicting casualties at Northfield . Dummer appealed to the leaders of the Connecticut Colony , who stationed a company of militia there in December to little effect . He also authorized construction of a fort north of Northfield , on land he had acquired a few years before in Connecticut 's auction of the so @-@ called " equivalent lands " Massachusetts gave to Connecticut as compensation for border issues . The stockaded fort was located in what is now Brattleboro , Vermont , and was named Fort Dummer in his honor . It is regarded as the start of permanent European settlement in the modern state of Vermont .

Fort Dummer was ineffective at stopping the Indian raids . When Grey Lock 's raids continued unabated in 1724 , Dummer renewed his appeals to Connecticut Governor Gurdon Saltonstall , noting that Connecticut was equally vulnerable to raiding should the Massachusetts towns in the Connecticut River be abandoned . Saltonstall sent further reinforcements , but Abenaki raids in the area continued until 1727 , when Grey Lock apparently tired of continuing the war without outside support . Embassies sent by Indian commissioners in Albany , New York and by eastern Abenaki leaders failed to make contact with the warrior , and he disappeared from view .

= = = Eastern frontier war = = =

One of the disputes Shute was engaged in with the assembly at the time of his departure concerned the appointment of militia officers , something that was the governor 's prerogative . The assembly had demanded the removal of the militia commander of the eastern district (i.e. Maine) ,

Colonel Shadrach Walton . Dummer continued to argue this issue with the assembly , but eventually relented , replacing Walton with Thomas Westbrook . Westbrook led a second raid against Norridgewock in February 1723 , but the village had been abandoned for the winter .

The war on the eastern frontier consisted of similar raiding activities conducted by eastern Abenaki tribes , and counterraided by the provincial militia of Massachusetts and New Hampshire . After Norridgewock was destroyed in a third raid in August 1724 (an action in which the influential French Jesuit priest Sebastian Rale was killed) , the war died down . Dummer adopted an aggressive stance after the raid , accusing the French of instigating the war and demanding their neutrality .

Peace negotiations began in early 1725 in Boston with the Penobscot leaders Wenemouet and Sauguaaram . Dummer led the negotiations , taking a hard line . He refused in principle to halt settlement activities in contested territories , but allowed the Penobscots to retain a Roman Catholic priest . He also pressured Wenemouet to bring Grey Lock and other Abenaki leaders to the peace table . These talks led to a preliminary peace with only the Penobscots at the end of July 1725 . Wenemouet then took up the peace cause within the wider Wabanaki Confederacy , sending belts of wampum representing peace to the other tribes . After a translation of the written treaty by a French priest revealed differences between what it stated and what was negotiated , Sauguaaram repudiated the written treaty in January 1726 . At a peace conference held in August 1726 the Penobscots attempted to argue against the offending language , but were convinced to sign the treaty anyway . The Penobscots , despite their reservations , promoted this peace within the confederacy , and reported in March 1727 that all of the tribes except Grey Lock 's band had agreed to it . A final major peace conference held at Casco Bay in July 1727 formally closed hostilities , and included Dummer , New Hampshire 's Acting Governor John Wentworth , Nova Scotia 's military commander Paul Mascarene , and many representatives of the Wabanaki Confederacy .

The treaty that Dummer negotiated became a staple of diplomacy between Massachusetts and the eastern tribes despite the discrepancies between written and oral versions . Every major treaty meeting for the next fifty years included a restatement of its terms .

= = = Other policies = = =

Dummer sought to be generally conciliatory in his dealings with the provincial legislature , tolerating , for example , the selection of Elisha Cooke (who had led the opposition to Shute) as speaker of the assembly . He finessed the assembly 's attempts to interfere with management of the militia by organizing expeditions when the body was not in session , earning the enmity of opponents when it did meet . The assembly refused to appropriate funds to pay soldier salaries , leading to a rise in desertions . They also retaliated by firing his brother Jeremiah (who was widely seen as a supporter of the Shute @-@ Dudley @-@ Dummer faction) as colonial agent .

Shute 's complaints to London resulted in the eventual issuance by the Privy Council of an Explanatory Charter for the province , in which the council sided with Shute on all of the major issues . Shute was preparing to return to Massachusetts in 1727 when King George I died . King George II chose to give the Massachusetts governorship to William Burnet instead of renewing Shute 's commission , and he renewed Dummer 's commission as lieutenant governor .

The matter of colonial currency arose again in 1726 . Dummer had been instructed to only allow new issues under exceptional circumstances , and £ 100 @, @ 000 was due to be retired . The assembly proposed to circumvent the need for an exception by allocating the issue for the repair of fortifications , something for which Dummer had requested funding . Since the proposed currency issuance greatly exceeded the amount needed for repairs , Dummer vetoed the request and dissolved the assembly . When the assembly met in 1727 , Dummer kept the body in session for 165 days , demanding it act on the mandated currency withdrawal . The assembly threatened to withhold his salary , and ultimately retired £ 40 @, @ 000 of currency before Dummer relented . The matter had significantly poisoned the atmosphere when Burnet arrived in July 1728 to take office .

= = Later years = =

Burnet 's short administration was primarily consumed by a vitriolic dispute over the assembly 's failure to grant him a regular salary . After Burnet died suddenly on September 7 , 1729 , Dummer resumed acting as governor and commander @-@ in @-@ chief . He remained in office until June 11 , 1730 , when he was replaced by William Tailer , who had been selected by incoming Governor Jonathan Belcher as his lieutenant .

After he was replaced as lieutenant governor , Dummer apparently retired into private life as a successful gentleman farmer . He is reported to have served on the provincial council , but there are no further public records of note , and he left no letters or other papers . He died at home on October 10 , 1761 , and was interred in Boston 's Granary Burying Ground six days later .

= = Legacy = =

Dummer made several charitable bequests in his will . He gave £ 200 to Harvard College , as well as a £ 50 grant for the purchase of books , and partially endowed two professorial chairs . His single largest gift was the grant of his Newbury property for a preparatory school . First called the Dummer Charity School , it opened on February 27 , 1763 . In its later history it was known as Dummer Academy , and until recently , Governor Dummer Academy . In July 2006 it changed to The Governor 's Academy (the benefactor 's surname sounded uncomfortably like " dumber , " it was decided , and thus elicited predictable taunts during sport meets) . Dummer 's Georgian mansion remains a central feature of the school campus , now serving as the headmaster 's residence .

The towns of Dummer , New Hampshire and Dummerston , Vermont were also named in his honor .