

= William Tailer =

William Tailer (February 25 , 1675 / 6 ? March 1 , 1731 / 2) was a military officer and politician in the Province of Massachusetts Bay . Born into the wealthy and influential Stoughton family , he twice married into other politically powerful families . He served as lieutenant governor of the province from 1711 until 1716 , and again in the early 1730s . During each of these times he was briefly acting governor . He was a political opponent of Governor Joseph Dudley , and was a supporter of a land bank proposal intended to address the province 's currency problems . During his first tenure as acting governor he authorized the erection of Boston Light , the earliest lighthouse in what is now the United States .

He was active in the provincial defense , and commanded a regiment in the 1710 siege of Port Royal , the capital of French Acadia , during Queen Anne 's War . He was responsible for overseeing the defenses of Boston in the 1720s , and was sent to negotiate with the Iroquois and Abenaki during Dummer 's War . Jonathan Belcher , initially a political opponent , later became an ally , and selected him to serve as his lieutenant governor in 1730 . Tailer held the post until his death , and was interred in the tomb of his uncle , William Stoughton .

= = Early life and military service = =

William Tailer was born in Dorchester , Massachusetts Bay Colony on February 25 , 1675 / 6 to William Tailer and Rebecca Stoughton Tailer . His mother was the daughter of early Massachusetts settler Israel Stoughton and sister to magistrate William Stoughton . His father was a wealthy landowner and merchant . His father owned commercial real estate in Boston and was a member of the Atherton Company , one of New England 's most powerful and well @-@ connected land development partnerships . He was also one of " a selected fraternity " of merchants engaged in the " eastward trade " with neighboring French Acadia , one of whose leading members was Boston merchant John Nelson . Tailer 's father committed suicide in 1682 , apparently suffering from depression which may have been brought on by financial reverses .

The younger Tailer inherited a substantial estate ; it was reported that in 1695 his guardians operated five mills on his behalf . He was also a beneficiary of the large estate of his uncle , who died a childless bachelor . By 1702 Tailer had married Sarah Byfield , daughter to Nathaniel Byfield , another leading colonial magistrate . She died childless in about 1708 . Byfield and Tailer 's father had been business partners , a relationship that Tailer continued .

He served in the provincial militia during Queen Anne 's War . In 1710 he commanded a militia regiment that saw action at the capture of Port Royal , Acadia . Following the victory he went London with Francis Nicholson , the expedition 's leader , where he was " bigg with expectation " of advancement . His expectations were rewarded with a commission as lieutenant governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay , serving under Governor Joseph Dudley . He then returned to Massachusetts , where he was again active in the defense of the colonies , serving at Fort William and Mary in New Hampshire , and reporting on the frontier defenses in what is now southern Maine (but was then part of Massachusetts) .

In early 1711 / 2 he married Abigail Gillam Dudley , widow of Joseph Dudley 's grandson Thomas . The couple had six children , who they raised in the old Stoughton homestead in Dorchester . Tailer joined the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company in 1712 and was elected as its captain the same year .

= = Acting governor of Massachusetts = =

Tailer was elected to the Governor 's Council from 1712 to 1729 , and was on three separate occasions commissioned as lieutenant governor of Massachusetts . Despite his connection by marriage to the Dudleys , he had an awkward political relationship with the governor during the period of his first two commissions . A number of Anglicans in the colony , Tailer among them , were skeptical of Dudley 's faith . (Dudley had been raised in the Puritan way , and had formally adopted

Anglican practices while in England in the 1690s .) He and Dudley were also on opposite sides of the debate on the province 's currency problems . Dudley favored the issuance of public bills of credit as a means to circumvent the inflationary issuance of paper currency that had become a serious problem by the end of Queen Anne 's War in 1713 , while Taler , along with his father @-@ in @-@ law Nathaniel Byfield and others , favored the establishment of a private land bank , that would issue bills secured by the lands of its investors .

Byfield in 1714 went to London to lobby on behalf of the land bank interests , and to seek for himself the post of governor , which was open for consideration after the accession of King George I to the throne . He was unsuccessful in acquiring the governorship , but was able to convince Colonel Elizeus Burges , who had been chosen to replace Dudley , to keep Taler on as lieutenant governor . Burges , however , was bribed by land bank opponents to resign his post before leaving England . The commissions of Burges and Taler had by then been sent to Massachusetts , and Taler became acting governor in November 1715 after they were formally proclaimed .

Immediately after taking office Taler engaged in political housecleaning , eliminating land bank opponents and Dudley supporters from a number of provincial positions . His efforts , however , backfired : the provincial assembly elected Joseph Dudley 's son Paul as attorney general , and London agents of the anti @-@ bank party worked to ensure Taler 's replacement . (One of those agents , Jonathan Belcher , would ironically become a Taler ally in later years and secure the lieutenant governorship for him the third time .) Through their efforts the king chose Colonel Samuel Shute , a land bank opponent , to replace Burges , and William Dummer as Shute 's lieutenant governor . Taler was turned out of office with Shute 's arrival in October 1716 . Shute deliberately snubbed Taler upon his arrival , choosing to first meet with the Dudleys instead .

The only major long @-@ term accomplishment of Taler 's tenure as acting governor was the establishment of Boston Light , the first lighthouse built in what is now the United States . While a member of the assembly , Taler had sat on the legislative committee that drafted the enabling and funding bills , and he signed them after he became governor .

= = Provincial military service = =

He next traveled to England . There he lobbied , on behalf of John Nelson , heir to Sir Thomas Temple 's claims to Nova Scotia . Nelson sought recompense for the loss of the territory in the 1667 Treaty of Breda , but Taler 's efforts were in vain . He also lobbied on his own behalf for a military pension . He successfully convinced Lord Cobham that he deserved one for his service at Port Royal in 1710 , and was awarded the half pay of a colonel , amounting to £ 400 per year . John Nelson observed that Taler 's loss of the lieutenant governorship (worth £ 50 per year) " has proved much to his advantage " .

Taler eventually returned to Massachusetts . Under Shute 's governorship he was several times involved in negotiations with Indians on the northern frontiers , and continued to be active in the provincial militia . Taler accompanied Shute on an expedition to Maine to negotiate with the Abenaki of northern New England in 1717 . Shute handled the negotiations poorly , raising tensions between the Abenaki and British settlers . In 1720 Taler was one of several commissioners sent to mediate between the settlers and Abenaki . Although a potential basis for agreement was identified , continued raiding and disagreement on the details of proposed terms caused the situation to deteriorate further . Shute declared war on the Abenaki in July 1722 following raids against British settlements on the Maine coast .

Shute 's ongoing conflicts with the provincial assembly prompted him to leave for England in early 1723 , leaving handling of the war in Lieutenant Governor Dummer 's hands . Taler was one of the lead members of a party sent in 1723 to Albany , New York in an attempt to convince the Iroquois to join the conflict against the Abenaki . The embassy was unsuccessful : the Iroquois resisted all attempts to bring them into the war against the Abenaki . Taler continued to be involved in the war , where he was responsible for maintaining Boston 's defenses .

= = Reprise as acting governor = =

Tailer 's politics shifted during the 1720s , and he and Byfield came to align more closely with the populist faction . As a result he and one @-@ time opponent Jonathan Belcher became allies . When Governor William Burnet died in 1729 , Belcher was in London , acting as agent for Connecticut and assisting in lobbying against Burnet 's unpopular insistence on a permanent salary . Belcher successfully gained for himself the post of governor , and then secured for Tailer another appointment as lieutenant governor . Tailer 's commission was proclaimed before Belcher 's arrival , and he briefly served as acting governor while awaiting his superior 's arrival . The few months were uneventful , as the province was then suffering from an outbreak of smallpox , because of which Tailer prorogued the assembly .

Tailer died in Dorchester , while serving as lieutenant governor , in March 1731 / 2 . His pallbearers included Governor Belcher and other leading political figures . He is buried in the tomb of his uncle , Willam Stoughton , in what is now called the Dorchester North Burying Ground .