

HOMETOWN NEWS DELIVERED TO EVERY HOME IN CHESTER, HAMPSTEAD &amp; SANDOWN



# Tri-Town Times

January 1, 2009 • Volume 4 – Issue 1

A FREE Weekly Publication

## Sandown Author Combines Love of History and Writing in Colonial Tale

MATT RITTENHOUSE  
Tri-Town Times

SANDOWN – Richard Brayall contends that if Sir William Pepperrell had survived to be a part of the American Revolution, he might well have been offered the command of the rebels' Continental Army in the place of George Washington – quite possibly changing the entire history of the United States, or at least the name of its capital city.

Sandown resident Brayall has written and published a book on Pepperrell titled “To the Uttermost of My Power”- The Life and Times of Sir William Pepperrell.” Though his belief that Pepperrell (1696-1759) could have been commander of the American forces during the American Revolution because of his experience in King George’s War is purely conjecture, the book details through extensive research the facts, stories and relationships surrounding the man’s successful life in the colonial era.

Pepperrell was the son of a fisherman, but built his father’s company into a commercial empire, eventually earning an audience with King George II. According to Brayall’s book, along the way Pepperrell served as a judge with no legal training, was a member of the Massachusetts Governor’s Council for 30 years, served as acting Mas-

sachusetts Governor, and was a militia colonel and one of the wealthiest merchants in the colonies. He was also the first colonial to be honored with the title of baronet.

The book is the first foray into publishing for Brayall, but is something he has wanted to do as far back as he can remember. Recent retirement has let him pursue the goal that ties well into his love of history. Though a history major at Bates College in Maine, Brayall’s career took him in a different direction, into writing for the corporate sector.

“This has worked out quite nicely,” Brayall said of his recent chance to combine his long-held goals and passions.

The origins of Brayall’s choice to tell his readers about the forgotten New England personage reside in his hometown of Kittery, Maine. In Kittery Point, the Pepperrell name is on everything from roads to coves to homes, but the man who warranted the naming is generally unknown.

“I always wondered who is this guy? What did he do? What era did he live in?” Brayall said. “Once I understood the scope of what he had accomplished, I knew this was a book I wanted to write.”

Working closely with the Massachusetts Historical Society, Brayall researched history books, personal letters, and collections of

Pepperrell papers to flesh out the 274-page book.

The author said he placed a lot of emphasis on primary source accounts of the time, adding that they give insight into what people were thinking, and what governed their actions.

All of the information Brayall learned through his research caused some complaints in his family, however. He joked that they get a little tired of hearing colonial-era facts at the dinner table.

One of the most interesting stories of Pepperrell’s life, according to Brayall, comes from his time as a military commander. In 1745, Pepperrell was named by Massachusetts Governor William Shirley to lead the attack on the thought-to-be impregnable French fortress of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island.

In just 49 days, Pepperrell took the fort with a group of mostly untrained New England militiamen.

“It’s unbelievable. Nobody expected him to do it,” Brayall said. “When Shirley was told, he almost fell out of bed. It was incredible.”

Brayall added that the military accomplishment was even more impressive, as only about 150 of Pepperrell’s men were lost out of a group of soldiers not necessarily the best fit to handle such an operation.

According to Brayall, “It depends on what source you’re looking at, but the expedition is described vari-

ously as a Boy Scout camping trip to an expedition full of drunkards. I think it’s somewhere in between. There were some very professional soldiers running the units, but they were still into having a good time. The problem was that up there was nowhere to find a good time, so they had to find something to keep them busy.”

The author’s investigations turned up many such stories, relationships, and personalities long forgotten to history. For example, though Pepperrell’s widow was allowed to stay on in her home in Kittery after the American Revolution, his grandson fled to England, unwilling to give up his loyalty to the crown.

Brayall also noted that at one point, Pepperrell and his father owned enough land in Maine to be able to walk from Kittery to Saco without stepping off their property.

Brayall is already in the process of writing a second book, this one on the life of General John Glover of Marblehead, Mass., but is still busy promoting his current work. He will be speaking in March to the Kittery Historical Society, and is hoping to speak at the Sandown Public Library in the coming months.

“To the Uttermost of My Power” can be ordered from HeritageBooks.com by calling 1-800-876-6103, or by ordering it at a local book store.