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## **A ‘Great National Calamity’: Sir William Pepperrell and Isaac Royall, Reluctant Loyalists**

**By**

**Colin Nicolson and Stuart Scott**

The tranquility of England’s most fashionable sea-side town could not alleviate the depression which gripped the thirty-five year-old American in the winter of 1781. Sir William Pepperrell of Kittery, Massachusetts, the only American baronet, had been a widower and refugee for six years. In his absence, he had been proscribed as a loyalist by his rebellious countrymen and deprived of his estates. Exile in Brighton had become nigh unbearable, despite the comfort afforded by his four young children -- his “dear little folks”-- and other distressed loyalists. Now, as Christmas beckoned, he was stunned by news of a “great national calamity distressing beyond measure” and which “filled [him] with horror.”

General Cornwallis’s capitulation at Yorktown, Virginia, in late October, was the beginning of the end of Britain’s attempts to force the Americans into submission. Pepperrell found refuge in self-denial. How, having started the war, could the king and the first minister, Frederick Lord North, consider giving up the “Constitutional dependence” of the American colonies when it would mean the “annihilation” of Britain’s American empire? Even at this late hour, Pepperrell trusted that political leaders on both sides of the Atlantic could settle their differences and forge a lasting union.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pepperrell to Winslow, London, Dec. 3, 1781, *Winslow Papers*, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Britain's folly was to ignore what loyalists like Pepperrell and his father-in-law Isaac Royall had to say, not at the end of the Revolutionary War, but at its beginning. Not all of those Americans who became loyalists when the fighting began dismissed colonial grievances. Some promoted schemes for reconciling aspirations for legislative self-government with British sovereignty, which, it has been argued, amounted to a viable alternative to independence and the status quo.<sup>2</sup> Before the war, Pepperrell and Royall were "friends of government,"<sup>3</sup> an amorphous coalition of disaffected moderate Whigs like themselves, intractable conservatives or "tories," and proto-loyalists of both camps who strove to repair Britain's fractured relationship with Massachusetts. Friends of government disagreed privately on many issues, but in 1773 and 1774 were united in their efforts to resolve disagreements between Britain and America.<sup>4</sup>

Pepperrell and Royall represented the center-ground in Massachusetts politics on imperial issues. They urged the British and the

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<sup>2</sup> Some propositions for reform, made in pamphlets and private letters, anticipated giving the colonies a dominion-like status, broadly similar to that enjoyed by Canada in the nineteenth century; others hoped to placate the colonists by giving powers to the colonial assemblies, getting American representation in Parliament, or reforming the trade laws. Janice Potter, *The Liberty We Seek: Loyalist Ideology in Colonial New York and Massachusetts* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983), esp., viii-ix. The full range of loyalists' views is discussed in Robert N. Calhoon's *The Loyalists of Revolutionary America, 1760-1781* (New York, 1973).

<sup>3</sup> In the 1760s, the colonists used various terms to denote political factions: "court" and "country" traditionally signified the supporters and critics of the royal governor, respectively, but other terms were more favored by contemporaries. Generally speaking, "Whigs" were those colonists who protested against British colonial policy between 1765 and 1775. "Friends of government" were more sympathetic to the governor or actively opposed the Whig protest movement. They were also labeled "tories" by the Whigs, a pejorative term rather than an accurate indicator of political allegiance, for it had no ideological connection with British torism. Those persons who fought on the American side during the war or supported the war effort in other ways were called "patriots": their counterparts on the British side from April 1775 were "loyalists."

<sup>4</sup> For a full discussion see Colin Nicolson, "Governor Francis Bernard, the Massachusetts Friends of Government, and the Advent of the Revolution," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 103 (1991): 24-113; Colin Nicolson, "'McIntosh, Otis & Adams are our demagogues': Nathaniel Coffin and the Loyalist Interpretation of the Origins of the American Revolution," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 108 (1996-1997): 73-114.

royal governors to be more sympathetic to American interests and concerns. But they were also hostile to the radical Whigs, who led the colonial protest movement in the 1760s and early 1770s, most of whom became patriots. In the last years of peace, friends of government like Pepperrell and Royall came to fear that internal revolution and military conflict were the only probable outcomes of American resistance and British recalcitrance.

By examining their response to the Revolution we can understand more clearly the predicament of moderates everywhere in the colonies. With connections to both sides -- the British and the royal governors on the one hand and the radical Whigs on the other -- they were subject to competing forces. When war divided Americans into loyalists and patriots, Pepperrell and Royall would have preferred to remain neutral. Pepperrell's loyalism certainly involved an element of reflection; Royall's, however, was far more the result of circumstances.

Both men had brief opportunities to shape deliberations on the "American Question." In June 1773, the Rev. William Gordon, the Congregational pastor of Roxbury, proposed to the earl of Dartmouth, the American Secretary that Pepperrell, his wealthy Anglican neighbor, would make an excellent governor. Pepperrell was just twenty-seven years old, but Gordon refused to accept that his inexperience would count against him. Pepperrell had spent several years in England where he became acquainted with Lord North. His patrician credentials and his whiggish tendencies, Gordon reasoned, made him the ideal candidate to replace the current governor, the discredited native-son, Thomas Hutchinson.<sup>5</sup>

Gordon sensibly argued that if Britain wished to regain the colonists' confidence then a new governor ought to be appointed. Hutchinson's reputation had been irrevocably destroyed by the publication of correspondence that many believed incriminated him in a conspiracy to "abridge" the colonists' rights and liberties. Hutchinson's

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<sup>5</sup> Neil Rolde, *Sir William Pepperrell of Colonial New England* (Brunswick, Maine, 1982), 159. Gordon arrived in America in 1770 and quickly identified with the Whigs. He lived for a short while in Philadelphia before moving to Roxbury, Massachusetts, where he remained until 1786. In 1774 and 1775, he delivered several sermons to the Provincial Congress and later authored *History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America* 4 vol. (London, 1788).

predecessor, Sir Francis Bernard, had also been ruined when the Whigs published some of his official letters. Royall was party to Gordon's proposal, but the Boston Tea Party left North, the king, and his ministers in no mood to act upon such entreaties; nor did they heed Royall's warning that retribution must be avoided lest it provoke a rebellion. Within twelve months Hutchinson had been replaced by a military governor, General Thomas Gage, and the Coercive Acts imposed upon a truculent and resentful people.

North's Draconian American policy and the militant reactions of the colonists undermined the efforts of men like Pepperrell and Royall to restore harmony in imperial relations. When war came they were reluctant rather than enthusiastic loyalists, but the patriots denigrated them as traitors and collaborators. History, however, might care to regard them as case studies of a resourceful and thwarted counter-revolutionary elite.

The political elite of late-colonial Massachusetts was not a self-perpetuating oligarchy, although the Pepperrells and the Royalls were the nearest approximation to a landed aristocracy in the province. Pepperrell had been christened William Pepperrell Sparhawk, the son of Nathaniel Sparhawk of Kittery, a merchant and member of the General Court. His maternal grandfather was the famous William Pepperrell, who was created a baronet for leading New England forces in the heroic capture of Louisbourg in 1745. The triumph was soured when the British returned the fortress to the French, and by the death of the general's only surviving son Andrew, in 1751. Shortly before his demise on July 6, 1759, Sir William made William Sparhawk, then just thirteen years-old, the main beneficiary of his will on condition that he assume the family name of Pepperrell. This he did in 1766 when he graduated from Harvard.

William did not assume his grandfather's title, which had lapsed on his death, but he did inherit the residue of the baronet's extensive property, and his mercantile and shipbuilding businesses at Kittery. Young Pepperrell was one of the most eligible bachelors in the province when, a year later, in a grand ceremony at Boston's Anglican Christ Church, he married Elizabeth Royall. For just eight years they enjoyed an affectionate loving, relationship, and produced four children: Elizabeth, Mary, Harriot and William.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> There are two biographies of the first Sir William Pepperrell: Rolde, *Pepperrell of New England*, op.cit. and Byron Fairchild, *Messrs. William Pepperrell, Merchants at*

Pepperrell's father-in-law Isaac Royall was one of Massachusetts's wealthiest merchants. The Royalls had settled at Salem in 1629 and at Casco Bay, north of Kittery, in the 1670s. Isaac's father, Isaac Royall, Sr., prospered by importing West Indian rum and exporting lumber and dried fish, the staple commodities of so much of Massachusetts's commerce; he was also active in the slave trade. Isaac Royall, Jr., was born in 1719 on the family estates at Antigua, in the British West Indies. His father described him at seventeen years of age as a "pretty diligent" young man, attentive to his studies and sure to "Answer" all his "Expectations," despite bouts of ill-health. Moving to Boston, Isaac married in 1738 Elizabeth MacIntosh, the daughter of a Scottish merchant, and sister-in-law of the Boston Palmers. His father died the following year, leaving him a fine library and an impressive 500 acre estate and mansion at Medford, near Boston, which he had purchased in 1732 and improved at a cost of 4,000 pounds sterling. (It was used as a headquarters by the revolutionary army during the siege of Boston.)<sup>7</sup>

Isaac Royall, Jr. and William Pepperrell were very wealthy men when the Revolutionary War began and considerably poorer when it ended. In addition to Medford House, Isaac possessed two other dwelling houses in the town and hundreds of acres of land in Massachusetts's western townships, though much of it was probably undeveloped. The Antigua estates were worth around 300 pounds annually. His claim of 30,000 pounds (worth some two million in today's money) was one of the largest submitted to the Royal

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*Piscataqua* (New York, 1954). Both contain references to William (Sparhawk) Pepperrell the loyalist, the third member of the family to hold the name and the second to bear the title. See also John L. Sibley and Clifford K. Shipton, eds., *Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University* (Cambridge, Mass., and Boston, 1873-), 16: 398. The Pepperrell family history in the colonies and in England is comprehensively covered in Virginia Browne-Wilkinson, *Pepperrell Posterity* (1982), which also contains extracts of Elizabeth's and William's correspondence, at 92-96.

<sup>7</sup> Isaac Royall, [Sr.], to Edmund Quincy, Antigua, Aug. 15, 1736, MS.L, Massachusetts Historical Society; Arthur L. Finney, "The Royall House in Medford: A Re-evaluation of the Structural and Documentary Evidence," in *Architecture in Colonial Massachusetts, Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1979), 23-41; James H. Stark, *The Loyalists of Massachusetts and the Other Side of the American Revolution* (Boston, 1910), 20. Isaac Royall, Jr.'s aunt Mary also married into the Palmers, who had offices in London and Boston, and estates at Wanlip in Leicestershire, England. Thomas Palmer III was a close friend of William Pepperrell.

Commission on the loyalists' losses; it probably underestimated the prewar value of his property, though some other claimants were prone to exaggeration; Royall died before the Commission came to a decision.<sup>8</sup> Pepperrell's claim exceeded Royall's by 2,370 pounds, for which he received 24,415 pounds for the loss of Kittery, and property in Roxbury and Boston's Summer Street, which was sold by the state for 102,000 pounds in depreciated currency.<sup>9</sup>

The union of the Pepperrells and Royalls created one of many extended family networks which helped to sustain leadership groups in Massachusetts. Both men saw themselves as natural political leaders in their respective communities, but it is misleading to suppose that they were instinctive loyalists who had nothing to gain by speaking out against Britain.<sup>10</sup> The friends of government who became loyalists never rationalized their political behavior solely in terms of or status or fealty to King George III: ideology as well as economics, kinship as well as patronage, and a sense of dual British and American identity were all powerful influences. England, Royall once scoffed, was a "Country where Gaiety and Dissipation are too apt to get the preeminence."<sup>11</sup> For better or worse, Pepperrell and Royall worked hard to educate the British about American sensibilities.

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<sup>8</sup> Audit Office Papers, 12/105, f. 48, Public Record Office, London; Royall to James Bowdoin, Kensington, Nov. 19, 1778, Bowdoin-Temple Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society. In 1739, the Medford mansion was valued at 29,094 pounds, in Finney, "The Royall House in Medford," 41. In 1771, the annual rental value of Royall's Medford property was 120 pounds per annum, which puts him in the top one to two per cent of the property-owning population. The tax list refers additionally to five "servants for life," or slaves; 167.5 acres of land and twenty-three livestock; and of Royall having lent out 119 pounds, 6 shillings and 8 pence. Bettye Hobbs Pruitt, ed., *The Massachusetts Tax Valuation List of 1771* (Boston, 1978), 244-245.

<sup>9</sup> John H. Noble, "Some Massachusetts Tories," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 5 (1897-1898): 257-297; Stark, *The Loyalists of Massachusetts*, 205; Rolde, *Pepperrell of New England*, 159, 164; Fairchild, *Messrs. William Pepperrell*, 195-196; Edward A. Jones, *The Loyalists of Massachusetts: Their Memorials, Petitions and Claims* (London, 1930), 232; Pruitt, *Massachusetts Tax List*, 244-245, 510-511, 760-761.

<sup>10</sup> Pepperrell was not a man of "firm Tory principles" as Rolde suggested in *Pepperrell of New England*, 62.

<sup>11</sup> Royall to Bowdoin, Kensington, Nov. 19, 1778.

When the Stamp Act Crisis erupted in 1765, Pepperrell was a college student and Royall a respected member of the governor's executive Council with twenty-two years of service behind him. Both men were moderate whigs in as much as they condemned parliamentary taxation and the apparent cupidity of the royal governors. They regarded themselves as citizens of the British Empire entitled to enjoy all the basic political rights of Englishmen. As citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Bay, Royall and his countrymen were also "very feelingly Tender-- and Zealously tenacious of their inestimable Charter Rights and Priviledges, which they apprehend . . . have been greatly infring'd and broken in upon through the Machinations and Misrepresentations to the former Ministry from Persons on this side of the Atlantic."<sup>12</sup> Neither man, however, belonged to the Sons of Liberty, and both were decidedly uncomfortable with the central role of crowd action in colonial opposition.

In terms of status, Royall was little different from the other councilors whom the House elected each May. The Council, with twenty-eight places, functioned in a dual a capacity as an upper legislative chamber and as an advisory board to the governor. Councilors devoted considerable time to public affairs, particularly those who had semi-retired from business. Royall was less involved in the Council's proceedings than others, such as the Province Secretary Andrew Oliver, Treasurer Harrison Gray, radicals Royal Tyler and James Bowdoin, and moderates John Erving and William Brattle. Royall was brigadier-general of the province's Horse Guards, the governor's ceremonial bodyguard, but he came to distrust the English governor, Francis Bernard.

Disputes between Governor Bernard and moderates like Royall were an integral part of the Council's disagreements with the governor, although historians have paid little attention to these internal divisions.<sup>13</sup> The friends of government had formed a majority in the early 1760s, but the Council was greatly divided in its responses to the Stamp Act Crisis. The friends of government found themselves assailed, somewhat

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<sup>12</sup> Royall to Dartmouth, Medford, New England, Jan.18, 1774, *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 1st ser., 13 (1873-1875), 179-182.

<sup>13</sup> For example, Francis G. Walett, "The Massachusetts Council: The Transformation of a Conservative Institution," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d.ser., 6 (1949): 605-627.



unfairly, by the moderate and radical Whigs for appearing to side with Bernard in order to get the Stamp Act implemented. They were also criticized by Bernard, after the riots in Boston of August 14 and 26, for refusing to accept his analysis that British troops were now required to preserve law and order in the town. But while the moderate Whigs were alarmed by the specter of social conflict thrown up by the riots, they were reluctant to do anything which might actually assist in the execution of the Stamp Act. Royall tactfully absented himself from those meetings where the Council rejected Bernard's proposal.<sup>14</sup>

Royall was re-elected to the Council in May 1766, in one of the most notable of all such elections. When Bernard's supporters were turned out by the House, the governor responded by vetoing the election of six radicals, including William Pepperrell's father, Nathaniel Sparhawk. When the House refused to vote replacements, Bernard was left to work with a board which included a substantial minority of moderates like Royall ready to challenge every controversial executive proposal. Lieutenant-governor Hutchinson, whose mansion house was ransacked during the Stamp Act riots and who failed to get re-elected to the Council complained that the "valiant Brigadier Royall is at head of all popular measures and become a great orator. [John] Erving, [William] Brattle, [Harrison] Gray and [Nathaniel] Sparhawk ... are in the same box."<sup>15</sup>

The Council never came under the control of the radical leaders of the popular party, Samuel Adams and James Otis Jr. However, James Bowdoin successfully coordinated opposition to the governor from within the Council. Moderate Whigs like Royall, Erving, and Gray obtained greater influence in Council affairs as Bowdoin, on the one hand, and Governor Bernard, on the other, tried to win their support. Bernard continued to accept the nominations of nearly all the moderates, including Royall, and in 1767 welcomed back Nathaniel Sparhawk, for he "had behaved with more decency than the rest."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Governor's Council, Executive Letters, Series 327, vol. 16, 1765-1774: 39, 50-51 (hereafter Council Records, 16).

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Hutchinson to Thomas Pownall, n.p., Mar. 8, 1766, Thomas Hutchinson, Correspondence, Massachusetts Archives, vols. 25-27, Typescripts, Massachusetts Historical Society, 26: 207-214.

<sup>16</sup> Nicolson, "The Friends of Government," 1: 162, 2: 535n.44; Bemard to Richard Jackson, Boston, May 6, 1767, Bernard Papers, 13 vols., Sparks Papers, Houghton

Moderates like Royall justified their opposition to Bernard by claiming that he was studiously alienating the Massachusetts elite. The most contentious matter on which the moderates tended to side with Bowdoin and the radicals concerned Bernard's animadversions on crowd action. To the governor, the disturbances which punctuated popular protests against the Townshend Acts between 1767 and 1769, along with more serious incidents such as the *Liberty* riot of June 10, 1768, were evidence that law and order in Boston were breaking down. The majority of councilors -- moderates, radicals, and a few friends of government -- refused to accept the veracity of Bernard's analysis. After the *Liberty* riot, they again rejected his plea to join him in requesting Britain to dispatch troops to the town.<sup>17</sup> However, it was easier to justify crowd action as an extra-legal form of political protest than it was to explain why no one in the town was ever convicted of rioting or why the justices of the peace, mostly Whigs, did nothing to protect importers and Custom House officers when they were assailed by mobs.

These matters unsettled Royall, but the arrival of British regulars in the autumn of 1768 gave the Council much more to worry about. There was little chance of the Council willingly assisting Bernard procure quarters for the soldiers in the town. Royall joined the others in frustrating the governor and the army commanders by strictly interpreting the colony's legal obligations to provide accommodation. On October 28, when the troops prepared to move into public buildings which Bernard alone had requisitioned as barracks, Royall and fourteen of his colleagues, including Sparhawk, Gray, and Erving, signed an address to the British commander-in-chief, General Thomas Gage, calling for the immediate removal of the regiments. Many suspected Bernard of having persuaded ministers to send the troops, but for now the Council chose not to question publicly Bernard's motives or

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Library, Harvard University, 6: 19-20 (hereafter Bernard Papers); William R Whitmore, *The Massachusetts Civil List for the Colonial and Provincial Periods. 1630-1774* (Albany, New York, 1870), 65; *The Journals of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, 1715-1776*, 53 vols., (Boston, 1919-1985), 44: 7, 23; Bernard to the earl of Shelburne, Boston, May 30, 1767, Bernard Papers, 6: 211-212.

<sup>17</sup> Council Records, 16: 336-337; Proceedings of the Council on Jul. 27 and 29, 1768, *Boston Gazette*, Oct. 16, 1768.

speculate on whether he had actually delivered such a request on his own authority.<sup>18</sup>

Royall and his colleagues did, however, question Bernard's fitness for office in other respects. They alleged that he had deliberately misrepresented the Council's petition for the repeal of the Townshend Acts, to make it sound innocuous and contradictory.<sup>19</sup> Despite latent tensions, at least twelve councilors out of the remaining twenty-two, including Royall, continued in opposition to Governor Bernard from December 1768 to his departure in August 1769. Bernard received little positive assistance, for councilors, including Royall, formulated their own "policy" separately and instructed their own London agent, William Bollan. A cache of Bernard's official letters sent to Boston by Bollan, were published in April 1769, revealing that Bernard had indeed claimed that Massachusetts was on the brink of rebellion.<sup>20</sup> In consequence, Bernard's last few supporters were removed from the General Court, and the House petitioned Britain to impeach the governor. Bernard was recalled in the spring of 1769 and left the province in August.

With Bernard out of the way, though not out of the picture, moderates like Pepperrell could vent their anger in a constructive way. When Pepperrell returned to Boston in August 1770, after spending two years in England, he immediately wrote the Lord North and Lord

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<sup>18</sup> Council Records, 16: 369-370; Nicolson, "Friends of Government," 1: 175-178.

<sup>19</sup> Bernard to the earl of Hillsborough, Boston, Dec. 5, 1768, Bernard Papers, 7: 114-115; Samuel Danforth to William Bollan, Boston, Dec. 5, 1768, "Bowdoin-Temple Papers," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 6th ser., 9 (1897), 113-115; William Bollan to Samuel Danforth, [London], Mar. 18, 1769, Bowdoin-Temple Papers; Petition of the Major Part of the Council to the House of Lords, [Boston], Dec. 5, 1768, Bowdoin-Temple Papers; the Massachusetts Council to the earl of Hillsborough, Boston, Jun. 12, 1769, *Boston Chronicle*, Aug. 3-7, 1769.

<sup>20</sup> By the province Charter, executive meetings of the Council were chaired by the governor and legislative sessions could only proceed when he was present. Some Council documents were henceforth signed by the "president" of the group, seventy-three year-old Samuel Danforth, in deference to Danforth's seniority as the longest serving councilor, but James Bowdoin was the effective "manager" as Bernard called him. The self-styled "major part" of the Council, including Royall, professed to act "individually, and not as a body," though it did not actually constitute a majority of members until Aug. 1769. Bernard refused to countenance proceedings from which he was excluded.

Edgcumbe, a former business associate and privy councilor.<sup>21</sup> Initially, his intention was probably only to ask for the revival of his grandfather George's title, which he did, but he also proffered a perceptive assessment of American affairs, as he endeavored to explain why the colonists' protests had continued in spite of the partial repeal of the Townshend Acts in March. The colonists, he told Edgcumbe, had been "greatly misrepresented and abused by men who have always appeared ready to sacrifice [the] good [of this country] to their own private interest." In a letter to North, Pepperrell distanced himself from any imputation that he approved the "riotous proceedings" in Boston that culminated in the Massacre of March 5 in which five civilians were killed by British soldiers. He blamed Crown officials for having "through prejudice magnified the most trifling disturbances to a riot as if we were in a state of rebellion, which there never has been the least appearance of."<sup>22</sup> Pepperrell did not mention Bernard by name, but with Bernard having been recently acquitted of any wrongdoing by the Privy Council, Edgcumbe and North could have been in no doubt to whom he was referring.

The Boston Massacre was also a turning point for the moderates in their relationship with the radicals. Although the tea duty had not been repealed, they still expected imperial relations to improve, particularly when the Council persuaded Hutchinson to get the British troops withdrawn from the town.<sup>23</sup> The moderates' hostility to the radical Whigs arose from their fears of civil disorder arising from what from Royall later called the "Tumults and Commotions"<sup>24</sup> attendant to the institution of Boston's non-importation agreements. By 1770, the

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<sup>21</sup> Baron Edgcumbe of Mount-Edgcumbe (1720-1795), who had retained the Pepperrells and the Sparhawks to represent his land claims in the Kennebec region, was a Whig M.P. between 1746 and 1761, Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall (1761-1795), and a member of the Privy Council from 1765 onwards. H. Doubleday and Lord Howard De Walden, eds., *The Complete Peerage* (London, 1936), 9: 316.

<sup>22</sup> Pepperrell to Lord Edgcumbe, Medford, Aug. 9, 1770, quoted in Browne-Wilkinson, *Pepperrell Posterity*, 102,103; Pepperrell to North, Aug. 9, Nov. 7, 1770. in *Ibid.* 105.

<sup>23</sup> Royall was not present at the Council meetings held immediately after the riot. Council Records, 16: 457. The Council's role is discussed in Hiller B. Zobel, *The Boston Massacre* (New York, 1970), 206-209, 213.

<sup>24</sup> Royall to unknown party, Kensington, Mar. 26, 1779, Boston Public Library.

general boycott was being enforced more rigorously by the “Body of Trade,” a large ad hoc meeting of traders, artisans, and townspeople. Royall attended some but not all of the Council meetings held between May and June 1770 which discussed the mobbing of importers and customs officers, but the members could not agree on taking any extraordinary measures, as some importers wanted, to break up the Body. While Thomas Hutchinson, in his capacity as Chief Justice, denounced the Body as an illegal combination, the Council refused to do anything other than urge the town’s law officers to be more vigilant in apprehending perpetrators of violence.<sup>25</sup> Thereafter, Royall’s interest in Council business waned considerably also because of his wife’s death in July.

The publication of Hutchinson’s controversial letters by the radicals in the summer of 1773 confirmed what many friends of government already knew: that few New Englanders had any confidence in the imperial elite. But the Whig cleric Rev. Gordon made a bold suggestion, that the young William Pepperrell be given a chance in Hutchinson’s stead.<sup>26</sup> Gordon believed he had found a man of integrity, uncorrupted by venality, who might help defuse the tension. Pepperrell’s “independent fortune” and “fine sweet disposition,” he asserted, placed him above partisanship, and he was “well respected by all.” Dartmouth was initially highly-regarded by the colonists, however, Gordon supposed that some of Dartmouth’s less knowledgeable colleagues might think Pepperrell lent “too much on the side of the people.”<sup>27</sup>

What the British thought of Gordon’s proposal is unclear. Gordon later “discovered” that Dartmouth and North had dismissed the views of moderates on the advice of Bernard, who questioned Pepperrell’s credentials as a potential intermediary.<sup>28</sup> It cannot be said that ministers were working in the dark in trying to understand political alignments in the province. Bernard and Hutchinson had regularly commented on the

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<sup>25</sup> Council Records, 16: 480-482, 488-489.

<sup>26</sup> Rolde, *Pepperrell of New England*, 59.

<sup>27</sup> Gordon to Dartmouth, Jamaica Plain, Sep. 18, 1773, in “Letters of William Gordon,” *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 3d. ser., 63 (1929-1930), 594-595.

<sup>28</sup> Gordon to George Washington, Jamaica Plain, Jan. 8, 1778, in “Letters of William Gordon,” 368; Gordon to James Bowdoin, Stoke-Newington, Sep. 8, 1786, *Ibid.*, 612.

views of the friends of government, although such discussions were often slanted to justify their own interpretations. Be that as it may, the British probably thought Pepperrell to have been too inexperienced to be trusted with the governorship of such a turbulent province as Massachusetts. Parliament and the king were in mood to compromise on constitutional principles or colonial grievances when the Bostonians dumped 5,000 pounds worth of East India Company tea into the harbor. When the ministry eventually appointed General Thomas Gage as governor, Gordon came to lament a lost opportunity for Britain and Massachusetts to have patched up their differences.

Royall, who had joined his Council colleagues in urging Governor Hutchinson and the company's consignees to return dutied tea to England, was gravely concerned by the destruction of the tea.<sup>29</sup> In January he wrote an engaging plea to Dartmouth asking for "Lenitive, Pacific Measures, rather than warm coercive ones." Once more the royal governors were convenient scapegoats -- men "who, from an Insatiable Thirst after Power and Gain, are far from seeking the welfare of Great Britain and her Colonies, -- the aggrandising and enriching themselves seeming to be their grand Ultimatum; and doubtless these Persons have also . . . made similar Misrepresentations to the present Ministry and to Lord North in particular." As an alternative to Hutchinson, Royall mentioned the popular former governor Thomas Pownall, now a Member of Parliament, though Pownall's recent opposition to North would have counted against him. Royall's reference to the first Sir William Pepperrell, the hero of Louisbourg, was an oblique promotion of his son-in-law, with whom North was already acquainted.<sup>30</sup>

News of the Boston Port Act, which closed the harbor, arrived in the town on May 10. It was the first of the four Coercive Acts. The friends of government immediately criticized North for failing to distinguish between "loyalists" and "rebels" and for infringing the colony's presumed rights of self-government.<sup>31</sup> On May 18, the friends of government, led by Royall's future son-in-law, George Erving, and John

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<sup>29</sup> The proceedings of the Council were published in *Boston Gazette*, Dec. 27, 1773.

<sup>30</sup> Royall to Dartmouth, Medford, New England, Jan. 18, 1774, 179-182.

<sup>31</sup> Similar points were made in British newspapers by those who nevertheless approved the purpose of the Coercive Acts. Fred J. Hinkhouse, *The Preliminaries of the American Revolution as seen in the English Press, 1763-1775* (New York, 1926), 168-170.

and Jonathan Amory,<sup>32</sup> offered concrete proposals that the damage inflicted by the Tea Party could be repaired by indemnifying the East India Company. Pepperrell was a signatory to the welcoming address delivered to Hutchinson's replacement, General Gage, on June 8, which was a rallying point for the friends of government. But Gage refused to give his unequivocal support to Erving and the Amorys. Their proposals were rejected by the Boston town meeting in mid-June, for Britain had given no indication as to whether restitution would be met by a repeal of the Port Act. The subsequent failure of friends of government to have the Boston Committee of Correspondence disbanded allowed the radicals to extend their strategy of resistance.<sup>33</sup>

The second Coercive Act, the Massachusetts Government Act, was another blow for it aimed to bolster the governor's power by overriding the Province Charter. Members of the governor's Council were now to be appointed by a royal writ of mandamus, as former Governor Bernard had long recommended. A list of nominees was drawn up at more or less the same time as the friends of government in Boston voiced their support for the Erving-Amory scheme and had no influence on these proceedings.

Ministers glibly supposed that moderates like Royall and Pepperrell would willingly join the hated mandamus Council. Massive popular resistance in the late summer of 1774, however, brought royal government to its knees. Royall and seven other nominees refused to accept the king's commission, prompting Gen. Gage unfairly to accuse Royall of "Timidity."<sup>34</sup> Of the twenty-five (out of thirty-six) nominees who took the oath of office, a few like Pepperrell still expected to cow

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<sup>32</sup> George Erving (1738-1806) was the son of councilor John Erving and a prosperous Boston merchant. There were three Amory brothers: Thomas (1722-1786), Jonathan (1726-1797), and John (1728-1805). The two younger were disgruntled Whigs and prominent friends of government.

<sup>33</sup> See Nicolson, "Governor Francis Bernard," 60-61; Nicolson, "The Friends of Government," 1: 302-322. The address to Gage is in *Boston Gazette*, Jun. 13, 1774. Copies of all the addresses circulated in 1774 and 1775 are in Stark, *Loyalists of Massachusetts*, 124-132.

<sup>34</sup> Gage to Dartmouth, Salem, Aug. 25, 1774, in Albert Matthews, ed., "Documents Relating to the Last Meetings of the Massachusetts Royal Council, 1774-1776," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, 32 (1933-1937): 450-504, at 473-474.

their detractors, until large crowds taught them otherwise. Pepperrell was fortunate to be in Boston on the night of August 30 when a mob visited his Roxbury home to demand his resignation. Gage was full of praise for the "sensible," imperious actions of Pepperrell, Daniel Leonard, and Timothy Ruggles in refusing to give way to intimidation. But the relative safety of Boston did not relieve Pepperrell and his colleagues from having to make difficult decisions. The eruption of crowd action was enough to convince both the Council and Gage to concentrate British troops in Boston instead of distributing them throughout the province in order to maintain royal government.<sup>35</sup> When Gage received orders in April 1775 to take appropriate action against the "rebels," military conflict with the colonists became inevitable.

Royall's and Pepperrell's views during the advent of the Revolution were typical of the friends of government. When the fighting started they left Massachusetts, as did hundreds of other loyalists. As might be expected, neither man embraced his new life with any enthusiasm. Royall was fifty-six years old, very wealthy and looking toward his retirement. Pepperrell was not yet thirty, and just beginning to make his own mark. "I love the Country, I love the People," he once said of New England.<sup>36</sup>

Despite his barbed criticism of the British, Pepperrell was proscribed as an arch-loyalist when he and his brothers joined Gage in Boston.<sup>37</sup> The patriots had reacted angrily to Britain's decision to confer on Pepperrell his grandfather's title, and retrospectively condemned his intervention with ministers as a smokescreen. The baronet was ostracised by the Maine patriots and lampooned as "Sir Sparrow Spendall" in Mercy Otis Warren's satire *The Group*.<sup>38</sup> Pepperrell

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<sup>35</sup> Gage to Dartmouth, Boston, Sep. 2, 1774, in Matthews, ed., "Documents Relating to the Last Meetings of the Massachusetts Royal Council, 1774-1776," 474-475; Pepperrell to Gage, Boston, Aug. 31, 1774, 482-483, *ibid.*; Narrative of Joshua Loring, Boston, Aug. 31, 1774, 480-481, *Ibid.* For a detailed account see Nicolson, "The Friends of Government," 1: 338-342.

<sup>36</sup> Pepperrell to Isaac Winslow, Brighthelmstone, Jul. 18, 1778; Winslow Papers.

<sup>37</sup> Jones, *Loyalists of Massachusetts*, 265.

<sup>38</sup> Rolde, *Pepperrell of New England*, 162; Fairchild, *Messrs. William Pepperrell*, 198-199; Browne-Wilkinson, *Pepperrell Posterity*, 112-113.



resolved to leave for England at the first opportunity, but delayed following the death of his wife Elizabeth shortly after bearing him a son, William, in July 1775. In October, Pepperrell joined the Boston Association, a militant organization. In February, he left for England with his four children and their Quaker nurse.

Pepperrell never regretted siding with the Crown, but equally he never regretted his Whiggish sympathies. His principal motivation was “to uphold the Government, to preserve the Peace, & to prevent the horrid evils which have taken place.” He often spoke of how his ire was roused by Britain’s needless indiscretions, in sending British troops to Boston, for example. Such “fatal innovations,” he argued, were the principal cause of the present conflict. But, he reacted angrily to the colonies’ Declaration of Independence.<sup>39</sup>

Royall’s path to loyalism was altogether more haphazard. He always insisted that he had wished to remain neutral -- inoffensive to both parties -- despite what patriots said about him. “I am certain no Man can say with Truth and Justice that I ever Voted for or advis’d anything that was prejudicial to the Interest of my Country and I will also defy any one to say that since I left America I have said or done or insinuated any thing to their Disadvantage.”<sup>40</sup>

In April 1775, Royall’s plans to retire from business and public service were well advanced. He intended one last trip to Antigua, to sell his estate, before returning to Medford. But on the day before the skirmishes at Lexington and Concord changed Americans’ lives forever, he dallied in Boston with his old friend John Erving, and was forced to remain in the town for some time when Gage prohibited egress. He was able to reach Halifax, Nova Scotia, where he hoped to find passage to the West Indies. But he spent nearly a year in the small township of Windsor, when smallpox ravaged Halifax. It was there that his daughter Mary and her husband George Erving found him when they arrived with the British fleet which evacuated Boston in March 1776. The day after the evacuation, the patriots started compiling lists of suspected loyalists, and Pepperrell, if not perhaps Royall, would have been arrested had he

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<sup>39</sup> Pepperrell to Isaac Winslow, Jul. 18, 1778, Winslow Papers.

<sup>40</sup> Royall to unknown party, Kensington, Mar. 26, 1779.

remained.<sup>41</sup> The Ervings did not have much trouble in persuading Royall to come to England with them.

After greeting Pepperrell and his family, the first thing Royall did was "to wait upon" Lord North and Lord George Germain, Dartmouth's successor. He probably remembered how two years earlier George III had given Thomas Hutchinson an immediate personal audience. No such invitation awaited the knowledgeable Royall. When ministers denied him the politeness of a reply, he despaired how the British could ever hope to understand the Americans. "I never attempted to go afterwards," he wrote, "and I have not seen any of the ministry since."<sup>42</sup>

One might think Royall naive in expecting to gain entry to high politics, but he was genuinely perplexed as to why ministers ignored him and why his letters "had not the desired effect." In 1778, he noted that he had still not seen Lord North nor any other grandee except Lord Edgcumbe, whom he met at Pepperrell's home. Royall did, however, meet Thomas Pownall, who assured him that the whole conflict might have been avoided if all the councilors had "acted the part" that he had. Royall was also visited by Bernard and Hutchinson, but did not maintain contact with them. He wanted nothing to do with the governors, having "endeavour'd upon my arrival all I could to remove the prejudices off of People's Minds respecting our Province."<sup>43</sup>

Royall was too old to fight, even he had wanted to, but Pepperrell chose not to bear arms against the Americans. When he arrived in England he worked tirelessly for the loyalists, but always with an eye to rebuilding his bridges with his countrymen. Cast adrift from events in America, Pepperrell exaggerated the loyalists' strength. William and his brother Samuel subscribed to a loyalist address to the king warning that their views should be neither "neglected" nor "disregarded" by the government, when the "greater number" of the King's subjects still "entertain the firmest Attachment and Allegiance" to the Crown.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ellis Ames, et. al., eds., *The Acts and Resolves, Public and Private of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, 1692-1776*, 21 vols. (Boston, 1896-1922), 19: 315-316; Pepperrell was named in the List of Inimical Persons given to the Massachusetts General Court, Boston, Mar. 4, 1778, MSS Li, 1: 79, Boston Athenaeum.

<sup>42</sup> Royall to Edmund Quincy, Kensington, May 29, 1779.

<sup>43</sup> Royall to Bowdoin, Kensington, Nov. 19, 1778.

<sup>44</sup> Loyal Petition to George III, July 1776, in Jones, *Loyalists of Massachusetts*, 307-308.

Pepperrell remained highly optimistic that an "Accommodation" with the rebels was possible, though General John Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga in October 1777 severely dented such hopes.<sup>45</sup> Despite all that had occurred since they left Massachusetts, Pepperrell and Royall refused to believe that independence was irreversible or that the restoration of royal government was chimerical. The prospect of both must have seemed very dim indeed when the French entered the fray in February 1778 and later that year North's Peace Commission failed miserably. When Massachusetts began to confiscate the estates of absentees only a crushing British victory could have facilitated their quick return to America.

Pepperrell and Royall were both named in the Banishment Act of September 1778. They would have been arrested had they returned without permission. Royall flinched when he had been labeled one of the Commonwealth's "greatest Enemies." Morally, Royall had a strong case and set about contesting his proscription. He did not challenge the legitimacy of the General Court's authority but the proposition that he had broken laws pertaining to the loyalists. He told his attorneys the story of his ill-fated efforts to get to Antigua,<sup>46</sup> and sought assistance from former councilors who had become patriots.<sup>47</sup> Royall spoke warmly of James Bowdoin, to whom he sent a copy of his letter to Dartmouth.<sup>48</sup> It was not too much to expect that these men would sympathize with his predicament. Royall also explained that he contributed six guineas to a subscription for American prisoners of war.<sup>49</sup> The bequest which he

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<sup>45</sup> Pepperrell to Isaac Winslow, London, Feb. 23, 1778, Winslow Papers; Norton, *British-Americans*, 96-129.

<sup>46</sup> Royall to unknown party, Kensington, Aug. 25, 1779, Bowdoin-Temple Papers; Royall to unknown party, [Kensington] Mar. 26, 1779.

<sup>47</sup> The Council had never been enthusiastic about confiscating absentees' property. David E. Maas, *The Return of the Massachusetts Loyalists* (New York and London, 1989), 271.

<sup>48</sup> Royall to Bowdoin, Kensington, Nov. 19, 1778.

<sup>49</sup> For a discussion of subscriptions for POWs see Sheldon S. Cohen, *Yankee Sailors in British Gaols: Prisoners of War at Forton and Mill, 1777-1783* (Newark and London, 1995), 151-154.

made to Harvard College, enabling the university to establish a chair, was certainly intended to curry favor with the patriots (though uncharitable critics might have seen it as an act of contrition).<sup>50</sup>

Royall hurriedly instructed his attorneys to contest Massachusetts's proceedings against absentees' property. His former Medford neighbor, Simon Tufts, whose son was a loyalist, petitioned the General Court to exempt Royall's Medford property from sequestration, but the plea was rejected by a narrow majority on October 22, 1778.<sup>51</sup> Tufts could do nothing to prevent either Royall or Pepperrell from being named in the Confiscation Act of April 30, 1779, which automatically labeled loyalists' estates for confiscation, some being later sold or assumed by patriots.<sup>52</sup> In June 1780, the General Court permitted persons lending money to the government to rent sequestered property from the state. Royall's mansion and his two other dwelling-houses in Medford were mortgaged as security for three lenders: a patriot colonel, Richard Cary, for a loan of 500 pounds new currency, occupied the mansion; legal partners Simon Tufts, W. Hall (100 pounds), and Seth Stone (500 pounds) rented the other houses.<sup>53</sup>

Pepperrell, though not Royall, was also named in the Conspiracy Act, which denied him citizenship of Massachusetts because he had been a mandamus councilor. The unlikelihood of Pepperrell and Royall ever recovering their American estates might explain Pepperrell's ambivalence. He urged the British, in prosecuting the war, to cultivate the support of the loyalists, and, in preparing for peace, to attend to the Americans' grievances which had spawned the rebellion. Such a view,

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<sup>50</sup> Royall to unknown party, Kensington, Dec. 22, 1779, Bowdoin-Temple Papers; Massachusetts Judicial Archives, Suffolk County Probate Records, Isaac Royall, 1786 Docket No. 18836.

<sup>51</sup> Royall to Edmund Quincy, Kensington, May 29, 1779. Local selectmen and committees, rather than attorneys, generally looked after the sequestered estates, before that task was given to the Massachusetts probate courts.

<sup>52</sup> The Confiscation Act of 1779 defined loyalists as persons who, after hostilities began on April 19, 1775, served in the British or the loyal American forces, or who had left the province without permission. Neither of these definitions, Royall claimed, could be applied to himself, for he had never willingly left Massachusetts for political reasons. Stark, *The Loyalists of Massachusetts*, 137-144.

<sup>53</sup> Maas, *Return of the Loyalists*, 305-306.

he observed, was “widely different” from that held by most of his friends, so much so that he was moved to declare that

there are few of them I believe who had sacrificed more to their sentiments than I have done, & yet I shou'd be a very miserable Man if I had seen the Day, when I cou'd have wished to have owed the recovery of my property to the scalping knife, or to a general Desolation of that Country which gave me Being; To be sure, I never wished America independent of this Country, I always thought it the height of Error injustice & ingratitude to desire it; but if there was a felicity that America did not enjoy, before the commencement of the present Troubles, to which the Laws of God or Man cou'd have given her a claim, I am sure the attainment of it wou'd have never met with opposition from Me . . . How hard it is to be exiled from one's Country, for trying to save it from ruin & using the utmost endeavours to promote her prosperity.<sup>54</sup>

When Pepperrell and over one hundred exiles, mostly from Massachusetts, delivered another address to the king in 1779 they asserted that the Americans “suffer so much from the Cruelty of their present Rulers, that there is scarce anything they would not do to get rid of their oppression.”<sup>55</sup> Such a view did not accurately reflect the situation in America, where the loyalists were invariably in the minority, but it did highlight the fact that British generals had to be careful not to alienate neutrals. While the loyalists comprised nearly one-fifth of the American population, they had little say in the formulation of British strategy because militant loyalism was never as substantive as Pepperrell and the British had hoped, and the loyalist's weakness was often cited by British generals as a principal cause of their own failures on the battle-field. British ministers also probably viewed Pepperrell's entreaties as comprising conflicting, self-interested messages, and generally took little

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<sup>54</sup> Pepperrell to Isaac Winslow, Brighthelmstone, Jul. 18, 1778.

<sup>55</sup> Norton, *The British-Americans*, 162-165.

heed of the refugees' advice on military issues.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, one historian has suggested that the British were never fully clear as to what the loyalists' military and political roles should be, and they were "alternately ignored and courted. Plans to use them were in the main ad hoc responses to constantly changing conditions."<sup>57</sup>

Exile proved unkind to the Royalls and the Pepperrells. They were bedeviled with stress-related illnesses. William, lamenting his wife, suffered recurrent chest pains and depression, particularly when his children were afflicted by whooping cough and measles. Royall was "dangerously ill" with a liver disorder for five weeks after arriving in England. He recuperated at the Pepperrells' London house before moving with them to Kensington, and then to Brighton on the Sussex coast.<sup>58</sup> He rarely ventured into London, for he had never been inoculated against the smallpox; when he did attend public events or entertainments he travelled in a "close Conveyance." Royall suffered "a violent oppression" and fever in September 1776 and a "severe stroke of the palsy" four years later, which left him much weakened in body though not his mind. Ironically, it was smallpox which eventually killed him on October, 16, 1781.<sup>59</sup>

Financially, Pepperrell was also better placed than the other refugees, and maintained houses in Brighton and Westminster.<sup>60</sup> He lived comfortably on his annual pension of 500 pounds and income of 500 pounds from his estates in Surinam, until that source dried up when the Dutch entered the war in December 1780.<sup>61</sup> As chairman of the

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<sup>56</sup> Norton, *The British-Americans*, 42-43, 226-231. Stephen Conway, *The War of Independence, 1775-1783* (London, 1995), chapters 2-6, 9.

<sup>57</sup> Paul H. Smith, *Loyalists and Redcoats: A Study in British Revolutionary Policy* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1964), ix-x.

<sup>58</sup> Royall to Bowdoin, Kensington, Nov. 19, 1778.

<sup>59</sup> Royall to Bowdoin, Kensington, Nov. 19, 1778; Peter Orlando Hutchinson, ed., *The Diary and Letters of His Excellency Thomas Hutchinson*, 2 vols., (London, 1883), 2: 96, Pepperrell to Isaac Winslow, Brighthelmstone, Sep. 19, 1776, Winslow Papers.

<sup>60</sup> *Pepperrell Prosperity*, 122.

<sup>61</sup> Pepperrell to Isaac Winslow, Brighthelmstone, Sep. 19, 1776. Pepperrell to Isaac Winslow, London, Aug. 1, 1781, Winslow Papers.

Loyalist Association, formed May 21, 1779, he worked hard to assist the loyalists in obtaining compensation and pensions from the British Treasury. He kept in regular contact with members of the New England Club, many of whom lived in or near Westminster, while others resided in Bath and Bristol; very few had any contact with ministers or parliamentarians.<sup>62</sup> Pepperrell's sense of obligation toward them stemmed from the "high aggravation of my own sufferings, in the Cause of Government" and the fact that, while in London, he was well placed to make representations to ministers.<sup>63</sup>

Pepperrell was irritated by the Treasury's delay in providing temporary relief for destitute loyalists. For example, he advised his friend Isaac Winslow, who had left Boston for Halifax before moving to New York with the British, to make a formal application for relief as soon as he could. Pepperrell was owed a sum of money by Winslow, but he never insisted that the debt be repaid. In any case, Pepperrell established for Winslow 1000 pounds worth of credit with the London merchants, Messrs. Lane, Fraser & Co., which Winslow might use to establish a business in New York. Peace, whatever the outcome, would "occasion a great demand" for British manufactures, and until then suggested that Winslow begin trading with the American rebels. Winslow did not receive any of Pepperrell's letters until the late summer of 1779, when Pepperrell submitted a memorial on his behalf, asking for compensation, as a result of which Winslow obtained a pension of 100 pounds and a grant of 200 pounds (a quarter of what he asked for).<sup>64</sup> Similar such applications forced the ministry to review the predicament of the loyalist refugees. Germain was sympathetic to their plight, which

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<sup>62</sup> Wilbur H. Siebert, "The Colony of Massachusetts Loyalists at Bristol, England," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 45 (1911-1912): 409-414; K.G. Davies, ed., *Documents of the American Revolution, 1770-1783*, 21 vols., (Shannon, 1972-1981), 9: 118, 330.

<sup>63</sup> Pepperrell to Winslow, London, Feb. 23, 1778.

<sup>64</sup> Isaac Winslow (1743-1793) was a salaried manager of a Boston distillery before the war, and member of the small Sandemanian sect. Pepperrell to Isaac Winslow, Brighthelmstone, Sep. 29, 1780, Winslow Papers; Jones, *Loyalists of Massachusetts*, 301-302.

he discussed with Pepperrell on several occasions, and a royal commission was formed to consider claims for compensation.<sup>65</sup>

Loyalists in America, meanwhile, urged the British to pursue a more clearly defined counter-revolutionary strategy. As William Franklin, the president of the Board of Directors of Associated Loyalists at New York put it, the British needed to work more closely with the loyalists in "emancipating" the Americans from the "tyranny" of the Continental Congress.<sup>66</sup> Pepperrell did not share Franklin's enthusiasm for a propaganda war. His own residual optimism reflected news of Britain's last major successes: naval victories by Admiral Sir George Rodney over the Spanish and Admiral Hyde Parker's over the French in the West Indies, and General Henry Clinton's capture of Charleston, SC, in the summer of 1780.<sup>67</sup>

When, in December 1781, Pepperrell heard of Cornwallis's defeat at Yorktown he assumed that Britain, "with all its weight of misfortunes however heavy it may be, is not yet prepared for a measure so ruinous & disgraceful" as conceding the independence of the rebellious colonies.<sup>68</sup> "To the last," he was "unwilling to believe that America would be unconditionally independent of this Country that so great a calamity to both Countries would be ever suffered to befall them."<sup>69</sup> Pepperrell's sanguinity was not so unrealistic as subsequent events might suggest: despite losing 4,000 troops at Yorktown and suffering reversals in the West Indies, the British were still capable of continuing the war; whether there was a political will, however, is another matter. Parliament finally voted against continuing the war on February 27, 1782.

Pepperrell was kept in the dark about the government's intentions, which might explain why he and other loyalists were so downcast when

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<sup>65</sup> Pepperrell to Isaac Winslow, London, Jun. 24, 1779, Winslow Papers.

<sup>66</sup> Franklin to the earl of Shelburne, May 10, 1782, Davies, *Documents of the American Revolution*, 21: 67-68.

<sup>67</sup> Pepperrell to Isaac Winslow, London, Feb. 15, 1780, Winslow Papers. Andrew Pepperrell to [Isaac Winslow], London, April 1, 1780; Pepperrell to Winslow, London, Jul. 4, 1780; Pepperrell to Winslow, London, May 3, 1780, *Ibid.*

<sup>68</sup> Pepperrell to Winslow, London, Dec. 3, 1781.

<sup>69</sup> Pepperrell to Isaac Winslow, London, Dec. 8, 1782, Winslow Papers.



parliamentary debates turned on the question of recognizing American independence. "I have been very long convinced," he told Winslow, "that this Country [Britain] wou'd be very happy to hearken to any reasonable terms of accommodation with America, but her Sovereignty over that Country she finds it hard to relinquish." Understandably, he was shocked by the fall of the North administration and to the end prayed for a political union with the Americans.<sup>70</sup>

He was little persuaded that either the British or the Americans would do anything about the loyalists' losses. In the Fifth Article of the Treaty of Paris of 1783, the United States promised to recommend that the states make restitution to the loyalists. Pepperrell represented the Massachusetts exiles on a committee whose purpose was to pester the British into doing something about the Fifth Article.<sup>71</sup> The new Shelburne ministry certainly did not raise the loyalists' expectations, but when the government ordered the evacuation of Charleston, Savannah, and New York, the British could exert little pressure on the Americans to compensate the loyalists.

The majority of Massachusetts's loyalist exiles were able to return to America. Most of their property was not actually confiscated and such proceedings, never popular with the socially conservative but politically radical patriots, ended after the Peace of Paris. Most absentees recovered their sequestered estates in the 1780s and 1790s, but not Pepperrell and Royall. Pepperrell's remaining years in England were uneventful, and long before he died in 1816, he had come to terms with his new life. Royall's efforts to recover his estates and clear his name were also unsuccessful: his property in Hampshire County, Mass. was forfeited to the state to pay outstanding taxes, a wholly spurious claim, and though in 1786 the case against his Medford estate was dismissed, his family never recovered the house or land, which remained in the hands of Col. Richard Cary.<sup>72</sup> George Erving, Royall's son-in-law, could not recover the land because he had been proscribed by the Conspiracy Act.

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<sup>70</sup> Pepperrell to Isaac Winslow, London, Mar. 5, 1782, Winslow Papers.

<sup>71</sup> Norton, *British-Americans*, 186, 305n4.

<sup>72</sup> Browne-Wilkinson, *Pepperrell Posterity*, 126-7; Pepperrell to Winslow, London, Feb. 23, 1778, Pepperrell to Winslow, Jul. 18, 1778.

To many patriots, William Pepperrell and Isaac Royall must have seemed like implacable opponents of the Revolution. Both men, however, would have preferred that history recognize their efforts to defuse the tensions in British-American relations. Like other friends of government, they warned London of the consequences of prevaricating over American grievances. For sure, they tended to exaggerate the influence of governors Bernard and Hutchinson on Britain and the leveling tendencies of the radical Whigs and the patriots. But British ministers invariably heard only what they wanted to hear, and in 1774 they heard only reports of incipient revolution. Once royal government had collapsed, the political alignments which Pepperrell and Royall described for the British were crudely swept aside.