

Bio: William Tryon Mathews

Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2018

William Tryon Mathews presents rather a mystery in the Mathews family. He was probably one of the older sons of David Mathews and Sarah Seymour, and was likely born between 1760 and 1765 at the family home in Flatbush, New York. The few records that have been found suggest that his father called him "Tryon". He was named after William Tryon who served as governor of the Province of North Carolina and the Province of New York, and was a friend and ally to David Mathews.

Tryon Mathews was in his teen years during the American Revolution, and faced all the turbulence of his father's term as Loyalist Mayor of New York City, during the British occupation. Tryon likely fled with his father's family to Nova Scotia in 1783-84. The Mathews family eventually set up housekeeping in the Loyalist colony of Cape Breton, and established a home across the harbor from the town of Sydney. Only a few records have surfaced relating to Tryon Mathews in Nova Scotia. He usually appears by name only in Mathews family genealogies. No significant personal details are given.

About 1795, when Tryon Mathews as in his twenties, his father appointed him Provost Marshall (head of Military Police) of the Cape Breton colony. David Mathews had a controversial career as Council President, and Attorney General of Cape Breton, positions that allowed him to hand out various offices to his family and friends. The exact date of the appointment for Tryon Mathews is unclear. There is some indication that the position of Provost Marshall may have passed from David Tait, to John Murray (son-in-law of David Mathews), to Tryon Mathews during the years 1795 to 1797.

Related Records:

David Tait . . . faction that opposed [David] Mathews in the council, and when in 1795 Mathews became senior councilor, he [David Tait] lost his job of provost marshal. Mathews replaced him with his own son, William Tryon Mathews.

[source] They Came From Away: Yanks, Brits and Cape Breton; David and Pamela Newton, 2010.

20 November 1797; Sydney; David Mathews to Secretary of State (Portland). Death of Murray, Provost – Marshal, leaving a widow unprovided for; has appointed his son, Tryon Mathews, to succeed, so that he may assist the widow, who is his sister.

[source] Report, Public Archives of Canada; Information Canada, 1896.

Tryon Mathews did not hold the Provost Marshall position long; in the following year 1798, both he and his father were expelled from office. David Mathews died at his Cape Breton home in July of 1800, and further evidence of Tryon Mathews, after his father's death, has not been discovered.

Do you want to know more?

[Link to William Tryon Mathews in database](#)

Biography of William Tryon Mathews; written by Pamela Hutchison Garrett for Markham of Chesterfield website; 2018.