

# THEY SIGNED FOR US



MERLE SINCLAIR and ANNABEL DOUGLAS McARTHUR

# *They Signed for Us*

by  
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# Foreword

ALMOST EVERY CITIZEN of the United States knows about the Declaration of Independence, the greatest statement of democratic rights and principles in history.

Curious, then, is the fact that most of us freedom-blest Americans cannot name half a dozen of the fifty-six patriots who signed the Declaration in Philadelphia that eventful summer of 1776.

How many Signers can you name?

“I thought I had remembered nine,” ruefully confessed a man with a Ph.D. degree, who holds an important position with our government. “But when I checked, I found only six were right.”

The proprietor of a bookstore said she would have a hard time naming any besides George Washington and Patrick Henry. She was chagrined to learn that neither Washington or Henry signed.

Who were the Signers? The least we, their beneficiaries, can do is learn their names. The highest tribute we can pay these men is to cherish the freedom for which they risked their lives and fortunes and to defend that freedom against every threat.

What sort of men were the patriots who risked a hangman’s noose? What consequences did they suffer as a result of their bold and hazardous act?

To answer these questions, and to acknowledge a debt which we, in common with our fellow Americans, owe the sturdy heroes of ’76, we have written *They Signed for Us*.

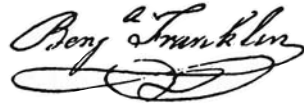
Merle Sinclair  
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## CHAPTER ONE

### “We Must Be Unanimous”



THOMAS MC KEAN  
*Delaware*



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN  
*Pennsylvania*



THOMAS JEFFERSON  
*Virginia*



BENJAMIN HARRISON  
*Virginia*



CAESAR RODNEY  
*Delaware*

WHEN THOMAS McKEAN OF DELAWARE arrived at the State House in Philadelphia that rainy Tuesday, July 2, 1776, his immediate concern was for his colleague, Caesar Rodney. Would the ailing Rodney be able to attend the day’s crucial session of the Continental Congress? Would he make it in time to break Delaware’s deadlocked vote?

The resolution coming up this morning — the most important ever presented in the history of the thirteen American colonies — proclaimed them independent of Great Britain!

Rodney had been absent from Congress in an effort to squelch a Loyalist uprising that threatened his home territory. He must have been dead tired when he returned to his plantation near Dover last night. Maybe he was too sick to comply with McKean’s urgent message: “Get to Philadelphia at the earliest possible moment.” Dover was eighty miles away.

During yesterday’s debate on the resolution — as heated as the weather attending it — McKean sensed an emergency. Always the man of action, he strode from the Assembly chamber to take matters into his own hands. He scribbled a note to Rodney. Then he hunted up an express rider and told him to speed with it to Dover. He paid the messenger from his own purse.

On June 7, the resolution of Richard Henry Lee, delegate from Virginia, had been introduced in Congress. Lee, acting upon instructions from his provincial government, proposed:

*“That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.”*

From the first, a majority vote on Lee’s resolution for Independence was practically assured. After several days’ debate, final action was postponed until July 1. Excitement over the measure mounted, both in Congress and throughout the provinces. About a third of the colonists, from New Hampshire to Georgia, bitterly opposed this act of rebellion or regarded it with anxious doubt.

The number of delegates willing to vote yes gradually increased. Those masters of persuasion, John Adams and his cousin Samuel, of Massachusetts, with other patriot leaders, worked unrelentingly to convert the opposition and hearten the dubious. New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina offered the chief resistance.

It became more and more clear that no mere majority but a unanimous vote was imperative. Agreement was necessary to convince Great Britain, her watchful enemies, the divided colonists — and even some of the members of Congress themselves.

The colonies had sent delegations of varying sizes to represent them at Philadelphia. However, each colony had only one vote, determined by the majority within its delegation.

Delaware had three representatives. McKean and Rodney vigorously supported Lee’s resolution. The more moderate and cautious George Read felt the move premature. He would vote no today. If Rodney didn’t arrive, Delaware’s deadlocked vote would be thrown out.

Delegates had worked feverishly through the night to line up support for the resolution or to make a last-ditch stand against it. This morning the word was that Pennsylvania and South Carolina had capitulated to the patriot cause. The New York position looked favorable.

That left Delaware. Now, on this morning of July 2, it seemed to McKean that the fate of the resolution rested on one sick man — and he was not even in Philadelphia!

An alarming dispatch had been read in Congress before Monday’s session ended, which helped wavering members to decide in favor of separation from King George III and his domineering ministers. It came from General George Washington, commander in chief of the Continental Army, stationed at New York with his pitifully small forces.

Washington reported that British vessels were appearing in New York harbor by threes and fours, that attack was imminent, that all his meager resources would be required to prevent disaster.

Rodney would be anguished, indeed, if Delaware failed the cause of Independence, all on account of him. He had served his province for more than twenty years and was a recognized leader in the movement to rescue Delaware from British rule.

If Rodney reached Philadelphia in time to vote, it meant spending the night in his saddle, braving thunder gusts and mud. Such a trip was a great deal to expect of anyone, particularly a man in Rodney's condition. The forty-eight-year-old bachelor suffered grievously from a malignancy that had spread over half of his face. Physicians had advised him to seek treatment in Europe, but he refused to leave the colonies in their crisis. His humor and a certain inward fire seemed to keep him going.

McKean himself, an outstanding lawyer, had long been a champion of colonial rights and felt strongly that the patriots should, as he put it, "stop talking and act." It was heartbreaking for him to contemplate Delaware as failing today.

Philadelphia, metropolis of the colonies with a population of almost 35,000, was the logical meeting place for the Continental Congress. Delegates to the First Congress had turned down an invitation to meet in Pennsylvania's State House in September 1774, in favor of Carpenter's Hall, two blocks to the east. But the Second Congress, convening in May 1775, accepted the use of the Assembly chamber. The provincial government graciously retired to smaller quarters in the building.

The State House was a handsome two-story brick structure, set back about thirty feet from the south side of Chestnut Street, between Fifth and Sixth Streets. It had a hundred-foot frontage, with brick arcades connecting it to fifty-foot wings. In its tall steeple hung a great bell with an inscription from Leviticus:

*"Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto  
all the inhabitants thereof."*

Two chambers in the main structure, one for the Assembly and the other for the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, were separated by a central hall about twenty feet wide. The Assembly chamber, where Congress met, was on the east side of the hall.

It was a little cooler this morning after the storm; but the atmosphere was humid and heavy rain clouds appeared ready to break loose again. The thermometer hovered around 78 degrees. Delegates were arriving by carriage, on horseback, or afoot, and gathering in earnest little groups.

Pennsylvania's representation included that amiable genius, Dr. Benjamin Franklin, who, at seventy, was the oldest of the few old men in Congress.

Somber-suited Samuel Adams didn't look as if he had much in common with his fellow delegate from Massachusetts, the rich and elegant John Hancock. The bond between these two close friends was their fervent patriotism, their love of liberty. The British had been trying to apprehend these rebels ever since an unsuccessful attempt at Lexington fourteen months before. George III was offering £500 apiece for their capture. If caught, Hancock and Adams would be sent to England on charges of treason.

Thomas Jefferson was a member of the Virginia delegation. At thirty-three, he'd had quite an honor thrust upon him. He had been chosen to draft a declaration to the world of the colonies' claim to Independence, to be broadcast in the event Lee's resolution carried. He had been more than busy at it these recent weeks.

Everybody liked the tall, freckled, sandy-haired Jefferson. He was quiet and shy until one got to know him — and such a poor speaker that he hadn't attempted a single speech in his year in Congress. But he was an earnest worker in committee and truly a master of the written word.

McKean, a tall, vigorous man, was pacing the hall or peering up Chestnut Street from one of the hall windows when he wasn't greeting his fellow congressmen. He knew that proceedings would start in a few minutes.

There was a dais, flanked by two fireplaces, in the center of the east wall of the Assembly chamber. The presiding officer's desk and red-upholstered chair occupied this platform. Now John Hancock, handsome president of Congress, impressive as always in tiewig and ruffled stock, was taking his seat. Charles Thomson, secretary, sat at a desk just below him.

Through the open window there came the sound of horse's hoofs on rough cobblestones. McKean hurried to the entrance. Galloping up Chestnut Street, with his three-cornered hat awry, came Caesar Rodney! The tall, gaunt rider, mud-splattered and bedraggled, reined in his horse and slid from his saddle. Fatigue and suffering showed in every line.

McKean greeted him with fervor. Rodney had left Dover astride a swift horse, in a blinding thunderstorm, within ten minutes after receiving McKean's message. He had ridden the night through, supplied with fresh horses along the way. Still shod in boots and spurs, Rodney walked arm in arm with his fellow delegate into the Assembly chamber. The two were almost the last to be seated.

President Hancock called the session to order at once.

During the trying days of debate over Lee's resolution, Congress resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the measure. Each morning Hancock



would relinquish the chair to Benjamin Harrison, huge and jovial member from Virginia, who was named chairman of this committee. At the end of the day, with Hancock again presiding, Harrison would make the official report to Congress of the committee's deliberations. Today President Hancock called on Harrison for his final report before the vote. Presently the poll of the thirteen colonies began.

Two Pennsylvanians who couldn't bring themselves to vote yes had delicately stayed clear of the State House this morning, enabling their delegation to cast an affirmative vote. New York abstained from voting. Hourly, its delegates had awaited fresh instructions from the newly elected provincial convention. Their present orders restrained them from voting for drastic action. South Carolina, in a real spirit of cooperation, gave in for the sake of unanimity.

When Delaware was called, Caesar Rodney pulled himself to his feet. He said, "As I believe the voice of my constituents and of all sensible and honest men is in favor of Independence, and my own judgment concurs, I vote for independence!" Then he sank exhausted to his seat.

The twelve colonies participating had voted unanimously for Freedom! Each man present fully realized what his vote meant in terms of personal danger should this rebellion fail. King George III had declared every rebel in the land a traitor. The penalty for treason was death by hanging.

## CHAPTER TWO

### “The Causes Which Impel Them”

*John Adams*

JOHN ADAMS  
*Massachusetts*

*Sam Adams*

SAMUEL ADAMS  
*Massachusetts*

*Robert Treat Paine*

ROBERT TREAT PAINE  
*Massachusetts*

*Elbridge Gerry*

ELBRIDGE GERRY  
*Massachusetts*

*Richard Henry Lee*

RICHARD HENRY LEE  
*Virginia*

*Francis Lightfoot Lee*

FRANCIS LIGHTFOOT LEE  
*Virginia*

*George Wythe*

GEORGE WYTHE  
*Virginia*

JOHN ADAMS CLAIMED THAT EVENTS which resulted in the American Revolution began in 1760, when Britain defeated France and George III became King. With a war to pay for and an enlarged empire to protect, the mother country needed funds desperately. She expected her colonies to contribute to her treasure.

The Americans had tasted freedom and they resented the taxes and controls which the British Parliament imposed. For the seeds of Independence were sown long before 1760 — probably when the first colonies came to America, when necessity bred self-reliance.

The habit of independent thinking grew with each generation, and the *right* to think freely was more and more taken for granted. The spirit of liberty was bred into John Adams, one of the long line of New England individualists. He was a

great-great-greatgrandson of independent Priscilla of Plymouth Colony and the shy fellow she chided for not asserting *his* rights! With no heart for marrying the widower Standish, who sent John Alden to plead his cause, the young lady asked, “Why don’t you speak for yourself, John?”

Patriot leaders realized that theirs was no mere revolt of American colonies from Britain, but a human revolution that had been centuries in the making. It was the protest of human beings against enslavement, against powers that sought to govern without consulting the governed.

The chief outrages imposed by the British were:

The Writs of Assistance — search warrants issued by the courts.

The Stamp Act — a tax affecting legal papers, newspapers, and ships’ papers.

The Townshend Acts, placing duties on imported articles, including tea.

Interference in colonial governments.

The quartering of British “redcoats” or “lobsterbacks” in Boston.

The Boston Port Bill.

“Taxation without representation!” was the cry of the provinces. If Britain taxed them, why did they not have a voice in Parliament? Time after time, the colonists petitioned for a “redress of grievances,” while earnestly declaring their alliance to the King. Division grew between the Tories, who favored yielding to the mother country, and the Whigs, who supported the cause of liberty.

The Stamp Act prompted the organization of the Sons of Liberty, who included the more radical of the anti-British elements. They became a strong and noisy force on the side of Independence. The Boston Port Bill of 1774 closed the port as punishment for the Boston Tea Party, the occasion when some of the radicals dumped 342 chests of tea into the harbor.

The port bill served to unite the colonies in a common cause. In distant Virginia, the House of Burgesses set apart the day on which the bill became effective as a time for fasting and prayer. The royal governor promptly dissolved the assembly. The burgesses then met at an inn and recommended an annual Congress of representatives from all the colonies. They appointed delegates; other colonies did likewise. Thus almost fifty members of the First Continental Congress were chosen to meet at Philadelphia in September 1774.

Delegates from Massachusetts included lawyer Robert Treat Paine; the honest, forthright man of law and order, John Adams; and his cousin Sam, rabble-rousing but high-minded Son of Liberty and member of the colony’s House of Representatives. All were Harvard graduates.

Paine was more moderate than the Adamses. However, he was resolute in supporting Independence. He was to become General Washington's chief procurer of cannon and gunpowder.

Sam Adams made little money and dressed plainly. Before his departure for Philadelphia, anonymous friends equipped him with a new suit, hat, wig, silk hose, shoes, and a bit of cash.

Matters came to a crisis in Massachusetts in the fall of 1774. The House of Representatives defied the royal governor, formed itself into the first Provincial Congress, and elected John Hancock president. It appointed a Committee of Safety and voted to drill 12,000 Minutemen.

Hancock had received a fine inheritance from the merchant uncle who had taken him into his large commercial and shipping business. He went abroad for his uncle in 1760 and was in London when King George II died and George III, who would one day put a price on his head, became King of Britain. John was twenty-three that year.

Most wealthy, aristocratic Bostonians sided with the royal governors. But John Hancock was an enthusiastic supporter of the popular party. He was amazingly generous; though he lost much of his fortune in the Revolutionary War, he contributed about \$100,000 to its prosecution.

The night of April 18, 1775, the British redcoats began their march from Boston toward Lexington and Concord. Their purpose was twofold: to seize the military stores at Concord and to capture patriots Hancock and Sam Adams.

That night the Committee of Safety met at Wetherby's Inn, about halfway between Boston and Lexington. It had word that several British officers were out searching for the two "traitors." Elbridge Gerry, a member of the committee, knew that Hancock and Adams were spending the night in Lexington and sent them a warning.

Young Gerry planned to stay all night at Wetherby's Inn. In the small hours, the British troops advanced upon it. He escaped only by fleeing in his nightshirt to a neighboring cornfield.

Until he was thirty-seven, John Hancock was probably Boston's most eligible bachelor. Now he was engaged to marry beautiful Dorothy Quincy and tonight the two were at dinner in the parsonage of the Reverend Jonas Clarke in Lexington. It was a house Hancock had enjoyed since childhood. His grandfather, the Reverend John Hancock, had occupied it for fifty-five years.

By midnight, all was dark and still at the parsonage. A sentry was posted outside. The silence was broken by a messenger on horseback galloping up to the

door. The rider, out of breath, yelled, “Where’s Mr. Hancock?”

“Don’t make so much noise!” the sentry ordered sternly.

“Noise!” exploded Paul Revere. “You’ll have noise enough before long. The Regulars are coming out!”

Hancock flung open his bedroom window. He called to Revere to come into the house. As he heard the news of the redcoats’ approach, John Hancock’s one thought was to dash to the village green to join the Minutemen who were mustering there. But the others persuaded him not to run any such risk of capture. He and Adams fled northeast toward the village of Woburn. As they departed Lexington, there came to their ears from the direction of the green the sound of the Minutemen’s fife and drum.

Following defeat at Concord, the British offered pardon to all rebels who would return to their former allegiance — all except John Hancock and Samuel Adams. The two did not go back to Boston, but left on the long journey to Philadelphia for the meeting of the Second Continental Congress beginning May 10.

Just a month before, in March, 1775, a Virginia Convention had been held in St. John’s Church, Richmond, out of reach of the royal governor at Williamsburg. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Richard Henry Lee were among the distinguished Virginians present to hear fiery Patrick Henry say that war was inevitable unless the colonies gave in to a slavish role. As he urged military preparation, Henry spoke his most famous words, “Give me liberty or give me death!

At that meeting, the tall, thin, aristocratic Lee also spoke with eloquence:

“We mean no aggression, no violence, no treason, but if the powers in England choose to regard this action as such, on them will fall the responsibility of the course taken by them....If we have our disadvantages, so had England. It will put her to a vast disadvantage to have to transport over such a distance, in the contingency of war, her armies and supplies....Admitting the probable calculations to be against us, I will say with our immortal bard:

*“Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just;  
And he but naked, though lock’d up in steel,  
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.”*

Washington, Henry, and Lee had all been delegates to the First Continental Congress the preceding fall. Three months after the Virginia Convention, young Jefferson departed for Philadelphia to replace another delegate in the Second Congress. He reached the city on June 20, “just in time to see George Washington set out for Cambridge to take command of the first American Army.” Congress had made Washington commander in chief on June 15.

In another year, Patrick Henry would become the first governor of the sovereign state of Virginia.

Public opinion swerved noticeably toward Independence in the early months of 1776, strongly influenced by a pamphlet called *Common Sense*. It was written by journalist Thomas Paine, who called for immediate separation from Britain. More clearly than anyone else had done, Paine indicated that America could and should become the haven of free peoples.

Richard Henry Lee's role in the spring of '76 was that of spokesman for the Virginia delegation in Congress, which included his younger brother, Francis Lightfoot Lee. The two belonged to one of Virginia's most distinguished families. Francis was less colorful than Richard, but quite as ardent a patriot. He had served in the House of Burgesses since 1758, when he was twenty-four, until he came to Congress.

On May 15, the Virginia Convention at Williamsburg passed a resolution that the delegates at Philadelphia be instructed to propose to Congress that the colonies be declared free and independent states, absolved from all allegiance to the Crown or Parliament of Great Britain. This provincial resolution was read in Congress on May 27. It was tabled for ten days while the delegates attended to other matters. Then, on June 7, Richard Henry Lee rose to make his resolution, "That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free..."

Before Lee had a chance to sit down, John Adams seconded the motion for Independence. A happy day in Adams' life! He had waited a long time for this moment.

In the discussion which followed, these two masters of debate, Lee and Adams, led the element favoring the resolution. They had the valuable support of one of the most influential Americans of that day, George Wythe of the Virginia delegation.

Wythe was a thinker, a scholar, a man of public affairs. He was to become America's first law professor, at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. Jefferson had studied under Wythe and admired him enormously. George Wythe had taken the stand that the only political link between the colonies and Great Britain was their common allegiance to the King; that "that nation and its Parliament had no more authority over us than we had over them."

One reluctant delegate was Virginia's Carter Braxton, who had more conservative views on how to deal with Britain. He had come to Congress in February, sent, it was said, by Virginians who were "so alarmed with the Idea of Independence that they have sent Mr. Braxton on purpose to turn the Vote of that Colony, if any

Question on that Subject should come before Congress.”

Many delegates merely regarded Lee’s proposition as premature. Some felt they should have instructions from their provincial governments before voting on such a momentous measure. Final action was postponed several weeks.

To save time, in case the resolution passed, Congress appointed a committee of five to prepare a Declaration setting forth the principles involved: John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, and Robert Livingston of New York.

Jefferson was named because of his gift for writing, and because he had aroused no political antagonisms. The committee promptly made him the sole draftsman of the document.

He had simple lodgings, a second-floor parlor and bedroom, in the home of a Philadelphia bricklayer. Here he worked diligently for almost three weeks composing the Declaration, putting to use a portable writing desk he had invented. His task was to put down in sublime language the concepts of freedom to which he and his fellow citizens were devoted. These convictions were:

All men are equal in God’s sight, though their talents, virtues, and circumstances of birth vary. They are born to equal rights in this world. These rights, being natural and not political, therefore are inalienable — incapable of being surrendered or transferred. No other man or group or nation is entitled to deprive any human being of such rights.

Jefferson showed his draft to Adams and Franklin, separately, before submitting it to the Committee. They made a few minor changes. On June 28, the Friday before the vote on Lee’s resolution came up, Jefferson submitted his final copy to Congress.

As soon as Lee’s resolution was adopted on July 2, Congress took up debate on the Declaration. John Adams, of course, supported the document in masterful fashion and the delegates on the whole were merciless critics. Propriety forbade Jefferson’s defending his phrases. So he said nothing. But Dr. Franklin, sitting next to him, could tell that he was fairly writhing inside.

Actually, Jefferson’s colleagues paid his composition enormous tribute by adopting it with no more changes than they made. They deleted only what they considered impolitic, then put the finishing touches to a treatise of such grace and felicity as to become one of the world’s immortal documents.

*“When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with*



*another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That Whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes...."*

By Wednesday night, July 3, the Congress was far from agreed and debate was held over until the next day.

Thursday morning, July 4, was sunny and pleasant, with a breeze from the southeast. The temperature was 72 degrees when Congress convened at nine o'clock.

Soon after President Hancock opened the meeting, the body again resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole. Chairman Harrison presided. Controversy flared again and went on and on into the afternoon. The air became close. Delegates grew weary wrestling with Jefferson's rhetoric.

"The debate seemed as though it would run on interminably," Jefferson wrote later. "The weather was oppressively warm and the room occupied by the delegates was hard by a livery stable...the horse-flies swarmed thick and fierce, alighting on the legs of members and biting hard through their thin silk stockings. Handkerchief in hand they lashed at the hungry pests to no avail."

Toward evening, Hancock resumed the chair. Harrison reported that the Committee of the Whole had agreed to a Declaration. The document was read once more. The vote for its adoption was taken without dissent.







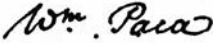

The only Signer of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, was John Hancock, president, on behalf of the members of Congress. Charles Thompson, secretary, attested Hancock's signature.

Quickly, the tired delegates ordered that copies of the Declaration be printed that night — and that Independence be proclaimed in each of the *United States*.



## CHAPTER THREE

### “Proclaim Liberty ...”

	OLIVER WOLCOTT <i>Connecticut</i>
	JOHN HANCOCK <i>Massachusetts</i>
	STEPHEN HOPKINS <i>Rhode Island</i>
	WILLIAM ELLERY <i>Rhode Island</i>
	CHARLES CARROLL OF CARROLLTON <i>Maryland</i>
	SAMUEL CHASE <i>Maryland</i>
	WILLIAM PACA <i>Maryland</i>
	THOMAS STONE <i>Maryland</i>

SUDDENLY THE BIG BELL in the State House steeple pealed joyously. The appointed signal! Cheers rose from the waiting crowds.

“Proclaim liberty throughout all the land ....”

Cannon boomed, drums rolled. Church bells rang, sounding the death knell of British domination!

News of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence spread like wildfire. Ready messengers leaped into their saddles to ride and spread the word. The Declaration had been ordered printed on a single large sheet, “45.5 x 37.5 cm.” or approximately eighteen by fifteen inches. These broadsides were distributed with

all possible speed, to be read in the provincial assemblies, pulpits, market places, and army camps.

On July 8, the Liberty Bell summoned citizens of Philadelphia to the State House yard for a public reading of the document. Colonel John Nixon mounted a high platform and spoke the noble lines in a strong, clear voice. The crowd, now hushed, listened intently throughout.

*“...for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.”*

Patriots shouted their approval of the pronouncement of their leaders. Some of them celebrated by tearing down the King’s Arms over the seat of justice in the courtroom and casting such vestiges of authority into a bonfire in the street. Processions and demonstrations lasted till midnight, when thunder and lightning sent the excited townspeople running to their homes.

Newport, Williamsburg, Charleston — a great many cities and towns — held celebrations and patriotic observances with speeches and prayers. Dover arranged a grand turtle feast. In Savannah, jubilant citizens burned King George in effigy and conducted a mock funeral service over his grave.

Not even a smallpox epidemic kept a great crowd from assembling in Boston. The Declaration was read from a balcony of the Massachusetts State House. At a given signal, thirteen cannons boomed across the New England shore. Bostonians celebrated with banquets and bonfires, having special reason to rejoice over their freedom from Britain and her obnoxious redcoats. According to a Boston newspaper, “The King’s Arms, and every sign that belonged to a Tory, was taken down and made a general conflagration of in King Street.”

In New York, General Washington ordered that the Declaration be read at the head of each brigade of the army at six o’clock, the evening of July 9. The brigades were drawn up in hollow squares. Washington, mounted on his horse, took up his position within one of these squares while an aide read the broadside. Afterward, the commander in chief reported to Congress on “the expressions and behavior of officers and men testifying their warmest approbation of It.”

Civilians rushed to Bowling Green, where stood a life-size equestrian statue of George III. They tore down the figure, which was made of lead, richly overlaid with gold. What fine ammunition it would make!

The metal was transported to the home of Brigadier General Oliver Wolcott, a Connecticut delegate to Congress. Behind his white house in Litchfield, the general’s wife and children, assisted by several ladies of the village, melted down His Majesty into 42,088 bullets for the American army. Mary Ann Wolcott, eleven, with great industry made 10,790 of them. Her eight-year-old brother Frederick

turned out 936 bullets. *Their* father was a general!

General Wolcott was a tall, distinguished-looking man of forty-nine, son of a former colonial governor and a lawyer in private life. After graduation from Yale at the head of his class, he became active in both military and legislative affairs.

Within weeks after the statute's commitment to the patriot side, Connecticut's governor and Council of Safety placed General Wolcott in command of fourteen regiments which were to march in response to Washington's urgent appeal for aid in the defense of New York. Wolcott, just recovered from an illness that brought him home from Philadelphia, wrote, "I shall most cheerfully render my country every service in my power."

Later, while participating in the battle with British General Burgoyne's forces at Saratoga, New York — so the story goes — General Wolcott, in his supply, came across some bullets of "melted majesty" that had been made at his Litchfield home.

On July 19, according to the secret domestic Journal of Congress, the Declaration of Independence was ordered engrossed on parchment and signed by the delegates.

The day of the Signing was August 2. As members gathered for this meaningful ceremony, William Ellery of Rhode Island — a witty, literary chap who wrote epigrams about his fellow delegates while they spoke in Congress — sought a spot where he could witness the signature of each man.

"I was determined," he said, "to see how they all looked as they signed what might be their death warrants. I placed myself beside the secretary, Charles Thomson, and eyed each closely as he affixed his name to the document. Undaunted resolution was displayed on every countenance."

John Hancock signed in large, shaded letters. His flowing handwriting was the result of long hours of practice in penmanship back at the Boston Latin School.

"There!" he declared. "John Bull can read my name without spectacles, and may now double his reward of £500 for my head. That is my defiance!"

Contrasting with Hancock's confident signature was the shaky scratch of Stephen Hopkins, Ellery's sole colleague from Rhode Island. Hopkins was the second oldest Signer, and suffered from palsy. As he handed the quill to Ellery, he said valiantly, "My hand trembles, but my heart does not!"

Hancock is reported to have said as others signed, "We must be unanimous. There must be no pulling different ways; we must all hang together."

"Yes," replied Dr. Franklin, "we must all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately."

Tradition also has it that Hancock turned to a new member from Maryland, Charles Carroll, and asked if he would sign. Carroll was one of the richest men in America. He had much to lose.

“Most willingly,” he answered. Taking the pen, he wrote, “Charles Carroll of Carrollton.” He was the only Signer to write anything more than his name. Carrollton was his magnificent estate and he was in the habit of including its name in his signature, to distinguish him from his father and another Carroll of the same name.

As he moved to his seat with the easy grace of the expert swordsman, one of the other delegates said in an aside, “There go a few millions!”

Carroll and the other men of Maryland — Samuel Chase, William Paca, and Thomas Stone — felt a special risk in signing because their families and property were so vulnerably situated near the long, exposed coastline of the Chesapeake area, all patrolled by British ships.

The New Englanders considered the Maryland members unduly given to pleasure. But there was no doubting their devotion to Independence.

Carroll had been well educated in France and England. He was a talented political writer, and had become a strong influence through an anonymous newspaper discussion in which he signed himself “First Citizen.” The provincial government, through the press, thanked the unknown author who so effectively opposed Britain’s taxation of the colonies without their consent.

Carroll’s father had given him the Manor of Carrollton, an estate of some 10,000 acres. He managed the family plantation and received an enormous income from loans, mortgages, and the sale of tobacco.

Though new as a delegate, Carroll was well known to Congress. In the spring he had been sent to Canada on a delicate political mission. The colonies hoped that their neighbor to the north could be persuaded to join the rebellion against the mother country — or, at least, to remain neutral.

In a letter, John Adams explained the choice of Carroll: “He speaks their language as easily as ours; and what is perhaps of more Consequence than all the rest, he was educated in the Roman Catholic Religion....In the Cause of American Liberty his...Fortitude and Perseverance have been so conspicuous that he is said to be marked out for peculiar Vengeance by the Friends of the Administration; but he continues to hazard his all, his immense Fortune, the largest in America, and his life.”

Carroll was accompanied by the diplomatic Franklin and persuasive Samuel Chase. But their mission failed. Dr. Franklin became ill and returned early from Montreal. He reached Philadelphia in time to serve on the committee to draw up the Declaration. Carroll and Chase presented their written report to Congress on

June 12. Then Carroll hastened to Annapolis, where instructions again had been issued to delegates in Congress to vote against Independence. He and Chase worked hard to get these orders reversed; and on June 28, the Friday before the vote, the Maryland delegation was empowered to join with a majority in favor of Lee's resolution.

Huge, boisterous Samuel Chase was a real contrast to the small-boned, gentlemanly Carroll. This son of an Anglican clergyman was nicknamed "Bacon Face" because of his fiery complexion. He practiced law, and had served in the Assembly of his province along with William Paca, his staunch friend of law-school days. The two began a long association in politics, fighting oppression wherever they found it and contributing to the general welfare. One time, at their own expense of nearly a thousand dollars, they supplied rifles to volunteer corps.

Paca was a handsome, engaging fellow. He and his friend Chase were responsible for a considerable number of high jinks in the course of their careers. On one occasion, the two led a crowd of citizens in protest against a proclamation of the colonial governor.

They copied the edict on a large sheet of paper, formed a procession to a gallows they had erected at the edge of town, and delivered the offensive words to the gibbet. After allowing sufficient time for the proclamation's demise, they enclosed it in a small coffin they had brought along and buried it beneath the gallows. Guns mounted on an elegant schooner belonging to Paca fired regularly during the obsequies.

The perpetrators marched in close order back to town and spent the remainder of the day in gala fashion.

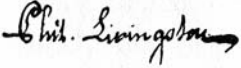






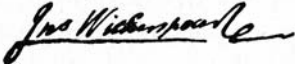

The fourth Marylander, quiet thirty-three-year-old Thomas Stone, had no part in such pranks. Though a lawyer, too, he seldom spoke out even in Congressional debate. But his good sense and hard work made him a valuable member of important committees. He was a firm defender of colonial rights.

Several delegates who could not be present on August 2, including General Wolcott and Thomas McKean, who were both away with the army, signed the Declaration later. Because of changes in delegates between July 4 and August 2, not all who voted for Independence were privileged to sign; and a number of those who affixed their signatures were not members of Congress when the Declaration was agreed to.

For fear of serious reprisals against the Signers and their families, their names were not made public for six months.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### “Our Lives, Our Fortunes”

	PHILIP LIVINGSTON <i>New York</i>
	FRANCIS LEWIS <i>New York</i>
	WILLIAM FLOYD <i>New York</i>
	LEWIS MORRIS <i>New York</i>
	JOHN HART <i>New Jersey</i>
	ABRAHAM CLARK <i>New Jersey</i>
	RICHARD STOCKTON <i>New Jersey</i>
	JOHN WITHERSPOON <i>New Jersey</i>
	FRANCIS HOPKINSON <i>New Jersey</i>

THE BRITISH NOW MARKED for special vengeance all members of Congress whom they suspected of having signed for Independence. Most of the delegates were busy in Philadelphia, leaving their families and property exposed to frenzied attacks by spiteful Loyalists who were aiding the enemy.

With the invading fleet already at their shores, the four New York delegates — Francis Lewis, William Floyd, Philip Livingston, and Lewis Morris — practically signed away their property when they put their names to the Declaration. This they knew, and they also felt the gravest concern for their families. These men were



wealthy aristocrats, with luxurious town houses and country estates filled with attractive loot for plundering.

New York's Provincial Congress had moved to White Plains for safety and on July 9 had received the Declaration. A resolution was adopted unanimously approving the Independence for which their delegates had been restrained from voting, and stating that the members of the New York Congress would "at the risk of our lives and fortunes, join with the other colonies in supporting it."

Late in August, the British and their mercenaries, the Hessians, were ready to pounce upon General Washington and his little army, gathered in slender forces to protect New York City against attack. On the twenty-seventh, enemy forces landed on the southwest shore of Long Island about 25,000 strong. They advanced in three divisions, inflicting terrible losses upon the stubborn colonials. About one fifth of Washington's men were killed, wounded, or captured.

Following the Battle of Long Island, the commander in chief and his generals met in the elegant country house of Philip Livingston on Brooklyn Heights and decided to evacuate. Leaving their campfires burning, the remnants of the American troops escaped by night across the river and took up a position on Harlem Heights.

A woman Loyalist sent her servant to warn the British, but he was seized by Hessian soldiers who understood only German. They detained the fellow until someone who spoke English could take his message. By that time, the Americans had retreated safely northward through the city of New York.

The conquering army swarmed over Long Island. They burned and plundered the home of Signer Francis Lewis at Whitestone and carried off his wife as a prisoner. Mrs. Lewis was confined in a filthy barracks and treated with brutality. She had no bed to lie on and no change of clothing for months. This disgraceful treatment came to the attention of Congress. General Washington then arranged for her exchange for two women prisoners of the Americans.

Mrs. Lewis had suffered so severely that she never regained her health and died two years later.

Francis Lewis was a merchant, born in Wales and educated in Scotland and England. His extensive travels had taken him twice to Russia. He early became one of the Sons of Liberty. At sixty-two he was elected to Congress. His business acumen proved valuable to the committees on which he served.

William Floyd was practically ruined by the Revolution. He had participated in a move of resistance against British oppression that had developed in the eastern part of Long Island, where his home was located. He was sent to the First and the

Second Continental Congress and shared the difficult task of supplying the army.

Tories plundered Floyd's extensive woodlands until they were "despoiled of almost every thing but the naked soil." They took over the family home, appropriating farm implements, stock, and household goods, as Mrs. Floyd and the children escaped with other victims across Long Island Sound to Connecticut.

Floyd and his family were exiled from their home for seven years. He received no income from his property until after the treaty of peace was signed and the British evacuated in 1783.

Philip Livingston was literally "to the manor born." His grandfather once owned 160,000 acres along the east bank of the Hudson River, constituted under English law as the Manor of Livingston, in which the lord exercised his own jurisdiction. Philip went to Yale and became a successful New York importer.

All his business interests and his mansion on Duke Street fell to the enemy. His country estate on Brooklyn Heights became a British naval hospital. Homeless, the members of his family fled up the Hudson to Kingston, New York. They were further endangered when the British burned Kingston.

Public-spirited and generous — one of a family that "had virtue and abilities as well as fortune" — Livingston sold some of his remaining property to help maintain the country's credit.

He never had a chance to return home. He died in 1778 while serving in Congress.

The family of Signer Lewis Morris also had to find refuge when the Manor of Morrisania in Westchester County was appropriated by the enemy. It was part of property known as Bronck's Land, named for its original owner, the first permanent settler of the county. The invaders destroyed valuable timber, crops, and gardens on the thousand-acre tract and drove away the livestock.

The Morrises, like the Floyds, were denied their home for seven years. Lewis Morris became a brigadier general of Westchester militia and had three sons who served as officers in the American army.

Washington's defeat on Long Island was a harsh blow to the colonies. They began to realize what it would mean if they lost the war.

The American troops — some of the men barefoot in the snow — retreated across New Jersey. At times the pursuing British were so close that the van of the redcoats was within sight of Washington's rear guard.

The New Jersey Tories welcomed the British and Hessian forces and aided



them in tracking down the “traitors” who had signed the Declaration.

The enemy encamped at Trenton. Living near the town was “Honest John” Hart, one of the five New Jersey Signers. He had a large farm and several grist-mills. Hart strongly resented British taxation, asserting that he felt himself a slave if taxed “to the value of a straw” without representation.

While his wife lay on her deathbed, Hessian soldiers descended upon Hart’s property, damaging his mills and devastating his farmland. He was hunted like an escaped criminal as he fled through the woods, sleeping in caves or any haven he could find. One night Honest John was so hard pressed for a place of safety that he slept with a big dog.

By the time this sixty-five-year-old man could return to his scourged land, broken in health by anxiety and hardship, his wife had died. His thirteen children were scattered in every direction.

That strong-minded, heavy-browed Signer, Abraham Clark of New Jersey, had two sons in the army, who were captured and confined on a prison ship. Britain’s prisons were loathsome enough; its prison ships were worse. They provided the cheapest means of disposing of prisoners because they died off so fast. On the *Jersey*, where the Clark boys were held, 11,000 American prisoners perished. New York harbor smelled of death.

The Clarks suffered special hardships because of their father’s stand. But patriotism was strong in this plain and pious Signer and he rejected the enemy’s offer to free his sons if he would renounce his cause in favor of King and Parliament. One son was confined to a dungeon for a time, without food except the little his fellow prisoners could pass through a keyhole.

The lives of two New Jersey Signers, Richard Stockton and John Witherspoon, and that of Signer Benjamin Rush of Pennsylvania, were associated in several ways. Judge Stockton of the State Supreme Court was a trustee of the College of New Jersey (later named Princeton). Ten years before the Signing, when Stockton and his family left for a visit to Scotland, the college trustees asked him to persuade the great Scottish preacher, Dr. John Witherspoon, to become president of the school.

The good doctor was willing, but his wife rebelled at living in the wilds of America. She was won over by a young American, Benjamin Rush, who was studying medicine in Scotland at the time.

Famous Dr. Witherspoon was a dignified Presbyterian who spoke eloquently from the pulpit with a strong Scottish accent. He became a great American, academically, ecclesiastically, and politically. During the Congressional debate over Independence, a dissenting delegate ventured that the colonies were not “ripe” for

separation from Britain. Dr. Witherspoon rose to his great height and retorted, “In my judgment, sir, we are not only ripe, but rotting for the want of it!”

In January, 1776, the now famous Dr. Rush of Philadelphia married Richard Stockton’s daughter Julie, with Dr. Witherspoon officiating. Within a few months, the minister, the father of the bride, and the bridegroom would all participate in another ceremony — the Signing of the Declaration.

When the British approached Princeton, President Witherspoon closed the college. The enemy billeted in Nassau Hall and destroyed the college library, which included hundreds of fine volumes that he had brought from abroad.

After signing on August 2, Judge Stockton went north to inspect Washington’s army, then returned to Congress to give his report. From Philadelphia, he rushed to his home at Morven to rescue his wife and children.

The Stocktons took refuge with friends but a Loyalist betrayed their hiding place. In the night, the judge was dragged from bed and brutally treated, then thrown into prison. This distinguished jurist, who had worn the handsome robes of a colonial court, now shivered in a common jail, abused and all but starved.

A shocked Congress arranged for his parole. Invalided by the harsh treatment he had received, he returned to Morven to find his furniture and clothing burned, his fine horses stolen, and his library — one of the finest private collections in the country — completely destroyed. The hiding place of exquisite family silver, hastily buried, had been betrayed by a servant.

The Stocktons were so destitute that they had to accept charity. For the judge’s fortune was gone, too. He had pledged it and his life to his country. He lost both. He did not live to see the Revolution won.

The fifth New Jersey Signer was a composer of popular songs! He was Francis Hopkinson, an animated little man, witty and versatile, who wrote the music for “My Days Have Been So Wondrous Free.” He liked to doodle with his pencil when bored by long Congressional debates. He loved the pigeons he raised, and had a pet mouse — which he fed at the table.

This engaging fellow was a lawyer, statesman, churchman, writer, and inventor. He won great popularity with verse that satirized the British. In “The Battle of the Kegs,” he ridiculed the alarm of the redcoats when the Americans floated kegs of gunpowder down the Delaware River to annoy enemy ships.

The artistic Hopkinson is said to have helped design the American flag. It was his father, a prominent Philadelphia lawyer, who introduced Benjamin Franklin to the study of electricity.

Francis married Ann Borden (whose wealthy father founded Bordentown, New Jersey) and thus became the brother-in-law of Signer Thomas McKean, who married Ann's sister Mary.

The British ransacked the Hopkinson home at Bordentown.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### “Victory or Death”

*Rob Morris*

ROBERT MORRIS  
*Pennsylvania*

*Benjamin Rush*

BENJAMIN RUSH  
*Pennsylvania*

*George Clymer*

GEORGE CLYMER  
*Pennsylvania*

*Jas. Smith*

JAMES SMITH  
*Pennsylvania*

*Geo. Ross*

GEORGE ROSS  
*Pennsylvania*

*Geo. Read*

GEORGE READ  
*Delaware*

*Geo. Taylor*

GEORGE TAYLOR  
*Pennsylvania*

*James Wilson*

JAMES WILSON  
*Pennsylvania*

*John Morton*

JOHN MORTON  
*Pennsylvania*

BY DECEMBER 1776, THE FUTURE of the thirteen United States looked grim indeed. When General Washington moved his ragged, outnumbered forces across the Delaware River into Pennsylvania to protect Philadelphia from attack, many influential citizens took sides with Britain. They believed the American cause was lost.

With the country's credit practically nonexistent, Congress struggled to meet the demands of the military, but Washington's troops were unpaid and all but destitute of supply. The commander in chief appealed to Robert Morris, merchant

prince of Philadelphia, who raised funds that prevented the collapse of the Revolutionary effort at this crucial stage.

Morris was a wizard in money matters. Besides his own vast business and fleet of ships, he had influential friends and wide credit. He had to use this personal credit time and again to obtain funds for his country's needs. Once, when Morris was trying to raise on short notice a large sum that Washington required, he met a Quaker friend on the street, and then and there persuaded the man to advance him \$50,000 on his word and bond.

Robert Morris lost about 150 of his own ships during the war, most of them uninsured; but through some genius of management, he was always able to meet General Washington's urgent appeals.

While Committees of Safety gathered lead water spouts and clock and window weights to melt into bullets, men like Morris and Benjamin Franklin (whose delicate diplomacy won the aid of the French) were laying long-range plans for provisioning Washington's forces. So stupendous was their task that it took almost two years to supply American generals with enough weapons and ammunition to complete a major engagement.

European courts took care to prevent the export of arms and munitions to America. But Morris held rendezvous at night on the outskirts of Philadelphia with sympathetic contacts from foreign powers. His deal with these secret agents brought arms to the patriot troops.

It was funds Morris raised that enabled Washington and selected troops to recross the Delaware above Trenton on Christmas night. They startled and captured one thousand Hessians while Britain's General Howe celebrated the Yuletide in New York City.

Dr. Benjamin Rush visited General Washington at his quarters just before the crossing. The commander in chief kept scribbling on several small pieces of paper. One accidentally fell at Rush's feet. He couldn't help but wonder at the words he saw — "Victory or Death."

Rush discovered later that "in my interview with General Washington, he had been meditating upon his attack upon the Hessians at their posts on the Jersey side of the Delaware, for I found that the countersign of his troops at the surprise of Trenton was 'Victory or Death.'"

It was victory this time for Washington. His successes at Trenton and Princeton made Philadelphians breathe easier, for they thought their city was saved from invasion. But the British sailed around to Chesapeake Bay and marched on the capital from the south. They defeated the Americans at the Battles of Brandywine and Germantown. On September 27, 1777, they took over Philadelphia and occupied it for the winter.

To escape capture, the Continental Congress fled to Baltimore, leaving Robert Morris to manage affairs at home.

Morris had come to America from Liverpool at thirteen to join his father, who was exporting tobacco from the colonies. He was orphaned at fifteen and began to learn the shipping trade, which made him wealthy. Out of his thirty years of sound business experience, Morris developed the qualities that made him the tireless, resourceful financier of the Revolution.

During the debate in Congress over separation from Britain, he had felt that the colonies were not ready to wage a successful war. However, he did not want to go on record against Independence; so he was one of the Pennsylvania delegates who stayed away from the State House the day Lee's resolution was put to vote. But he signed the Declaration.

In the month between the vote and the Signing, the Pennsylvania representation in Congress experienced a shake-up. Delegates opposing Independence withdrew. Elected to take their places were Dr. Rush, George Clymer, James Smith, George Taylor, and George Ross. All of them signed on August 2.

Clymer was a wealthy merchant. He was one of a committee left with Robert Morris in Philadelphia to conduct the business of Congress there. His home was in Chester County, directly in the path of the advancing enemy. After the battle of Brandywine, the large Clymer family escaped to safer quarters. Their house was looted by British soldiers and all its furnishings destroyed.

Dr. Rush was one of the most distinguished of all the Signers. When his widowed mother started a grocery store to support her five children, there was little to suggest that her lively six-year-old Ben would become the most famous physician and professor of medicine in his time.

After earning his degree at the University of Edinburgh, he visited London and Benjamin Franklin, who was then abroad on diplomatic missions. Franklin gave Rush a letter of credit for £200 to finance a trip to Paris. "This kindness," said Rush, "attached me to him for the remainder of his life."

The gifted, versatile physician returned to Philadelphia to begin a phenomenal career. The political articles he wrote favoring the cause of Independence were widely read. It was he who suggested the title, *Common Sense*, to Thomas Paine for his famous booklet.

When Congress moved to Baltimore and Philadelphia took measures for protection, Dr. Rush escorted his wife, Julie Stockton Rush, to Maryland, where the first of their thirteen children was born. He moved some of his furniture to the home of a friend in Darby, Pennsylvania. Later, during the occupation, British Commander Howe made his headquarters in that house on one of his excursions

from Philadelphia. Dr. Rush related years later, "...on one of my mahogany tea tables he wrote his dispatches to England...This table bears the marks of his ink to this day."

Dr. Rush joined the Philadelphia militia and cared for the wounded and dying. He barely escaped capture after the Battle of Brandywine.

Pennsylvania's Signer James Smith was a witty, well-educated Irishman who had begun his law practice in the western wilds. He later moved to York, Pennsylvania, and went into the iron business. Colonel Smith foresaw the break with Britain and trained militia long before the war began. When Congress moved from Baltimore to York, the Board of War occupied his law office.

The colonel was full of funny stories and his speeches in Congress were often highly entertaining. He could joke about almost anything — even the large fortune he lost and the two superintendents who helped him lose it through mismanagement of his business while he was absent on patriotic duties. But there were two things about which he never joked — religion and George Washington, whom he greatly admired.

In the spring of 1777, General Washington and financier Morris, two of the busiest men of the time, appeared at the little upholstery shop of John and Betsy Ross on Arch Street in Philadelphia, near the State House. Accompanying them was John's uncle, George Ross. The three had brought a design for an American flag which they wanted Betsy to make. This design indicated six-pointed stars on a blue square in the upper left-hand corner of a field of red and white stripes. Betsy suggested that five-pointed stars be used.

With a fine stitch, she proceeded to make the first Star-Spangled Banner, with thirteen stars and thirteen stripes to honor the colonies that had agreed to the Declaration of Independence. On June 14, Congress approved this design.

Jolly Uncle George Ross was a prominent lawyer of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, who had served in the First Continental Congress. He was not reelected to the Second Congress until the change in delegates in July of '76.

Ross had a sister Gertrude who was married to Delaware Signer George Read, vice-president of his state. Gertrude was in Philadelphia with her husband and family when he was summoned home to succeed the president (governor), who had been taken prisoner by the enemy. To avoid capture themselves, the Reads proceeded cautiously along the Jersey shore of the Delaware River.

An armed barge from the British men-of-war pursued them as they crossed the river. The tide was out. Their boat went aground. Quickly, they removed all iden-



tifying marks from their luggage. As the British officers came alongside, Read assumed the role of a country gentleman returning home with his family. Whereupon the British sailors good-naturedly helped carry Signer Read's mother, Gertrude, and the small children to shore!

While many of the Signers were born to wealth and fine educational advantages, there were those whose early days were difficult and humble. In fact, George Taylor began his life in America as a bondservant! He gave up studying medicine in Ireland and, without even a sixpence in his pocket, boarded a vessel bound for America as a redemptioner. A man who owned an iron works in Pennsylvania's Bucks County paid his expenses.

Young George was set to feeding coal to the blast furnaces. He developed such blisters that his employer, perceiving the boy's intelligence, suggested that he might handle a pen better than a shovel. So he became a clerk, though a bondservant still.

Apparently George made out well at the iron works. Some years later, at any rate, he married the widow of the man who had paid his passage to America.

Taylor expanded the industry and acquired a considerable fortune. He served in the Provincial Assembly and consistently opposed British imperialism. His neighbors called him a "fine and furious Whig." His period in Congress was brief. But he served his country diligently in deals with the Indians and suffered financial losses because he was away so much.

Also an immigrant was the stern, nearsighted Scot, James Wilson, who had come to America ten years before the Signing. He had studied at the Universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow, and Edinburgh.

Wilson was a bold, decided man with a powerful voice who became one of the eminent lawyers of Pennsylvania. Dr. Rush said of him, "Not a word ever fell from his lips out of time, or out of place, nor could a word be taken from or added to his speeches without injuring them." He was among the first to declare that Parliament had no authority to rule over the colonies.

Signer John Morton was born near Philadelphia in humble circumstances. John's stepfather taught him his own profession of surveying and gave him a good education. He began his public life as justice of the peace and rose to associate judge of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

For a long time he was a Loyalist, like the others of his locality. But his political opinions changed as Britain's tyranny continued and he cast his vote for Independence. His neighbors and friends, even many of his relatives, then turned



upon him. He was a sensitive man and those who knew him were convinced that this social ostracism hastened his death in April 1777, eight months after he affixed his signature to the Declaration.

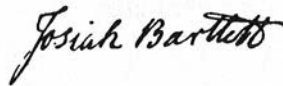
John Morton was the first of all Signers to die. His last words were, "...tell them that they will live to see the hour when they shall acknowledge it to have been the most glorious service that I ever rendered to my country."

## CHAPTER SIX

### “Turn Out and Crush Burgoyne”



WILLIAM WHIPPLE  
*New Hampshire*



JOSIAH BARTLETT  
*New Hampshire*



MATTHEW THORNTON  
*New Hampshire*



ROGER SHERMAN  
*Connecticut*



SAMUEL HUNTINGTON  
*Connecticut*



WILLIAM WILLIAMS  
*Connecticut*

THE DELEGATES IN CONGRESS put in exhausting days and nights prosecuting the war. They were family men, most of them away from their homes and chosen vocations for months at a time. Important committee sessions often were held of an evening in the pleasant informality of a coffeehouse or inn. With business disposed of, the weary delegates would relax with good talk and refreshments. Often it was venerable Stephen Hopkins of Rhode Island who, as John Adams put it, “kept us all alive.”

This witty Quaker entertained until midnight with his anecdotes, dissertations on history, and gems from Milton and Pope. Sharing these sessions with Hopkins as a fellow member of the Naval Committee, Adams recalled his memories of them as the most delightful of all his years in Congress.

Stephen Hopkins, nine times governor of Rhode Island, had little formal education. He read and studied by himself sufficiently to become a distinguished mathematician, a representative in Provincial Assembly, chief justice of the colony, and the first chancellor of Rhode Island College (later Brown University). Called the

country's first abolitionist, he made strong efforts for legislation to free slaves in his colony and granted freedom to every slave owned.

In full agreement with him on the slavery question was his fellow Signer from Rhode Island, William Ellery, who worked hard to abolish slavery in the United States. Ellery was a lawyer and Harvard graduate. The British felt particular hostility toward him because of his active and outspoken patriotism. When he signed the Declaration, he pledged a large fortune, which he lost within a few months to the cause.

On the very day in December 1776 that Washington crossed the Delaware, the British captured Ellery's hometown of Newport, Rhode Island, and occupied it for three years. He left Congress for a few weeks to participate in a scheme to drive the British from Newport, but the effort failed. Through Congress, he did manage to relieve the distress of victims of the invasion. The British burned Ellery's house and destroyed almost all of his property.

In the summer of 1777, the British began their campaign to separate New England from the other colonies. But British plans went awry. Their General Burgoyne became isolated in the northern Hudson Valley. General Washington called on "all New England to turn out and crush Burgoyne." New England forces closed in and the Indians assisting Burgoyne deserted him. The American victory at Saratoga, one of the great decisive battles of history, forced Burgoyne to surrender on October 17, 1777.

Signer William Whipple, a brigadier general in command of New Hampshire troops, was one of the commissioners who, on behalf of General Gates, arranged and signed the terms of Burgoyne's capitulation. He was one of the officers chosen to guard the prisoners of war on the march to Winter Hill, near Boston.

General Whipple was a cool commander, a prosperous Portsmouth merchant, and an able seaman, all of which made him an extremely valuable member of Congress during these hazardous times. He had gone to sea as a cabin boy, which was considered necessary training for a successful merchant's career. He worked his way up and retired from the sea as a captain at twenty-nine.

He commanded a detachment of New Hampshire troops on an expedition to Rhode Island. One morning while having breakfast with his officers, General Whipple narrowly escaped serious injury. A British cannon ball whizzed under the table, struck a brigade major, and shattered his leg so badly that it had to be amputated.

All three of the New Hampshire delegates were military men, two of whom were doctors. Colonel Josiah Bartlett's brilliant talents, quick mind, and tenacious memory made him a leading patriot in the poor frontier colony of New Hampshire.

Bribes had been offered him by the royal governor, but the physician refused them and continued to work for Independence. Consequently, the governor dismissed him as justice of the peace and deprived him of his military commission.

When Dr. Bartlett was elected to the First Continental Congress, he could not attend because his house had been burned, presumably because of his patriotic views. He was elected to the Second Continental Congress and had the honor, together with his colleague William Whipple, of being the first to vote for Independence. It is thought that Josiah Bartlett was the first, following President Hancock, to sign the Declaration. Delegates signed by colonies, starting with the most northern. Dr. Bartlett signed, as was the custom of the day, at the extreme right.

Dr. Matthew Thornton, of New Hampshire, a sober-faced Irishman full of funny stories, appeared in Congress three months after the signing. He added his name at the lower right below the signatures of the Connecticut delegates.

Two of the four Connecticut Signers struggled hard for their early education. Roger Sherman was apprenticed to a shoemaker and gained his elementary schooling largely from reading books propped up on his shoemaker's bench. When he became a partner of his merchant brother, he had time to study law. Shrewd and able, Sherman became a leading patriot in Connecticut and rose rapidly in public office. He was chosen treasurer of Yale College and received an honorary degree of Master of Arts. He attended the First and the Second Continental Congress and served on the committee to draft the Declaration.

Like his colleague Roger Sherman, Samuel Huntington had a meager education, but he taught himself from borrowed books. His father was a farmer and young Samuel, a fourth-generation American, was apprenticed to a cooper. He studied law by himself and established a good practice. He became associate judge of the Superior Court of Connecticut. Huntington was an economical, modest, thoughtful man who talked little. He rose from plowboy to what was then called president of Congress.

William Williams, the son-in-law of the governor of Connecticut, replaced General Oliver Wolcott in Congress. Williams, a Harvard graduate, gave up theology to become a merchant in Lebanon, Connecticut, but he closed his business when the Revolution broke out. He was generous in helping to meet military needs. His house was always open to American soldiers. When the French allies wintered in Lebanon, he moved his family out of his own home so the French officers might have more comfortable winter quarters.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### “The World Turned Upside Down”

<i>Edward Rutledge</i>	EDWARD RUTLEDGE <i>South Carolina</i>
<i>Arthur Middleton</i>	ARTHUR MIDDLETON <i>South Carolina</i>
<i>Thos Heyward, Jr.</i>	THOMAS HEYWARD, JR. <i>South Carolina</i>
<i>Thomas Lynch, Jr.</i>	THOMAS LYNCH, JR. <i>South Carolina</i>
<i>Lyman Hall</i>	LYMAN HALL <i>Georgia</i>
<i>Geo Walton</i>	GEORGE WALTON <i>Georgia</i>
<i>Button Gwinnett</i>	BUTTON GWINNETT <i>Georgia</i>
<i>John Penn</i>	JOHN PENN <i>North Carolina</i>
<i>Wm Hooper</i>	WILLIAM HOOPER <i>North Carolina</i>
<i>Joseph Hewes</i>	JOSEPH HEWES <i>North Carolina</i>
<i>Thos Nelson, Jr.</i>	THOMAS NELSON, JR. <i>Virginia</i>
<i>Carter Braxton</i>	CARTER BRAXTON <i>Virginia</i>

PATRIOTISM IN SOUTH CAROLINA had a provincial emphasis. The colony did not think of itself as separating from the mother country. Its leaders were absorbed that spring of 1776 in setting up a new colonial government and adopting a constitution. The mature in judgment were needed at home; the younger men were more easily spared to look after the business in the Continental Congress.

Consequently, the South Carolina delegation was the youngest at the time of the Signing. The average age of the four plantation aristocrats who affixed their name to the Declaration was just twenty-nine years. The youngest, Edward Rutledge, became a member of the First Continental Congress before he was twenty-five. At twenty-six, he distinguished himself as the youngest Signer of them all. Rutledge's colleagues were his brother-in-law, Arthur Middleton; Thomas Heyward, Jr.; and Thomas Lynch, Jr. The four had more than age, wealth, and family background in common. All had studied law at the Middle Temple in London. Each, upon returning to America, had entered public life.

Arthur Middleton, who was thirty-four in 1776 and the eldest of the quartet, came from an immensely wealthy family. His father owned several plantations and about eight hundred slaves.

Young Middleton did not get up to Philadelphia until a few weeks before Lee's resolution came to a vote. Thomas Heyward went about the same time. He was an amiable fellow and was considered quite a poet. Thomas Lynch, who lost out to Rutledge as the youngest Signer by just three months, had been dispatched to Philadelphia to care for and, as it turned out, to substitute for his delegate father, who had suffered a stroke. His own health was precarious.

The four young men all saw military service. In 1775, Lynch was appointed to command a company. On a march to British-threatened Charleston, he became violently ill. Privation and exposure aggravated a condition from which he never fully recovered. His health declined alarmingly while he was in Congress and signing the Declaration was one of his last political acts. A change of climate was the only hope physicians could suggest. He and his young wife sailed for the south of France. Presumably, their ship foundered in a violent storm, which was reported by another vessel. The Lynches were never heard of again.

When Middleton, Rutledge, and Heyward returned from Philadelphia, they served as officers in the militia. All three were captured during the forty-day siege of Charleston and were taken to St. Augustine on a prison ship. There, for ten months, they suffered privations and indignities until the formal exchange of prisoners at the end of the war. The magnificent estates of Middleton and Rutledge were devastated.

By 1779, the British were confident that the North was all but won. They had wrought frightful damage to military installations. They held or had disabled so many



ports that patriot shipping was paralyzed. General Washington warned Congress that he might have to stop fighting for a year until his forces could recover.

The theater of war had moved to the South, which was even more torn by violence between Whigs and Tories than was the North. This was an ugly, vicious, hateful period, in which even women, children, and slaves were forced into woods and swamps to die.

By late 1779, the enemy had forced the sparsely settled coastal strip called Georgia into submission. There was strong Loyalist sentiment there, but the state's three delegates to Congress all had favored Independence. Lyman Hall, Button Gwinnett, and George Walton made a strong, united stand against foreign domination.

When the British captured Savannah, Colonel Walton, badly wounded, was taken prisoner. The enemy destroyed the home of Dr. Hall and confiscated his rice plantation.

Button Gwinnett, an Englishman who had come to Savannah in 1765, was commissioned president of Georgia and commander in chief of its military forces after Independence was declared. But, in May 1777, he was so badly wounded in a duel with a political adversary that he died a few days later. He was the second Signer to die.

Two of North Carolina's three representatives in Congress in '76, John Penn and William Hooper, were lawyers, and the third, Joseph Hewes, was a prosperous merchant. Knowledge of shipping made Hewes a valuable member of the Marine Committee in Congress. He knew the Revolutionary hero, John Paul Jones, and was instrumental in procuring a ship for him. Hewes died during his term of service in Philadelphia, presumably from overwork. Hooper and his family were endangered by the British and driven from their home near Wilmington, North Carolina.

The Signer who wrote "Thos. Nelson, jr.," on the famous parchment was a grandson of "Scotch Tom" Nelson, who founded one of the richest families in Virginia. The "jr." was to distinguish him from an uncle of the same name. The Nelsons, prominent merchants and planters, lived at Yorktown. Thomas the Signer was associated in business with a tobacco man named Reynolds.

He became a member of the Virginia Council at twenty-six. At the meeting in St. John's Church, Richmond, in March 1775, Nelson asked for the floor a few minutes before Patrick Henry delivered his famous speech.

The chair recognized him: "The gentleman from York County."

"I am a merchant of Yorktown," Thomas Nelson said, "but I am a Virginian first. Let my trade perish. I call God to witness that if any British troops are landed in the County of York, of which I am lieutenant, I will wait for no orders, but

will summon the militia and drive the invaders into the sea.”

Several of his colleagues jumped to their feet at this brash declaration.

It was Nelson who bore to Philadelphia the following year, in May, the resolution of the Virginia Convention which Lee presented to Congress. A year after he placed his signature on the Declaration, Nelson left Congress for military service. He commanded the Virginia militia as brigadier general. At the age of forty-two, he became third governor of his state, succeeding Thomas Jefferson.

Late in 1780, the fortunes of war began to turn in favor of the Americans. Frontiersmen defeated detachments of the British army in encounters in the Carolinas. Washington saw that the need now was aid for the inadequate southern forces opposing the British general, Charles, Earl Cornwallis.

By August 1781, Cornwallis had moved his army toward Chesapeake Bay and was holding a position at Yorktown. The village was bounded on three sides by water; Cornwallis counted on British naval strength to protect him and guarantee his supply.

Most of the American troops were in New York with Washington, who determined to coordinate all possible sea and land forces, both French and American, in one giant effort against Cornwallis. The story of this accomplishment became an epic in the military and naval history of the world.

The twenty-three-year-old French leader, Marquis de Lafayette, marched his troops from Richmond toward Yorktown. In the north, Washington and the French general, Rochambeau, walked their troops all the way to Chesapeake Bay because there were no ships to transport them. Naval reinforcements from France by way of Haiti, under the command of Comte de Grasse, beat the British fleet to the Chesapeake. De Grasse then sent ships to Annapolis to meet the American and French troops. Cornwallis was closed in at Yorktown like a ship in a bottle.

On September 18, Washington, Lafayette, and Governor Nelson, with their aides, accepted De Grasse’s invitation to board his flagship. There details for the siege of Yorktown were worked out.

Residents of the village had fled to safety behind the patriot lines. One man who chose to remain with his property was the governor’s uncle, Thomas Nelson, Sr. Cornwallis had commandeered the uncle’s fine house for headquarters.

On September 28, the American and French land forces, 16,000 in number, took their positions in a semicircle about the town. By October 9, they had dug in and were ready. At three o’clock in the afternoon they opened bombardment with seventy cannon.

The siege lasted three weeks. The British soon retreated to rear positions within Yorktown. Homes and business houses were riddled. In scenes of horror, rich



furnishings and books were strewn in the same earth with the mangled bodies of horses and men.

Allied bombardment so reduced the elder Nelson's home that Cornwallis was forced to seek quarters elsewhere. At this point, the uncle asked permission of the British general to pass through the lines to the patriot side and his own family. Cornwallis consented and Thomas Nelson, Sr. crossed under a "flag of truce." As quickly as he could, he made his way to the side of the governor, who was commander in chief of the Virginia militia. The uncle said he thought Cornwallis and his staff were moving to the governor's home.

Later, on a tour of inspection, Governor Nelson watched his men fire on his own neighborhood. "Why do you spare my house?" he demanded of a gunner.

"Out of respect to you, sir," the soldier replied.

"Give me the cannon!" Nelson ordered. He directed the fire upon his own state-ly dwelling.

At ten o'clock on the morning of October 17, a drummer in red, accompanied by an officer with a flag of truce, appeared on a British parapet on the south side of Yorktown to beat a "parley." Cornwallis was asking for surrender terms!

On the afternoon of the nineteenth, the British army, clad in a new issue of uniforms, marched out from Yorktown with fife and drum playing an old British air, "The World Turned Upside Down." The sword of surrender was presented by one of the generals under Cornwallis, who pleaded illness as his reason for absence from the field of defeat. Then, between a mile-long column of American and French troops, the British marched to a designated spot to stack their muskets and lay down all arms.

The Revolutionary War was virtually at an end. The United States of America was a free and independent nation!

The cost of war had no ending. Governor Nelson had raised a necessary \$2,000,000 almost overnight by putting up his own properties as collateral. They were forfeited when the loans came due. His government never reimbursed him. With health as well as fortune ruined, Thomas Nelson, Jr., removed with his large family to a modest place in a neighboring county. He died of asthma eight years later, a little over fifty years of age.

Sharing in the price of victory was his fellow Virginian, Signer Carter Braxton, whose fortune was invested in ships. Braxton's vessels were seized by the enemy or otherwise lost. Many of his debtors were unable to pay him, and he spent the rest of his life in dire financial straits.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### “That Host of Worthies”

THE FIFTY-SIX MEN who affixed their signatures to the Declaration of Independence were, for the most part, a young, vigorous, and hardy lot. Only seven were over sixty; eighteen were still in their thirties; and three in their twenties. Not one wore a beard or mustache.

Considering the average life span of their time, most of these patriots lived to a remarkable age. Three lived to be over ninety. Ten died in their eighties. If George Wythe had not been poisoned by a grandnephew impatient for his inheritance, the distinguished old scholar would have exceeded his eighty years.

Maryland's Charles Carroll outlived by six years the last of the other Signers. On the Fourth of July, 1828, he spaded the first earth for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which would unite the East with the West. Carroll died in 1832, at the age of ninety-five.

Only two of the Signers were bachelors. Sixteen married twice. Records indicate that at least two, and possibly as many as six, were childless. But the remaining Signers fathered close to 325 children! Carter Braxton of Virginia compensated for several small families by having eighteen. William Ellerey of Rhode Island had seventeen children; Roger Sherman of Connecticut had fifteen.

The Signers were men devoted to their belief in a Creator who had fashioned them in His image and likeness. That meant, they stoutly contended, that they were to be free rather than enslaved. Since the Church of England prevailed in the colonies, considerably more than half of the fifty-six expressed their religious faith in Episcopalian worship. Charles Carroll was Roman Catholic; the others were Congregational, Presbyterian, Quaker, or Baptist. Ten Signers were preachers' sons.

Only a few Signers fell into obscurity after the significant days of '76. Most of them served state and nation with honor for many years. John Adams became the first vice-president of the United States and its second president. Thomas Jefferson served under him as vice-president, then succeeded him to the presidency. Elbridge Gerry, who once had fled the redcoats in his nightshirt, had ample opportunity to display a proper dignity thereafter. He was vice-president under James Madison. Gerry died in his carriage in his seventy-first year while on his way to preside over the Senate.

Fifty years after the Signing, in 1826, only Charles Carroll and those two stal-

warts, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, remained alive.

Through their long years of friendship, Adams and Jefferson had disagreed on many basic issues. Around the turn of the century, political differences estranged them. They were reconciled partly through the efforts of a self-appointed mediator, Dr. Benjamin Rush. Most of the credit unquestionably was due to their own wisdom in recognizing that neither men nor nations need forgo friendship because they do not agree at every point. The two spent many long hours of their declining years — one at his beloved Monticello near Charlottesville, Virginia, the other in Quincy, Massachusetts — writing philosophical letters to each other.

Jefferson had pledged himself, when he first took public office, never to misuse his trust to promote his personal fortunes. His forty years of service to his country often deprived him of time and energy for his own business affairs. Although he had inherited a considerable estate, and had enhanced that by marrying a wealthy young widow, the author of the Declaration of Independence spent his last years staving off bankruptcy.

The chief trial of Adams' old age was the loss of his beloved wife, Abigail, who died thirteen years before he did. Death also claimed three children. His eldest son, John Quincy, became the sixth president of the United States.

As the Fourth of July, 1826, drew near, festivities marking fifty years of freedom were planned the length and breadth of the U.S.A. The three living Signers were invited to be present at a significant gathering in Washington, D.C. But old John Adams, now almost ninety-one, was too feeble even to participate in the celebration at Quincy. At Monticello, Thomas Jefferson, eight years younger, lay on his deathbed.

In a dramatic climax that even their agile minds would not have contemplated, these two principals in the struggle for Independence left the nation awestricken and touched by dying hours apart on the Fourth of July. Jefferson died at one o'clock in the afternoon, Adams toward evening.

Jefferson had written his last letter on June 24, addressed to the mayor of Washington, who had issued the invitation:

*"I should, indeed, with peculiar delight, have met...with the small band, the remnant of that host of worthies, who joined with us on that day, in the bold and doubtful election we were to make for our country, between submission or the sword; and to have enjoyed with them the consolatory fact, that our fellow-citizens, after half a century of experience and prosperity, continue to approve the choice we made...All eyes are opened to the right of man...let the annual return of this day forever refresh our recollection of these rights, and an undiminished devotion to them."*

The end.

**IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776**

**The unanimous Declaration  
of the thirteen united States of America**

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, —That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.—Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be

obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguin-

ity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.



# The Signers of the Declaration of Independence

## *Connecticut*

Samuel Huntington, 1731-1796  
Roger Sherman, 1721-1793  
William Williams, 1731-1811  
Oliver Wolcott, 1726-1797

## *Delaware*

Thomas McKean, 1734-1817  
George Read, 1733-1798  
Caesar Rodney, 1728-1784

## *Georgia*

Button Gwinnett, 1735(?) - 1777  
Lyman Hall, 1724(?) - 1790  
George Walton, 1741(?) - 1804

## *Maryland*

Charles Carroll, 1737-1832  
Samuel Chase, 1741-1811  
William Paca, 1740-1799  
Thomas Stone, 1743-1787

## *Massachusetts*

John Adams, 1735-1826  
Samuel Adams, 1722-1803  
Elbridge Gerry, 1744-1814  
John Hancock, 1737-1793  
Robert Treat Paine, 1731-1814

## *New Hampshire*

Josiah Bartlett, 1729-1795  
Matthew Thornton, 1714(?) - 1803  
William Whipple, 1730-1785

## *New Jersey*

Abraham Clark, 1726-1794  
John Hart, 1711(?) - 1779  
Francis Hopkinson, 1737-1791  
Richard Stockton, 1730-1781  
John Witherspoon, 1723-1794

## *New York*

William Floyd, 1734-1821  
Francis Lewis, 1713-1803  
Philip Livingston, 1716-1778  
Lewis Morris, 1726-1798

## *North Carolina*

Joseph Hewes, 1730-1779  
William Hooper, 1742-1790  
John Penn, 1741(?) - 1788

## *Pennsylvania*

George Clymer, 1739-1813  
Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790  
Robert Morris, 1734-1806  
John Morton, 1724(?) - 1777  
George Ross, 1730-1779  
Benjamin Rush, 1745(?) - 1813  
James Smith, 1719(?) - 1806  
George Taylor, 1716-1781  
James Wilson, 1742-1798

## *Rhode Island*

William Ellery, 1727-1820  
Stephen Hopkins, 1707-1785

## *South Carolina*

Thomas Heyward, Jr., 1746-1809  
Thomas Lynch, Jr., 1749-1779  
Arthur Middleton, 1742-1787  
Edward Rutledge, 1749-1800

## *Virginia*

Carter Braxton, 1736-1797  
Benjamin Harrison, 1726(?) - 1791  
Thomas Jefferson, 1743-1826  
Francis Lightfoot Lee, 1734-1797  
Richard Henry Lee, 1732-1794  
Thomas Nelson, Jr., 1738-1789  
George Wythe, 1726-1806