

**The Founding Documents of the United States of America and the  
Freemasons Who Signed Them**

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## The Founding Documents of the United States of America and the Freemasons Who Signed Them

### Introduction

The American colonists were loyal to Great Britain for many years. After the French and Indian War, Parliament and the King wanted the colonists to help pay for expenses incurred and imposed taxes and established regulations unilaterally. While many colonists were willing to pay taxes, they wanted to be included in the decision-making.

Freemasons were engaged in all steps of the process. This paper will describe the contributions made by Freemasons in writing and signing the documents followed by short biographies of their lives explaining how they contributed to the development of the new country and some of the sacrifices they made while engaged in those actions.

### Founding Documents

The colonists wrote several documents from 1774 to 1787 to secure their freedom from Great Britain. The initial documents—Articles of Association and Olive Branch Petition-- were written to express their displeasure with laws enacted unilaterally without consulting the colonists. However, as conditions deteriorated, the colonists moved from expressing their disapproval with the actions of the Crown to declaring independence— Declaration of Independence—to establishing a new government—Articles of Confederation and United States Constitution.

A “founding document” is defined as follows:

- It was signed by representatives or delegates from twelve or thirteen of the colonies. Rhode Island declined to send delegates to the Constitutional Convention. <sup>1</sup>
- It united the colonies.
- It expounded the principles and philosophy of the United States.
- It defined and secured the rights of the American people.
- It established or led to the establishment of the government of the United States.

Some might include the Federalist Papers, Anti-Federalist Papers, and Bill of Rights as founding documents. The Federalist Papers were 85 articles and essays written under the pseudonym of “Publius” to promote the ratification of the United States Constitution. <sup>2</sup> I excluded the Federalist Papers because none of the authors were Freemasons. <sup>3</sup> The Anti-Federalist Papers were essays written under pseudonyms by several authors in opposition to the United States Constitution. <sup>4</sup> I excluded the Anti-Federalist Papers because none of the suggested authors were Freemasons. <sup>5</sup> James Madison wrote the Bill of Rights or the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution. <sup>6</sup> I excluded the Bill of Rights because James Madison was not a Freemason. <sup>7</sup>

### Continental Association

#### Background

The founding documents had their genesis several years earlier. As early as March 1751, Benjamin Franklin believed the colonies could form a union to secure a

friendship with the Native Americans, regulate the Indian Trade, and protect the Indians should relations with the French get worse.<sup>8</sup> He wrote, in part, in a letter to James Parker, his New York printing partner, on March 20, 1754,<sup>9</sup>

“that securing the Friendship of the Indians is of the greatest Consequence to these Colonies; and that the surest Means of doing it, are, to regulate the Indian Trade, so as to convince them, by Experience, that they may have the best and cheapest Goods, and the fairest Dealing from the English; and to unite the several Governments, so as to form a Strength that the Indians may depend on for Protection, in Case of a Rupture with the French; or apprehend great Danger from, if they should break with us.”<sup>10</sup>

The Albany Congress was convened by the British Board of Trade to discuss security and defense against the French.<sup>11</sup> The Board of Trade and Plantations was a committee of eight members whose duties included, in part, overseeing colonial commercial relations with other nations, enforcing trade and navigation acts, and ensure the colonial laws were not contrary to English common law or British interests.<sup>12</sup> The primary reason for the meeting was to negotiate a treaty with the Iroquois Federation to ensure a well-defined colonial – Indian relationship.<sup>13</sup> The secondary reason was to discuss inter-colonial cooperation on other matters due to the possibility of war with France.<sup>14</sup> It is also noted that colonies were jealous of the other colonies and they were not equally in danger at any one time.<sup>15</sup> Seven colonies sent delegates to the conference; New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, and they met from June 19 to July 11, 1754.<sup>16</sup>

The delegates, or commissioners, approved the Albany Plan in July 1754 and sent it to the colonial assemblies and Parliament for approval.<sup>17</sup> While awaiting the outcome, Benjamin Franklin, the primary proposer of the Albany Plan, traveled to Boston to talk with William Shirley, Governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay.<sup>18</sup> On December 4, 1754, Franklin wrote to Governor Shirley, sharing the following ideas:

- (1) The colonists are loyal to the Constitution and Crown
- (2) Colonists would be dissatisfied if (a) they did not have input to the choice of Grand Council and (b) Parliament taxed them with no representation
- (3) Requiring colonists to pay taxes without their consent is similar to raising funds in an enemy country
- (4) The colonists are ready and willing to defend the country
- (5) Colonists are better judges of the need for armed forces to be raised and forts to be built and the ability to bear those expenses
- (6) Parliament is far away and subject to misinformation by Governors and Councils<sup>19</sup>

Governor “Shirley apparently responded with a suggestion that the colonies be given representatives in Parliament”<sup>20</sup> because Franklin wrote another letter to Governor Shirley on December 22, 1754, in which he said, in part

“on the subject of uniting the Colonies more intimately with Great Britain, by allowing them Representatives in Parliament, I have something further considered the matter, and am of opinion, that such a Union would be very acceptable to the Colonies, provided

they had a reasonable number of Representatives allowed them; and that all the old Acts of Parliament restraining the trade or cramping the manufactures of the Colonies, be at the same time repealed, ....”<sup>21</sup>

Under this plan, the general government would be administered by a president-general appointed and supported by the crown, and a grand council would be chosen by representatives of the people in the colonies.<sup>22</sup> The Albany Plan was rejected by all of the colonies because their authority would have been reduced and rejected by Parliament because it gave too much power and a dangerous unity to the colonies.<sup>23</sup> Franklin wrote that “the assemblies did not adopt it, as they all thought there was too much *prerogative* in it, and in England, it was judg’d to have too much of the *democratic*.”<sup>24</sup>

The colonies were subject to the King and Parliament; however, that authority had never been tested. Parliament had never tried to raise revenue in the American colonies.<sup>25</sup> The French and Indian War lasted from 1754 to 1763.<sup>26</sup> and cost Great Britain £58 million of additional debt.<sup>27</sup> Parliament began passing laws to collect tariffs and taxes:

- Sugar Act of 1764 placed a tax on sugar and molasses imported into the colonies and this impacted the manufacture of rum in New England<sup>28</sup>

Currency Act of 1764 regulated paper money printed by the colonies by prohibiting new ‘Bills of Credit’ and re-issuing existing currency by the colonists<sup>29</sup>

Colonial opposition began in Massachusetts with colonists voicing their opposition to

taxation without representation in Parliament and suggested some form of united protest. By the end of 1764 many colonies refused to import British goods.<sup>30</sup>

- 1765 Quartering Act directed American colonists to provide food and shelter to British troops at their own expense.<sup>31</sup>
- 1765 Stamp Act required the American Colonies to purchase a duty or tax in the form of a stamp for all newspapers, legal, and commercial documents.<sup>32</sup>

Colonists protested by organizing secret organizations of Sons of Liberty and convening the Stamp Act Congress which passed a “Declaration of Rights and Grievances” that stated American colonists were equal to other British citizens and Parliament could not tax colonists unless they were represented in Parliament.<sup>33</sup> The following year The Stamp Act was repealed, and the colonists resumed importing British goods.<sup>34</sup>

- 1766 Declaratory Act stated that the colonies and plantations in America are subordinate and dependent upon Great Britain “in all cases whatsoever.”<sup>35</sup>
- 1767 Townshend Acts directed the colonists to pay taxes on glass, lead, paint, paper, and tea to help defray the expenses in governing the colonies and plantations.<sup>36</sup>

In 1770, Parliament withdrew all of the Townshend Act taxes except for the tax on tea because the colonial boycotts of imported British goods reduced profits.<sup>37</sup> In response, the colonists resumed importing British goods.<sup>38</sup> Due to unrest and rising tensions between the colonists and Great Britain, King George III sent 1,000 soldiers to Boston to mitigate the unrest in the

Colony of Massachusetts Bay. Unfortunately, some British soldiers fired on a group of colonists, killing five of them in what has been referred to as the Boston Massacre.<sup>39</sup>

On June 9, 1772, the British customs schooner H. M. S. Gaspee ran aground in shallow water near Namquid Point (now Gaspee Point), Rhode Island,<sup>40</sup> while chasing the packet ship Hannah. The schooner was boarded, captain and crew were captured, and the ship was burned by a group of men.<sup>41</sup> On December 16, 1773, members of the Sons of Liberty disguised as Mohawk Indians boarded three American ships moored at Griffin's Wharf in Boston loaded with tea from China and threw the chests of tea owned by the British East India Company into the Boston Harbor.<sup>42</sup>

In 1774, Parliament passed the Coercive Acts to punish the Massachusetts Bay Province for destroying the tea in Boston Harbor.<sup>43</sup> The Coercive Acts of 1774, referred to as Intolerable Acts by the colonists, included four laws: Boston Port Act, Massachusetts Government Act, Administration of Justice Act, and Quartering Act.<sup>44</sup>

- The Boston Port Act authorized the Royal Navy to blockade Boston Harbor because "the commerce of his Majesty's subjects cannot be safely carried on there." The blockade began on June 1, 1774, closing all Boston ports to commercial traffic until restitution was made to the East India Company. The only imports allowed were those items needed to support the British Army.<sup>45</sup>
- The Massachusetts Government Act changed the composition of the Massachusetts Council from a body elected

with the governor's approval to one appointed by the crown. In addition, the royal governor could choose judges and county sheriffs without Council approval, sheriffs could appoint jurors, and town meetings were restricted to once a year with additional meetings requiring the governor's approval.<sup>46</sup>

- The Act for the Impartial Administration of Justice gave the Massachusetts governor additional power by allowing him the ability to move the trial to another colony or Great Britain if "an indifferent trial cannot be had within the said province," eliminating the right to a trial by one's peers, a judicial principle dating to the Magna Carta.<sup>47</sup>
- The Quartering Act applied to all of the colonies. It allowed soldiers to be housed in "uninhabited houses, out-houses, barns, or other buildings" at the colonists' expense.<sup>48</sup>
- The Quebec (or Canada) Act became law at the same time as the others even though it was considered by Parliament prior to the Boston Tea Party. It extended the borders of Quebec southward to the Ohio River, granted the citizens to practice Roman Catholicism, and allowed French civil law to remain in place which excluded trial by jury.<sup>49</sup>

The Coercive Acts were meant to cause colonists in Massachusetts Bay to suffer by damaging different aspects of colonial life and to warn other colonies of the consequences of rebellious behavior.<sup>50</sup> Delegates from 12 of the 13 colonies met in Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia from September 5 to October 26, 1774, to discuss how to respond to the Coercive Acts. This became known as the First Continental Congress. Georgia did not send representatives to the First Continental Congress because it was facing a war with



Native American tribes and did not want to jeopardize British assistance.

There was a lack of unity among the delegates. Many members of the First Continental Congress blamed the crisis between Great Britain and the colonies on the actions of governors, military officers, and ministers.<sup>51</sup> Advocates of defending American rights by force, if necessary, were led by representatives of Massachusetts, Virginia, and South Carolina.<sup>52</sup> Representatives of New York and Pennsylvania favored reconciliation with Great Britain and were willing to accept a greater degree of authority over colonial affairs.<sup>53</sup> The remaining moderate delegates hoped that Great Britain would realize that denying the colonists their right of self-government would fail<sup>54</sup> and preferred reconciliation with the Crown along with guarantees against further infringements on American liberty.<sup>55</sup> The moderates were not sure whether the dangers of going to war with Great Britain would outweigh the benefits they would enjoy as the king's loyal subjects.<sup>56</sup>

Eventually, delegates to the First Continental Congress accomplished the following:

- Approved a petition to the King on October 25, 1774 pleading with him to preserve English liberties in the colonies and to repeal the Intolerable Acts.<sup>57</sup>
- Endorsed the Suffolk Resolves, passed in Suffolk County, Massachusetts, ordering citizens not to obey the Coercive acts and import British goods, and to raise a militia.<sup>58</sup>
- Discussed and drafted the Continental Association or Articles of Association hoping to convince Parliament to repeal the Intolerable Acts and address the grievances of the colonies.<sup>59</sup>

- Called for a Second Continental Congress to meet the following spring, giving Great Britain time to respond to the Continental Association.<sup>60</sup>

The Petition to King George III included the following information:

An address of loyalty to King George III: "To the King's Most Excellent Majesty. Most Gracious Sovereign, We, your Majesty's faithful subjects of the Colonies New-Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode-Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Counties of New-Castle, Kent and Sussex, on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, in behalf of ourselves and the inhabitants of those Colonies who have deputed us to represent them in General Congress, by this humble petition..."<sup>61</sup>

The first paragraph ends "... beg leave to lay our grievances before the throne"<sup>62</sup> and continues with the list of grievances, that includes, in part

A standing army has been kept in these colonies ever since the conclusion of the late war, without the consent of our Assemblies; and this army, with a considerable naval armament, has been employed to enforce the collection of taxes.

The charges of usual offices have been greatly increased; and new, expensive, and oppressive offices have been multiplied.

The Officers of the Customs are empowered to break open and enter houses, without the authority of any Civil Magistrate, founded on legal information.

The Judges of Courts of common law have been made entirely dependent on one part of the legislature for their salaries, as well as

for the duration of their commissions.

Humble and reasonable petitions from the Representatives of the people have been fruitless.

The Agents of the people have been discountenanced, and Governors have been instructed to prevent the payment of their salaries.

Assemblies have been repeatedly and injuriously dissolved, and commerce burthened with many useless and oppressive restrictions.

By several Acts of Parliament made in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth years of your Majesty's reign, duties are imposed on us, for the purpose of raising a revenue, and the powers of Admiralty and Vice-admiralty courts are extended beyond their ancient limits, whereby our property is taken from us without our consent; the trial by jury, in many civil cases, is abolished; enormous forfeitures are incurred for slight offenses; vexatious informers are exempted from paying damages to which they are justly liable, and oppressive security is required from owners before they are allowed to defend their rights.

In the last Session of Parliament, an act was passed for blocking up the harbor of Boston; another empowering the Governor of the Massachusetts-Bay to send persons indicted for murder in that province to another colony, or even to Great-Britain, for trial, whereby such offenders may escape legal punishment; a third for altering the chartered constitution of government in that province; and a fourth for extending the limits of Quebec, abolishing the English, and restoring the French laws, whereby great numbers of British freemen are subjected to

the latter, and establishing an absolute government, and the Roman Catholic Religion throughout those vast regions, that border on the westerly and northerly boundaries of the free Protestant English settlements; and a fifth, for the better providing suitable quarters for officers and soldiers in his Majesty's service in North America.<sup>63</sup>

The list of grievances was followed by the reasons why the grievances necessitate an address to King George III that includes, in part

From this destructive system of colony administration, adopted since the conclusion of the last war, have flowed those distresses, dangers, fears, and jealousies, that overwhelm your Majesty's dutiful colonists with affliction; and we defy our most subtle and inveterate enemies to trace the unhappy differences between Great-Britain and these colonies from an earlier period, or from other causes than we have assigned; had they proceeded on our part from a restless levity of temper, unjust impulses of ambition, or artful suggestions of seditious persons, we should merit the opprobrious terms frequently bestowed upon us by those we revere. But, so far from promoting innovations, we have only opposed them; and can be charged with no offense, unless it be one to receive injuries and be sensible of them.

Had our creator been pleased to give us existence in a land of slavery, the sense of our condition might have been mitigated by ignorance and habit; but, thanks be to his adorable goodness, we were born the heirs of freedom, and ever enjoyed our right under the auspices of your royal ancestors, whose family was seated on the British throne to rescue and secure a pious and gallant nation from the popery and despotism of a

superstitious and inexorable tyrant. Your Majesty, we are confident, justly rejoices that your title to the crown is thus founded on the title of your people to liberty; and therefore we doubt not but your royal wisdom must approve the sensibility, that teaches your subjects anxiously to guard the blessing they received from divine providence, and thereby to prove the performance of that compact which elevated the illustrious house of Brunswick to the imperial dignity it now possesses.

These sentiments are extorted from hearts that much more willingly would bleed in your Majesty's service. Yet so greatly have we been misrepresented, that a necessity has been alleged of taking our property from us without our consent, "to defray the charge of the administration of justice, the support of the civil government, and the defense, protection, and security of the colonies." But we beg leave to assure your Majesty that such provision has been and will be made for defraying the two first articles, as has been and shall be judged by the legislatures of the several colonies, just and suitable to their respective circumstances; and for the defense, protection, and security of the colonies, their militias, if properly regulated, as they earnestly desire may immediately be done, would be fully sufficient, at least in times of peace; and, in case of war, your faithful colonists will be ready and willing, as they ever have been, when constitutionally required, to demonstrate their loyalty to your Majesty, by exerting their most strenuous efforts in granting supplies and raising forces. Yielding to no British subjects in affectionate attachment to your Majesty's person, family, and government, we too dearly prize the privilege of expressing that attachment by those proofs which are honorable to the Prince who receives them, and to the people

who give them, ever to resign it to anybody of men upon earth.

Had we been permitted to enjoy, in quiet, the inheritance left us by our forefathers, we should at this time have been peaceably, cheerfully and usefully, employed in recommending ourselves by every testimony of devotion to your Majesty, and of veneration to the state from which we derive our origin. But though now exposed to unexpected and unnatural scenes of distress, by contention with that nation in whose parental guidance on all important affairs, we have hitherto with filial reverence constantly trusted, and therefore can derive no instruction in our present unhappy and perplexing circumstances from any former experience; yet we doubt not the purity of our intention, and the integrity of our conduct will justify us at that grand tribunal before which all mankind must submit to judgment.

We ask but for peace, liberty, and safety. We wish not a diminution of the prerogative, nor do we solicit the grant of any new right in our favor. Your royal authority over us, and our connection with Great Britain, we shall always carefully and zealously endeavor to support and maintain.<sup>64</sup>

The conclusion restates the goal of the petition and reaffirms the Colonies' to the British monarchy and states, in part  
Filled with sentiments of duty to your Majesty, and of affection to our parent state, deeply impressed by our education, and strongly confirmed by our reason, and anxious to evince the sincerity of these dispositions, we present this petition only to obtain redress of grievances, and relief from fears and jealousies, occasioned by the system of statutes and regulations adopted since the close of the late war, for raising a

revenue in America, extending the powers of courts of admiralty and vice-admiralty, trying persons in Great Britain for offenses alleged to have been committed in America, affecting the province of Massachusetts-Bay and altering the government, and extending the limits of Quebec; by the abolition of which system, the harmony between Great-Britain and these Colonies, so necessary to the happiness of both, and so ardently desired by the latter, and the usual intercourses will be immediately restored.

We, therefore, most earnestly beseech your Majesty, that your royal authority and interposition may be used for our relief, and that a gracious answer may be given to this petition.

That your Majesty may enjoy every felicity through a long and glorious reign over loyal and happy subjects and that your descendants may inherit your prosperity and dominions till time shall be no more, is, and always will be, our sincere and fervent prayer. <sup>65</sup>

### Summary of Document

The Articles of Association included the following information:

An address of loyalty to King George III: “We, his majesty's most loyal subjects, the delegates of the several colonies of New-Hampshire, Massachusetts-Bay, Rhode-Island, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, the three lower counties of Newcastle, Kent and Sussex on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, and South-Carolina, deputed to represent them in a continental Congress, ... avowing our allegiance to his majesty, our

affection and regard for our fellow-subjects in Great-Britain and elsewhere... ‘

The first paragraph continues with a list of grievances or complaints: “...the present unhappy situation of our affairs is occasioned by a ruinous system of colony administration, adopted by the British Ministry about the year 1763, evidently calculated for enslaving these colonies, and, with them, the British Empire. In the prosecution of which system, various acts of parliament have been passed, for raising a revenue in America, for depriving the American subjects, in many instances, of the constitutional trial by jury, exposing their lives to danger, by directing a new and illegal trial beyond the seas, for crimes alleged to have been committed in America: And in the prosecution of the same system, several late, cruel, and oppressive acts have been passed, respecting the town of Boston and the Massachusetts-Bay, and also an act for extending the province of Quebec, so as to border on the western frontiers of these colonies, establishing an arbitrary government therein, and discouraging the settlement of British subjects in that wide extended country; thus, by the influence of civil principles and ancient prejudices, to dispose the inhabitants to act with hostility against the free Protestant colonies, whenever a wicked ministry shall choose so to direct them.”

The list of grievances is followed by a list of fourteen actions the Association would take. “To obtain redress of these grievances, which threaten destruction to the lives liberty, and property of his majesty's subjects, in North-America, we are of opinion, that a non-importation, non-consumption, and non-exportation agreement, faithfully adhered to, will prove the most speedy, effectual, and peaceable

measure: And, therefore, we do, for ourselves, and the inhabitants of the several colonies, whom we represent, firmly agree and associate, under the sacred ties of virtue, honor, and love of our country..." The actions include:

- Discontinue imports into British America of any goods wares, or merchandise whatsoever from Great Britain or Ireland
- Discontinue exports of any goods wares, or merchandise whatsoever to Great Britain or Ireland
- Discontinue import of East India tea, molasses, syrups, coffee, or pimento from British plantations or Dominica
- Discontinue import of wines from Madeira
- Discontinue the slave trade
- Improve the breed of sheep and increase their number
- Promote agriculture, arts, and manufacture, especially of wool; and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially horse-racing, cock fighting, shows, plays, and other expensive diversions and entertainments
- That committees of correspondence be chosen in every county, city, or town, enforce the measures detailed in the Articles of Association and publish information on a regular basis

### Effects

The Petition to King George III was signed on October 25, 1774. It arrived in London on November 14 and was presented to Parliament in mid-January 1775. Neither King George III nor Parliament wrote a reply to the petition.<sup>66</sup>

The Articles of Association took effect on December 1, 1774. Restrictions were enforced in twelve of the thirteen colonies that established local enforcement committees. The ban succeeded for the time it was in effect and trade with Great Britain decreased. However, Great Britain retaliated by blocking American access to North Atlantic fisheries.<sup>67</sup>

### Freemason Signers

Ten of the fifty-three signers of the Continental Association were Freemasons:

Edward Biddle – Pennsylvania; Richard Caswell – North Carolina; John Dickinson – Pennsylvania; Joseph Hewes – North Carolina; William Hooper – North Carolina; Charles Humphreys – Pennsylvania; Robert Treat Payne – Massachusetts; Peyton Randolph – Virginia; John Sullivan – New Hampshire; George Washington - Virginia

<b>Signers of Articles of Association</b>	
Freemasons	10 68
All Signers	53 69
Percent Freemasons	19 percent

### **Olive Branch Petition**

## Background

Brother Richard Stockton, a highly respected lawyer and new judge on New Jersey's highest court, was concerned about the civil war and sent a proposed plan titled "An Expedient for the Settlement of the American Disputes" to Lord Dartmouth, Secretary to the Colonies, on December 12, 1774.<sup>70</sup> He wrote

An Expedient for the Settlement of the American Disputes humbly submitted to the consideration of his Majesty's Ministers by an American

The State of American Affairs is so truly alarming at the time that every real friend to the British Empire ought to suggest every probable expedient that occurs to him for the accommodation of the unhappy disputes between Great Britain and the Colonies. To give the following suggestions their due weight; it must be premised ---

1<sup>st</sup> That the several North American Colonies, from New Hampshire to South Carolina inclusive, are able to furnish 500,000 fighting men: who are in general as fit for service as the English Militia, and many of them much more so, having been in actual service the last war.

2<sup>dly</sup> That the great body of the people in these several Colonies are now (even to the astonishment of many Colonists themselves perfectly united in a determinate opposition to the authority of the British Parliament, *as to all internal Taxation.*

3<sup>dly</sup> That there is not the least remaining doubt if the British Government should proceed to put the late Acts of Parliament respecting the Massachusetts Bay (or any other Acts which involve the Idea of an abso-

uncontrollable power in the British Parliament over the Colonies) into execution, by force, but that the ass<sup>d</sup> Colonies would unite in attempting to repel force by force. --- To which may be added, what is as well or perhaps better known in Great Britain than in America, to wit,

4<sup>thly</sup> That the *certain* consequences of this unnatural War will be dreadful to both Great Britain and America, and the *probable* effects thereof may be fatal to the whole British Empire.

Matters standing thus; and the three first propositions above premised being founded upon the most indubitable facts (of which the writer of this, from his general acquaintance with America, is perhaps as competent a judge as any man whatever. It is humbly proposed to the Consideration of his Majesty's Ministers whether it would not be proper

1<sup>st</sup> That a royal Instruction be immediately obtained, and sent over to the several Governors of the North American Colonies, requiring them forthwith to recommend it to their several Assemblies to pass, and to give their own assent to an Act which may be passed by the Legislatures of the several Provinces, empowering certain Commissioners therein to be named, to repair to England; with power to confer with his Majesty's Ministers or with Commissioners to be appointed by Act of Parliament, respecting the grand points in dispute between Great Britain and America; and finally to determine thereupon.

2<sup>dly</sup> That to prevent all disputes in the future the s<sup>d</sup> American Commissioners be also empowered to confer and agree with the British Commissioners respecting the future government and regulation of the Colonies;

either by framing One general System of Government for all the Colonies on the Continent, similar to the British Or by making some material alterations in the present mode of provincial Government. *In either* of which systems, some effectual provision may be made for the adequate support of the American Government by the Americans themselves: And also for the payment of all such sums of money as may become due from America to Great Britain for the assistance of her Fleet and Army. These determinations of the s<sup>d</sup> Commissioners to be subjected nevertheless to such alteration as the wisdom of his Majesty and his Parliament of Great Britain may make therein; and as shall be agreed to by the several provincial Legislatures.

<sup>3dly</sup> That upon such Instructions being given to the several Governors, his Majesty be advised in his royal clemency to recommend it to his Parliament to suspend the operation of the Boston Port Act until the determination of the s<sup>d</sup> Commissioners shall be had.

The Author of the above hints offers them with all humility, and with great diffidence of his own abilities, on so great and national a question. But some expedient must be immediately fallen upon, or we shall be involved in a civil war the most obstinate awful and tremendous that perhaps ever occurred since the Creation of the world.

He will esteem it a signal blessing of divine providence, conferred upon him, if any one Idea he hath suggested may be of any use at the dreadful Crisis: And if otherwise, he will at least be able to comfort himself with the uprightness of his intentions in this feeble attempt; and with the assurance that it can do no harm either to

himself or any other person. <sup>71</sup>

Stockton sent the document to the British Parliament through a London merchant named Samuel Smith; however, if it was seen by Lord Dartmouth, no action was taken. <sup>72</sup> Parliament passed two Restraining Acts early in 1775.

- King George III signed the New England Restraining Act on March 30, 1775, which limited the New England colonies to trading only with Great Britain and her colonies. It also prevented colonists from entering the North Atlantic fisheries. <sup>73</sup>
- On learning that Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina were also boycotting and raising armies, those colonies were added to the Act in April. <sup>74</sup>

On April 19, 1775, British troops and colonists exchanged gunfire at Lexington and Concord, killing 93 Americans and 300 British. <sup>75</sup> A small group of delegates was ready to declare independence. However, a moderate faction led by Brother John Dickinson wanted to make one last appeal to King George III to intervene. <sup>76</sup>

### **Summary of Document**

Brother John Dickinson wrote the Olive Branch Petition that was adopted by the Second Continental Congress on July 8, 1775. <sup>77</sup> It is described as follows: <sup>78</sup>

Salutation: "To the King's Most Excellent Majesty."

Greeting: "Most Gracious Sovereign: We, your Majesty's faithful subjects of the Colonies of New-Hampshire,

Massachusetts-Bay, Rhode-Island, and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Counties of Newcastle, Kent, and Sussex, on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, in behalf of ourselves and the inhabitants of these Colonies, who have deputed us to represent them in General Congress, entreat your Majesty's gracious attention to this our humble petition.”

Benefits: “The union between our Mother Country and these Colonies, and the energy of mild and just Government, produced benefits so remarkably important, and afforded such an assurance of their permanency and increase, that the wonder and envy of other nations were excited, while they beheld Great Britain rising to a power the most extraordinary the world had ever known.”

A few paragraphs later, hopes are mentioned: “At the conclusion, therefore, of the late war, the most glorious and advantageous that ever had been carried on by British arms, your loyal Colonists having contributed to its success by such repeated and strenuous exertions as frequently procured them the distinguished approbation of your Majesty, of the late King, and of Parliament, doubted not but that they should be permitted, with the rest of the Empire, to share in the blessings of peace, and the emoluments of victory and conquest.”

Concerns are noted, in part: “... they were alarmed by a new system of statutes and regulations adopted for the administration of the Colonies that filled their minds with the most painful fears and jealousies;” ... “influence appeared to be injurious to the commerce and prosperity of Great Britain. ... Your Majesty’s Ministers, persevering I their measures, and proceeding to open hostilities for enforcing them, have

compelled us to arm in our own defense...”

Appeal to justice: “We, therefore, beseech your Majesty, that your royal authority and influence may be graciously interposed to procure us relief from our afflicting fears and jealousies, occasioned by the system before-mentioned, and to settle peace through every part of our Dominions, with all humility submitting to your Majesty's wise consideration, whether it may not be expedient, for facilitating those important purposes, that your Majesty be pleased to direct some mode, by which the united applications of your faithful Colonists to the Throne, in pursuance of their common counsels, may be improved into a happy and permanent reconciliation; and that, in the meantime, measures may be taken for preventing the further destruction of the lives of your Majesty's subjects; and that such statutes as more immediately distressing any of your Majesty's Colonies, may be repealed.”

Closing paragraph: “That Your Majesty may enjoy a long and prosperous reign and that your descendants may govern your Dominions with honor to themselves and happiness to their subjects, is our sincere prayer.”

The Olive Branch Petition ended with the signatures of 48 delegates.

### **Effects**

The Petition was delivered to King George III through Lord Dartmouth, Secretary of State for the American Colonies. However, King George refused to receive the Olive Branch Petition and published a proclamation on August 23, 1775, declaring the American colonies to be in rebellion. The House of Commons made a final attempt at reconciliation on November 7, 1775.



Unfortunately, the motion to receive the Olive Branch Petition was defeated. Rejection of the Olive Branch Petition by King George and Parliament strengthened the position and influence of radicals seeking independence.<sup>79</sup>

**Freemason Signers**

Nine of the forty-eight signers of the Olive Branch Petition were Freemasons: Edward Biddle – Pennsylvania; John Dickinson – Pennsylvania; Benjamin Franklin – Pennsylvania; John Hancock – Massachusetts; Joseph Hewes – North Carolina; William Hooper – North Carolina; Charles Humphreys – Pennsylvania; Robert Livingston, Jr. – New York Robert; Treat Payne - Massachusetts

<b>Signers of Olive Branch Petition</b>	
Freemasons	9
All Signers	48 80
Percent Freemasons	19 percent

**Declaration of Independence**

**Background**

With the refusal of the British Parliament and King George III to address the grievances of the colonists, the colonists felt that war was inevitable. At the same time, the Olive Branch Petition was approved, they also wrote two additional documents: The Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms and the Resolution for Independence.

The Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms listed objectionable policies such as taxation without representation, extending the use of vice admiralty courts, and enforcing the Coercive Acts. It also described how the colonists had petitioned the British Parliament and King George to listen to their grievances, without success. The Declaration also stated that the colonists did not yet seek independence from the mother country.<sup>81</sup>

The Lee Resolution or The Resolution for Independence, proposed by Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, was passed by the Second Continental Congress on July 2, 1776. This led to consideration of the Declaration of Independence and its approval on July 4, 1776.<sup>82</sup>

**Summary of Document**

The Declaration of Independence was written primarily by Thomas Jefferson and includes the following information:<sup>83</sup>

The Introduction is a declaration of universal principles. The colonies are entitled to independence by “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God”

The Preamble is a declaration of universal principles and self-evident truths:

- All men are created equal
- All men are endowed by Creator with unalienable rights: life, liberty, and the

pursuit of happiness

Civil government is instituted to secure these rights

Civil government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed Civil government may be altered or abolished when it violates these principles People should abolish civil government only after a “long train of abuses and usurpations.”

England engaged in a “long train of abuses and usurpations” against the colonies: Refused to assent to necessary colonial laws Dissolved colonial legislatures Prevented emigration to colonies

Made administration of colonial justice impossible by controlling judges and refusing to approve needed laws

Appointed bureaucrats to harass colonial population

Keeping standing armies in colonies, not subject to the control of colonial government cutting off colonial trade with the rest of the world

Taxation without representation Denial of trial by jury

Transporting colonists for trial in England

Abrogating English common law in Canada, setting an example for same in colonies

Abolishing colonial charters

Taking colonists captive on high seas

Incited insurrection and Indian warfare against the colonists

Conclusion: King “unfit to be the ruler of a free people.”

Colonists’ efforts to resolve grievances

peaceably have gone unheeded

Declaration: “That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States...”

**Effects**

The colonists and Great Britain had been at war for over a year when The Unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America was signed. Hostilities continued throughout the colonies until October 19, 1781, when Lieutenant General Charles Cornwallis surrendered to Continental Army troops led by General George Washington and French Army troops led by the Comte de Rochambeau.<sup>84</sup>

**Freemason Signers**

Nine of the fifty-eight signers of the 1776 Declaration of Independence were Freemasons:

William Ellery – Rhode Island and Providence Plantations; Benjamin Franklin – Pennsylvania;

John Hancock – Massachusetts; Bay Joseph Hewes – North Carolina; William Hooper – North Carolina; Robert Treat Payne – Massachusetts; Bay Richard Stockton – New Jersey;

George Walton – Georgia; William Whipple – New Hampshire

<b>Signers of Declaration of Independence</b>	
Freemasons	9 85
All Signers	58 86
Percent Freemasons	16 percent

## Articles of Confederation

### Background

After declaring independence from Great Britain, the colonists recognized the importance of establishing the functions of the national government in a written document. Hostilities between the British and colonists and the capture of Philadelphia increased the urgency of creating a new government. Many political leaders recognized the advantages of a centralized national government to coordinate the Revolutionary War.<sup>87</sup> John Dickinson wrote the fourth version of the Articles of Confederation that eventually became the version approved by the Second Continental Congress.<sup>88</sup>

### Summary of Document

The Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union were approved by the Congress of the Confederation on 15 November 1777 after about 17 months of debate. After ratification by all thirteen states, it took effect on 1 March 1781.<sup>89</sup> The American colonists placed power in the states because they were concerned about a strong national government based on their interaction with Great Britain.<sup>90</sup> The Articles of Confederation included a preamble, thirteen articles, conclusion, and signatory section.<sup>91</sup>

- The name of the confederation was “The United States of America.”
- Each state was sovereign, except for powers delegated to the confederation government.
- The States entered into a league of friendship with each other for their common

defense, security of liberties, and mutual and general welfare.

- One vote was allocated to each state in the Congress of the Confederation.
- Only the central government may declare war or conduct foreign political or commercial relations.
- State legislatures shall assign military ranks of colonel and below when an army is raised for the common defense.
- State legislatures will raise funds to pay for expenditures by the United States of America.
- Congress had control over diplomacy, treaties, and alliances, regulating post offices and the armed forces, printing money, resolving controversies between different states, coordinating the war effort, appointing courts for trying pirates and crimes committed on the high seas, appointing commissioners for courts, and appointing a president who shall not serve longer than one year per three-year term of Congress.

### Effects

The Articles of Confederation contained the following weaknesses:<sup>92</sup>

- Congress had no power to coin money, so each state developed its own currency.
- Congress did not regulate interstate and foreign commerce, and some states refused to pay for products they purchased from abroad.
- Congress could not impose taxes, and could only borrow money on credit.
- No national court system was established to protect the rights of United States citizens.
- No executive branch was established to enforce laws.

- All thirteen states were required to approve amendments.
- Nine of thirteen states were required to pass a law in Congress.
- One vote was allotted to each state, regardless of population.
- It was only a “firm league of friendship.”

The government under the Articles of Confederation included the following strengths.<sup>93</sup>

- Signed a treaty of alliance with France in 1778
- Waged a successful war for independence against the British
- Negotiated and signed the Treaty of Paris to end the American Revolution in 1783
- Provided for the possible admission of Canada into the Confederation
- Passed the Northwest Ordinance of 1787

allowing the Northwest Territories to organize their own governments and banning slavery from the region

- Established the Departments of Foreign Affairs, War, Marine, and Treasury.

**Freemason Signers**

Nine of the forty-eight signers of the Articles of Confederation were Freemasons.

Thomas Adams – Virginia; Daniel Carroll – Maryland; John Dickinson – Delaware; William Ellery – Rhode Island and Providence Plantations; John Hancock – Massachusetts; Bay Cornelius Harnett – North Carolina; Henry Laurens – South Carolina; Daniel Roberdeau – Pennsylvania; Jonathan Bayard Smith - Pennsylvania

<b>Signers of Articles of Confederation</b>	
Freemasons	9 94
All Signers	49 95
Percent Freemasons	18 percent

**United States Constitution**

**Background**

The lack of a strong national government in the Articles of Confederation caused three general limitations: economic disorganization, lack of central leadership, and legislative inefficiencies. Economic disorganization was caused by Congress’

inability to regulate trade and levy taxes, and there were multiple systems of currency. Lack of central leadership was caused by not having an independent judiciary, no person or body to conduct foreign affairs, and the inability to mobilize an army for defense.

Legislative inefficiencies included each state having one vote regardless of population, Congress’s inability to pass laws, and an

impractical amendment process.<sup>96</sup>

The colonists recognized the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation and formed a Constitutional Convention to modify the document. Even though the original goal was to correct the deficiencies of the Articles of Confederation, most delegates recognized the benefits of creating a new system of government.

The draft U.S. Constitution was read in its final form on 17 September 1787.<sup>97</sup> Benjamin Franklin, 81 years of age and too frail to make a speech, requested that his written remarks be read aloud.<sup>98</sup> He concluded by making a motion that the convention all of the states accept this document, and closed with the following words:

*On the whole, sir, I cannot help expressing a wish that every member of the convention who may still have objections to it would with me, on this occasion, doubt a little of his own infallibility and, to make manifest*

*our unanimity, put his name to this instrument.*<sup>99</sup>

When Franklin concluded, most of the delegates signed the historic document, one state delegation at a time.<sup>100</sup>

Brother Nicholas Gilman, an ardent supporter, wrote to his cousin Joseph Gilman the day following its signing:

“...it is the best that could meet the unanimous concurrence of the States in Convention; it was done by bargain and Compromise, yet notwithstanding its imperfections, on the adoption of it depends (in my feeble judgment) whether we shall become a respectable nation, or a people torn to pieces by intestine commotions, and rendered contemptible forages.”<sup>101</sup>

Two groups of individuals debated the merits of the draft United States Constitution: Federalists and Anti-Federalists. The following table explains the major differences between the two groups.

	<b>Federalists</b>	<b>Anti-Federalists</b>
Federal	Strong	Weak
State	Weak	Strong
Favored Document	Constitution	Articles of Confederation
Bill of Rights	would protect individual rights	ution would NOT protect individual rights
Support	Urban areas	Rural areas

Delaware was the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution on December 7, 1787. The legislatures of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, and New Hampshire ratified the Constitution over the next few months. When New Hampshire ratified it on June 21, 1788, the Constitution was adopted.<sup>103</sup> It took effect on March 4,

1789, when the first Congress convened.<sup>104</sup>

**Summary of Document**

The United States Constitution includes the following sections:<sup>105</sup>

- The Preamble is an introductory statement that sets forth the basic purposes.
- Article I establishes a bicameral legislature

and describes the qualifications of members and powers granted to each body.

- Article II describes the qualifications, office, and duties of the Executive Branch.
- Article III establishes the courts and judges.
- Article IV outlines the relations among the states and between the state and the federal government.
- Article V specifies the process for amending the Constitution.
- Article VI discusses general matters such as honoring debts and agreements entered before the Constitution.
- Article VII establishes the process for ratifying the Constitution.

**Effects**

The Massachusetts Compromise was a solution reached between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists over ratification of the United States Constitution. The Anti-Federalists agreed to support ratification with the understanding they would

recommend amendments should the document be ratified. The Federalists agreed to support proposed amendments as a bill of rights.<sup>106</sup> The Bill of Rights included the first ten amendments to the United States Constitution. Amendments 1, 2, and 3 protect liberty; Amendments 4, 5, 6, and 8 protect justice; and Amendments 9 and 10 discuss unenumerated rights and reserved powers.

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**Freemason Signers**

Thirteen of the 39 signers of the United States Constitution were Freemasons.

Gunning Bedford Jr. John Blair  
 David Brearley Jacob Broom Daniel Carroll  
 Jonathan Dayton John Dickinson Benjamin  
 Franklin Nicholas Gilman Rufus King  
 James McHenry William Paterson  
 George Washington

<b>Signers of United States Constitution</b>	
Freemasons	13 108
All Signers	39 109
Percent Freemasons	33 percent

**Brief Biographies of Freemasons**

The 32 Freemasons who signed one or more of our founding documents had a variety of occupations and lived in all of the colonies

except Connecticut. The following table summarizes the documents signed by the 32 Freemasons:

<b>Freemasons Who Signed Founding Documents</b>						
Articles of Association	Olive Branch Petition	Declaration of Independence	Articles of Confederation	U.S. Constitution	Number	Names
						<b>Freemason Signers</b>

X					3	Richard Caswell (NC), Peyton Randolph (VA), John Sullivan (NH)
X	X				2	Edward Biddle (PA), Charles Humphreys (PA),
X				X	1	George Washington
X	X	X			3	Joseph Hewes (NC), William Hooper (NC), Robert Treat Paine (MA)
X	X		X	X	1	John Dickinson (DE)
	X				1	Robert Livingston, Jr. (NY)
	X	X	X		1	John Hancock (MA)
	X	X		X	1	Benjamin Franklin (PA)
		X			3	Richard Stockton (NJ), George Walton (GA), William Whipple (NH)
		X	X		1	William Ellery
			X		5	Thomas Adams (VA), Cornelius Harnett (NC), Henry Laurens (SC), Daniel Roberdeau (PA), Jonathan Bayard Smith (PA)
			X	X	1	Daniel Carroll (MD)
				X	9	Gunning Bedford Jr, (DE) John Blair (VA) David Brearley, Jacob Broom, Jonathan Dayton, Nicholas Gilman, Rufus King, James McHenry, William Paterson

For the thirty-two Masons, 21 signed one document, six signed two documents, three signed three documents, and one, John Dickinson, signed four documents. Roger Sherman of Connecticut was the only person to sign all five founding documents. However, no documents have been found to prove that he was a Freemason.<sup>110</sup> Six of these men were captured by the British, and none were executed. Eight of the thirty-two Freemasons were Grand Masters of their

respective jurisdictions, and four were the first Grand Masters in their grand jurisdictions.

The following brief biographies of the Freemasons describe some of the additional achievements and contributions of these men. Names are listed by state in the order the colony/state ratified the U.S. Constitution.

Freemason Signers of Founding Documents	
Freemasons	32
All Signers	147
Percent Freemasons	22 percent

**Delaware**

Delaware ratified the United States Constitution on December 7, 1787.<sup>111</sup> Three of the eight signers of the Articles of

Association, Olive Branch Petition, Articles of Confederation, or U.S. Constitution from Delaware were Freemasons. None signed the Declaration of Independence.

Signers from Delaware	
Freemasons	3
All Signers	8
Percent Freemasons	38 percent

Freemason Signers from Delaware					
Freemason	Articles of Association	Olive Branch Petition	Declaration of Independence	Articles of Confederation	U.S. Constitution
Gunning Bedford, Jr.					Yes
Jacob Broom					Yes
John Dickinson	Yes*	Yes		Yes	Yes

\*

Dickinson was living in Pennsylvania when he signed the Articles of Association.

Gunning Bedford, Jr.

Gunning Bedford, Jr. (1747—1812) graduated from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton), then studied law and opened his practice in Dover, and later Wilmington.<sup>112</sup> Bedford held two military offices: elected deputy muster-master in July 1775 and ordered to his post in the northern army in Canada to muster the troops once every month,<sup>113</sup> then promoted to Muster-Master-General in June 1776 and ordered to

headquarters in New York.<sup>114</sup> At the Constitutional Convention, Bedford was concerned that small states would be dominated by more populous neighbors and warned the delegates to the Constitutional Convention that small states might need to seek foreign alliances for their protection. He noted that “there was no middle way between a perfect consolidation and a mere confederacy of the States. The first is out of the question, and in the latter, they must continue if not perfectly, yet equally



sovereign.”<sup>115</sup> He also said, “I do not gentlemen, trust you. If you possess the power, the abuse of it could not be checked; and what then would prevent you from exercising it to our destruction?”<sup>116</sup> Bedford’s concern led delegates to adopt the Great Compromise that included a House of Representatives based on population and a Senate with each state having two senators.<sup>117</sup> President Washington selected Bedford to be a federal district judge in September 1789 and he held that post until his death in 1812.<sup>118</sup> Gunning Bedford was a member of Lodge No. 14 chartered under the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania (now Lodge No. 1) at Christiana Ferry (now Wilmington), Delaware.<sup>119</sup> Most Worshipful Brother Bedford served as the first grandmaster of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Delaware from 1806 to 1808.<sup>120</sup>

### Jacob Broom

Jacob Broom (1752—1810) was educated at home before entering the Old Academy in Wilmington, Delaware where he completed surveying courses in 1772.<sup>121</sup> He held various offices in Wilmington, Delaware that included Second or Assistant Burgess six times and Chief Burgess four times between 1773 and 1796,<sup>122</sup> president of the “street regulators” who maintained the city’s street, water, and sewage systems,<sup>123</sup> and first treasurer of the first library incorporated in 1788,<sup>124</sup> and first postmaster from 1790-1792.<sup>125</sup> Broom also reorganized the Old Academy into the College of Wilmington and served on the first Board of Trustees.<sup>126</sup> He used his surveying skills to prepare maps of the Brandywine region of northern Delaware for General Washington that included natural elements such as rivers and hills and manmade features such as roads

and bridges. These maps were used during the Battle of Brandywine, and unfortunately, the British forced the American troops to withdraw to Philadelphia.<sup>127</sup> As a member of the Constitutional Convention, Broom voted for nine-year terms<sup>128</sup> and equal representation for Senators.<sup>129</sup> In 1802,<sup>130</sup> Broom sold all of his cotton mills on the Brandywine River to Eleuthere Ireneé’ du Pont de Nemours who converted the mills into gunpowder operations that later became the Du Pont Chemical Company.<sup>131</sup> Jacob Broom was a member of Lodge No. 14 chartered under the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania (now Lodge No. 1) at Christiana Ferry (now Wilmington), Delaware.<sup>132</sup>

### John Dickinson

John Dickinson (1732—1808) was the son of a wealthy plantation owner and educated at the Middle Temple at the Inns of Court in London, England.<sup>133</sup> The four Inns of Court are professional associations for barristers in England and Wales.<sup>134</sup> Dickinson wrote a series of letters titled “Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania” in 1767 and 1768 arguing, in part, that the Townshend Acts were illegal because only the colonial assemblies had the power to raise revenue. Soon afterward the letters were published as a pamphlet and reprinted in many colonial newspapers. The popularity of his letters led to boycotting imported goods throughout the colonies.<sup>135</sup> Dickinson also wrote “The Liberty Song,” sung to the tune of the Royal Navy of the United Kingdom, “Heart of Oak,” and first published in the Boston Gazette in 1768. The Chorus goes “In Freedom, we’re born, and in Freedom, we’ll live. Our purses are ready. Steady, friends, steady, Not as Slaves, but as Freemen our money we’ll give.”<sup>136</sup> In June 1774, he was appointed

chairman of Philadelphia’s Committee of Correspondence.<sup>137</sup> A year later he was appointed Chairman of the Committee of Safety and Defense for Pennsylvania.<sup>138</sup> Dickinson’s moderate stance was based, in part, on his relationship with his parents and wife who were all Quakers and committed to pacifism. After the Battles of Lexington and Concord, Dickinson and other moderates convinced Congress to draft a second olive branch petition to the king. When the Olive Branch Petition failed, Dickinson honored his other commitment to prepare for war and worked with Thomas Jefferson in drafting the Declaration of the Causes and Necessity for Taking up Arms.<sup>139</sup> Rakove writes, “When Congress adopted a nearly unanimous resolution the next day to sever ties with Britain, Dickinson abstained from the vote,

knowing full well that he had delivered “the finishing Blow to my once too great, and my Integrity considered, now too diminish’d Popularity.”<sup>140</sup> John Dickinson was initiated on January 11, 1780, at Lodge No. 18 in Dover, Delaware chartered under the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania and “Never since Appeared in Lodge.”<sup>141</sup>

**Pennsylvania**

Pennsylvania ratified the United States Constitution on December 12, 1787.<sup>142</sup> Five of the 19 signers of the Articles of Association, Olive Branch Petition, Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, or U.S. Constitution from Pennsylvania were Freemasons.

<b>Signers from Pennsylvania</b>	
Freemasons	5
All Signers	19
Percent Freemasons	26 percent

<b>Freemason Signers from Pennsylvania</b>					
<b>Freemason</b>	<b>Articles of Association</b>	<b>Olive Branch Petition</b>	<b>Declaration of Independence</b>	<b>Articles of Confederation</b>	<b>U.S. Constitution</b>
Edward Biddle	Yes	Yes			
Benjamin Franklin		Yes	Yes		Yes
Charles Humphries	Yes	Yes			
Daniel Roberdeau				Yes	
Jonathan Bayard Smith				Yes	

Edward Biddle

Edward Biddle (1738—1779) was commissioned in the provincial army as an ensign at age sixteen in 1758.

<sup>143</sup> After promotion to captain in 1760, he resigned from the army and received 5,000 acres of land for his services. <sup>144</sup> He studied law in Philadelphia, then began his practice in Reading. <sup>145</sup> He was elected to represent Berks County in the Provincial Assembly from 1767 to 1775 <sup>146</sup> and served on the Committees on Correspondence and Observation, and Colonels of Associated Battalions in 1774 and 1775. <sup>147</sup> Elected to the Second Continental Congress in 1775, Biddle traveled by boat from Reading to Philadelphia and accidentally fell overboard into the Schuylkill River where he caught a cold from sleeping in wet clothing, lost sight in one eye, and became an invalid for the rest of his life. <sup>148</sup> He attended the opening session of Congress and signed the Olive Branch Petition but died in 1779 at 41 years of age. <sup>149</sup> Edward Biddle was a member of Freemasons Lodge No. 2 in Philadelphia (warranted by Benjamin Franklin on September 5, 1749) <sup>150</sup> where he was “Made a Mason” on March 29, 1763. <sup>151</sup>

Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin (1706—1790) published Poor Richard’s Almanack from 1732 to 1757. <sup>152</sup> He was appointed clerk of the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1736, <sup>153</sup> postmaster of Philadelphia in 1737, <sup>154</sup> and deputy postmaster general for all the colonies in 1753. <sup>155</sup> In 1754, Franklin proposed unsuccessfully the Albany Plan to unify the colonies for defense when the French and Indian Wars started. <sup>156</sup> He spent time in London, England from 1760 to 1775

talking with individuals to try to convince Parliament to rescind the taxes and other restraining acts. <sup>157</sup> Unsuccessful in those efforts he returned to Philadelphia two weeks after the Battles of Lexington and Concord and was chosen as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress. <sup>158</sup> Franklin wrote and presented the first draft of the Articles of Confederation to Congress in July 1775, but it was never formally considered, <sup>159</sup> and served on the committee that drafted the Declaration of Independence. <sup>160</sup> Son William was a militant Loyalist, the last Royal governor of New Jersey, and incarcerated in Connecticut at the time the Declaration of Independence was signed. <sup>161</sup>

At the time Franklin drafted the Declaration of Independence he is reported to have remarked, “Gentlemen, we must now all hang together, or we shall most assuredly all hang separately;” however, there is no proof. The statement is more likely attributed to Richard Penn, former governor of Pennsylvania and member of Congress who remarked “they must hang together: If you do not, gentlemen, I can tell you that you will be very apt to hang separately.” <sup>162</sup>

As Minister to France from 1776-1785, Franklin obtained loans, negotiated treaties of commerce and alliance, and was a member of the committee that negotiated the Treaty of Paris that ended the War for Independence. <sup>163</sup> Benjamin Franklin was also an inventor; his inventions included swim fins, lightning rod, flexible catheter, glass armonica, and bifocals. <sup>164</sup> He also founded or co-founded the first circulating library, volunteer fire department, liberal arts academy, public hospital, and a mutual insurance company. <sup>165</sup> Benjamin Franklin was initiated in St. John’s Lodge, Philadelphia in February 1730/1. <sup>166</sup> He

served as Right Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania in 1734 and 1749<sup>167</sup>

### Charles Humphreys

Charles Humphreys (1714—1786) was born in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.<sup>168</sup> He was a Quaker and did not sign the Declaration of Independence.<sup>169</sup> In 1782, brother Humphreys became the owner of a grist and fulling mill in Delaware County, Pennsylvania.<sup>170</sup> Fulling was a step in woolen clothmaking that removes oils, dirt, and other impurities from the cloth.<sup>171</sup> Charles Humphreys was a member of the lodge that met at the Tun Tavern in Philadelphia<sup>172</sup> and is recorded as a regular member of the lodge.<sup>173</sup>

### Daniel Roberdeau

Daniel Roberdeau (1727—1812) was born in the West Indies, traveled to Philadelphia with his mother and sisters after the death of his father, and completed his education on mercantile business.<sup>174</sup> Roberdeau purchased produce primarily from the West Indies that included sugar, molasses, rum, and Madeira wine.<sup>175</sup> He was elected to the Pennsylvania State Assembly and was influential in arranging peace with Native Americans.<sup>176</sup> In 1775, Roberdeau joined the Pennsylvania Associators, a volunteer militia organized to defend the colony, and was elected colonel of the second battalion.<sup>177</sup> He was later elected brigadier general.<sup>178</sup> The Continental army needed lead to make bullets and initially obtained smelted lead from Europe.<sup>179</sup> Roberdeau discovered lead mines near Franklinton (York County), Pennsylvania<sup>180</sup> and wrote to General Washington in 1778 saying, in part, “permit

me to inform your Excellency that the want of Smelters of lead is the only remora now in the way of supplying your Army in the most speedy & ample manner with that necessary Article, now transported from distant parts of the Continent, from a vein of Ore in this State, within nine miles of the navigation of a branch of Juniata.”<sup>181</sup> The Juniata River is a tributary of the Susquehanna River in central Pennsylvania.<sup>182</sup> Roberdeau Buchanan, a descendant of Brother Roberdeau, wrote in his biography of Daniel Roberdeau, “It may well be noted here that in the whole of General Roberdeau's official life — in the State Assembly, in Congress, and in all the other positions to which he had been called — it is gratifying to be able to say that there has not appeared against him one word of censure or disapproval of the course he pursued. On the contrary, there is evidence of regard for him.”<sup>183</sup> Daniel Roberdeau was a member of First Lodge and was a subscriber paying fifteen pounds to purchase a building in Lodge Alley, Philadelphia.<sup>184</sup>

### Jonathan Bayard Smith

Jonathan Bayard Smith (1742—1812) was born in Philadelphia and was among the earliest to promote the cause of independence.<sup>185</sup> He was chosen secretary of the Committee of Safety in 1775,<sup>186</sup> secretary of provincial conference of Pennsylvania in 1776,<sup>187</sup> and elected as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress in February 1777.<sup>188</sup> Presiding at a public meeting in Philadelphia in December 1777, the Committee of Safety recommended that “every person between the age of 16 and 50 years be ordered under arms.”<sup>189</sup> The same year, Lt. Col. Jonathan B. Smith's Battalion of Philadelphia Militia of about 300 men was ordered to participate in the Brandywine

campaign and mustered at Wilmington, Delaware.

<sup>190</sup> He was a member of the American Philosophical Society, <sup>191</sup> served as a Trustee of Princeton University, <sup>192</sup> and was an active member of the Second Presbyterian Church. <sup>193</sup> Brother Smith was a member of Lodge No. 3 <sup>194</sup> and served as Right Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania from 1789-1794 and 1798-1802 <sup>195</sup>

**New Jersey**

New Jersey ratified the United States Constitution on December 18, 1787. <sup>196</sup> Four of fourteen signers of the Declaration of Independence or U.S. Constitution from New Jersey were Freemasons. None signed the Articles of Association, Olive Branch Petition, and Articles of Confederation.

<b>Signers from New Jersey</b>	
Freemasons	4
All Signers	14
Percent Freemasons	29 percent

<b>Freemason Signers from New Jersey</b>					
<b>Freemason</b>	<b>Articles of Association</b>	<b>Olive Branch Petition</b>	<b>Declaration of Independence</b>	<b>Articles of Confederation</b>	<b>U.S. Constitution</b>
David Brearley					Yes
Jonathan Dayton					Yes
William Paterson					Yes
Richard Stockton			Yes		

David Brearley

David Brearley, Jr. (1745—1790) attended the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), left before graduating to study law, and after acceptance by the bar, opened a practice in Allentown. <sup>197</sup> In 1775, <sup>198</sup> his outspokenness annoyed his neighbors, the British government offered a reward of one hundred pounds for his apprehension,

arrested him for treason, but he was freed by a mob of patriots. <sup>199</sup> Brearley began his military career as a Captain in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment New Jersey Line in 1775 and resigned his commission as Lieutenant Colonel in the New Jersey in June 1779 <sup>200</sup> to become Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New Jersey from 1779-1789. <sup>201</sup>

In 1780 he set precedent in the first known use of judicial review in *Holmes v. Walton*.

The New Jersey legislature passed a law in 1778 to prevent trade and commerce with the enemy, making it lawful to seize goods crossing enemy lines and persecuting the perpetrators. A Monmouth County, New Jersey justice of the peace and jury of six men heard the case and found the defendants (Holmes and Ketcham) guilty of violating the law. The defendants appealed to the New Jersey Supreme Court. Under Chief Justice David Brearley, they ruled in favor of the plaintiffs (Holmes and Ketcham) noting that the legislature had overstepped its authority by requiring a jury of six instead of the constitutional authority of twelve.<sup>202</sup>

President Washington nominated Brearley to serve as the first federal judge for the District of New Jersey and he served for only about one year until his death in August 1790 at age 45.<sup>203</sup> Brother Brearley is presumed to have received his degrees in Military Lodge No. 19 under the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania while serving in Western Pennsylvania in 1776<sup>204</sup> and served as the first Most Worshipful Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New Jersey in 1787<sup>205</sup>

### Jonathan Dayton

Jonathan Dayton (1760—1824) was born in Elizabethtown (now Elizabeth) and graduated from the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) in 1776.<sup>206</sup> He began his military service as Ensign in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment New Jersey Line in 1776, was captured at the Battle of Elizabethtown in October 1780, exchanged after winter imprisonment, and discharged in November 1783.<sup>207</sup> As one of the youngest members of the Constitutional Convention, Dayton maintained a low profile and was part of the group that created the Electoral College to elect the President and a bicameral

legislature.<sup>208</sup> Major William Pierce of Georgia made notes during the Constitutional Convention and wrote, “Capt. Dayton is a young Gentleman of talents, with an ambition to exert them. He possesses a good education and some reading; he speaks well and seems desirous of improving himself in Oratory. Although there is impetuosity in his temper that is injurious to him, there is an honest rectitude about him that makes him a valuable Member of Society, and secures to him the esteem of all good Men.”<sup>209</sup> Dayton was elected to the United States House of Representative in 1791 and served as Speaker for the Fourth and Fifth Congresses. He was elected to the United States Senate in 1799; supported Hamilton’s fiscal program, suppression of the Whiskey Rebellion, Jay’s Treaty, Louisiana Purchase, but opposed the repeal of the Judiciary Act of 1801.<sup>210</sup> On September 7, 1824, Dayton served as Grand Marshall while giving Lafayette a tour of Elizabethtown. Brother Dayton died three weeks later.<sup>211</sup> Jonathan Dayton was probably a member of Temple Lodge No. 1 at Elizabethtown.<sup>212</sup>

### William Paterson

William Paterson (1745—1806) was born in Country Antrim, Ireland, immigrated to the Colony of New Jersey with his family in 1747, attended the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), and was accepted to the bar in 1769.<sup>213</sup> He served Somerset County, New Jersey as secretary of the first, second, and third provincial congresses, and established legislation to transition from a colony to an independent state from 1775-8.<sup>214</sup> Elected to the New Jersey legislative council in 1776-7 and the council of safety in 1777, Paterson prosecuted loyalists and war profiteers.<sup>215</sup> As a member of the Constitutional

Convention Paterson co-authored the New Jersey Plan that proposed a national legislature that would give equal representation to all states to counter the Virginia Plan introduced by Brother Peyton Randolph which based representation on population.<sup>216</sup> After ratification of the United States Constitution, Paterson was elected as one of the first Senators from New Jersey and assisted in drafting the Judiciary Act of 1789 which established the federal court system.<sup>217</sup> He resigned from the Senate in 1790 to serve New Jersey as its second governor where he codified the English statutes that had been in force prior to the Revolution and revised the rules of the chancery and common law courts that was later adopted by the New Jersey legislature.<sup>218</sup> President Washington appointed Paterson as an associate justice to the Supreme Court in March 1793 and he served until his death in 1806.<sup>219</sup> Among the cases heard, he presided over trials of farmers in western Pennsylvania who protested the federal excise tax on whiskey, their principal cash crop; this was the first time the United States Constitution had to be interpreted regarding the use of troops to quell civil disturbances.<sup>220</sup> William Paterson was a member of Trenton Lodge No. 5 and received his degrees in 1791.<sup>221</sup>

### Richard Stockton

Richard Stockton (1730—1781) was born near Princeton, New Jersey, attended Nottingham Academy in Maryland, then the College of New Jersey at Newark, graduating in 1748.<sup>222</sup> He was admitted to the bar in 1754 and received the degree of Sergeant-at-Law in 1763, the highest degree in England common law.

<sup>223</sup> In 1768, Stockton was chosen as a member of the New Jersey royal executive council and in 1774 on the bench of the New

Jersey Supreme Court.<sup>224</sup> He warned Lord Dartmouth of the dangers of ignoring the concerns of the colonists (“An Expedient for the Settlement of the American Disputes”) in December 1774<sup>225</sup> and when that failed, he chose his native country and resigned his royal appointments.<sup>226</sup> In 1776, he was sent to Albany, New York to inspect and report on the state of the northern army, the survivors who straggled back to Fort Ticonderoga after the failed attack on Quebec.<sup>227</sup> Returning home in November 1776, Princeton had been taken by the British, Stockton went to the home of a friend, was captured by local Tories, and imprisoned in New York City.<sup>228</sup> At the time of Stockton’s capture, Admiral Viscount Howe and General William Howe offered a free pardon to all American rebels who would return to their former allegiance within sixty days.<sup>229</sup> Early 1777, Stockton signed a Proclamation paper, “I, Richard Stockton, do promise and declare, that I will remain in a peaceable obedience to his Majesty.....” and was released about a month later.<sup>230</sup> Some biographers suggest that Stockton re-affirmed his allegiance to Great Britain after signing the Declaration of Independence,<sup>231</sup> while others suggest imprisonment damaged his health and he signed to improve his emotional health.<sup>232</sup> Cancer caused his death in February 1781.<sup>233</sup> Brother Stockton was Charter Master of the second St. John’s Lodge at Prince Town (now Princeton) in 1765<sup>234</sup>

### **Georgia**

Georgia ratified the United States Constitution on January 2, 1788.<sup>235</sup> One of the signers of the Declaration of Independence from Georgia was a Freemason.

<b>Signers from Georgia</b>	
Freemasons	1
All Signers	8
Percent Freemasons	13 percent

<b>Freemason Signers from Georgia</b>					
<b>Freemason</b>	<b>Articles of Association</b>	<b>Olive Branch Petition</b>	<b>Declaration of Independence</b>	<b>Articles of Confederation</b>	<b>U.S. Constitution</b>
George Walton			Yes		

George Walton

George Walton (1741—1804) was born possibly in Virginia (three different counties—Frederick, Prince Edward, and Cumberland--have been suggested) in years ranging from 1741 to 1750, lost his parents at an early age, and was raised by relatives.<sup>236</sup> He moved to Georgia, studied law, and in 1774 was admitted to the bar.<sup>237</sup> In 1774, Walton was appointed to the committee that created the Committee of Correspondence to relay news to patriots in the province and correspond with individuals in other colonies.<sup>238</sup> He urged independence, married the daughter of a loyalist, was made a member of the Committee of Safety, later its president, and in February 1776 was elected to the Second Continental Congress.<sup>239</sup> Returning to Savannah in December 1778, he was made a colonel of the First Regiment of the Georgia Militia after the British invaded Georgia.<sup>240</sup> While defending Savannah, Walton was shot from his horse, a cannon ball severely shattered his leg, and he was captured by the British.<sup>241</sup> He received proper care from British surgeons, was transported to a prison in Florida, and exchanged for a British naval

captain after nine months in captivity.<sup>242</sup> Knowing his wife was in danger, Walton sent his wife Dorothy and slaves to sea, but the ship was captured by a British frigate and his wife and slaves were sent to the Island of St. Eustatia in the West Indies.<sup>243</sup> While imprisoned, she refused offers to return to England, was exchanged for two British colonels, and returned to her family.<sup>244</sup> Walton served as chief justice of Georgia from 1783 to 1789,<sup>245</sup> judge of the Superior Court of the Eastern Judicial Circuit in 1789,<sup>246</sup> and appointed to the United States Senate in 1795.<sup>247</sup> George Walton was a member of Solomon’s Lodge in Savannah, Georgia and even though the date of his initiation is unknown, he appears to have retaken his degrees when the lodge was reconstituted in 1785.<sup>248</sup>

**Connecticut**

Connecticut ratified the United States Constitution on January 9, 1788.<sup>249</sup> None of the signers of the founding documents from Connecticut were Freemasons.



<b>Signers from Connecticut</b>	
Freemasons	0
Signers	9
Percent Freemasons	0 percent

### Massachusetts

Massachusetts ratified the United States Constitution on February 6, 1788.<sup>250</sup> Three of the signers of the Articles of Association

Olive Branch Petition Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, or United States Constitution from Massachusetts were Freemasons.

<b>Signers from Massachusetts</b>	
Freemasons	3
All Signers	11
Percent Freemasons	27 percent

<b>Freemason Signers from Massachusetts</b>					
<b>Freemason</b>	<b>Articles of Association</b>	<b>Olive Branch Petition</b>	<b>Declaration of Independence</b>	<b>Articles of Confederation</b>	<b>U.S. Constitution</b>
John Hancock		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Rufus King					Yes
Robert Treat Paine	Yes	Yes	Yes		

### John Hancock

John Hancock (1737—1793) was born in Braintree (now Quincy), Massachusetts, adopted by his wealthy merchant childless uncle after his father died,<sup>251</sup> and graduated

from Harvard College.<sup>252</sup> In 1754, he learned the shipping and import business and inherited one of the largest businesses in New England when his uncle died in 1764.<sup>253</sup> The Hancock's became the primary source for financing military supplies and

equipment for the British military during the French and Indian War.<sup>254</sup> After Parliament passed The Stamp Act in 1765, Hancock as a member of the Provincial Assembly, proposed and adopted non-importation measures that spread to other colonies.<sup>255</sup> An early act of open resistance occurred in 1768 when Hancock's sloop *Liberty* entered Boston harbor in 1768 with Madeira wine and was seized on suspicion of violating revenue laws.<sup>256</sup> The colonists beat the officers with clubs, burned the Collector's boat, and committed other acts of violence giving the royal governor reason to bring British troops into Boston.<sup>257</sup> The Provincial Congress of Massachusetts unanimously elected Hancock their president and a delegate to the First Continental Congress in 1774.<sup>258</sup> He was elected unanimously to succeed Peyton Randolph as Chair of the Second Continental Congress in 1775.<sup>259</sup> Later that year, he learned that British General Gage was enjoying his Madeira wine while living in his house and ransacking his properties and stores.<sup>260</sup> After the War, Hancock repaired his property and business interests which were severely damaged.<sup>261</sup> He served the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as its first and third Governors.<sup>262</sup> John Hancock was a member of Merchants Lodge No. 277 in Quebec in 1762 and affiliated with St. Andrews Lodge in Boston on October 14, 1762.<sup>263</sup>

### Rufus King

Rufus King (1755—1827) was born in Scarborough, Massachusetts (now Scarborough, Maine)<sup>264</sup> and graduated first in his class from Harvard College in 1777.<sup>265</sup> His father, Richard King, a wealthy landowner and Loyalist, supported the unpopular Stamp Act and maintained records of his debtors;

and local Patriots, Sons of Liberty, ransacked the family home in 1766, burning deeds and other securities and demolishing furniture.<sup>266</sup> Following graduation, King studied law and was admitted to the bar in 1780,<sup>267</sup> serving as justice of the peace in 1781<sup>268</sup> and two years later admitted to practice before the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts.<sup>269</sup> In August 1778, King volunteered for militia service and was appointed an aide with the rank of major.<sup>270</sup> He was sworn in as a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives on October 7, 1783,<sup>271</sup> moved to New York City in 1788,<sup>272</sup> and was elected to the United States Senate in 1789.<sup>273</sup> As a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, Shay's Rebellion convinced King of the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation,<sup>274</sup> and he encouraged other members of the benefits of a national union.<sup>275</sup> King participated in drafting "An Ordinance for the Government of the Territory of the United States, North-West of the River Ohio" (Northwest Ordinance) that was passed by the Confederation Congress on July 13, 1787.<sup>276</sup> This document established a government for the Northwest Territory, outlined the process for admitting a new state to the Union, and outlawed slavery in the new territories.<sup>277</sup> King was chosen as one of New York's first senators on July 16, 1789.<sup>278</sup> President Washington appointed King as minister to Great Britain in 1796.<sup>279</sup> He was respected by men of differing political views<sup>280</sup> and ran for President as a Federalist in 1816 receiving 34 electoral votes (3 states) to James Monroe's 183 votes (16 states).<sup>281</sup> He joined St. John's Lodge before 1781.<sup>282</sup>

### Robert Treat Paine

Robert Treat Paine (1731—1814) was born

in Boston, <sup>283</sup> entered Harvard College at the age of fourteen, <sup>284</sup> and graduated in 1749. <sup>285</sup> In 1754 he led a whaling expedition on the sloop Seaflower toward Davis’s Streights, west of Greenland, from Cape Cod. <sup>286</sup> He was admitted to the Massachusetts Bar in 1757, <sup>287</sup> and attended court sessions at York, Portsmouth, Cambridge, Worcester, Plymouth, and Barnstable from his Boston office. <sup>288</sup> In 1761 Paine moved his home and practice to Taunton, Massachusetts, and was chosen as moderator of the town in 1766 and 1768. <sup>289</sup> After the “Affair on King Street” (Boston Massacre) on March 5, 1770, Paine was recruited as another prosecutor of Captain Preston, the eight soldiers, and four civilians accused of murder. <sup>290</sup> At the trial, two of the soldiers were found guilty of manslaughter and had their thumbs branded with the letter “M” to ensure not receiving lenient treatment in the future. <sup>291</sup> In Taunton, Paine chaired the Committee of Vigilance in 1773, <sup>292</sup> elected a member of the Provincial Congress in

1774 and 1775, <sup>293</sup> and unanimously chosen as the first Attorney General of Massachusetts in 1777. <sup>294</sup> As a member of the Second Continental Congress, he chaired the Committee on Ordnance or munitions, urging that gunpowder, muskets, and artillery be manufactured locally, and successfully established several government-controlled mills. <sup>295</sup> In 1790, Brother Governor John Hancock appointed him Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Superior Court <sup>296</sup> and he retired in 1804 due to deafness. <sup>297</sup> Robert Treat Paine is known to be a Freemason even though the location where he received his degrees is unknown. <sup>298</sup>

**Maryland**

Maryland ratified the United States Constitution on April 28, 1788. <sup>299</sup> Two of the signers of the Articles of Confederation or United States Constitution from Maryland were Freemasons.

<b>Signers from Maryland</b>	
Freemasons	2
All Signers	10
Percent Freemasons	20 percent

<b>Freemason Signers from Maryland</b>					
<b>Freemason</b>	<b>Articles of Association</b>	<b>Olive Branch Petition</b>	<b>Declaration of Independence</b>	<b>Articles of Confederation</b>	<b>U.S. Constitution</b>
Daniel Carroll				Yes	Yes
James McHenry					Yes

Daniel Carroll

Daniel Carroll (1730—1796) was born in Maryland, <sup>300</sup> attended the Jesuit school at Bohemia Manor, Maryland, <sup>301</sup> and studied

abroad at the College of St. Omer in Flanders. <sup>302</sup> He grew tobacco and owned 53 slaves. <sup>303</sup> Before the Revolutionary War, Catholics were disqualified from holding office and participating in politics. <sup>304</sup> After

the Maryland constitution nullified these laws on November 11, 1776,<sup>305</sup> Carroll was elected to the Maryland state senate.<sup>306</sup> As a member of the Constitutional Convention, he believed a strong central government was important to regulating commerce among the states and other nations, and he spoke against paying members of Congress by the states believing that the compensation would sabotage the strength of the new government.<sup>307</sup> After the Convention, he became a representative in the First Congress from Maryland,<sup>308</sup> advocated for the present site for a federal city,<sup>309</sup> donated one of his farms and land for this purpose,<sup>310</sup> and laid a cornerstone at Jones Point on the south bank of the Potomac River near Alexandria, Virginia.<sup>311</sup> Carroll later became a business partner with George Washington in the Patowmack Company to build a canal now known as the Potomac Canal to link the middle states with the expanding west.<sup>312</sup> Daniel Carroll received his degrees from Lodge No. 16 in Baltimore, Maryland in 1780 and 1781 and participated with George Washington at the laying of the cornerstone of the National Capitol on September 18, 1793.<sup>313</sup>

### James McHenry

James McHenry (1753—1816) was born in Ballymena, County Antrim, Ireland,<sup>314</sup> received a classical education in Dublin,<sup>315</sup> and immigrated to Philadelphia in 1771.<sup>316</sup> He continued his education at the Newark Academy in Newark, Delaware in 1772<sup>317</sup> before studying medicine in Philadelphia as an apprentice to Dr. Benjamin Rush who opposed British rule and was a future signer of the Declaration of Independence.<sup>318</sup> The Newark Academy was established in 1767 and about 1898 was incorporated as part of the Newark public school system.<sup>319</sup> In

August 1776, he was appointed surgeon of the 5<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Battalion,<sup>320</sup> one of five surgeons and 2,000 others taken prisoner at Fort Washington, New York on November 16, 1776,<sup>321</sup> paroled on January 27, 1777,<sup>322</sup> to his home,<sup>323</sup> and exchanged on March 5, 1778.<sup>324</sup> Paroled prisoners swore an oath to their captors that in return for their freedom, they would return to their homes and families and refuse subsequent military service until the war ended.<sup>325</sup> McHenry was selected in May 1778 to be George Washington's assistant secretary participating in conflicts in Monmouth and Springfield, New Jersey,<sup>326</sup> then transferred to the staff of Marquis de Lafayette during the Battle of Yorktown.<sup>327</sup> McHenry resigned his commission<sup>328</sup> and was elected to the Maryland state senate in 1781.<sup>329</sup> He received a letter from General Washington dated 11 December 1781 who wrote "I am convinced your transition from the military to the civil line will be attended with good consequences, as you will be able to communicate that kind of information to the body of which you are now a member, which they often stand in need of, in times like the present..."<sup>330</sup> He served thirteen years in the Maryland state legislature<sup>331</sup> and was elected on December 2, 1784, to the Second Continental Congress<sup>332</sup> where he supported a strong central government.<sup>333</sup> On January 20, 1796, President Washington again wrote to McHenry "that it would now give me sincere pleasure if you will fill the office of Secretary of War."<sup>334</sup> McHenry accepted<sup>335</sup> and served in that capacity until 1800,<sup>336</sup> improving western garrisons to better protect new frontiers from Indian tribes and persuading Congress to approve the creation of twelve new regiments of regulars in 1798.<sup>337</sup> James McHenry was a member of Spiritual Lodge No. 23 in Maryland and received his degrees in 1806.<sup>338</sup>

**South Carolina**

South Carolina ratified the United States

Constitution on May 23, 1788.<sup>339</sup> One of the signers of the Articles of Confederation from South Carolina was a Freemason.

<b>Signers from South Carolina</b>	
Freemasons	1
All Signers	15
Percent Freemasons	7 percent

<b>Freemason Signer from South Carolina</b>					
<b>Freemason</b>	<b>Articles of Association</b>	<b>Olive Branch Petition</b>	<b>Declaration of Independence</b>	<b>Articles of Confederation</b>	<b>U.S. Constitution</b>
Henry Laurens				Yes	

Henry Laurens

Henry Laurens (1724—1792) was born in Charles Town (now Charlestown), South Carolina,<sup>340</sup> the southernmost major city of British North America in a colony where slavery was prevalent.<sup>341</sup> He was educated in Charles Town,<sup>342</sup> apprenticed to learn the merchant trade in England,<sup>343</sup> and returned to South Carolina in 1747.<sup>344</sup> At this time Charles Town was the busiest port in America<sup>345</sup> and Laurens partnered with George Austin.<sup>346</sup> Austin and Laurens opened an import-export business in Charles Town,<sup>347</sup> importing rum and British mercantile goods,<sup>348</sup> and receiving, cataloging, and marketing slaves at auctions in Charles Town.<sup>349</sup> In 1765, there were about 40,000 Europeans and 90,000 Africans in South Carolina.<sup>350</sup> He became wealthy earning a ten percent commission of each of the 6,900 slaves he sold at the

Charles Town wharves.<sup>351</sup> Tax records suggest he became one of the richest men in America trading slaves, indentured servants, rice, indigo, and deerskins by the time of the Revolution.<sup>352</sup> He owned nearly 300 slaves between his plantation, Mepkin, and other properties.<sup>353</sup> He criticized British involvement in the Colonial economy and often filed lawsuits with Crown judges, signed the Boston Port Bill petition which opposed the Tea Act while in England and established trade contracts with French businesses.<sup>354</sup> In 1775, Laurens served as President of the Provincial Congress and Council of Safety<sup>355</sup> and the following year assisted in writing South Carolina's first constitution.<sup>356</sup> In 1777, he was elected as a delegate to the Second Continental Congress and succeeded John Hancock as President.<sup>357</sup> His contributions during the Revolutionary War involved negotiating with foreign powers.<sup>358</sup> In 1780 he was

captured at sea by the British on his way to the Netherlands,<sup>359</sup> accused of treason,<sup>360</sup> and imprisoned in the Tower of London,<sup>361</sup> the only American to be held there.<sup>362</sup> In 1782, Brother Laurens was exchanged for General Cornwallis<sup>363</sup> who had returned to England as a prisoner of war on parole in January 1782.<sup>364</sup> The terms of Cornwallis' parole was that he could return to Great Britain provided he did not engage in further military action against the United States or its allies.<sup>365</sup> After declaring that he abhorred slavery, Laurens purchased another plantation (Mount Tacitus) and continued to maintain slaves.<sup>366</sup> Among the concerns of releasing the Negroes were fears of a black

rebellion and Great Britain's promise of freedom to those who aided loyalists.<sup>367</sup> Henry Laurens was a member of Solomon's Lodge No. 1 in Charleston, South Carolina, serving as Treasurer in 1755.<sup>368</sup>

### New Hampshire

New Hampshire ratified the United States Constitution on June 21, 1788.<sup>369</sup> Three of the signers of the Articles of Association, Olive Branch Petition, Declaration of Independence, or United States Constitution were Freemasons. None signed the Articles of Confederation.

Signers from New Hampshire	
Freemasons	3
All Signers	8
Percent Freemasons	38 percent

Freemason Signers from New Hampshire					
Freemason	Articles of Association	Olive Branch Petition	Declaration of Independence	Articles of Confederation	U.S. Constitution
Nicholas Gilman.					Yes
John Sullivan	Yes	Yes			
William Whipple			Yes		

### Nicholas Gilman

Nicholas Gilman (1755—1814) was born in Exeter, New Hampshire,<sup>370</sup> attended local public schools,<sup>371</sup> then began his short career as a merchant by being a clerk in his father's trading house.<sup>372</sup> In November 1776 Gilman was appointed adjutant, or administrative officer, of the 3d New Hampshire Regiment<sup>373</sup> and put his administrative skills to use taking raw recruits and Trenton-Princeton

campaign veterans to create a potent fighting force.<sup>374</sup> The New Hampshire company of volunteers participated in the American victory over the British at the two battles of Saratoga (Freeman's Farm and Bemis Heights) in 1777.<sup>375</sup> On January 15, 1778, Gilman received general orders appointing him Assistant to the Adjutant General.<sup>376</sup> He was promoted to Captain in June 1778<sup>377</sup> and transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> New Hampshire Regiment in January 1781.<sup>378</sup> Gilman

participated in the Constitution Convention and assisted in producing compromises to the document that would improve support in each state.<sup>379</sup> Gilman was elected to the First and three succeeding Congresses as a member of the House of Representatives.<sup>380</sup> He accepted an appointment from President Thomas Jefferson as a federal bankruptcy commissioner in 1801.<sup>381</sup> He was elected to the United States Senate in 1805,<sup>382</sup> was re-elected in 1811,<sup>383</sup> and served until he died while returning home on a recess in 1814.<sup>384</sup> Nicholas Gilman became a member of St. John's Lodge No. 1 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire<sup>385</sup> on March 20, 1777.<sup>386</sup>

### John Sullivan

John Sullivan (1740—1795) was born in Somersworth, New Hampshire and began his law practice in Durham. He was elected to New Hampshire's First Provincial Congress in 1774. In December of that year, Major Sullivan led a raid on Fort William and Mary at New Castle, New Hampshire, capturing some cannon and gunpowder.<sup>387</sup> In 1776, Hessians attacked and surround Sullivan's troops in Long Island, capturing him.<sup>388</sup> He was released in a prisoner exchange and rejoined Washington before the Battle of Trenton.<sup>389</sup> In 1779, General Washington wrote to Major General John Sullivan, "The expedition you are appointed to command is to be directed against the hostile tribes of the six nations of Indians, with their associates and adherents. The immediate objects are the total destruction and devastation of their settlements and the capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex as possible. It will be essential to ruin their crops now in the ground and prevent their planting more."<sup>390</sup> This expedition known as the Battle of Newtown (near Elmira, New York) resulted in the

defeat of Loyalists and British-aligned Iroquois.

<sup>391</sup> Sullivan served as Attorney general and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Presidents (Governors) of New Hampshire.<sup>392</sup>

In 1789, President Washington nominated Sullivan, and the United States Senate confirmed his appointment as the first judge to the United States District Court for the District of New Hampshire.<sup>393</sup> Most Worshipful Brother Sullivan was elected First Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New Hampshire on July 16, 1789.<sup>394</sup> However, as he had never been Master of a lodge, St. John's of Portsmouth elected and installed him as Worshipful Master in 1790,<sup>395</sup> and he was duly installed as the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New Hampshire<sup>396</sup>

### William Whipple

William Whipple (1730—1785) was born in Kittery, Massachusetts<sup>397</sup> (now Kittery, Maine). In his early years, he was master of his ship, carrying wood to the West Indies, rum to Africa, and slaves to Portsmouth,<sup>398</sup> and a merchant with his brother.<sup>399</sup> Early in his career, Whipple purchased a black man born in Amabou (Anamabou) (now Ghana) named Prince.<sup>400</sup> "Prince was a name commonly given to slaves who were stripped of their African or Caribbean identity and assigned the owner's surname."<sup>401</sup> Brigadier General Whipple took the slave along with him as he fought in the Revolutionary War.<sup>402</sup> In 1764, he was a member of a committee to prevent tea from being off-loaded at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. He was also appointed a member of the committee of safety. Elected to the Second Continental Congress, Whipple corrected abuses in the commissary

and quartermaster departments while serving as a superintendent.<sup>403</sup> On June 18, 1777, Whipple carried a letter from the Continental Congress to Captain John Paul Jones appointing him to command the ship Ranger and equip the ship for sea as soon as possible.<sup>404</sup> He was appointed brigadier general of the New Hampshire militia and was present at the surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga.<sup>405</sup> in 1778, he participated in retaking Rhode Island where a cannon ball passed into the house where Whipple and other officers were meeting severely wounding an officer’s leg requiring immediate amputation.<sup>406</sup> In 1782, Brother Whipple was appointed “a judge of the superior court of judicature of New Hampshire,”<sup>407</sup> and two years later, “a

justice of the peace and quorum throughout the state,”<sup>408</sup> William Whipple was a member of St John’s Lodge in Portsmouth, New Hampshire and raised on January 2, 1752.<sup>409</sup>

**Virginia**

Virginia ratified the United States Constitution on June 25, 1788.<sup>410</sup> Four of the signers of the Articles of Association, Articles of Confederation, or United States Constitution from Virginia were Freemasons. None signed the Olive Branch Petition or Declaration of Independence.

<b>Signers from Virginia</b>	
Freemasons	4
All Signers	17
Percent Freemasons	24 percent

<b>Freemason Signers from Virginia</b>					
<b>Freemason</b>	<b>Articles of Association</b>	<b>Olive Branch Petition</b>	<b>Declaration of Independence</b>	<b>Articles of Confederation</b>	<b>U.S. Constitution</b>
Thomas Adams				Yes	
John Blair					Yes
Peyton Randolph	Yes				
George Washington	Yes				Yes

Thomas Adams

Thomas Adams (1730—1788) was born in New Kent County, Virginia,<sup>411</sup> a businessman in Henrico County, Virginia,

and later moved to New Kent County where he served as chairman of the Committee of Safety in 1774. After moving to Augusta County, Brother Adams served as a member of the State Senate from 1783-1786.<sup>412</sup>



Thomas Adams was a member of Fredericksburg Lodge, Fredericksburg, Virginia, balloted and admitted on May 29, 1756.<sup>413</sup>

#### John Blair, Jr.

John Blair, Jr. (1732—1800) was a lawyer who became a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1765.<sup>414</sup> In 1772, he served as clerk of the Royal Governor's Council, the upper chamber of the colonial legislature.<sup>415</sup> In 1778, the Virginia legislature appointed him to General Court and a year later became chief justice.<sup>416</sup> In 1780, Blair became Chancellor of the High Court of Chancery and a judge on the Supreme Court of Appeals.<sup>417</sup> A chancery case is administered according to fairness instead of common law and could not be easily decided by existing written laws.<sup>418</sup> Blair made a number of important decisions as a member of the Virginia court of appeals including *Commonwealth vs. Posey* (1787) that established a principle in American law that the accepted judicial understanding of a statute forms a part of the law itself.<sup>419</sup> The United States Senate confirmed President Washington's appointment of Blair as an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court in 1789 where he was involved in important constitutional cases. The 1793 *Chisolm vs. Georgia* case concerned the right of an individual to sue a state. Justice Blair ruled with the majority 4-1 arguing that citizens may sue the federal court of another state.<sup>420</sup> After this case, states' rights advocates encouraged passing the Eleventh Amendment to the United States Constitution to overturn the 1793 ruling.<sup>421</sup> John Blair was initiated in a lodge at the "Crown Tavern" on December 21, 1762,<sup>422</sup> became a charter member of Williamsburg Lodge No. 6,<sup>423</sup> and succeeded Peyton Randolph as Master on

June 7, 1774.<sup>424</sup> Most Worshipful John Blair served as the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Virginia from 1778-1784<sup>425</sup>

#### Peyton Randolph

Peyton Randolph (1723—1775) passed the bar after completing his studies from The Honorable Society of the Middle Temple in London, England<sup>426</sup> in 1742/3.<sup>427</sup> In 1753 the House of Burgesses voted to send Randolph to England to ask unsuccessfully that the fee imposed by the royal governor for affixing the colony's seal to official documents be repealed.<sup>428</sup> He offered to lead a company of one hundred horsemen, the "Gentlemen Associators" to Winchester, Virginia in 1756 when that area was threatened by French and Indians; however, the raid was repulsed making the expedition unnecessary.<sup>429</sup>

On his election to Speaker of the House of Burgesses in 1766, he resigned as Attorney General.<sup>430</sup> In 1774, he was chosen a delegate by the House of Burgesses to attend the First Continental Congress and was elected the first President of the First Continental Congress.<sup>431</sup> He was also elected president of the Second Continental Congress the following year but resigned to preside over what would be the last meeting of the House of Burgesses.<sup>432</sup> Thomas Jefferson wrote, in part, "He was indeed the most excellent man; and none was ever more beloved and respected by his friends: somewhat cold and coy toward strangers, but of the sweetest affability when ripened into acquaintance, of Attic pleasantry in conversation, always good-humored and conciliatory. With a sound and logical head, he was well-read in the law; and his opinions, when consulted, were highly regarded..."<sup>433</sup>

Brother Randolph served as provincial grand master of Virginia in 1774<sup>434</sup> while serving as President of the First Continental Congress<sup>435</sup> and died in Philadelphia on October 22, 1775.<sup>436</sup>

### George Washington

George Washington (1732—1799) was born on the family plantation on Popes Creek in Westmoreland County, Virginia.<sup>437</sup> His father died when he was eleven years old, and very little is known about his childhood.<sup>438</sup> His education was limited to reading, writing, and studying geometry and trigonometry.<sup>439</sup> When his father died, he inherited ten slaves.<sup>440</sup> Washington eventually controlled over 500 slaves at Mount Vernon and his other properties.<sup>441</sup> Even though he had economic and moral concerns about slavery, he never lobbied publicly for abolition and freed the 123 slaves he owned outright in his will.<sup>442</sup> Washington's career as a surveyor began in 1749 when he surveyed the newly formed Culpeper County.

<sup>443</sup> He recognized the importance of the "Forks of the Ohio" as a strategic position because this is where the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers join to form the Ohio River. Three empires—British, French, and Native Americans—claimed this territory.<sup>444</sup> In late 1753, Robert Dinwiddie, Governor of Virginia, sent Major Washington to Fort Le Boeuf (often referred to as Fort de la Rivière au Boeuf)<sup>445</sup> in northwest Pennsylvania in present-day Waterford<sup>446</sup> to deliver a message to the French that they withdraw from the area.<sup>447</sup> Washington delivered the message to the commander of the fort, Jacques Legardeur de Saint- Pierre who responded, in part, "as to the Summons you send me to retire, I do not think myself obliged to obey it;"<sup>448</sup>

Washington was ordered to return to the Ohio country with about one hundred and fifty men in March 1754 and on May 28 killed 13 French soldiers and captured another 21<sup>449</sup> at what was later named Jumonville Glen (in present-day Fayette County, Pennsylvania) in memory of the French commander, Ensign Joseph Coulon de Villiers, Sieur de Jumonville.<sup>450</sup> Washington traveled to Fort Necessity about 7 ½ miles away<sup>451</sup> to re-fortify the structure in anticipation of retaliation by the French.<sup>452</sup> On July 3, he surrendered to an overpowering French force of 500 men and 100 Indians,<sup>453</sup> admitting his assassination of Ensign Jumonville, possibly due to poor translation, that is considered the beginning of the French and Indian War.<sup>454</sup> A year later on July 9, 1755, the British and their Native American allies attacked near present-day Braddock, Pennsylvania.<sup>455</sup> General Braddock was mortally wounded at the Battle of Monongahela and Washington led the retreat back to the British supply train.<sup>456</sup> Based on his experiences in the field, Washington wrote: "Discipline is the soul of an army. It makes small numbers formidable; procures success to the weak and esteem to all."<sup>457</sup>

After the Battles of Lexington and Concord, the Second Continental Congress unanimously elected Washington as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army on June 19, 1775, and he assumed command in Cambridge on July 3, 1775.<sup>458</sup> He preserved his forces, acted decisively when the opportunity of surprise arose, avoided major defeats, and eventually defeated the British at Yorktown in 1781.<sup>459</sup> Washington dismantled the Army, refused a petition for back pay because he believed the military should be subordinate to civilian authority and that loyalty should be to the country, not the Army. The government

under the Articles of Confederation convinced Washington that a strong central authority was essential to realize the political and economic promises of independence. Delegates to the Constitution Convention in 1787 unanimously elected Washington president, and he guided the compromises necessary to complete the document.<sup>460</sup> He was inaugurated president in New York City on April 30, 1789.<sup>461</sup> As president, he supported financial measures to strengthen the stability of the new nation, secured the west through military actions and international treaties, defended the authority of the federal government to suppress the Whiskey Rebellion, and established precedent by refusing to accept a

third term.<sup>462</sup> George Washington received his degrees in the “Lodge of Fredericksburgh” (now Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4), Virginia<sup>463</sup> and served as Charter Master of Alexandria Lodge No. 22 (now Alexandria-Washington Lodge No. 22) on April 28, 1788, under the Grand Lodge of Virginia.<sup>464</sup>

**New York**

New York ratified the United States Constitution on July 26, 1788.<sup>465</sup> One of the signers of the Olive Branch Petition from New York was a Freemason.

<b>Signers from New York</b>	
Freemasons	1
All Signers	14
Percent Freemasons	7 percent

<b>Freemason Signer from New York</b>					
<b>Freemason</b>	<b>Articles of Association</b>	<b>Olive Branch Petition</b>	<b>Declaration of Independence</b>	<b>Articles of Confederation</b>	<b>U.S. Constitution</b>
Robert R Livingston		Yes			

Robert R Livingston

Robert R Livingston (1746—1813) graduated from King’s (now Columbia) College with honor in 1764 at seventeen years.<sup>466</sup> In 1771, after getting his license as attorney and counselor, he was appointed Recorder of New York City.<sup>467</sup> He was one of the committee members that drafted the Declaration of Independence but did not sign for unknown reasons.<sup>468</sup> In 1777, he was appointed the first Chancellor of the State of New York under the new state

constitution and held that position until 1801.<sup>469</sup> Holding this position for such a long time, Brother Livingston became known as “The Chancellor.”<sup>470</sup> After serving in the legislature and Congress, Livingston was appointed Secretary of Foreign Affairs under the Articles of Confederation between August 1781 and August 1783.<sup>471</sup> He administered the oath of office to George Washington when he assumed the Presidency in April 1789.<sup>472</sup> In 1801, President Jefferson appointed Brother Livingston minister to the court of France and negotiated with the ministers of

Napoleon Bonaparte for the purchase of Louisiana, signing the treaty in April 1802.<sup>473</sup> Most Worshipful Brother Livingston served as the third Grand Master of New York from 1784 to 1800<sup>474</sup>

**North Carolina**

North Carolina ratified the United States Constitution on November 21, 1789.<sup>475</sup> Four of the signers of the Articles of Association, Olive Branch Petition, Declaration of Independence, or Articles of Confederation were Freemasons. None signed the United States Constitution.

<b>Signers from North Carolina</b>	
Freemasons	4
All Signers	9
Percent Freemasons	44 percent

<b>Freemason Signers from North Carolina</b>					
<b>Freemason</b>	<b>Articles of Association</b>	<b>Olive Branch Petition</b>	<b>Declaration of Independence</b>	<b>Articles of Confederation</b>	<b>U.S. Constitution</b>
Richard Caswell	Yes				
Cornelius Harnett				Yes	
Joseph Hewes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
William Hooper	Yes	Yes	Yes		

Richard Caswell

Richard Caswell (1729—1787) was born in Joppa, Maryland, a major seaport in Baltimore County.<sup>476</sup> His parents moved to New Bern, North Carolina and at age sixteen he was apprenticed to a surveyor.<sup>477</sup> After his training was completed, he became deputy surveyor general.<sup>478</sup> Caswell served in the colonial assembly from 1754-1776 where he developed and enacted legislation relating to trade and industry, courts, public defense, and humanitarian concerns.<sup>479</sup> He also proposed erecting and establishing a freeschool for every county.<sup>480</sup> In 1773, he was elected as one of three judges of the court of oyer and terminer and general gaol delivery.<sup>481</sup> A commission of oyer and terminer and general gaol delivery tries individuals for treason, felonies, and prisoners in gaol.<sup>482</sup> In December 1773,

Caswell was appointed as a member of the Committee of Correspondence to correspond with committees in other colonies on resisting the Intolerable Acts of Parliament.<sup>483</sup> In 1775, as Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the Provincial Council, Caswell submitted a report on the state of the public funds and recommended issuing bills of credit to individuals from whom taxes were collected.<sup>484</sup> A few days later he was elected Treasurer for the Southern District and was allowed to be one of the Signers of the Public Bills of Credit.

<sup>485</sup> Brother Caswell’s military career began in 1776 when he led 1,000 Patriots to defeat 1,600 British Loyalists at Moore’s Creek Bridge near present-day Wilmington and ended British authority in the colony.

<sup>486</sup> He was sworn in as the first state governor of North Carolina in 1777 and re-elected the next two successive years, the

maximum allowed under the Constitution.<sup>487</sup> In 1780, Caswell supported General Horatio Gates by leading North Carolina militia at the Battle of Camden, South Carolina where Lieutenant General Cornwallis defeated the American forces.<sup>488</sup> After representing Dobbs County in the North Carolina Senate, he was again elected Governor in 1785 and served another three consecutive terms.<sup>489</sup> Richard Caswell was Master of St. John's No. 3 in Kingston, North Carolina in 1787.<sup>490</sup> Most Worshipful Brother Cassell served the Grand Lodge of North Carolina as the second Grand Master in 1788.<sup>491</sup>

### Cornelius Harnett

Cornelius Harnett (1723—1781) was a leading merchant in Wilmington, North Carolina.<sup>492</sup> He was involved in farming and milling and owned and operated the first ferry to connect Brunswick Town and Wilmington across the Cape Fear River.<sup>493</sup> In 1750, he was appointed justice of the peace for New Hanover County and a few months later elected Town Commissioner for Wilmington.<sup>494</sup> He was elected to the House of Burgesses representing Wilmington in 1754 and served in that body through 1775.<sup>495</sup> In 1776, Harnett led four to five hundred men to the Royal Governor and Comptroller in protest of the Stamp Act.<sup>496</sup> In 1776, Brother Caswell notified Harnett, president of the provincial council, that one thousand patriots defeated sixteen hundred Tories at Moore's Creek Bridge.<sup>497</sup> From October 1775 to December 1776, Harnett served as President of the Council of Safety which governed the colony of North Carolina.<sup>498</sup> In 1776, Harnett served as a member of a committee to frame a Constitution and Bill of Rights for the new state government.<sup>499</sup> As a delegate to the Second Continental

Congress, Harnett wrote to his wife through business associate William Wilkinson in December 1777:

Tell Mrs. Harnett (for I forgot to mention it to her) that two or three gallons of pickled oysters would be the greatest rarity she could send me. I have not tasted one since I left home — also a few dried fish of any kind, a dozen or two; even if they stank they would be pleasing. I am heartily tired of eating the flesh of four-footed animals. We can get very little else in this plentiful country that you have so often praised and even bragged of.

Believe me, it is the most inhospitable scandalous place I ever was in....<sup>500</sup>

In 1781, Brother Harnett was taken captive by the British when they invaded Wilmington and imprisoned in a roofless blockhouse that exposed him to winter weather that accelerated his death.<sup>501</sup> Cornelius Harnett was Master of St. John's Lodge No. 1 in Wilmington, North Carolina.<sup>502</sup> Most Worshipful Brother Harnett served the Grand Lodge of North Carolina as the second Grand Master in 1788.<sup>503</sup>

### Joseph Hewes

Joseph Hewes (1730—1779) was born near Kingston, New Jersey,<sup>504</sup> and educated at Princeton.<sup>505</sup> He apprenticed himself to a merchant in Philadelphia in 1749, learning the business from dock laborer to cargo master.<sup>506</sup> He moved to Edenton, North Carolina with his nephew Nathaniel Allen<sup>507</sup> in 1755 and established a prosperous shipping and mercantile business.<sup>508</sup> Hewes joined with George Blair and Charles Worth Blount to create the firm of Blount, Hewes & Blair.<sup>509</sup> The firm owned several vessels and transacted a large amount of business.<sup>510</sup> Hewes owned a shipyard in a small cove in

Edenton Bay at the junction of Granville and Blount Streets<sup>511</sup> and ten slaves in 1777.<sup>512</sup> In 1760, he was elected to the Assembly, appointed to the appropriation and finance committees and discussed originating appropriation bills, auditing accounts of public expenditures, issuing paper currency, collecting quitrent revenue, appointing and instructing provincial treasurers and agents, and structuring the colony's judicial system.<sup>513</sup> From 1760 to 1774, Hewes supported his constituents by sponsoring bills to finance the construction of a courthouse, church, academy in Edenton; reorganize the town's court and tax system, improve navigational aids in Albemarle Sound and Edenton Bay, and regulate the inspection of export through the Port of Roanoke.<sup>514</sup> In December 1773, the North Carolina Assembly organized its first Committee of Correspondence and appointed Hewes as a member.<sup>515</sup> Hewes was named a delegate to the First Continental Congress in August 1774.<sup>516</sup> He returned to Edenton in November 1774 suffering from "intermittent fever and ague" which was most likely malaria.<sup>517</sup> The mosquito-infested swamps surrounding Edenton made malaria a common disease in the area.<sup>518</sup> Hewes wrote on February 11, 1776, in part, "An obstinate ague and fever, or rather an intermittent fever, persecutes me continually. I have no way to remove it unless I retire from Congress and from public business; this I am determined not to do till North Carolina sends another delegate..."<sup>519</sup> On June 14, 1775, the Second Continental Congress made Hewes chairman of the committee to organize a naval force.<sup>520</sup> He commissioned John Paul Jones as a lieutenant and assigned him to the ship *Alfred*.<sup>521</sup> Thirteen frigates were ordered built on December 13, 1775.<sup>522</sup> Some individuals claim that Hewes contributed some or all of his ships to the new naval force, but this writer and another

<sup>523</sup> cannot find any sources documenting the statement.

Returning to the Continental Congress in early 1779, he was appointed to the Treasury and Marine committees.<sup>524</sup> However, ill health forced him to resign on October 29 and he died shortly thereafter at age forty-nine.<sup>525</sup> Joseph Hewes is recorded as a "visiting brother" at Unanimity Lodge in Edenton, North Carolina on December 27, 1776;<sup>526</sup> however, the lodge in which he was raised is unknown.<sup>527</sup>

#### William Hooper

William Hooper (1742—1790) was born in Boston, Massachusetts,<sup>528</sup> graduated from Harvard College in 1760 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree<sup>529</sup> and in 1763 with a Master of Arts Degree.<sup>530</sup> Even though Hooper's father hoped his son would become a minister, his son elected to enter the legal profession.<sup>531</sup> In 1761,<sup>532</sup> Hooper apprenticed himself to James Otis, Jr. further alienating his Loyalist father<sup>533</sup> and observed Otis' famous Writs of Assistance speech in which he attacked some fundamental precepts of British law.<sup>534</sup> He moved to Wilmington, North Carolina in 1764 to begin his practice of law.<sup>535</sup> In 1769, Hooper was appointed Deputy Attorney General in the Salisbury District Court by the British Governor William Tryon<sup>536</sup> and the following year Deputy Attorney General for North Carolina.<sup>537</sup> He supported the Royal Governor in suppressing the Regulators, farmers opposed to excessive taxation, legal fees, and corruption<sup>538</sup> at the Battle of Alamance in May 1771,<sup>539</sup> the first battle of the Revolution.<sup>540</sup> In 1773, he was elected to represent Campbellton (now Fayetteville) in the Colonial Assembly and was soon appointed as a member of the Committee of Correspondence and Inquiry.<sup>541</sup> As a member of the Second Continental

Congress, he prepared the first draft of a resolution calling for a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer.<sup>542</sup> When the British occupied Wilmington in 1781, Royal Navy vessels shelled and burned the Hooper estate of Finian, burned his downtown home, and Hooper and his family relocated to Hillsborough.<sup>543</sup> When the British evacuated Wilmington in November 1781, three of Hooper’s slaves left with the British, one was returned, and one resisted British bribes and evaded sentries to rejoin the Hooper family.<sup>544</sup> After the War, Hooper advocated for Loyalists dealing primarily with confiscated property, but also

included individual rights, collection and payment of debts, and compliance with the Treaty of Paris.<sup>545</sup> William Hooper was a member of Hanover Lodge in Masonborough, North Carolina.  
546

**Rhode Island**

Rhode Island ratified the United States Constitution on May 29, 1790.<sup>547</sup> One of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and Articles of Confederation from Rhode Island was a Freemason.

<b>Signers from Rhode Island</b>	
Freemasons	1
All Signers	5
Percent Freemasons	20 percent

<b>Freemason Signers from Rhode Island</b>					
<b>Freemason</b>	<b>Articles of Association</b>	<b>Olive Branch Petition</b>	<b>Declaration of Independence</b>	<b>Articles of Confederation</b>	<b>U.S. Constitution</b>
William Ellery			Yes	Yes	

William Ellery

William Ellery (1727—1820) was born in Newport, Rhode Island,<sup>548</sup> graduated from Harvard College in 1747,<sup>549</sup> and then learned his father’s mercantile business about shipping and trade.<sup>550</sup> He became Clerk of the Court in 1750, learning about law, writs, deeds, and procedure, and passed the Bar and began his practice in 1770.<sup>551</sup> In August 1765, Ellery was a ringleader of a group of men<sup>552</sup> that hung effigies of three Loyalists (publisher Martin Howard who

defended the Stamp Act, Dr. Thomas Moffat, and stamp master Augustus Johnson)<sup>553</sup> before cutting them down and setting them on fire.<sup>554</sup> He was elected clerk of the Inferior Court of Common Pleas and General Sessions of the Peace in 1768<sup>555</sup> In 1775, Ellery was elected a member of a committee to inspect boats passing from one part of the colony to another<sup>556</sup> and also a member of a committee to direct the commanding officer where to station troops, etc.<sup>557</sup> On July 10, 1776, Ellery wrote a letter to his brother Benjamin Ellery saying

“We have lived to see

a Period which a few years ago no human forecast could have imagined. We have lived to see these Colonies shake off, or rather, declare themselves independent of a State which they once gloried to call their Parent ...”<sup>558</sup> The British occupied Newport from December 8, 1776,<sup>559</sup> and departed with about fifty Tory families in October 1779.<sup>560</sup> Ellery served on the Marine Committee, Board of Admiralty, and was also appointed to a committee to hear appeals from the Admiralty Courts while in Congress from 1776 to 1786.<sup>561</sup> Ellery returned to Newport after their departure and noted it was “a barren city, with shuttered houses, a pillaged library, books burned and commerce practically at a standstill.”<sup>562</sup> Ellery’s home was burned and much of his property was destroyed.<sup>563</sup> He was elected Justice of the Superior Court of Judicature, Court of Assize and General Gaol Delivery in 1780<sup>564</sup> and Chief Judge of the Superior Court of Judicature, Court of Assize and General Gaol Delivery in 1785.<sup>565</sup> President Washington appointed Ellery as the first Collector of the Customs for the Port of Newport, Rhode Island in 1790 and he held the position until his death in 1820.<sup>566</sup> William Ellery was a member of a lodge in Boston, Massachusetts— both First Lodge and St. John’s Lodge are mentioned.<sup>567</sup>

### Conclusion

The Freemasons selected to represent their colonies at the First Continental Congress, Second Continental Congress, and the Constitutional Convention were already leaders in their local communities. Some served on their local committees of correspondence. Some served in the military. Some were merchants and lawyers. All were respected by their peers.

The Continental Association and Olive Branch Petition were attempts to convince Great Britain to acknowledge that the colonists had certain rights. The Declaration of Independence was the formal document the colonists wrote to separate from Great Britain and form a new country. The Articles of Confederation was the first attempt to establish a framework for managing the government. When that failed, the colonists constructed the United States Constitution.

The brief biographies of the accomplishments of these Freemasons do not adequately express their thoughts, feelings, and actions. For example, Brother Benjamin Franklin made a trip to Great Britain in 1764 to discuss the concerns of the colonists with key members of Parliament. Morgan writes “... Franklin was a latecomer to the Americans’ intransigent assertion of rights. Negotiation was more to his taste. But he had believed from the outset that the Americans were right and Parliament was wrong. By 1772 (Franklin had been in London eight years and did not return to Philadelphia until 1775.<sup>568</sup>) he was convinced that an absolute insistence on American rights was the only way to sustain America’s relationship with the country he loved almost as much as his own.”<sup>569570</sup>

I recommend that each of us read biographies of these Brethren to learn more about them and gain a much better appreciation of the sacrifices they made as they progressed from colonists to citizens of the United States of America.



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