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FOURTH OF JULY REFLECTIONS 2003[©]

Robert W. Smiley, Jr., Chairman

To commemorate the continuing significance of the Fourth of July, here are four more reflections about the men who took risks that few had ever experienced by siding with the cause of liberty. While these men did not suffer the same physical dangers and hardships as our previously selected signers, they did put their lives, families, and fortunes on the line just the same, for nothing but the hope of bringing liberty to our land.

The bravery of these men is unquestioned; they demonstrated their willingness to put themselves, their very lives—and their families—and their property—in jeopardy in order to lift from the shoulders of the New World the weighty yoke of bondage to the Old World, to Britain. We, the citizens of the wonderful nation they brought forth for us, can learn from their lives after so many years of living under the most enduring form of government the world has even known. These courageous men reached the conviction that victory would be worth the battle. They knew innocent lives would be lost, perhaps even their own. But they fought—for their freedom, *which is now ours*.

Today, when American History often is only cursorily taught in our public schools, when displays of patriotism have returned from their emotionally charged popularity in the period immediately following September 11, 2001, to often being regarded as something embarrassing, should not we stop to remember where we have come from, and to worry about where we are going? Should we not give more than silent thanks to the men who led us out of domination, to freedom and began the framework of government that has allowed us to remain free and to prosper? We are privileged to live in the nation that is the greatest force for good on the face of this earth. We must neither forget our history nor fail to bravely secure that enduring freedom for those who come after us.

Please enjoy the enclosed reflections on the lives of four more of our Founding Fathers in appreciation for their roles in bringing the United States of America into being, and, as you celebrate Independence Day 2003, make a toast to them and their 52 co-signers of the Declaration of Independence.

FOURTH OF JULY REFLECTIONS
JULY 4, 2003
INDEPENDENCE DAY

William Paca

Born: October 31, 1740, Abington, Maryland

Died: October 23, 1799

William Paca entered this world almost exactly 100 years after his grandfather had arrived in the New World in 1640.

After receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1759 at the College of Philadelphia, Paca pursued a career in law in Annapolis. In 1759 he was a founding member of the Forensic Club there. Paca married well, built a fine home, and entered into an active community life, initially as councilman and then mayor of Annapolis, vestryman of St. Anne's Church, and delegate from Annapolis to the lower house of the General Assembly, from which post he went on to become delegate to the Continental Congress.

Opposition to the Stamp Act in 1764 marked his emergence as a leader, along with Samuel Chase, of the patriot cause in Maryland. His political career really began in 1771 with his appointment to represent his county in the popular branch of the Maryland legislature. Here he looked faithfully after the interests of his constituents, interests which he strongly shared. In that lower, popularly elected legislative assembly he was particularly effective—knowledgeable and bold—in upholding those interests against the upper house, a proprietor-appointed body. Along with Samuel Chase, he wielded great influence bringing the people of Maryland around to the cause of independence. Paca signed the Declaration of Independence on August 2, 1776.

He resigned as delegate to the Continental Congress to become a judge of the Admiralty Court, giving up that position when elected governor of Maryland in November 1782. He was re-elected governor in 1783 and 1784. Later on, after relocating his home, Paca represented his Eastern Shore district in the House of Delegates. In 1787 he refused election to the Constitutional Convention and the following year attended the ratification convention in Baltimore as an Anti-Federalist. George Washington appointed him a Federal district judge in December 1789, and there he remained for the rest of his life.

Reports of Paca's life indicate that he took a considerable interest in young people, in their moral and intellectual improvement and that this dedication continued to the end of his life.

He died at the relatively young age of 58

Samuel Chase

Born: April 17, 1741, Somerset County, Maryland

Died: June 19, 1811, Baltimore

Samuel Chase was born on April 17, 1741, the son of an Episcopal clergyman who was also a fine classical scholar. After completing his study of law at Annapolis, Chase was admitted to the bar in 1761. It was not long before his prominence as a lawyer had led him to become a member of the colonial legislature, where he made his mark by his independence and his strong opposition to the royal governor.

Another of the ultimate Declaration of Independence signers to rally around opposition of the Stamp Act, Chase was prominent in the “Sons of Liberty”, a group of Annapolis Patriots that broke into the public offices, destroyed the stamps and burned the collector in effigy. In 1774 he became one of Maryland’s five delegates to the first Continental Congress and was a member of successive congresses until the end of 1778.

Frustrated when Maryland was not permitted to vote for the break with Britain, Chase took his enthusiasm for the patriots’ cause to Canada, where, along with Charles Carroll and Benjamin Franklin, he made an unsuccessful attempt to get Canada to join the colonies. Returning to Maryland, Chase, along with Carroll, traveled long and hard throughout the area, by horseback, promoting independence at farms and towns throughout the colony. Tirelessly, they assembled meeting after meeting, and organized and encouraged letter writing promoting independence. This campaign ultimately was successful, with the Maryland delegation reversing its position and urging an all out vote in favor of the split from Britain.

To say that Chase returned to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia in time to vote for the resolution is putting it too simply. Actually, he rode 150 miles in only two days, and arrived the very morning of the day on which the resolution was voted! He remained in Congress several years, but went through a cloudy period after being charged in newspapers for trading in flour on inside information. It was ten years before he regained his political prominence. In 1783 the Maryland legislature sent him abroad to recover money that had been invested in the Bank of England before the war. This almost year-long endeavor was successful, and he recovered \$650,000, a truly vast sum in those days.

In ensuing years Chase suffered more business reversals, but assumed judicial offices in Baltimore, rising to the chief judge of the general court of Maryland. He developed into a strong Federalist, and in 1796 President Washington appointed him an associate justice of the Supreme Court. His 15-year career there was a tumultuous one. Admired for his intellectual strength, he was castigated for what had been termed his “bullying” tactics during the sedition trials and his partisan harangues against the Republicans. He suffered impeachment, but was not convicted. Poor health marked the rest of his judicial career, and he died June 19, 1811, at age 70.

Charles Carroll

Born: September 19, 1737, Annapolis, Maryland

Died: November 14, 1832

Born into a wealthy Roman Catholic family, Charles Carroll was sent at age eight to France to attend a Jesuit College at St. Omer. Following his graduation at 17, he continued studying liberal arts and civil law in London and Paris, returning to American shores when he was 28.

Once back in the land of his birth, he immediately took up the radical patriot cause. This was the time of the vehement opposition to the infamous Stamp Act. In 1772 writing anonymously, he challenged the secretary of the Maryland colony over the right of the British government to tax the colonies without representation. In 1773 Carroll attended the first Maryland Revolutionary Convention. As to his advocacy of armed resistance in the cause of separation from the Crown, Carroll and his native colony were not in agreement at first. The first Continental Congress even met without a representative from Maryland.

Carroll served on the first Committee of Safety, at Annapolis, in 1775, and also in the Provincial Congress. While visiting the Continental Congress in 1776, Carroll, along with Benjamin Franklin and Samuel Chase, was sent on a diplomatic mission to establish a union with Canada. Soon after they returned, unsuccessful, Maryland did decide to join the Revolution, and on July 4

Carroll was elected to represent Maryland. He signed the Declaration of Independence, though he had been too late to vote for it. He was the only Catholic signer.

At the same time that he served on the Board of War in the Continental Congress throughout the Revolutionary War, Carroll took part in the framing of Maryland's constitution, and in 1778 he went back to Maryland to participate in forming the state's government. He was elected to the Maryland Senate in 1781 and to the first Federal Congress in 1788. He remained in the State Senate 10 years, from 1790 until his retirement in 1800.

Carroll was the last surviving member of those who signed the Declaration of Independence. He died November 14, 1832, at the age of 95.

Thomas Stone

Born: 1743, Poynton Manor, Charles County, Maryland

Died: October 5, 1787, Alexandria, Virginia

Thomas Stone is one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence about whom considerably less is known than most others, as no documentation of his life in the form of letters or papers accounting his life have ever been discovered.

Against his father's wishes, Stone pursued the study of Greek and Latin. So great was his desire for this learning that he rode more than 10 miles to school each way daily, on horseback. Having acquired this classical education, he did then go on to acquire knowledge in a more practical field: law. Stone was admitted to the bar in 1764 and initially practiced in Fredericktown. Stone's first involvement with politics began in 1773 when he served as a member of the committee of correspondence in Charles County.

He had married at 25, and early in his marriage things did not go well for him financially. Despite how well off his father was, Stone had to borrow money for his education. Though a substantial landowner, Stone's land had poor soil, and farming was not lucrative. He also had the responsibility of supporting his four younger brothers in addition to his own family, a wife and three children. Eventually, though, Stone's law practice succeeded, and he took his seat in the Maryland delegation to the Continental Congress in May 1775, achieving re-election the following year.

In Congress, Stone came across as less zealous than some of the other men, as he was not a speechmaker. Also, he's reported to have been in favor of some sort of reconciliation with England. Yet, he was a member of the committee that framed the Articles of Confederation, and he did sign the Declaration of Independence, affirming this quiet man's judgment and courage.

Stone resigned from the Continental Congress to serve in the Maryland State Senate, but returned to Congress in 1783, where he served as president for nearly a year, and then retired at the end of his term.

In 1787 Stone's wife died from complications of a small pox inoculation. Stone had been elected to attend the Constitutional Convention in 1785, but turned down the office due to his wife's illness. Her illness and death depressed Stone beyond his endurance, and his own health began to fail. He died October 5, 1787, in Alexandria, Virginia, where he was waiting to take a doctor-advised sea voyage. He was only 45 years old.