

Maryland Biographical Gazetteer

The following sketches outline the political careers of the principal Maryland leaders who participated in the process of ratifying the U.S. Constitution. Their political positions are indicated on the Constitution in 1787 and 1788 (Antifederalist or Federalist). Inclusive years, especially for state offices, reflect periods of repeated, not successive, office-holding. The exception to this practice is delegates in Congress, where inclusive years reflect only delegates' actual attendance for any portion of the years listed.

CARROLL, CHARLES, OF CARROLLTON (1737–1832)

Federalist

Born, Annapolis, Anne Arundel County. Catholic. Planter, landlord, moneylender, and philanthropist. Resided, Annapolis and "Doughoregan Manor," Anne Arundel County. Attended Jesuit academy in Cecil County, 1747; Jesuit College of St. Omer, France, 1749–53; College of French Jesuits, Rheims, France, 1754; College of Louis-le-Grand, Paris, France, 1755–57. Studied law at Bourges and Paris, 1757–59, and in Middle Temple, London, 1759–64. Member, Committee of Correspondence, 1774. Member, 2nd–5th, 6th, 8th Conventions, Anne Arundel County; 9th Convention, Annapolis. With Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Chase, and Rev. John Carroll, travelled to Canada to seek Canadian support for the revolutionary cause, 1776. Delegate, Continental Congress, 1776, 1777–78. Signed the Declaration of Independence. State senator, Western Shore, 1777–1800 (multiple sessions as president). U.S. senator, 1789–92; resigns, 1792. Introduced bill for gradual abolition of slavery in Md. Senate, 1797. One of the wealthiest men in colonial and early national America.

CARROLL, DANIEL (1730–1796)

Federalist

Born, Upper Marlboro, Prince George's County. Catholic. Planter and merchant. Resided, Rock Creek Parish, Forest Glen, Montgomery County. Attended, Jesuit academy in Cecil County; Jesuit College of St. Omer, France, 1742–48. Cousin of Charles Carroll of Carrollton; brother of John Carroll, first U.S. Catholic bishop and archbishop. Member, Maryland Executive Council, 1777–81. State senator, Western Shore, 1781–90 (multiple sessions or parts of sessions as president). Delegate, Continental and Confederation congresses, 1781–83. Delegate, Constitutional Convention 1787; signs Constitution. U.S. representative, 1789–91. Surveyor, District of Columbia. Member, Board of Commissioners, District of Columbia, 1791–95.

CHASE, SAMUEL (1741–1811)

Antifederalist

Born near Princess Anne, Somerset County. Anglican. Lawyer. Resided, Baltimore City. Studied the classics at home and read law under John Hall. Represented Annapolis in the Lower House, 1765–66, 1777, 1779–83, 1784–85; Anne Arundel County, 1768–71, 1773–74, 1786–87; and Baltimore Town, 1787–88. Member, Committee of Correspondence, 1773–75. Represented Anne Arundel County in the 1st–6th, 8th–9th Conventions, 1774–76. Delegate, Continental Congress, 1774–78. Signed the Declaration of Independence. With Benjamin Franklin, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and Rev. John Carroll, travelled to Canada to seek Canadian support for the revolutionary cause, 1776. Anne Arundel County dele-

gate to state Convention, where he voted against ratification. Judge, Md. General Court, 1791–96 (resigned). Associate justice, U.S. Supreme Court, 1796–1811. Impeached by U.S. House of Representatives for alleged judicial improprieties, 1804; acquitted by U.S. Senate, 1805.

HANSON, ALEXANDER CONTEE (1749–1806)

Federalist

Born, Charles County. Protestant. Lawyer. Resided, Frederick County and Annapolis. Attended, College of Philadelphia. Studied law. Committee of Observation, Frederick County, 1774–1775. Represented Frederick County in the 1st Convention, 1774. Assistant private secretary to Gen. George Washington, 1776. Clerk of state Senate, 1777–78. Judge, Md. General Court, 1778–89. Compiler, *Laws of Maryland* (Annapolis, 1787). Under pseudonym “Aristides” wrote pamphlet in support of the U.S. Constitution (Annapolis, 1788). Represented Annapolis in the state Convention, 1788, voted to ratify. Chancellor and judge, Md. Land Office, 1789–1806. Presidential elector, 1789, 1792.

JENIFER, DANIEL OF ST. THOMAS (1723–1790)

Federalist

Born, Charles County. Anglican. Planter and merchant. Resided, “Stepney” (near Annapolis), Anne Arundel County. Member, commission to negotiate boundary dispute with Pa. and Del., 1760. Represented Charles County in the Lower House, 1756–57. Member, Upper House, 1771, 1773–74. State senator, Western Shore, 1777–81 (president, 1777–80, 1781). Delegate, Continental Congress, 1779, 1780, 1781. Unsuccessful candidate for governor, 1782, 1785. Delegate, Constitutional Convention, 1787, signed Constitution.

JOHNSON, THOMAS (1732–1819)

Federalist

Born, near St. Leonard’s Creek, Calvert County. Anglican. Lawyer and ironworks owner in partnership with his brothers. Resided, “Richfield” and “Rose Hill,” Frederick County. Read law with Stephen Bordley. Represented Anne Arundel County in the Lower House, 1762–63, 1765–66, 1768–70, 1773–74, and 1st–8th Conventions, 1774–76; and Caroline in the 9th Convention, 1776. Delegate, Continental Congress, 1774–76. Brigadier general, Md. militia, 1776–77. State senator, Western Shore, 1777. Governor, 1777–79. Represented Frederick County in the House of Delegates, 1786–88. Represented Frederick County in the state Convention, 1788, voted to ratify. Elected governor, 1788, but declined to serve. Chief judge, Md. General Court, 1790–91. Associate justice, U.S. Supreme Court, 1791–93 (resigned). Member Board of Commissioners, District of Columbia, 1791–94.

MCHENRY, JAMES (c. 1752–1816)

Federalist

Born, County Antrim, Ireland. Presbyterian. Merchant and land developer. Immigrated to Philadelphia, 1771, and then to Baltimore Town, 1781. Resided, Baltimore Town and County. Attended, Newark Academy, Del., and then studied medicine with Dr. Benjamin Rush, c. 1774–75. Continental Army surgeon, 1776–78. Assistant secretary, Gen. George Washington, 1778–80. Major and aide-de-camp to Gen. Lafayette, 1780–81. State senator, Western Shore, 1781–84, 1791–95. Delegate, Confederation

Congress, 1783–84. Delegate, Constitutional Convention 1787, signs Constitution. Represented Baltimore Town in the state Convention, 1788, voted to ratify; and the House of Delegates, 1788–89. U.S. Secretary of War, 1796–1800. Member, Society of the Cincinnati and American Philosophical Society.

MARTIN, LUTHER (1748–1826)

Antifederalist

Born, New Brunswick, N.J. Anglican. Schoolmaster, 1767–71, and lawyer. Resided, Baltimore Town. Graduate, College of New Jersey (Princeton), c. 1776. Studied law. Md. attorney general, 1778–1805, 1818–22. Delegate, Constitutional Convention 1787; left early; opposed Constitution. Wrote numerous essays against ratification of the Constitution, 1787–88. Represented Harford County in the state Convention, 1788, voted against ratification. Counsel for the defense in Samuel Chase's impeachment trial, 1804, and in Aaron Burr's treason trial, 1807.

MERCER, JOHN FRANCIS (1759–1821)

Antifederalist

Born, "Marlborough Point," Stafford County, Va. Anglican. Lawyer and planter. Moved to Md., 1785. Resided, "West River Farm," Anne Arundel County, Md. Graduate, College of William and Mary, 1775. Studied law with Thomas Jefferson, 1779, and at William and Mary, 1782–83. In Continental Army, 1776–79, rising in rank to major; Lt. colonel, Va. militia, 1780–81. Virginia Delegate to Confederation Congress, 1783–84. Represented Anne Arundel County in the House of Delegates, 1788, 1791–92, 1800, 1803–5. Delegate, Constitutional Convention, 1787; left early; opposed Constitution. Represented Anne Arundel County in the state Convention, 1788, voted against ratification. U.S. representative, 1792–94. Md. governor, 1801–3.

PACA, WILLIAM (1740–1799)

Antifederalist

Born, near Abingdon (on the Bush River), Baltimore County (later Harford). Anglican. Lawyer and planter. Resided, "Wye Hall" on Wye Island, Queen Anne's County. Attended, Academy and Charity School of Philadelphia, 1752–56. Graduate, College of Philadelphia, 1759; studied law with Stephen Bordley, 1759–60, and at Inner Temple, London, 1761. M.A., College of Philadelphia, 1762. Represented Annapolis in the Lower House, 1768–70, 1771, 1773–74; Anne Arundel County in the 1st–3rd, 5th Conventions, 1774, 1775–76; Annapolis in the 9th Convention, 1776; and Queen Anne's County in the House of Delegates, 1786–87. Delegate, Continental Congress, 1774–78. Signed the Declaration of Independence. State senator, Western Shore, 1777; Eastern Shore, 1779–80. Judge, U.S. Court of Appeals for Admiralty and Prize Cases, 1780. Md. governor, 1782–85. Member, Executive Council, 1786. Represented Harford County in the state Convention, 1788, where he proposed amendments but voted for ratification. Judge, Federal District Court of Md., 1789–99.

PLATER, GEORGE (1735–1792)

Born, "Sotterly," St. Mary's County. Anglican. Planter. Resided, "Sotterly." Graduate, College of William and Mary, 1752. Represented St. Mary's County in the Lower House, 1757–61, 1762–63, 1765–66. Member, Council, 1771–74. Member, Upper House, 1771, 1773–74. Represented St. Mary's County in

the 7th, 8th, 9th Conventions, 1776. State senator, Western Shore, 1777–79, 1780–88, 1790 (president, 1781–82, 1784–88, 1790). Delegate, Continental Congress, 1778–80. Represented St. Mary's County in the state Convention, 1788, president, voted to ratify. Md. governor, 1791–92.