



*We hold these truths to be self-evident  
that all men are created equal*

# PORTRAITS OF FREEDOM

**THE PATRIOTS WHO INSURED  
OUR NATION'S FUTURE**

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**W**hether aristocrat, lawyer, farmer, or shopkeeper, fifty-six ordinary men achieved something extraordinary when the Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776. The British called the document treasonous, and the signatories traitors—signing it was an act punishable by death. Some signers lost their homes in the ensuing Revolutionary War. Others were left without their livelihoods. All had put their lives on the line.

The Declaration wasn't just a blueprint for revolution; it helped to secure the future of the United States and became the mission statement for world democracy. We're all familiar with the famous signers of the Declaration. Here are stories of some of the lesser-known, ordinary heroes who declared our nation's future.

## | CONNECTICUT |

### *The Farmer*

**SAMUEL HUNTINGTON** (1731–1796)

Born on a farm and the fourth of ten children, Huntington was apprenticed to a cooper [or barrel-maker]. He was educated by a local preacher—and married the preacher's daughter, Martha Devotion. He eventually taught himself the law. As President of the Continental Congress, Huntington was key to the ratification of the Articles of Confederation.

*Sam<sup>d</sup> Huntington*

### *The Shoemaker*

**ROGER SHERMAN** (1721–1793)

Even though his parents were unable to provide him with a formal education, Sherman read and studied widely. He opened a shoe store and published a popular almanac. He is the only person to have signed all four basic documents of the United States: the Articles of Association, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution.

*Roger Sherman*



THOMAS

## | DELAWARE |

### *The Reluctant Patriot*

**GEORGE READ** (1733–1798)

Read, a conservative lawyer, may have opposed such measures as the Stamp Act, but he voted against independence, creating a deadlock with fellow representative Thomas McKean. Caesar Rodney had to cast the decisive vote for Delaware. Ultimately, Read did sign the Declaration once it was adopted.



### *The Midnight Rider*

**CAESAR RODNEY** (1728–1784)

Considered a radical in his home colony, Rodney was no stranger to being an outsider: his face was disfigured by skin cancer, and he often wore a green silk scarf to conceal it. He took an eighty-mile midnight ride to Philadelphia in a thunderstorm to ensure that the bid for independence had Delaware's full support.



## | GEORGIA |

### *The Street Fighter*

**BUTTON GWINNETT** (1735–1777)

After signing the Declaration, Gwinnett served in the Georgia legislature and ran unsuccessfully for Governor of Georgia. He challenged his political opponent, Lachlan McIntosh, to a notorious duel—both were wounded, and Gwinnett died three days later. His autograph is among the most valuable in the world.



### *The P.O.W.*

**GEORGE WALTON** (1741–1804)

Colonel Walton commanded a battalion under General Robert Howe's army when the British took Savannah. He was wounded and taken prisoner by the British, then freed in exchange for a British Navy captain. He later served as Governor of Georgia and filled an unexpired term in the Senate.





## MARYLAND

### *Last Man Standing*

#### **CHARLES CARROLL** (1737–1832)



At the time of his death, Carroll was the last surviving signer of the Declaration. He was also one of the richest men in the colonies; when he signed his name to the Declaration, someone is supposed to have said, “There go a few millions.” Carroll turned down a senatorial office in favor of the state legislature. He was also an early industrialist who helped found the B&O Railroad.

### *The Unimpeachable*

#### **SAMUEL CHASE** (1741–1811)



Chase was educated at home and became a lawyer at age twenty. Along with Benjamin Franklin, he tried unsuccessfully to convince Canada to join the Revolution. He was later appointed to the Supreme Court. The only Justice to have been impeached by Congress, his acquittal is thought to have guaranteed an independent judiciary.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### *The Rebel Rouser*

#### **SAMUEL ADAMS** (1722–1803)



An outspoken advocate of dissent against the British, Adams garnered numerous supporters for independence. In fact, when Britain offered rebellious patriots a general pardon in 1775, he and John Hancock were noticeably excluded. Adams developed his ideas about freedom while studying the theories of John Locke at Harvard.

### *The Paradox*

#### **ELBRIDGE GERRY** (1744–1814)



Gerry was often a man of two conflicting opinions. He advocated better pay for soldiers, yet vacillated on pensions. He approved of a strong central government, yet refused to sign the Constitution. It's ironic that the man who disliked compromise presided as chairman of the committee that produced the Great Compromise.





## NEW HAMPSHIRE

*The Self-made Man*

**JOSIAH BARTLETT** (1729–1795)



With only a rudimentary classical education, Bartlett established a successful medical practice in Kingston, New Hampshire, and was appointed to that state's Supreme Court in 1782 despite not being a lawyer. His support of the patriots presumably led to the burning of his house by the Tories.

*The Idealist*

**MATTHEW THORNTON** (1714–1803)



Known for his intellectual acumen as well as his talent as a storyteller, Thornton, a surgeon, took an active part in the overthrow of the royal government in New Hampshire. His passion for justice continued in his later years, when he retired to his farm and wrote political essays.

## NEW JERSEY

*The Satirist*

**FRANCIS HOPKINSON** (1737–1791)



A lawyer, poet, composer, and essayist, Hopkinson was renowned for his sense of humor. His satires of the British, notably his ballad “The Battle of the Kegs,” were extremely popular. Increasingly, scholars credit him with having helped to design the American flag.

*The Preacher*

**JOHN WITHERSPOON** (1723–1794)



The Scottish-born Witherspoon was forty-five when he immigrated to America to head up the College of New Jersey (now Princeton). He'd been a Presbyterian minister and a supporter of the Stuarts against the Tudor kings. After the Revolution, Witherspoon restored the war-torn campus with his own funds.





## NEW YORK

### *The Patrician*

**PHILIP LIVINGSTON** (1716–1778)



In the days before independence, four members of the Continental Congress were from the prominent Livingston family. However, Philip was the only family member present when the Declaration was signed. His patriotic spirit was so strong that he continued attending sessions of the Continental Congress even in ill health.

### *The Unexpected Patriot*

**LEWIS MORRIS** (1726–1798)



It was a surprise to many that a wealthy man such as Morris would support the Revolution. He had shown little interest in politics until his opposition to British policies led to his election to the Continental Congress. He signed the Declaration even as the British Army was about to destroy his estate.

## NORTH CAROLINA

### *The Pro-War Pacifist*

**JOSEPH HEWES** (1730–1779)



Quakers are noted for their pacifism, but Hewes, the only Quaker in the Continental Congress, was one of the strongest, most persuasive supporters of independence. After breaking ties with his church, he became the first Secretary of the Navy and a key military leader.

### *The Black Sheep*

**WILLIAM HOOPER** (1742–1790)



One of North Carolina's leading attorneys, Hooper was elected a delegate to the legislature in 1774. He was a staunch supporter of American liberty, much to the chagrin of his many loyalist friends and relatives. Outwardly calm and unflappable, Hooper was known to have a fondness for drinking, which may have exacerbated his declining health at a relatively young age.



## PENNSYLVANIA

### *The Protester*

**GEORGE CLYMER** (1739–1813)



One of the first patriots to advocate complete independence from Britain, Clymer led the demonstrations in Philadelphia against the Tea Act and the Stamp Act, and during the war helped supply the army with gunpowder. He was a revenue officer in Pennsylvania during the Whiskey Rebellion.

### *The Money Manager*

**ROBERT MORRIS** (1734–1806)



After successfully raising capital for the Continental Army, which ultimately enabled George Washington to win the war, Morris was a shoo-in for Secretary of the Treasury in 1781. He immediately initiated the creation of a national bank, which became the Bank of North America. He died in relative poverty, after a stint in debtor's prison.

## RHODE ISLAND

### *The Late Bloomer*

**WILLIAM ELLERY** (1727–1820)



**Twenty years after graduating from Harvard, Ellery discovered a passion for politics and law. He led a march through Providence in opposition to the Stamp Act, and by 1785 had become an abolitionist. Charismatic and witty, Ellery often wrote epigrams about his colleagues while they were speaking.**

### *The Freethinker*

**STEPHEN HOPKINS** (1707–1785)



While serving in the Rhode Island Assembly in 1774, Hopkins made his mark on history when he introduced what became the first antislavery bill in the United States. He suffered from cerebral palsy, which explains why his is the only unsteady signature on the Declaration.



## | SOUTH CAROLINA |

### *The True Believer*

**ARTHUR MIDDLETON** (1742–1787)



Though an aristocrat, Middleton was a strong supporter of the Revolution, to the point of advocating the tarring and feathering of loyalists. In 1778, he was offered the governorship of South Carolina but turned it down. During the Revolution, the British imprisoned him and much of his property was destroyed.

### *The Youngest Patriot*

**EDWARD RUTLEDGE** (1749–1800)



At twenty-six, Rutledge was the youngest signer of the Declaration. He fought in the Revolutionary War and was captured by the British. Later, he became a senator and a governor. Interestingly, Rutledge had argued against the Declaration, but signed it in the name of unity.

## | VIRGINIA |

### *The Pressured Peer*

**CARTER BRAXTON** (1736–1797)



A wealthy man who married into more wealth, Braxton lived in splendor until the Revolution. During the war, the British destroyed his ships and several of his plantations. Under a cloud of lawsuits, he had to sell many of his belongings.

### *The Murder Victim*

**GEORGE WYTHE** (1726–1806)



The first law professor in the United States, Wythe was Thomas Jefferson's teacher. He was also an abolitionist slaveholder. When he freed his slaves and provided for their support, Wythe's heir tried to poison them with arsenic. Accidentally, however, he also killed Wythe, who lived long enough to change his will. His killer was acquitted because African-American witnesses to the poisoning couldn't testify in court.





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