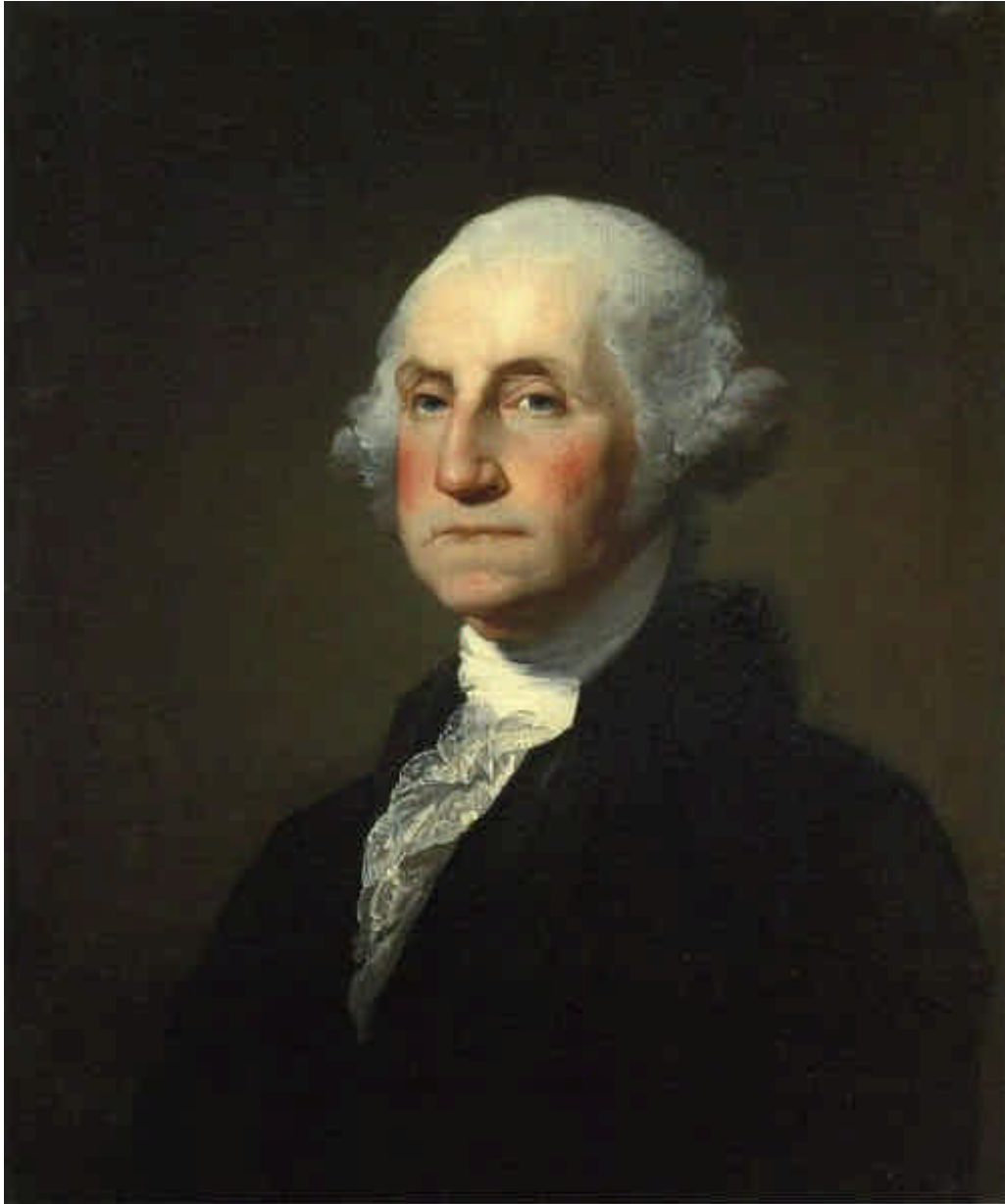


Hail to the other chiefs

A brief history of US Presidents you haven't heard of



Was George Washington the first President of the United States of America? The answer is no, he was not. George Washington was the first president under the U.S. Constitution. Someone had to run the country before the constitution was ratified. The U.S. had a running government as early as mid-1774. This document is about those men who did run the country before Old George.

Peyton Randolph



When delegates gathered in Philadelphia for the first Continental Congress, they promptly elected the former King's Attorney of Virginia as the moderator and president of their convocation. He was a propitious choice. He was a legal prodigy—having studied at the Inner Temple in London, served as his native colony's Attorney General, and tutored many of the most able men of the South at William and Mary College—including the young Patrick Henry. His home in Williamsburg was the gathering place for Virginia's legal and political gentry—and it remains a popular attraction in the restored colonial capital. He had served as a delegate in the Virginia House of Burgesses, and had been a commander under William Byrd in the colonial militia. He was a scholar of some renown—having begun a self-guided reading of the classics when he was thirteen. Despite suffering poor health, he served the Continental Congress as president twice—in 1774 from September 5 to October 21, and then again for a few days in 1775 from May 10 to May 23. He never lived to see independence, yet was numbered among the nation's most revered founders.

Henry Middleton



America's second elected president was one of the wealthiest planters in the South, the patriarch of the most powerful families anywhere in the nation. His public spirit was evident from an early age. He was a member of his state's Common House from 1744-1747. During the last two years, he served as the Speaker. During 1755, he was the King's Commissioner of Indian Affairs. He was a member of the South Carolina Council from 1755-1770. His valor in the War with the Cherokees during 1760-1761 earned him wide recognition throughout the colonies—and demonstrated his cool leadership abilities while under pressure. He was elected as a delegate to the first session of the Continental Congress and when Peyton Randolph was forced to resign the presidency, his peers immediately turned to Middleton to complete the term. He served as the fledgling coalition's president from October 22, 1774 until Randolph was able to resume his duties briefly beginning on May 10, 1775. Afterward, he was a member of the Congressional Council of Safety and helped to establish the young nation's policy toward the encouragement and support of education. In February 1776, he resigned his political involvements in order to prepare his family and lands for what he believed was inevitable war—but he was replaced by his son Arthur who eventually became a signer of both the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation, served time as an English prisoner of war, and was twice elected Governor of his state.

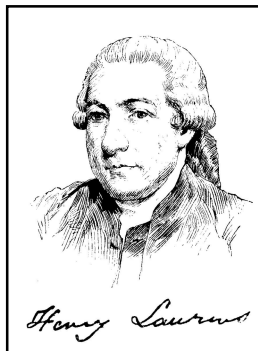
John Hancock



The third president was a patriot, rebel leader, and merchant who signed his name into immortality in giant strokes on the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The boldness of his signature has made it live in American minds as a perfect expression of the strength and freedom—and defiance—of the individual in the face of British tyranny. As President of the Continental Congress during two widely spaced terms—the first from May 24 1775 to October 30 1777 and the second from November 23, 1785 to June 5, 1786—Hancock was the presiding officer when the members approved the Declaration of Independence. Because of his position, it was his official duty to sign the document first—but not necessarily as dramatically as he did. Hancock figured prominently in another historic event—the battle at Lexington: British troops who fought there April 10, 1775, had known Hancock and Samuel Adams were in Lexington and had come there to capture these rebel leaders. And the two would have been captured, if they had not been warned by Paul Revere. As early as 1768, Hancock defied the British by refusing to pay customs charges on the cargo of one of his ships. One of Boston's wealthiest merchants, he was recognized by the citizens, as well as by the British, as a rebel leader—and was elected President of the first Massachusetts Provincial Congress. After he was chosen

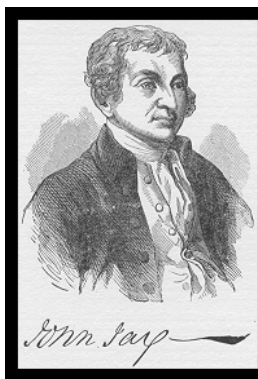
President of the Continental Congress in 1775, Hancock became known beyond the borders of Massachusetts, and, having served as colonel of the Massachusetts Governor's Guards he hoped to be named commander of the American forces—until John Adams nominated George Washington. In 1778, Hancock was commissioned Major General and took part in an unsuccessful campaign in Rhode Island. But it was as a political leader that his real distinction was earned—as the first Governor of Massachusetts, as President of Congress, and as President of the Massachusetts constitutional ratification convention. He helped win ratification in Massachusetts, gaining enough popular recognition to make him a contender for the newly created Presidency of the United States, but again he saw Washington gain the prize. Like his rival, George Washington, Hancock was a wealthy man who risked much for the cause of independence. He was the wealthiest New Englander supporting the patriotic cause, and, although he lacked the brilliance of John Adams or the capacity to inspire of Samuel Adams, he became one of the foremost leaders of the new nation—perhaps, in part, because he was willing to commit so much at such risk to the cause of freedom.

Henry Laurens



The only American president ever to be held as a prisoner of war by a foreign power, Laurens was heralded after he was released as "the father of our country," by no less a personage than George Washington. He was of Huguenot extraction, his ancestors having come to America from France after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes made the Reformed faith illegal. Raised and educated for a life of mercantilism at his home in Charleston, he also had the opportunity to spend more than a year in continental travel. It was while in Europe that he began to write revolutionary pamphlets—gaining him renown as a patriot. He served as vice-president of South Carolina in 1776. He was then elected to the Continental Congress. He succeeded John Hancock as President of the newly independent but war beleaguered United States on November 1, 1777. He served until December 9, 1778 at which time he was appointed Ambassador to the Netherlands. Unfortunately for the cause of the young nation, he was captured by an English warship during his cross-Atlantic voyage and was confined to the Tower of London until the end of the war. After the Battle of Yorktown, the American government regained his freedom in a dramatic prisoner exchange—President Laurens for Lord Cornwallis. Ever the patriot, Laurens continued to serve his nation as one of the three representatives selected to negotiate terms at the Paris Peace Conference in 1782.

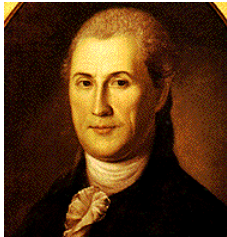
John Jay



America's first Secretary of State, first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, one of its first ambassadors, and author of some of the celebrated Federalist Papers, Jay was a Founding Father who, by a quirk of fate, missed signing the Declaration of Independence—at the time of the vote for independence and the signing, he had temporarily left the Continental Congress to serve in New York's revolutionary legislature. Nevertheless, he was chosen by his peers to succeed Henry Laurens as President of the United States—serving a term from December 10, 1778 to September 27, 1779. A conservative New York lawyer who was at first against the idea of independence for the colonies, the aristocratic Jay in 1776 turned into a patriot who was willing to give the next twenty-five years of his life to help establish the new nation. During those years, he won the regard of his peers as a dedicated and accomplished statesman and a man of unwavering principle. In the Continental Congress, Jay prepared addresses to the people of Canada and Great Britain. In New York, he drafted the State constitution and served as Chief Justice during the war. He was President of the Continental Congress before he undertook the difficult assignment, as ambassador, of trying to gain support and funds from Spain. After helping Franklin, Jefferson, Adams, and Laurens complete peace negotiations in Paris in 1783, Jay returned to become the first Secretary of State, called "Secretary of Foreign Affairs" under the Articles of Confederation. He negotiated valuable commercial treaties with Russia and Morocco, and dealt with the continuing controversy with Britain and Spain over the southern and western boundaries of the United

States. He proposed that America and Britain establish a joint commission to arbitrate disputes that remained after the war—a proposal which, though not adopted, influenced the government's use of arbitration and diplomacy in settling later international problems. In this post, Jay felt keenly the weakness of the Articles of Confederation and was one of the first to advocate a new governmental compact. He wrote five Federalist Papers supporting the Constitution, and he was a leader in the New York ratification convention. As first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Jay made the historic decision that a State could be sued by a citizen from another State, which led to the Eleventh Amendment to the Constitution. On a special mission to London, he concluded the "Jay Treaty," which helped avert a renewal of hostilities with Britain but won little popular favor at home—and it is probably for this treaty that this Founding Father is best remembered.

Samuel Huntington



An industrious youth who mastered his studies of the law without the advantage of a school, a tutor, or a master—borrowing books and snatching opportunities to read and research between odd jobs—he was one of the greatest self-made men among the Founders. He was also one of the greatest legal minds of the age—all the more remarkable for his lack of advantage as a youth. In 1764, in recognition of his obvious abilities and initiative, he was elected to the General Assembly of Connecticut. The next year he was chosen to serve on the Executive Council. In 1774, he was appointed Associate Judge of the Superior Court and, as a delegate to the Continental Congress, was acknowledged to be a legal scholar of some respect. He served in Congress for five consecutive terms, during the last of which he was elected President. He served in that office from September 28, 1779 until ill health forced him to resign on July 9, 1781. He returned to his home in Connecticut—and as he recuperated, he accepted more Counciliar and Bench duties. He again took his seat in Congress in 1783, but left it to become Chief Justice of his state's Superior Court. He was elected Lieutenant Governor in 1785 and Governor in 1786. According to John Jay, he was one of "the most precisely trained Christian jurists ever to serve his country."

Thomas McKean



During his astonishingly varied fifty-year career in public life, he held almost every possible position—from deputy county attorney to President of the United States under the Confederation. Besides signing the Declaration of Independence, he contributed significantly to the development and establishment of constitutional government in both his home state of Delaware and the nation. At the Stamp Act Congress, he proposed the voting procedure that Congress adopted: that each colony, regardless of size or population, have one vote—the practice adopted by the Continental Congress and the Congress of the Confederation, and the principle of state equality manifest in the composition of the Senate. And as county judge in 1765, he defied the British by ordering his court to work only with documents that did not bear the hated stamps. In June 1776, at the Continental Congress, McKean joined with Caesar Rodney to register Delaware's approval of the Declaration of Independence, over the negative vote of the third Delaware delegate, George Read—permitting it to be "The unanimous declaration of the thirteen United States." And at a special Delaware convention, he drafted the constitution for that State. McKean also helped draft—and signed—the Articles of Confederation. It was during his tenure of service as President—from July 10, 1781 to November 4, 1782—when news arrived from General Washington in October 1781 that the British had surrendered following the Battle of Yorktown. As Chief Justice of the supreme court of Pennsylvania, he contributed to the establishment of the legal system in that State, and, in 1787, he strongly supported the Constitution at the Pennsylvania Ratification Convention, declaring it "the best the world has yet seen." At sixty-five, after over forty years of public service, McKean resigned from his post as Chief Justice. A candidate on the Democratic-Republican ticket in 1799, McKean was elected Governor of Pennsylvania. As Governor, he followed such a strict policy of appointing only fellow Republicans to office that he became the father of the spoils system in America. He served three tempestuous terms as Governor, completing one of the longest continuous careers of public service of any of the Founding Fathers.

The Articles of Confederation Presidents

John Hanson



He was the heir of one of the greatest family traditions in the colonies and became the patriarch of a long line of American patriots—his great-grandfather died at Lutzen beside the great King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden; his grandfather was one of the founders of New Sweden along the Delaware River in Maryland; one of his nephews was the military secretary to George Washington; another was a signer of the Declaration; still another was a signer of the Constitution; yet another was Governor of Maryland during the Revolution; and still another was a member of the first Congress; two sons were killed in action with the Continental Army; a grandson served as a member of Congress under the new Constitution; and another grandson was a Maryland Senator. Thus, even if Hanson had not served as President himself, he would have greatly contributed to the life of the nation through his ancestry and progeny. As a youngster, he began a self-guided reading

of classics and rather quickly became an acknowledged expert in the juridicalism of Anselm and the practical philosophy of Seneca—both of which were influential in the development of the political philosophy of the great leaders of the Reformation. It was based upon these legal and theological studies that the young planter—his farm, Mulberry Grove, was just across the Potomac from Mount Vernon—began to espouse the cause of the patriots. In 1775, he was elected to the Provincial Legislature of Maryland. Then in 1777, he became a member of Congress where he distinguished himself as a brilliant administrator. Thus, he was elected President in 1781. Was John Hanson the first President of the United States? The new country was actually formed on March 1, 1781 with the adoption of The Articles of Confederation. This document was actually proposed on June 11, 1776, but not agreed upon by Congress until November 15, 1777. Maryland refused to sign this document until Virginia and New York ceded their western lands (Maryland was afraid that these states would gain too much power in the new government from such large amounts of land). Once the signing took place in 1781, a President was needed to run the country. John Hanson was chosen unanimously by Congress (which included George Washington). In fact, all the other potential candidates refused to run against him, as he was a major player in the Revolution and an extremely influential member of Congress. As the first President, Hanson had quite the shoes to fill. No one had ever been President and the role was poorly defined. His actions in office would set precedent for all future Presidents. He took office just as the Revolutionary War ended. Almost immediately, the troops demanded to be paid. As would be expected after any long war, there were no funds to meet the salaries. As a result, the soldiers threatened to overthrow the new government and put Washington on the throne as a monarch. All the members of Congress ran for their lives, leaving Hanson running the government. He somehow managed to calm the troops and hold the country together. If he had failed, the government would have fallen almost immediately and everyone would have been bowing to King Washington. Hanson, as President, ordered all foreign troops off American soil, as well as the removal of all foreign flags. This was quite a feat, considering the fact that so many European countries had a stake in the United States since the days following Columbus. Hanson established the Great Seal of the United States, which all Presidents have since been required to use on all official documents. President Hanson also established the first Treasury Department, the first Secretary of War, and the first Foreign Affairs Department. Lastly, he declared that the fourth Thursday of every November was to be Thanksgiving Day, which is still true today. The Articles of Confederation only allowed a President to serve a one-year term during any three-year period, so Hanson actually accomplished quite a bit in such little time. He served in that office from November 5, 1781 until November 3, 1782. He was the first President to serve a full term after the full ratification of the Articles of Confederation—and like so many of the Southern and New England Founders, he was strongly opposed to the Constitution when it was first discussed. He remained a confirmed anti-federalist until his untimely death.

Elias Boudinot



He did not sign the Declaration, the Articles, or the Constitution. He did not serve in the Continental Army with distinction. He was not renowned for his legal mind or his political skills. He was instead a man who spent his entire career in foreign diplomacy. He earned the respect of his fellow patriots during the dangerous days following the traitorous action of Benedict Arnold. His deft handling of relations with Canada also earned him great praise. After being elected to the Congress from his home state of New Jersey, he served as the new nation's Secretary for Foreign Affairs—managing the influx of aid from France, Spain, and Holland. Then in 1783, he was elected to the Presidency. He served in that office from November 4, 1782 until November 2, 1783. Like so many of the other early presidents, he was a classically trained scholar, of the Reformed faith, and an anti-federalist in political matters. He was the father and grandfather of frontiersmen—and one of his grandchildren and namesakes eventually became a leader of the Cherokee nation in its bid for independence from the sprawling expansion of the United States.

Thomas Mifflin



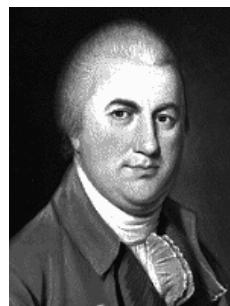
A member of the fourth generation of a Pennsylvania Quaker family who had emigrated from England, Mifflin was born at Philadelphia in 1744, the son of a rich merchant and local politician. He studied at a Quaker school and then at the College of Philadelphia (later part of the University of Pennsylvania), from which he won a diploma at the age of 16 and whose interests he advanced for the rest of his life. Mifflin then worked for 4 years in a Philadelphia counting house. In 1764, he visited Europe, and the next year entered the mercantile business in Philadelphia with his brother. In 1767, he wed Sarah Morris. Although he prospered in business, politics enticed him. In the Pennsylvania legislature (1772-76), Mifflin championed the colonial position against the crown. In 1774, he attended the Continental Congress (1774-76). Meanwhile, he had helped to raise troops and in May 1775 won appointment as a major in the Continental Army, which caused him to be expelled from his Quaker faith. In the summer of 1775, he first became an aide-de-camp to Washington and then Quartermaster General of the Continental Army. Late in 1775, he became a colonel and in May 1776 a brigadier general. Preferring action to administration, after a time he began to perform his quartermaster duties perfunctorily. Nevertheless, he participated directly in the war effort. He took part in the Battles of Long Island, NY; Trenton, NJ; and Princeton, NJ. Furthermore, through his persuasive oratory, he apparently convinced many men not to leave the military service. In 1777, Mifflin attained the rank of major general but, restive at criticism of his quartermaster activities, he resigned. About the same time—though he later became a friend of Washington—he became involved in the cabal that advanced Gen. Horatio Gates to replace him in command of the Continental Army. In 1777-78, Mifflin sat on the Congressional Board of War. In the latter year, he briefly reentered the military, but continuing attacks on his earlier conduct of the quartermastership soon led him to resign once more. Mifflin returned immediately to politics. He sat in the state assembly (1778-79) and again in the Continental Congress (1782-84), from December 1783 to the following June as its president. In 1787, he was chosen to take part in the Constitutional Convention. He attended regularly, but made no speeches and did not play a substantial role. Mifflin continued in the legislature (1785-88 and 1799-1800); succeeded Franklin as president of the Supreme Executive Council (1788-90); chaired the constitutional convention (1789-90); and held the governorship (1790-99), during which time he affiliated himself with the emerging Democratic-Republican Party. Although wealthy most of his life, Mifflin was a lavish spender. Pressure from his creditors forced him to leave Philadelphia in 1799, and he died at Lancaster the next year, aged 56. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania paid his burial expenses at the local Trinity Lutheran Church.

Richard Henry Lee



His resolution "that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States," approved by the Continental Congress July 2, 1776, was the first official act of the United Colonies that set them irrevocably on the road to independence. It was not surprising that it came from Lee's pen—as early as 1768, he proposed the idea of committees of correspondence among the colonies, and in 1774, he proposed that the colonies meet in what became the Continental Congress. From the first, his eye was on independence. A wealthy Virginia planter whose ancestors had been granted extensive lands by King Charles II, Lee disdained the traditional aristocratic role and the aristocratic view. In the House of Burgesses, he flatly denounced the practice of slavery. He saw independent America as "an asylum where the unhappy may find solace, and the persecuted repose." In 1764, when news of the proposed Stamp Act reached Virginia, Lee was a member of the committee of the House of Burgesses that drew up an address to the King, an official protest against such a tax. After the tax was established, Lee organized the citizens of his county into the Westmoreland Association, a group pledged to buy no British goods until the Stamp Act was repealed. At the First Continental Congress, Lee persuaded representatives from all the colonies to adopt this non-importation idea, leading to the formation of the Continental Association, which was one of the first steps toward union of the colonies. Lee also proposed to the First Continental Congress that a militia be organized and armed—the year before the first shots were fired at Lexington; but this and other proposals of his were considered too radical at the time. Three days after Lee introduced his resolution, in June of 1776, Congress appointed him to the committee responsible for drafting a declaration of independence, but he was called home when his wife fell ill, and his place was taken by his young protégé, Thomas Jefferson. Thus, Lee missed the chance to draft the document—though his influence greatly shaped it and he was able to return in time to sign it. He was elected President—serving from November 30, 1784 to November 22, 1785 when he was succeeded by the second administration of John Hancock. Elected to the Constitutional Convention, Lee refused to attend, but as a member of the Congress of the Confederation, he contributed to another great document, the Northwest Ordinance, which provided for the formation of new States from the Northwest Territory. When the completed Constitution was sent to the States for ratification, Lee opposed it as anti-democratic and anti-Christian. However, as one of Virginia's first Senators, he helped assure passage of the amendments that, he felt, corrected many of the document's gravest faults—the Bill of Rights. He was the great uncle of Robert E. Lee and the scion of a great family tradition.

Nathaniel Gorham



Gorham, an eldest child, was born in 1738 at Charlestown, MA, into an old Bay Colony family of modest means. His father operated a packet boat. The youth's education was minimal. When he was about 15 years of age, he was apprenticed to a New London, CT, merchant. He quit in 1759, returned to his hometown and established a business which quickly succeeded. In 1763, he wed Rebecca Call, who was to bear nine children. Gorham began his political career as a public notary but soon won election to the colonial legislature (1771-75). During the Revolution, he unswervingly backed the Whigs. He was a delegate to the provincial congress (1774-75), member of the Massachusetts Board of War (1778-81), delegate to the constitutional convention (1779-80), and representative in both the upper (1780) and lower (1781-87) houses of the legislature, including speaker of the latter in 1781, 1782, and 1785. In the last year, though he apparently lacked formal legal training, he began a judicial career as judge of the Middlesex County court of common pleas (1785-96). During this same period, he sat on the Governor's Council (1788-89). During the war, British troops had ravaged much of Gorham's property, though by privateering and speculation he managed to recoup most of his fortune. Despite these pressing business concerns and his state political and judicial activities, he also served the nation. He was a member of the Continental Congress (1782-83 and 1785-87), and held the office of president from June 1786 until January 1787. The next year, at age 49, Gorham attended the Constitutional Convention. A moderate nationalist, he attended all the sessions and played an influential role. He spoke often, acted as chairman

of the Committee of the Whole, and sat on the Committee of Detail. As a delegate to the Massachusetts ratifying convention, he stood behind the Constitution. Some unhappy years followed. Gorham did not serve in the new government he had helped to create. In 1788 he and Oliver Phelps of Windsor, CT, and possibly others, contracted to purchase from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts 6 million acres of unimproved land in western New York. The price was \$1 million in devalued Massachusetts scrip. Gorham and Phelps quickly succeeded in clearing Indian title to 2,600,000 acres in the eastern section of the grant and sold much of it to settlers. Problems soon arose, however. Massachusetts scrip rose dramatically in value, enormously swelling the purchase price of the vast tract. By 1790 the two men were unable to meet their payments. The result was a financial crisis that led to Gorham's insolvency--and a fall from the heights of Boston society and political esteem. Gorham died in 1796 at the age of 58 and is buried at the Phipps Street Cemetery in Charlestown, MA.

Arthur St. Clair



Born and educated in Edinburgh, Scotland during the tumultuous days of the final Jacobite Rising and the Tartan Suppression, St. Clair was the only president of the United States born and bred on foreign soil. Though most of his family and friends abandoned their devastated homeland in the years following the Battle of Culloden—after which nearly a third of the land was depopulated through emigration to America—he stayed behind to learn the ways of the hated Hanoverian English in the Royal Navy. His plan was to learn of the enemy's military might in order to fight another day. During the global conflict of the Seven Years War—generally known as the French and Indian War—he was stationed in the American theater. Afterward, he decided to settle in Pennsylvania where many of his kin had established themselves. His civic-mindedness quickly became apparent: he helped to organize both the New Jersey and the Pennsylvania militias, led the Continental Army's Canadian expedition, and was elected to Congress. His long years of training in the enemy camp were finally paying off. He was elected President in 1787—and he served from February 2 of that year until January 21 of the next. Following his term of duty in the highest office in the land, he became the first Governor of the Northwest Territory and the founder of Cincinnati. Though he briefly supported the idea of creating a constitutional monarchy under the Stuart's Bonnie Prince Charlie, he was a strident Anti-Federalist—believing that the proposed federal constitution would eventually allow for the intrusion of government into virtually every sphere and aspect of life. He even predicted that under the vastly expanded centralized power of the state the taxing powers of bureaucrats and other unelected officials would eventually confiscate as much as a quarter of the income of the citizens—a notion that seemed laughable at the time but that has proven to be ominously modest in light of our current governmental leviathan. St. Clair lived to see the hated English tyrants who destroyed his homeland defeated. But he despaired that his adopted home might actually create similar tyrannies and impose them upon themselves.

Cyrus Griffin



Like Peyton Randolph, he was trained in London's Inner Temple to be a lawyer—and thus was counted among his nation's legal elite. Like so many other Virginians, he was an anti-federalist, though he eventually accepted the new Constitution with the promise of the Bill of Rights as a hedge against the establishment of an American monarchy—which still had a good deal of currency. The Articles of Confederation afforded such freedoms that he had become convinced that even with the incumbent loss of liberty, some new form of government would be required. A protégé of George Washington—having worked with him on several speculative land deals in the West—he was a reluctant supporter of the Constitutional ratifying process. It was during his term in the office of the Presidency—the last before the new national compact went into effect—that ratification was formalized and finalized. He served as the nation's chief executive from January 22, 1788 until George Washington's inauguration on April 30, 1789.