

Wages of the Representatives of Kent County Oct: 1770

To John Vining Esq: Speaker — £ 7⁰ 10⁰ 0
 15 Days at 10^s per Day

To his Travelling Charges 43 Miles — 1⁰ 1⁰ 6
8⁰ 11⁰ 6

To Charles Bridgely Esq: D^r at G^r Day — 4⁰ 10⁰ 0
 To his Milage — 1⁰ 1⁰ 6

£ 5⁰ 11⁰ 6

To Casar Oodney Esq: at G^r Day — 4⁰ 10⁰ 0
 To his Milage — 1⁰ 1⁰ 6

£ 5⁰ 11⁰ 6

Wincent Lockerman Esq: at G^r Day — 4⁰ 10⁰ 0
 To his Milage — 1⁰ 1⁰ 6

£ 5⁰ 11⁰ 6

To William Hillon Esq: at G^r Day — 4⁰ 10⁰ 0
 To his Milage — 1⁰ 1⁰ 6

£ 5⁰ 11⁰ 6

To John Haslet Esq: at G^r Day — 4⁰ 10⁰ 0
 To his Milage — 1⁰ 10⁰ 6

£ 6⁰ 10⁰ 6

in all — £ 36⁰ 18⁰ 6

Gentlemen,

Please to pay to the Representatives for Kent County, for fifteen days attendance in October Session 1770. the above sum of thirty six pounds eighteen shillings & six pence out of the Interest arising from the public Money in your Hands, & the same shall be allowed you at Settlement with the Committee of Assembly.

To the Trustees of the General Loan-Office of the County of Kent. October 20th 1770

Signed by Order of the House,
 John Vining Speaker

Received of Cesar Rodney Esq surviving Trustee, £ 5. 11. 6 the
wages within mentioned due John Vining Esq. Deed, — and also
£ 5. 11. 6 my own wages — in the whole fourteen pounds, three shillings
£ 14. 3. 0
16 May 1771

Cha Ridgely

Recd. May 23rd 1771 of Cesar Rodney Trustee my Assemblyman's
Wages within mentioned.
£ 5. 11. 6. Will Miller

Recd. May 28th 1771 of Cesar Rodney surviving Trustee of the General
Loan Office for Kent County the within sum of five pounds & eleven
shillings and six pence in full of my fees as an Assembly man —
£ 5. 11. 6 Vincent Lockerman

Received of Cesar Rodney Esq surviving Trustee Six pounds & one
shilling
£ 6. 1. 0
John Hasket
No. 5
1771

Gentlemen

Please to pay to Caleb Citwithin or order, the sum of Twenty eight pounds seven shill^s & six pence out of the Interest arising from the Public Money in your Hands and the same shall be allowed You at Settlement with the Committee of Assembly.

Signed by Order of the House,
Caesar Rodney Speaker

To the Trustees of the General
Loan Office for the County of
Kent - Sept. 2^d 1775

Sir,

Please to pay John Clowes the within Sum and Oblige
your

Humble Ser^{vt}.

To Caesar Rodney Esq^r
Sept. 11th 1775

Sir,

Please to pay the Contents to D^r Charles Ridgely - for
value of him

re
16 Sep^r 1775

John Clowes

Recd Contents

29 June 1776

Cha Ridgely

TWO
TWO

EXPENSE ACCOUNTS FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY FROM KENT COUNTY FOR THE
YEAR, 1775-1776.

(Both in the possession of ~~Mr. Tatnall~~)

Archives - in Representative papers

The first account is for two sessions: October 1775 and March 1776.

It shows that Caesar Rodney was the Speaker of the Assembly and the other
members were: William Killen
John Banning
John Hazlett
Thomas Rodney
Vincent Lockerman All these members attended both sessions.

The second account is also for two sessions: June 11 to June 22, 1776 and
July 22 to July 28, 1776.

The same members
are indicated as above: Caesar Rodney, Speaker
William Killen
John Banning
John Hazlett
Thomas Rodney
Vincent Lockerman. The first five attended both
sessions, but Vincent Lockerman only attended the one from June 11 to June 22.

In Convention for the Delaware State,
Saturday, August 31. 1776. P. M.

The Honorable George Read Esq. President.

Ordered,

That the President write to General Rodney
to recommend William Millan to the Continental
Congress for the Place of Paymaster of Colonel
Patterson's Battalion.

Extract from the Minutes,

Salbooth

On Motion agreed

That a Certificate of the Appointment of the Delegates to the Congress as chosen on Wednesday the 17th Inst: in the General Assembly, expressing the Powers they are to be invested with, be drawn up and sent to the House of Assembly for their Concurrence which being done and transcribed, was followed to wit:

In Council Decemb^r 29th 1777
Whereas Nicholas Vanduyke and
~~Nicholas Vanduyke~~ Thomas M. Kear and
~~Nicholas Vanduyke~~ Esquires have been chosen by joint Ballot of the two Houses of Assembly to represent the Delaware State in the Continental Congress.

Resolved, that they, or any one or more of them are hereby fully authorized and empowered for and in Behalf of this State to consent agree to & execute any Measure which they or any of them with a Majority of the Continental Congress shall judge necessary for the Defense, Security, Interest and Welfare of this State in particular and America in general, with Power to adjourn to such Times and Places as shall appear most conducive to the Publick Safety and Advantage.

Dec 19. 1777.
Delegates to Congress -
for the Appointment of
a Resolution of Council
Dr. J. H. P.

In Council. Thursday, April 2^d 1778. A. M.

On Motion resolved,

That the Speaker of the Council be authorized to administer as well the Oath of Allegiance and Declaration of Faith as the Oath of Office to the Honourable Cesar Rodney Esquire, now appointed President of this State, as directed by the 22^d Section of the System of Government, and that the same be certified into the Secretary's Office.

Resolved also,

That the Oath of Office be in the form following, to wit,
I Cesar Rodney do swear that I will well and truly according to the best of my Abilities and Judgment execute the Office of President of the Delaware State agreeable to the Laws and Constitution thereof: So help me God.

Extract from the Minutes.

Sent for Concurrence.

Benj^r Vining Clk of the Council

In the House of Assembly Thursday April 2^d 1778

On Motion The House of Assembly concurred in the above Resolutions of Council:

Extract from the Minutes

Thomas Rodney Clk of the Assembly

Certain Resolutions of Council
imposing the Oath of the
Council the admission to the Oath
of Allegiance, Declaration of
Fidelity & Oath of Office to the
Honble. Caspar Rodney Esq:
as President of the State: &
also prescribing the ^{Form of the} Oath of
Office.

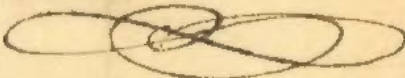
April 2. 1778.
Read & Concurred in.

88.
The Council
of the State
do hereby certify
that the within
resolutions were
read and concurred
in by the Council
on the 2. day of
April 1778.

To the Worshipfull the Justices of the Orphans
Court now Sitting at Dover

The petition of Casar Rodney a minor above
fourteen years of age most humbly sheweth
unto your worshipps that your petitioner desires
that your worshipps would appoint Nicholas Ridgely
as Guardian to your Petitioner, and in so doing
your petitioner as in duty bound shall ever pray

Feb^{ry} 27th 1765

Casar Rodney


7ⁿ 11ⁿ 3
19ⁿ 2ⁿ 1
4ⁿ 15ⁿ 5ⁿ
10ⁿ 7ⁿ 4
65 15ⁿ 6

107ⁿ 11ⁿ 4ⁿ
18ⁿ 16ⁿ 4ⁿ

126ⁿ 7ⁿ 11ⁿ

The Petition of
Cesar Rodney to
the Court of the
Commons

[Faint signature]

16

THE SIGNERS LIVED HERE

By

ELIZABETH FIELDS AND DR. J. E. FIELDS

Reprinted from

DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION MAGAZINE

May, 1951

John Hart. The farm home occupied by John Hart is no longer standing. It was located near Hopewell, N. J. The present farmhouse was erected on the site of the original about 1800. Hart is buried in the Baptist Churchyard in Hopewell. Hart built the church for the community. His death may be ascribed to the privations and exposure suffered at the hands of the British.

Richard Stockton. Stockton's home, "Morven," is located in Princeton, N. J. It is the residence of the Governor of New Jersey. During the Revolution it was raided and sacked by the British. Stockton is buried in an unmarked grave in the Quaker burial grounds near Princeton.

John Witherspoon was president of Princeton. His home, "Tusculum," is located near Princeton and is privately owned. Witherspoon is buried in the president's lot in Princeton Cemetery.

DELAWARE

Caesar Rodney's home, "Byfield," near Dover, is no longer standing. A modern farmhouse is built on the site. His town house still stands and is located opposite the State House on the Town Square, Dover. Rodney is buried beneath a large monument at the northeast corner of Christ Church in Dover.

George Read's home was located on the Strand in New Castle, Del. The house was destroyed by fire many years ago. Read's son built a beautiful mansion on the site between the years 1791-1801. It still stands, one of America's most stately mansions. Read is buried to the rear of Immanuel Church, New Castle. Mr. and Mrs. Philip D. Laird are the owners of the Read mansion.

Thomas McKean had residences in Philadelphia and in New Castle. Neither is standing today. The home in New Castle burned in 1824. McKean is buried in Laurel Hill Cemetery, Philadelphia.

PENNSYLVANIA

Benjamin Franklin. Neither Franklin's birthplace nor his boyhood home in Boston is standing. His home in Philadelphia is no longer standing. Franklin's burial place is located immediately inside the fence of the Christ Church burial grounds at the corner of 5th and Arch Streets, Philadelphia.

Benjamin Rush was born at a farm called "Byberry," located near Bristol, Penn. The house is in an excellent state of preservation, is privately owned, and is now called "The Homestead." The Rush residence on South 4th Street in Philadelphia is no longer standing. Rush is buried in the Christ Church burial grounds, Philadelphia.

George Ross' home in Lancaster is no longer standing. It was originally located on what is now East Ross Street between Plum and Shippen Streets. A monument marks the site and Donnegal Chapter, N. S. D. A. R., Lancaster, pays a caretaker to keep the plot in good condition. A good photograph of the original house is extant. It was torn down in 1894. Ross is buried in an unknown grave in either the Christ Churchyard or the burial ground.

George Clymer. The house occupied by George Clymer on Chestnut near 7th Street in Philadelphia is no longer standing. His later home, "Somerset," is in Morrisville, Penn. It is located at the corner of Clymer Street and Morris Avenue and is used as a school administration building. Clymer is buried in the Friends Meeting House burial ground on East Hanover Street, Trenton, N. J.

George Taylor. The house once owned and occupied by Taylor is located at the corner of 4th and Ferry Streets, Easton, Penn. It is owned by the George Taylor Chapter, N. S. D. A. R., of Easton. Taylor is buried in the Easton Cemetery near the 7th Street entrance.

James Smith's home is no longer standing in York. His home and office stood on the location now occupied by the Brooks Hotel on South George Street. The office was destroyed by fire in 1804. When the house was destroyed is not known. He is interred in the cemetery beside the First Presbyterian Church, Market and Queen Streets, York.

James Wilson's residence in Philadelphia was located at the southwest corner of Third and Walnut Streets. It is no longer standing. For a time Wilson resided in the home of his friend, James Iredell, his fellow Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, in Edenton, N. C. It was while living there that Wilson died. The house is still extant. Wilson is buried along the south wall of Christ Church, Philadelphia, his remains having been

"THE THREE SIGNERS"



***An address by HENRY C. CONRAD, Esq., of Wilmington, Delaware, before The Sons of Delaware, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania ***

SATURDAY EVENING

JANUARY 30, 1897

Printed for
The Sons of Delaware, Phila.
1897

The President of the Society, Richard Fisher, Esq., introduced Mr. Conrad, who said:

Mr. President and Gentlemen:—The three men whose names appear as representatives from Delaware on the Declaration of Independence have always interested me very much as public characters. I have had some natural bent, I think, for some years in the direction of Revolutionary affairs and have been brought into contact with these men as historical characters. And the more I have read of them and learned of them, the more interest I have felt in them, and recently I have prepared this fragmentary sketch, covering the lives of these three men, with the hope that it might prove interesting to such as may hear it.

The first of these men of whom I shall treat is Caesar Rodney, who was born in 1728, near Dover, in Delaware. His father's name was also Caesar. He was a grandson of William Rodney. His mother's name was Crawford, being the daughter of Rev. Thomas Crawford, I think the earliest Rector of Christ Episcopal Church at Dover. The name "Caesar" was the family name that came to Caesar Rodney, the signer, from his maternal grandfather, whose name was Thomas Caesar and who lived in London. The family was of English descent.

The ancestors of the family in this country settled in Kent County early in 1700.

In order that we may go back to the times in which these people lived, I want to quote, very briefly from a letter written by Thomas Rodney, a brother of Caesar, the signer, in which he speaks of the manners and customs of the people of that day:

"The manner and customs of the white people when

I first remember, were very simple, plain and social. Very few foreign articles were used in this part of the country for eating, drinking or clothing. Almost every family manufactured their own clothes; and beef, pork, poultry, milk, butter, cheese, wheat, and Indian corn were raised by themselves, served them with fruits of the country, and wild game for food; and cider, small beer, and peach and apple brandy for drink. The best families in the country but seldom used tea, coffee, chocolate or sugar, for honey was their sweetening. The largest farmers at that time did not sow over twenty acres of wheat, nor tend more than thirty acres of Indian corn, and there was very few of this sort, so that all the families in the country had a great deal of idle time, for the land being fertile supplied them plentifully by a little labor, with all that was necessary, hay with great abundance, more than enough, grudged nothing to those who happened to want. Indeed, they seemed to live as it were in concord; for they constantly associated together at one house or another in considerable numbers, to play and frolic, at which times the young people would dance, and the elder ones whistle, run, hop, jump or throw the disc or play at some rustic and manly exercises. On Christmas Eve there was an universal firing of guns, and traveling round from house to house during the holiday, and indeed all winter there was a continual frolic at one house or another, shooting-matches, twelfth-cakes, &c."

This is an indication of the simplicity of the people in the times in which these men figured.

Caesar Rodney's father died in 1745. The son Caesar, being the eldest son, inherited all. He was a man of meagre education, so far as known, and was raised a

farmer, and had very little advantage of books or of learning in that day. He was appointed High Sheriff of Kent County in 1758, when but thirty years of age, and shortly afterwards Justice of the Peace and Judge of all the Courts.

Delaware was then a Province (part of Pennsylvania) under the control of the English government.

In 1762 he was appointed with Thomas McKean to revise and print the laws—that is, all existing laws of this Province in force at that time—and there are copies of these laws now in existence. In fact, we have one or two in the possession of our Historical Society in Wilmington.

Rodney and McKean were elected to represent Delaware in the Stamp Act Congress which met in New York in October, 1765; and both took conspicuous and influential parts in its deliberations and served on its most important committees.

One of the issues which led up to the Revolution was the failure of the British Government to allow the people living in these colonies to tax themselves, and also the further denial of the right to be tried by their peers. As I understand it, in many cases of importance, the British authorities insisted upon taking the people who were to be tried, and who should have been tried here for these offenses, across the water to be tried by entire strangers to them; and they insisted that by right they were entitled to be tried by their peers.

From 1766 to 1769, Rodney was an active member of the General Assembly and sought to prohibit the importation of slaves, even at that early period.

Never a robust man, about this time, in 1768 I think

it was, there appeared on his face, what proved to be a cancer, and it was a source of very great pain and distress to him during the remainder of his life. I have here a letter written by him under date of June 13, 1768, in which he says he has gone to Philadelphia with a view to consulting physicians as to this trouble on his face. He says further: "But to conclude, my case is truly dangerous, and what will be the event, God only knows, I still live in hopes and still retain my usual flow of spirits."

In a letter written a week before, he says:

"I got to Philadelphia on Saturday, and on Monday applied to doctors concerning the sore on my nose, who all, upon examination, pronounced it a cancer, and that it will be necessary I should go through a small course of physick and then to extract it by a costick or by cutting it out, all which (to me) is a dreadful undertaking—and will require so much time, that it is impossible for me to now to determine when you may probably expect to see me in Kent again—if ever—as (no doubt) it will be attended with danger."

Then followed the letter of a week later, in which he says, "what will be the event, God only knows, I still live in hopes and still retain my usual flow of spirits."

I quote from these letters to show that notwithstanding what was almost a death sentence pronounced upon this man, for nearly twenty years after that he stood at his post of public duty and made for himself a name that has come down to us after more than one hundred years, as probably the foremost name in Delaware history.

Rodney was almost continuously a member of the Legislature and frequently its speaker—From the Stamp

act Congress in 1765 until the close of the Revolution, he was the most active, and was by odds the leading man in the State in espousing the American cause.

We have somehow drifted into the idea that at that time the whole people rose en masse in favor of severing the relations between these colonies and the mother country. As a matter of fact, the people were very evenly divided. There was a large number of people in every one of the colonies who were honestly of opinion that the time had not come when the colonies were strong enough to form and maintain a government of their own; that the time had not come when it was expedient for them to break the ties which joined them to the mother country. So that these men who stood in the fore-front of this movement for independence were harassed continually by this sentiment which existed in all of the colonies, and it was a great deal harder task that they had to perform, than if the overwhelming sentiment of the people had been in favor of independence. The result of this was, that men who were fighting in the field, and the men who were representing the different colonies in their assemblies, were continually harassed with this firing from the rear, so to speak, by these opponents of American independence. That was particularly the case as regards Caesar Rodney. In reading his letters you find that he was with the military one day and back in Dover the next, trying to prevent the people from overturning all that was being done in the field and in Congress. With that opposition existing you can appreciate the hard duty which these men had to perform.

There was a Committee of Correspondence in each of the colonies in 1772-73-74. Mr. Rodney was, during

all these years, a leading member of this Committee on Correspondence. That Committee, as its name suggests, was composed of leading men who were in favor of American Independence, and a continual correspondence was kept up with the different colonies, suggesting how the movement was getting along and how the sentiment for independence was growing from time to time. The Committee of Correspondence held a convention at New Castle, under date of August 1, 1774, with a view of choosing delegates to the first Continental Congress which was to meet in Philadelphia a month later. I have in my possession a most interesting relic, being a notice written and sent by Caesar Rodney, calling upon Dr. Charles Ridgely, a delegate from Kent County to attend this meeting at New Castle.

A month later (September 5, 1774), the first Continental Congress met in Philadelphia, with Rodney, Read and McKean as the representatives from Delaware. There were fifty-six delegates present. George Washington was a member from Virginia. Rodney was also a delegate to the Continental Congress of 1775-76.

The population of Delaware in 1775 was 35,000. Rodney was speaker of the Assembly of the State while in Congress. He was also a Brigadier-General in the Continental Army—in the field and back again to the State, serving as a military man and serving as the leading Statesman of the day; evidently the man of all others who was continually conferred with as to all lines of conduct in that time, both in the civil and in the military service.

Letters extant indicate that he was close to Wash-
ington—possibly as near to Washington as any man

living in Delaware at that time. There are a great many letters in existence, from Washington to Rodney and from Rodney to Washington, in which the situations of that day are discussed and explained. They are scattered all about. I do not recall that the Delaware Historical Society has even an autograph signature of Caesar Rodney. Some of them still are in the possession of the Rodney family. I think Mr. John M. C. Rodney, living at Cool Spring, has some of them. A good many of them are published in "Spark's Life and Correspondence of Washington."

Caesar Rodney was among the first to advocate the election of George Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the American Army. He was his warm, ardent and close friend all through the War of the Revolution, as shown by his correspondence.

We come now to July 1, 1776. On that day the vote was taken in the Committee of the Whole of the Continental Congress as to the framing and proclaiming of the Declaration of Independence. There were thirteen original colonies represented—I do not know whether anybody else has any such a faculty as I have of always forgetting which were the thirteen original colonies, but I have taken precaution this time to set them down, and as I have them before me, I will make no mistake this time.

The thirteen original colonies were—New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia; all feeble little colonies, scattered along the Atlantic seaboard.

In the Committee of the Whole, ten out of the thirteen

colonies voted in favor of proclaiming the Declaration of Independence. Pennsylvania had seven delegates; four of whom were opposed to it and three in favor of it. Delaware had two members present—McKean and Read—and being divided, did not vote. Rodney was absent. McKean was in favor of, and Read against the Declaration. McKean appreciating that it was most important, for the sentiment it would create, that the Declaration of Independence should be proclaimed, if proclaimed at all, by the unanimous vote of these thirteen colonies, sent for Rodney, who was at the time at one of his farms near Dover (one called "By-field" and the other "Poplar Grove") and the story goes that Rodney came post-haste and that he arrived just in time to save the day, and cast the vote of Delaware in favor of the Declaration of Independence.

McKean, writing of it years afterwards to Caesar A. Rodney, a nephew of Caesar Rodney, the signer, says: "I sent an express, at my own private expense, for your honored uncle, Caesar Rodney, Esquire, the remaining member for Delaware, whom I met at the State House door, in his boots and spurs, as the members were assembling. After a friendly salutation, without a word on the business, we went into the hall of Congress together, and found we were among the latest. Proceedings immediately commenced, and after a few minutes the great question was put. When the vote for Delaware was called, your uncle arose and said: 'As I believe the voice of my constituents and of all sensible and honest men is in favor of independence my own judgment concurs with them, I vote for independence,' or in words to the same effect."

And so in that way, by bringing Caesar Rodney those seventy or eighty miles and joining his vote with the vote of Thomas McKean, Delaware's vote was recorded that day in favor of proclaiming the Declaration of Independence. Pennsylvania's vote, it turned out, was cast for the Declaration also; and thereby the unanimous vote of the thirteen colonies was procured. It happened that only five, of the seven members from Pennsylvania were present, and three out of the five were in favor of it, three making a majority of those present, and so Pennsylvania's vote was cast for the Declaration. If the other members from that State who were opposed to it had been there, they could have thrown the vote of Pennsylvania against it.

Caesar Rodney was a member of the Convention that framed the first Constitution of Delaware, in August, 1776. He was again elected to Congress in 1777. In August, 1777, the forces of Lord Howe landed at Head of Elk, near what is now known as Elkton, and very shortly afterwards the Battle of Brandywine was fought. At that time Caesar Rodney was placed in command of the Delaware State Militia, and served to protect Delaware from the invasions of the British force which landed at the Head of Elk. The statement is made that he was in command and that his force was encamped a little to the Southeast of Middletown, at a place then called Noxontown, which was his headquarters, and there for several days he guarded the inhabitants of Delaware from the invasion of the British forces. There were forty-seven hundred and twenty-eight soldiers from Delaware in the Continental Army.

In 1778, a year afterwards, he was elected President

(Governor) of Delaware. He had served, as you see, almost without interruption, in the General Assembly of the State, and its representative in the Continental Congress, meeting from year to year. He was also serving as Brigadier-General, and now the General Assembly of State elected him Governor. Just here I want to read you, as a matter of interest, a very brief letter which he wrote in acknowledgment of the action of the General Assembly in electing him Governor.

“Wednesday, A. M., April 1st, 1778.

“Gentlemen of the General Assembly:”

“I received yesterday afternoon your message declaring me duly elected President of the Delaware State”—

At that time, and for a few years afterwards, the Chief Executive of the State was called “President” and not “Governor.” Continuing he says:

“And am fully sensible of the honor done me by the appointment; but as I am too conscious of my own inability to suppose your expectation will be answered by my acceptance, I hope I shall be excused. I think, nevertheless, that at a time like this, it is the duty of every member of society to take such part in the civil line as shall be assigned him by the government, if tolerably qualified; therefore if the General Assembly cannot fix upon some other person more equal to that important duty, I shall, though with great diffidence, accept; in full confidence, however, that Your Honors will afford me every necessary aid in the due execution of the laws, and otherwise supporting the civil government as now established under the authority of the people; and as the provision made for the President is by no means an ample one; that the General Assembly would not wish to add

to the sacrifice I have already made, by which more than ought to fall to the share of any one member of the community.

“Caesar Rodney.”

He did accept, although his letter indicates that he hesitated about it; and he was Governor for three years. He was a member of the Legislative Council and its Speaker in 1784. On April 8, 1784, it is recorded that what was called the State Council, of which he was a member and the Presiding Officer, met at his own house out on one of his farms a little east of Dover. He being too ill to attend at the regular meeting place, the Council came to him.

Caesar Rodney, died June 26, 1784, of cancer, yet a comparatively young man, being in his fifty-sixth year. He never married. For his time, he was regarded as a substantial man, a man of considerable means for that day and generation. His will indicates that he left a comfortable estate. There is a tradition in his family that he owned two hundred slaves. By his will they were all manumitted. And yet he doubtless sacrificed a great deal of his own means in the various positions in which he served his country during that trying time.

Judge Whitely, speaking of the Revolutionary soldiers, says, “that to Rodney more than to any other man in Delaware do we owe the position which our State and people took in that most important contest.”

John Adams, in his Diary, describes Caesar Rodney as follows:

“Caesar Rodney is the oddest looking man in the world; he is tall, thin and slender as a reed and pale;

his face is not bigger than a large apple, yet there is sense, fire, spirit, wit and humour in his countenance."

His brother, Thomas, describing him says: "Caesar Rodney was about five feet ten inches high; his person was very elegant and genteel; his manners graceful, easy and polite. He had a good fund of humour, and the happiest talent in the world of making his wit agreeable, however sparkling and severe. He was a great statesman, a faithful public officer, just in all his dealings, easy to his family and debtors, sincere to his friends, beneficent to his relatives, and kind to his servants, and always lived in a generous and social style."

He was buried on one of his farms near Dover. In 1888 or 1889, an association of young men in Dover calling itself the "Rodney Club," arranged for the removal of the remains of Caesar Rodney from the rather neglected locality on the old Rodney farm and interred the same in Christ's Episcopal Church-yard in Dover; and over his remains there has been erected a substantial granite tomb-stone, to mark his last resting place.

There is no picture of Caesar Rodney in existence; presumably on account of his face being so disfigured by the cancer, he was averse to having one taken. There is a picture extant of Caesar A. Rodney, a nephew of Caesar Rodney, the signer, and he is frequently confused with Caesar Rodney, the signer. Caesar A. Rodney was a very distinguished and prominent man in his day, but belonged to the generation succeeding Caesar Rodney, the signer.

GEORGE READ.

We come now to George Read. He was born of Irish parentage in 1734, and was the oldest of six brothers. His father's name was John Read. About the time, or shortly after George Read was born in Cecil County, Maryland, his father came over and settled near Christiana Bridge, at what we now call "Christiana." He was educated at Chester and at New London. There was at that time an Academy at New London of the first rank under the charge of Doctor Allison, afterwards connected with the University of Pennsylvania. He studied law with John Moland, in Philadelphia, who was a distinguished member of the bar of that city, and was admitted to the bar when nineteen years of age.

He was entitled by law to two shares of his father's estate; but he took the ground that his father had spent on him all that he was entitled to receive in giving him his education, and so he surrendered the two shares which the law gave him to his brothers and sisters, and refused to take anything himself.

He settled in New Castle in 1754. He married, in 1763, Miss Gertrude Ross, daughter of Reverend George Ross, Rector of Immanuel Episcopal Church at New Castle. Although a believer in the maxim that men who are ambitious of reaching the acme of their ambitions should never marry, he did marry. It was somewhat like the case of a man's preaching one thing and practicing another. George Read's wife, Gertrude Ross, was also a sister of George Ross, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence from Pennsylvania.

He succeeded John Ross as Attorney-General in

1763, and was really the first Attorney-General appointed to serve Delaware alone in the capacity of a prosecuting attorney. Before that the Attorney-Generals from Pennsylvania had merely visited the Courts here, and Read was the first one to serve Delaware alone.

In 1765 he held an office under the Crown, but espoused the American cause. He was elected a member of the General Assembly in 1765, and was a member continuously for twelve years.

You will observe how these three men, Rodney, McKean and Read, for a period of twenty years seemed to stay side by side, and wherever you would find one, there the others were. The people, during all that time, seemed to look to these three men as the men best fitted to exercise the most important public functions.

In 1774 Read was sent as a representative, with Rodney and McKean, to the first Congress, and continued a member until the close of the war in 1783, covering a period of nine years. One after another he served in these positions: He was one of the Representatives in the Continental Congress from Delaware; he shouldered a musket as a private in the militia in 1775, and was also enrolled in Richard McWilliam's Company of Foot in 1757; he was President of the Convention that formed the first Constitution for the State in 1776.

The first President of Delaware was John McKinly. McKinly is a name that we are familiar with at this time, but it is William now and not John. John McKinly was a doctor of medicine and a distinguished man in that day. After the Battle of Brandywine, the British swooped down on Wilmington and got possession there. They took Governor McKinly prisoner and put him on a boat

and held him in the Delaware River for several months. At that time Read was Speaker of the Assembly, and by virtue of that office, became President of the State. On the locking up of President McKinly, it devolved on Read to take command, and he proceeded to do so.

He was in Philadelphia at the time, and the shores of the Delaware River from Philadelphia down past Chester and on to Wilmington were largely in control of the British forces. It was deemed important for him to come down into Delaware and take command, so he struck out through New Jersey, coming down on that side of the Delaware River, going to Salem and going across from Salem in a boat. There were several British gun boats in the Delaware at that time and he came very near being taken prisoner in coming across; but finally landed on the Delaware side with his family, went to Dover, and during the time that John McKinly was held a prisoner on the British boat in the Delaware, Read acted as Governor.

He served as member of the General Assembly from 1767 to 1779, a period of twelve years. In 1782 was appointed Judge of the United States Court of Appeals in Admiralty, which position he held until the abolition of the Court.

In 1787 he was a member of the Convention that framed the Constitution of the United States. In 1789 he was elected the first United States Senator from Delaware. He resigned his seat in the Senate to become Chief Justice in 1793, and served until his death in 1798.

Governor Joshua Clayton, (who was Governor of Delaware when the Constitution of 1792 went into force), wrote to Read, who was United States Senator from

Delaware, asking him to accept the place of his choice in the judiciary system under the new Constitution of the State. He chose, after some hesitation, the position of Chief Justice, which he filled acceptably until his death.

He died at New Castle, September 21, 1789, in the sixty-fourth year of his age, after a most eventful life, which was spent largely in the public service, and was buried there in the grave-yard of the Immanuel Episcopal Church.

He must have been a man of means, always living in much style. The Read house, which was his home for years, and in which he entertained very handsomely all the prominent men of his day, was burned down in the fire of 1824. There is now in New Castle, a large house the Read house, but that house was built by George Read, Junior, the son of George Read, the signer; and it is said that he had the misfortune of investing so much money in it that it seriously embarrassed him. The house, however, must not be confused with the residence of George Read, the signer.

THOMAS McKEAN.

Thomas McKean was of Irish parentage, and was born at New London, Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1734. He was principally educated there in the Academy that was presided over, as I have suggested, by Doctor Allison.

Of these three men, only Caesar Rodney was born in the State and of English parentage. George Read, being of Irish parentage was born just across the border in Cecil County, Maryland.

McKean too, like Read, was admitted to practice

before he was twenty-one, having studied law with David Finney, Esquire, of New Castle. He was early appointed Deputy Attorney-General. In 1757 and 1758 he was Clerk of the Assembly.

In 1752, he was appointed with Caesar Rodney to revise and print the laws then in existence in this Province. In 1762 he was elected member of the General Assembly, and this was repeated uninterruptedly for seventeen years, or to 1779.

Think of it for a moment, that one man should be held in such respect and esteem by his constituents as to be elected year after year for seventeen years as a member of the General Assembly of the State, all through the trying times of the Revolution. This was done after repeated declinations on his part. From 1773 to 1779, he had really lived in Philadelphia and not in Delaware; and after he had positively declined to allow the use of his name after his term of seventeen years, the people suggested to him that if he could not serve he had better name who should serve, which he did and they elected the men whom he suggested.

He was one of the members of the Committee of the Loan Office for three terms of four years each.

In 1765 he was appointed sole Notary Public for the three counties, and to that was added Justice of the Peace, and Justice of the Court of Common Pleas and Quarter Sessions and Orphans' Court for the County of New Castle; so that he seems to have had quite an accumulation of offices.

There had come across the water an edict that only stamped paper was to be used in the Courts of the Colonies, but he was bold enough to tell the authorities

that he would use unstamped paper when he chose to do so—and he did. He took this stand in the Common Pleas Court, in November, 1765.

McKean had been licensed to practice law in Delaware and Pennsylvania prior to 1766—although very young—and afterwards in New Jersey. In 1771 he was appointed Collector of Customs at New Castle. New Castle was his general home, although he owned land about Christiana Bridge, where he spent considerable time.

In 1774 he was a member of the first Congress, from Delaware, although living in Philadelphia, and continued a member until 1783, a period of nine years; and he was the only member of Congress who took his seat in the first Congress and remained a member until the close of the war. While serving Delaware as a member of Congress, he was acting for six years, from 1777, as Chief Justice of Pennsylvania. And during one year (1781), he acted in the three-fold capacity of Member of Congress from Delaware, President of Congress and Chief Justice of Pennsylvania.

If it would be possible ever to combine in any one public character more offices than that at one time, I am unable to appreciate it.

In 1776 he was in the New Jersey campaign with Washington as Colonel of the Philadelphia Associators. While there he was elected a member of the Convention to form the first Constitution of Delaware. He came to this Convention in August, 1776. Years afterwards, writing in regard to it, he said that in a tavern on the night preceding the meeting of the Convention, he drafted the Constitution itself which was adopted substantially

by the Convention, and that he drafted it without the aid of any book, sitting alone in a room of the tavern. He was then on his way from the New Jersey campaign to the Convention, which, I think, met at New Castle. In drafting this Constitution (which was afterwards adopted by the Convention as the first Constitution of Delaware) somebody suggested that he had a bottle of ink (and a bottle of something else), a quill and a sand-box; and that was all.

McKean served as Chief Justice of Pennsylvania for twenty-two years—from 1777 to 1799. He was elected Governor of that State and was twice re-elected, serving nine years altogether.

He retired from public life in 1808. He died in 1817, in Philadelphia, and was buried in Christ's Church-yard in Philadelphia, dying in his 87th year.

McKean is described as tall, erect and dignified, his face expressive of ability, courage and fortitude.

His first wife was a Miss Borden of New Jersey, by which marriage there were six children. His second wife was Miss Armitage of New Castle, and by this marriage there were eleven children.

You can appreciate that a man who was as long and as continuously in public life as was this man, made many bitter enemies; and especially during the time that he was Governor of Pennsylvania, he seems to have had the faculty of stirring up a great deal of opposition; so that many severe and cutting things were said about him. I presume the politicians of those days were about as ugly in their remarks as they are to-day. But Thomas McKean was able to hold his own. Here is his picture; and it is evident that a man having the characteristics as

shown in that face, was perfectly able to hold his own under all circumstances, as he did.

Here is a picture of George Read, the signer—a milder and gentler sort of man, evidently; a delightful face or visage. No wonder the people loved and honored him.

If in this brief and imperfect sketch of these three men, I have been able to interest you, and if in the consideration of their lives we shall all conclude that we have some characters in Delaware history of which we may be all proud, I shall feel amply repaid for any exertion made on my own part.

Officers,
SONS OF DELAWARE,
Philadelphia,
1897.

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RICHARD FISHER,
408 Walnut Street.

First Vice-President,

WILLIAM T. TILDEN,
252 N. Front Street.

Second Vice-President,

ALEXANDER P. COLESBERRY,
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JOHN L. CLAWSON, 45 South 2nd Street.

Delaware History

DRAMATIC HOURS IN REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

Caesar Rodney's Ride

BY

HENRY FISK CARLTON

BUREAU OF PUBLICATIONS
TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK CITY

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The series *Dramatic Hours in History* consists of radio plays selected from those written by Henry Fisk Carlton. These were presented over the radio in "Soconyland Sketches." At the present time the series includes the following incidents in the Exploration and Settlement period, in the Colonial period, and in the Revolutionary period of American history. These plays are appropriate supplementary reading material for any grade in which history is studied.—W. A. McCALL

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APR 29 1949

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Caesar Rodney's Ride

BY

HENRY FISK CARLTON

Edited by CLAIRE T. ZYVE, Ph.D.

Fox Meadow School, Scarsdale, New York

BUREAU OF PUBLICATIONS
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NEW YORK CITY

HOW TO BE A GOOD RADIO ACTOR

The play in this book has actually been produced on the radio. Possibly you have listened to this one when you tuned in at home. The persons whose voices you heard as you listened, looked just as they did when they left their homes to go to the studio, although they were taking the parts of men and women who lived long ago and who wore costumes very different from the ones we wear today.

The persons whose voices you heard stood close together around the microphone, each one reading from a copy of the play in his hand. Since they could not be seen, they did not act parts as in other plays, but tried to make their voices show how they felt.

When you give these plays you will not need costumes and you will not need scenery, although you can easily arrange a broadcasting studio if you wish. You will not need to memorize your parts; in fact, it will not be like a real radio broadcast if you do so, and, furthermore, you will not want to, since you will each have a copy of the book in your hands. All you will need to do is to remember that you are taking the part of a radio actor, that you are to read your speeches very distinctly, and that by your voice you will make your audience understand how you feel. In this way you will have the fun of living through some of the great moments of history.

HOW TO FOLLOW DIRECTIONS IN THE PLAY

There are some directions in this play which may be new to you, but these are necessary, for you are now in a radio broadcasting studio, talking in front of a microphone. The word [*in*] means that the character is standing close to the microphone, while [*off*] indicates that he is farther away, so that his voice sounds faint. When the directions [*off, coming in*] are given, the person speaking is away from the microphone at first but gradually comes closer. The words [*mob*] or [*crowd noise*] you will understand mean the sound of many people talking in the distance.

Both the English and the dialect used help make the characters live, so the speeches have been written in the way in which these men and women would talk. This means that sometimes the character may use what seems to you unusual English. The punctuation helps, too, to make the speeches sound like real conversation; for example, you will find that a dash is often used to show that a character is talking very excitedly.

CAESAR RODNEY'S RIDE

CAST

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN	URIAH CLARKE
JOHN HANCOCK	CAESAR RODNEY
JOHN RUTLEDGE	PRUDENCE RODNEY
THOMAS MCKEEN	TOM

VOICES

ANNOUNCER

On July 1, 1776, the Continental Congress of the American Colonies faced one of the most important crises this country has ever passed through. Upon what happened that night depended the fate of the resolution before Congress which declared that: "These United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." This was known as the Lee Resolution, the fate of which was to be decided by one of the most famous rides in history — Caesar Rodney's ride.

Let us begin our story on the morning of July 1, 1776, in the Continental Congress at Philadelphia. For nearly three hours the Lee Resolution has been the subject of furious debate. The members are all excited, anxious, overwrought. The debate has become bitter, for some of the members are unalterably opposed to independence. It is about noon when Dr. Franklin rises to address the Chair:

FRANKLIN
Mr. President —

HANCOCK
Dr. Franklin.

FRANKLIN
I have sat uneasily, sir, during the furious debate, hoping that the storm would subside, and the bright sun of reason would shine upon us through the parting clouds. But, sir, I am fearful that the storm is gathering with new fury, and that we may be blown too far from our course to steer safely into harbor. Perhaps, sir, we should end this debate which seems to bid fair to wreck our unity. I move you, sir, that we lay the Lee Resolution on the table.

ALL
No, no, bring it to a vote!
Yes, lay it on the table!
Let's vote on it now!
Have it over with! [*etc.*]

HANCOCK [*sound of gavel*]
Order! Order! Do I hear a second to Dr. Franklin's motion?

VOICE
Second!

HANCOCK
You have heard the motion — are there any remarks?

RUTLEDGE
Mr. President —

HANCOCK
Mr. Rutledge of South Carolina.

RUTLEDGE
I believe, sir, with Dr. Franklin, that the debate has lasted too long; but, sir, I am hopeful that with only a little more

delay we may secure unanimous action on the most important question which has ever been before this body. With Dr. Franklin's permission, I suggest an amendment, sir, that the resolution be laid upon the table until tomorrow morning. [*murmurs and comments*]

HANCOCK
Does Dr. Franklin accept the amendment?

FRANKLIN
Mr. President, I have only one desire in this matter, and that is to see this body united and of one mind. If in the peace of a quiet July afternoon and the tranquillity of a night's rest we can find that bond which will unite us and hold us together, I say, yes — I accept Mr. Rutledge's amendment. Let us vote upon the Lee Resolution tomorrow morning.

VOICE
But the first thing tomorrow morning!

FRANKLIN
Yes — the first thing tomorrow morning. [*murmurs of assent*]

HANCOCK [*sound of gavel*]
You have heard the motion. Are there any further remarks?

ALL
Question! Question! Question!

HANCOCK
Those favoring?

ALL
Aye — aye — aye —

HANCOCK
Contrary minded? — Carried! [*sound of gavel*]

RUTLEDGE

And now, sir, I move we adjourn until nine o'clock tomorrow morning.

VOICE

Second!

HANCOCK

Before putting Mr. Rutledge's motion to adjourn, I wish to caution all the members to the greatest secrecy. Whatever the outcome of our deliberation, we can only cause harm to ourselves and to our country by divulging what has been done here. The motion to adjourn is before the Congress. Those favoring?

ALL

Aye — aye — aye —

HANCOCK

Contrary minded? — Carried! [*sound of gavel*] Congress is adjourned until nine o'clock tomorrow morning.

ALL [*confusion and noise*]

It can't be done!

It's useless!

We can never get them to vote with us!

We must be united!

We can never unite on independence!

We must bring this thing about!

Will you join me?

We have no power to vote. [*etc.*]

FRANKLIN

Oh, Mr. Rutledge —

RUTLEDGE [*off*]

Yes, Dr. Franklin?

FRANKLIN

Please — may I speak to you?

[4]

RUTLEDGE [*coming in*]

Of course, Doctor — what is it?

FRANKLIN

Sit down here, my boy.

RUTLEDGE

Thank you.

FRANKLIN

Do you think you can swing the South Carolina delegation for independence?

RUTLEDGE

I don't know, Dr. Franklin, but I've invited them to my lodging to dine with me and talk over the question.

FRANKLIN

Good, good! Often an excellent meal and a taste of fine wine carry more conviction than hours of argument. As I see it now, we must swing South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Delaware into line before tomorrow morning.

RUTLEDGE

Count on me for South Carolina.

FRANKLIN

And I'll take care of Pennsylvania. I think I'll try your strategy — I'll invite the delegation to dinner.

RUTLEDGE

Then that leaves Delaware.

FRANKLIN

I wonder if McKeen of Delaware, who favors independence —

RUTLEDGE

Yes, I know.

[5]

FRANKLIN [*going on*]
— can't swing Dr. Reed in the same way.

RUTLEDGE
Perhaps.

FRANKLIN
Oh, there's McKeen now. Call him over here — will you, Rutledge?

RUTLEDGE
Of course. [*calling*] Oh, Mr. McKeen! Mr. McKeen!

MCKEEN [*off*]
Yes?

RUTLEDGE
Come over here a moment — will you, please?

MCKEEN
Why, certainly. [*coming in*] Well, Dr. Franklin, we had a stormy session this morning.

FRANKLIN
All that will be forgotten —

MCKEEN
In victory.

FRANKLIN
If only we can make our victory complete.

MCKEEN
True.

FRANKLIN
What chance is there for Delaware to join us?

MCKEEN
None, I'm afraid. Dr. Reed and I are the only delegates here — and he is as unalterably opposed to independence as I am in favor of it. The vote of Delaware won't count.

FRANKLIN
What about getting another favoring delegate here by tomorrow? Could you do that?

MCKEEN
Well, Doctor, I'm afraid it's out of the question. Caesar Rodney favors the resolution, I know, but he's at home in Dover, Delaware.

FRANKLIN
Send a postrider for him!

MCKEEN
It's eighty miles.

FRANKLIN
Well, that's not impossible. We have until nine o'clock tomorrow morning — it's now — let's see — just a little after twelve — that's nearly twenty-one hours.

MCKEEN
But Rodney was very ill when he went home last week.

FRANKLIN
Perhaps he's better by now. Write him a letter — send it by the postrider — urge upon him the enormous importance of his getting here by tomorrow morning.

MCKEEN
Well, I can try it.

FRANKLIN
Do, Mr. McKeen, for we must have unanimous action on this question! We must hang together on this, or we'll all hang separately!

MCKEEN
All right, sir, I'll go to the postrider's at once! Good day.

FRANKLIN
Good day. And let us pray that Rodney gets here!

ANNOUNCER

So McKeen hurried to the postrider's stable. Now the postrider was to the people of Revolutionary days what the telegraph or the telephone is to us today. He carried messages at a very rapid rate, for those days, by changing horses every ten or fifteen miles.

As McKeen came up to the post stable, he saw the stableman sitting on a bench, hard at work cleaning a saddle.

MCKEEN

Good day, sir.

URIAH

Day to ye.

MCKEEN

I want a postrider.

URIAH

Wal', postriders are all out, sir.

MCKEEN

Oh, too bad! When do you expect one back?

URIAH

Dunno fer certain. Mebbe three or four hours — mebbe longer.

MCKEEN

But look here — I can't wait that long — I want one right away!

URIAH

I'm right sorry, sir, but thar ain't nawthin' I kin do about et. Come back this evenin' and I kin hev a man fer ye, but not before.

MCKEEN

But, look here, my man —

[8]

URIAH

My name's Uriah Clarke — at yer service.

MCKEEN

All right, Mr. Clarke, I've got to have a postrider to carry a very important message to Dover, Delaware, to get a man back here from Dover by nine o'clock tomorrow morning.

URIAH

Dover, Delaware, and back?

MCKEEN

Yes, by nine tomorrow morning!

URIAH

Why, sir, it's nigh onto eighty mile to Delaware.

MCKEEN

I know it.

URIAH

Eighty mile thar and eighty mile back — why, pshaw, sir, we couldn't do thet under a whole day — even ef we hed a rider to send out right now — which we ain't.

MCKEEN

Twenty-five pounds if you'll do it!

URIAH

But how kin we? Ain't I jest told ye we ain't got no riders?

MCKEEN

Why can't you go?

URIAH

Law, sir, I ain't rode a trip like thet fer years. It 'ud more than likely kill me.

MCKEEN

Fifty pounds if you'll do it!

[9]

No, sir!

URIAH

Name your own sum.

MCKEEN

Ye couldn't pay me, sir — not fer that ride. I know that road like a book — bad, slow, hard on hoss flesh when ye take it easy. I'd stave up half my hosses — not to mention myself, sir, and I hev a mind fer myself, too.

URIAH

MCKEEN

Change riders — change your horses oftener — but make it you must!

URIAH

Not ef 'twas a matter of life and death, sir.

MCKEEN

It's more than that!

URIAH

Eh? What? What ye talkin' about?

MCKEEN

It's a matter of life and death for a nation — our country!

URIAH

Is et somethin' to do with Congress, sir?

MCKEEN

It is.

URIAH

Wal', sir, I'm a Son of Liberty, and et's my sworn duty to go whar I'm wanted fer liberty, and ef that's et —

MCKEEN

It is.

[10]

Then I'll go.

URIAH

I'll pay your price.

MCKEEN

Thar won't be no price! I'll git yer man to Philadelphia tomorrow mornin' ef I hev to carry him myself. Who's yer man?

URIAH

MCKEEN

Caesar Rodney of Dover, Delaware. Here's a letter for him.

URIAH

Caesar Rodney — I'll fetch him!

MCKEEN

Good!

URIAH [*going*]

Hey, Jim! Throw a saddle on that bay mare! [*orders fade out*]

ANNOUNCER

For our next scene let us look in at the home of Caesar Rodney in Dover, Delaware. It is nearly eight o'clock on the evening of July 1, 1776. Rodney, pale and drawn, with the languid air of a man but recently out of a sick bed, is sitting in an easy chair. Mrs. Rodney is hovering over him with a protecting anxiety —

PRUDENCE

You're sure you feel strong enough to sit up, Caesar?

RODNEY

Yes, yes, Prudence, I'm all right, I tell you.

[11]

PRUDENCE

You're sure you're not in any pain?

RODNEY

No, no, dear, I'm all right — just weak, that's all.

PRUDENCE

Now, Caesar, you just mustn't overtax your strength — remember this is only the second day you've been out of bed.

RODNEY

Yes, dear.

PRUDENCE

And the physician said you mustn't overdo.

RODNEY

All right, dear. I wonder what's happening in Philadelphia.

PRUDENCE

You must get your mind off Congress. You mustn't worry.

RODNEY

I know, but — what date's today?

PRUDENCE

July first — why?

RODNEY

July first. Why, today the Lee Resolution was to come up for final action! Oh, I'm sorry I wasn't there!

PRUDENCE

What's the Lee Resolution?

RODNEY

It's the most important motion that's come before the Continental Congress in the two years Congress has been sitting.

[12]

PRUDENCE

What's it about?

RODNEY

Independence.

PRUDENCE

You mean to say they're even considering such a thing?

RODNEY

Of course. It's the only thing left for us. We've got to declare our independence.

PRUDENCE

Well, I'm mighty glad you weren't there today to vote for it.

RODNEY

Why?

PRUDENCE

You'd just have put a rope around your neck.

RODNEY

My dear, I've done that long ago. [*knocking*] See who's at the door, dear.

PRUDENCE

All right. [*knocking*] Yes, yes, I'm coming. [*door opens*]

URIAH [*off*]

Does Caesar Rodney dwell here?

PRUDENCE

Yes, what's wanted?

URIAH

Kin I see him, ma'm?

PRUDENCE

He's just out of a sick bed and not very strong.

[13]

URIAH

Et's very important, ma'm.

RODNEY [*calling*]

Ask him to come in, Prudence.

PRUDENCE

Well, just a minute — and don't excite him. Right in this way.

URIAH

Be ye Caesar Rodney?

RODNEY

Yes.

URIAH

Here's a letter fer ye.

RODNEY

A letter — where from?

URIAH

Philadelphia. I fetched et all the way since noon today.

RODNEY

Indeed! [*sound of tearing paper*]

PRUDENCE

Now, Caesar, do you think you ought to read that?

RODNEY

Why not?

PRUDENCE

It might be something exciting — something you oughtn't to read — it might upset you — let me read it first!

RODNEY

Oh, nonsense! [*rattle of paper*]

[14]

PRUDENCE

I do wish people could leave a sick man alone — always bothering you!

RODNEY

Quiet! What's this — what's this? They haven't voted on the Lee Resolution yet! They need me! Prudence, my riding boots!

PRUDENCE

Your riding boots! Have you gone crazy, Caesar?

RODNEY

Don't stand and argue! Please get my boots — there isn't a moment to lose! I've got to be in Philadelphia before nine o'clock tomorrow morning!

PRUDENCE

You can't go! It'll kill you!

RODNEY

Where's my riding coat? Hurry up — get my boots!

PRUDENCE

You shan't go — I won't let you!

RODNEY

I've got to go — I'm needed. If you won't get the boots, I will!

PRUDENCE

Oh, please, sir, whoever you are —

URIAH

I'm Uriah Clarke, ma'm — at yer service.

PRUDENCE

Please, please, don't let him go! He can't stand it — he's too weak. He's been terribly ill — the physician told him he must rest — he could never stand a trip like that!

[15]

URIAH

But, ma'm, he's got to git thar. And I give my word thet I'd hev him thar tomorrow mornin'.

PRUDENCE

Your word — what's your word to a man's life!

URIAH

What's a man's life to the life of his country!

RODNEY [*coming in*]

All right, I'm ready — let's start!

PRUDENCE

Caesar!

RODNEY

Good-bye, Prudence.

PRUDENCE

If I can't persuade you to give up this mad —

RODNEY

You can't, my dear —

PRUDENCE

Good-bye, and God be with you. [*door opens*]

URIAH

Here ye be, sir — this is yer hoss.

RODNEY

You'll have to give me a hand up — I'm a little weak.

URIAH

All right, sir. [*sound of mounting horses*] Ready?

RODNEY

Ready!

URIAH

Then we're off. [*horses' hoofs, Prudence's fading "Good-bye, good-bye!"*]

[16]

ANNOUNCER

And so out into the July night rode Caesar Rodney and the postrider, bound for Philadelphia eighty miles away — an hour — two hours — past the first remount station — it is nearing eleven o'clock. [*sound of horses' hoofs and thunder*]

RODNEY

Is that thunder?

URIAH

Cal'ate thet's what 'tis.

RODNEY

I hope it doesn't rain.

URIAH

'Twon't help us none ef et does.

RODNEY

I don't see how we can ever make it if it starts raining.

URIAH

We got to make et — rain or no rain. I give my word of honor to Mr. McKeen. Git along, boy — tch — tch.

RODNEY

It's sprinkling.

URIAH

I felt et. [*another peal of thunder closer*] [*sound of rain and wind*]

RODNEY

I guess it's on us.

URIAH

Here — draw up yer hoss!

RODNEY

What for?

[17]

URIAH

Never mind — do what I say! Whoa, boy, whoa! Here, put on my greatcoat!

RODNEY

Oh, no, no!

URIAH

Ye need et. Do as I say. Ye been ill, and I ain't a-goin' to hev ye catchin' yer death o' cold — here ye be — now put et on.

RODNEY [*giving in*]

But — but what will you do — Uriah?

URIAH

I'm rugged — I don't need et. [*exchanging coat*]

RODNEY

Really, you oughtn't to do this.

URIAH

I'm a-doin' et — thar ye be! [*another clap of thunder and storm noises*] She's a-comin' down now! Come on, follow me! Giddap, boy!

RODNEY

Giddap! [*sound of horses' hoofs*]

ANNOUNCER

And on into the storm they rode. Another hour — another change of horses. It is after midnight and they come upon a stretch of good road —

URIAH

Here we be on the turnpike.

RODNEY

Is that as far as we've got?

[18]

URIAH

It's nigh onto thirty mile.

RODNEY

But we've got fifty miles more! Can we make it?

URIAH

We got to make et. How ye feelin'?

RODNEY

I guess I'll — hold out.

URIAH

Then let's step along a mite and make up some of thet time we lost in the storm.

RODNEY

All right. Tch — tch — come along.

URIAH

Giddap, boy! [*beat of horses' hoofs increases*] [*to himself*] Fifty mile. We got to make et, boy — we got to make et — come on — tch — tch — come on — and don't ye make a misstep.

RODNEY [*off a bit*]

Oh — whoa! Ow! [*thud of falling body, a groan*]

URIAH

Whoa, boy! Hey! What's the matter? What's happened?

RODNEY [*off*]

Quick! Catch the horse — I'm off.

URIAH

Hey! Whoa, thar — whoa, thar — stand still thar, boy! Thar — I got ye! [*calling*] Where are ye, Mr. Rodney? What happened? Be ye hurt?

RODNEY

No — I — I guess I'm all right.

[19]

URIAH

How'd he throw ye?

RODNEY [*in*]

I don't know — the saddle slipped — then it came clear off and I came with it.

URIAH

Here — hold the hosses, will ye — let me see that saddle! Ah-ha! — Girth broken!

RODNEY

Can you fix it?

URIAH

Ain't got time.

RODNEY

I'm afraid I can't — can't keep a seat bareback.

URIAH

Here — you climb on my hoss — I'll take your'n.

RODNEY

But —

URIAH

Not another word — climb aboard, thar. [*sound of getting Rodney on horse*] All right, boy, stand still. Thar we be! Go along with ye!

BOTH

Tch — tch — giddap! [*sound of horses' hoofs*]

ANNOUNCER

And now five miles farther into the next remount station. Rodney and Uriah clatter up to the stable and find the stable closed, with everything dark.

[20]

URIAH

Whoa, boy! Hm — cal'ate they've all gone to bed. Wal', we'll fetch 'em out. Hold the hosses a minute!

RODNEY

All right.

URIAH

I'll git that lazy stableman out! Here's where he lives. Hey! Wake up! [*knocking*] Wake up — come on out here. [*knocking*] Come on — we want a pair of hosses — wake up thar.

TOM [*off*]

Hey — what's goin' on out there? What do ye want?

URIAH

We want some hosses — come on out. [*door opens*]

TOM

Who is et?

URIAH

Et's Uriah Clarke of Philadelphia.

TOM

Oh, hello, Uriah. Kinda late fer ye to be out, ain't et?

URIAH

Oh, hello, Tom. I'm in a big hurry — come on — saddle me a couple of yer best hosses!

TOM

Pshaw now, I'm right put out.

URIAH

Eh? What the trouble?

TOM

I let my last hoss go not two hour ago.

[21]

URIAH
Yer last hoss?

TOM
Yes, sir — my last fresh one.

URIAH
Wal', we've got to have two hosses. Give us what ye got.

TOM
There's nothin' in the stable but two hosses that come in so tuckered out they couldn't hardly eat their corn — ye'll hev to go on with the hosses ye got — less'n ye want to wait until mornin'.

URIAH
We got to be in Philadelphia by mornin'.

TOM
Philadelphia? Ye'll never make et.

URIAH
We got to — I give my word. If ye can't give me a hoss, let me hev a saddle. We broke a saddle girth.

TOM
All right, Uriah — I'll git ye a saddle! Come on — but ye'll never make Philadelphia by mornin'! Not with the roads the way they be!

URIAH
We got to make et.

TOM
Here — git this door open! [*sound of opening door*]
There's a saddle fer ye.

URIAH
Come on — give me a hand — git et on this hoss! [*sound of putting saddle on*]

[22]

TOM
There ye be!

URIAH
All right, Mr. Rodney. Let me give ye a hand up. How ye feelin'?

RODNEY
I guess — I'll make it.

URIAH
Thar! Good-bye, Tom.

TOM
Good-bye — good luck.

URIAH
Tch -- tch — giddap! [*sound of horses' hoofs*]

TOM [*off — fading*]
I'll bet ye a new hat ye don't make Philadelphia!

URIAH [*yelling back*]
I'll bet ye a hat and a new pair o' boots — come on, boy!
[*sound of horses' hoofs*]

ANNOUNCER

And now two hours later Rodney is riding ahead when his horse stops suddenly —

URIAH [*calling*]
What's the matter?

RODNEY
Listen — [*sound of rushing water*]

URIAH
Pshaw now! Thet brook's kinda doin' business, ain't et?

RODNEY
The storm has turned it into a torrent.

[23]

URIAH
Wal', we got to git across!

RODNEY
How?

URIAH
Let the hosses swim!

RODNEY
All right.

URIAH
You drive in fu'st! I'll be right behind ye.

RODNEY
Tch — tch — giddap!

URIAH
Lean way over his neck — give him his head!

RODNEY
Tch — tch — get in there, boy! Go on!

URIAH
What's the matter? Is he skittish of the water?

RODNEY
Get in there — go on! He won't go in, Uriah.

URIAH
Here — let me hev the reins. I'll lead him in with my hoss.

RODNEY
Here you are.

URIAH
Come on, boy — come on in — 'tain't goin' ter hurt ye!
Come on — giddap! [*sound of splashing water — roar of stream rises*]

URIAH
Go on — swim fer et! Go et, boy! Hold on tight, Mr. Rodney! Go et, boy — go et! [*sound of water recedes a little — we hear horses' hoofs on solid ground*]

URIAH
Wal'! Thar we be! Made et slicker'n a greased griddle! You all right, Mr. Rodney?

RODNEY
I'm still here.

URIAH
Mite wet?

RODNEY
I've been dryer.

URIAH
All right, take yer reins — we'll ride fast to keep warm. You ready?

RODNEY
All ready.

URIAH
Tch — tch — giddap! Come on, boy!

ANNOUNCER
And now two hours later just as the first streaks of dawn begin to brighten the eastern sky our two riders are pushing their horses over a piece of rough, stony road. Suddenly Uriah pulls up his horse —

URIAH
Whoa, thar, boy! Ah, you've done et now!

RODNEY [*off a little*]
Whoa! What's happened now, Uriah?

URIAH

Wal', blamed ef I didn't think thet everything had happened to us thet could happen!

RODNEY [*coming in*]

What's wrong now? Why are you dismounting?

URIAH

This blamed hoss has pulled up lame.

RODNEY

Oh, too bad!

URIAH

Mebbe he's jest got a stone in his shoe — I'll take a look! Here, boy — lift up yer foot! Come on — let me look at et! Thar! No, 'tain't a stone.

RODNEY

Can't he carry you any farther?

URIAH

No. He can't hardly hobble. I cal'ate ye better go on without me, Mr. Rodney, while I lead this hoss into the next remount station.

RODNEY

I — I'm a little afraid to try it alone.

URIAH

Oh, ye kin make et all right — the hosses know the road.

RODNEY

I know — the horses can make it — but I don't know that I can.

URIAH

Gittin' wore out?

RODNEY

I'm afraid so.

[26]

URIAH

Wal', ye got to git to Philadelphia — I give my word.

RODNEY

All right — I'll go on — I'll try to make it.

URIAH

Look here — et's six or seven mile to the next remount station — I tell ye what I'll do — I'll tie this lame hoss here — and thet hoss of your'n will hev to carry double thet far!

RODNEY

I guess that's the best thing.

URIAH

Let me hev thet stirrup —

RODNEY

You all ready?

URIAH

Let him go.

RODNEY

Tch — tch — giddap! [*sound of horses' hoofs*]

ANNOUNCER

And now let us leave the two riders and their heroic effort against enormous odds to reach Philadelphia in time to make the decision for independence unanimous. Our next scene is on the steps of the State House, the morning of July 2, 1776. The hour for assembling Congress is drawing near. Thomas McKeen of Delaware is standing on the steps anxiously waiting and watching for Caesar Rodney. Dr. Franklin rides up in his carriage and steps out.

MCKEEN

Good morning, Dr. Franklin.

[27]

FRANKLIN

Good morning, good morning, my boy. Has Rodney come?

MCKEEN

Not yet. I've been waiting for an hour.

FRANKLIN

Oh, I hope he gets here.

MCKEEN

It is a long, hard ride.

FRANKLIN

This morning our action must be unanimous and final! One dissenting colony and we'll be defeated!

MCKEEN

How is it with Pennsylvania?

FRANKLIN

I was able to persuade Dickinson and Morris — we can count on Pennsylvania.

MCKEEN

You must have given them a good dinner, Doctor.

FRANKLIN

And good advice. [*chuckles*] Oh, here comes Rutledge.

MCKEEN

I hope he's convinced his colleagues from South Carolina.

FRANKLIN

Good morning, Mr. Rutledge.

RUTLEDGE

Good morning, Doctor — good morning, McKeen.

FRANKLIN

I trust, Mr. Rutledge, your dinner of last evening was as productive of good results as mine.

[28]

RUTLEDGE

You can count on South Carolina.

FRANKLIN

Great news, sir!

MCKEEN

Good!

RUTLEDGE

The members are beginning to assemble.

ALL [*growing from one voice to many*]

Good morning.

How do you do, Doctor?

Good morning, Mr. McKeen.

What news this morning?

Has Rodney come?

How will Pennsylvania vote, Doctor?

Good morning, Mr. Hancock.

Good morning, Dr. Franklin. A fine day, isn't it?

How is it with New Hampshire?

New Hampshire is unanimous, sir.

Good morning, gentlemen.

The hour of assembling is nearly here.

Shall we go in, gentlemen?

How do you do, Dr. Franklin?

Has New York been heard from?

Can we swing Delaware, Mr. McKeen?

Well, it's nearly nine o'clock.

There's no question about it, Mr. Livingston.

No, no, I don't believe we can go so far.

Yes, but we have no alternative. [*etc.*] [*this thins out but does not stop entirely*]

VOICE [*calling*]

Come on, gentlemen, we must go in! It's nine o'clock.

The session will open in a moment.

[29]

MCKEEN

Doctor, ask the members to delay — hold them a few minutes — don't let a quorum assemble.

FRANKLIN

Yes, yes! [*louder*] Gentlemen, just a moment.

ALL

Yes, Doctor, what is it?

What do you want, Dr. Franklin? [*etc.*]

FRANKLIN

Wait — wait a moment — don't go in just yet — come — do you mind standing here with us — no — perhaps — Mr. Adams, take several members and go up Market Street!

VOICE

Yes, certainly, Doctor — why?

FRANKLIN

Don't ask me why! We must delay the opening of the meeting. Come back in a quarter of an hour!

VOICE

Of course, sir.

FRANKLIN

And Livingston, keep the members here on the steps in conversation — don't let them go in.

VOICE

Certainly, Doctor.

FRANKLIN

Oh, Jefferson, you are always too prompt! My boy, be late this morning — stroll about the Square! Take some of your friends with you — sh — don't ask me why — I might incriminate myself! It's a beautiful morning for a stroll — you need the air, my hoy — you need — [*sound of horses' hoofs off, growing louder*]

[30]

MCKEEN

Oh, Doctor, look!

FRANKLIN

Eh? What?

MCKEEN

Two horsemen coming up Market Street!

FRANKLIN

Is it by any chance —

MCKEEN

Yes, yes, it's Rodney — Rodney and the postrider — they're coming!

FRANKLIN

Good, good! This is a glorious day!

ALL

Here comes Rodney of Delaware!

Good! That swings Delaware into line!

It looks like unanimous action!

Rodney, Rodney — good work!

[*horses' hoofs close, and stop*]

URIAH [*calling*]

Wal', here we be, Mr. McKeen.

MCKEEN

Good! You're just in time!

RODNEY

They haven't voted yet?

MCKEEN

No, no, the session is just assembling. Come, dismount!

RODNEY

You'll have to give me a hand.

[31]

URIAH

Here — I'll help ye. [*sound of dismounting*]

RODNEY

I — I can hardly stand.

FRANKLIN

Here, Rodney, take my arm — I seldom have a chance to support young and vigorous men now, but I insist on this!

RODNEY

Thank you, Doctor.

FRANKLIN

Come — let me lead you in a triumphant entry!

RODNEY

I'm glad I got here in time.

FRANKLIN

My congratulations, Rodney — you've ridden to a great victory! Before another hour is passed a new nation will be born! [*members cheer*]

MCKEEN

Mr. Clarke, I want to thank you. I was almost afraid you wouldn't get him here in time.

URIAH

Why, pshaw, Mr. McKeen, I give ye my word, didn't I? I had to git him here!

ANNOUNCER

And so Rodney, with his mud-spattered clothes, booted and spurred as he had ridden, went into the meeting of Congress and secured the adherence of Delaware to the Lee Resolution. When Congress was called to order and the vote taken, every Colony voted for independence, and, as New York did not vote at all, there was not a dissenting voice in the victory!

CAESAR RODNEY

A Biographical Sketch

CAESAR RODNEY'S chief claim to fame in the popular mind has been his dramatic overnight ride from his home near Dover to Philadelphia, where he arrived on July 2, 1776, in time to break the deadlock in Delaware's representation in the Continental Congress and determine the vote of his State for independence. To the historian this event is not so important as the fact that for almost ten years, that is, during the last ten years of his life, Caesar Rodney's career was replete with acts and episodes contributing to Delaware's part in the movement for independence both before and after the Declaration of Independence was adopted. As speaker of the last Delaware colonial assembly, he took a leading part in bringing about the complete separation of the Government of the Three Lower Counties from the British Empire and the Province of Pennsylvania. On June 15, 1776, the Assembly passed its famous resolution effecting the secession, and on the same day gave its delegates Congress new instructions empowering them to join with the other delegates to vote for independence, to form a national government, and to conclude treaties with foreign states.

As the most active general officer of the Delaware militia before his elevation to the position of President of the Delaware State in 1778, and as a virtual war executive following his election to that office, he was chiefly instrumental in keeping the State faithful to its commitments and loyal to the cause of freedom. Upon this work, and upon his services in the Stamp Act Congress in 1765, in the First Continental Congress of 1774, and in the Second Continental Congress of 1775 onward, rests the larger fame to which Caesar Rodney is entitled.

Caesar Rodney was born on October 7, 1728, on his father's farm in the part of East Dover Hundred, Kent County, near the Delaware River, which, ever since its first settlement by Englishmen, has been called St. Jones Neck. His father, Caesar Rodney, was the youngest son of William Rodenev, the immigrant. His mother, Elizabeth Crawford Rodney, was the eldest daughter of Rev. Thomas Crawford, the first Episcopal missionary sent from England to Dover, Delaware, and its environs by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Reared in a cultured home, she was an accomplished woman and early inculcated in her children a taste for reading. Whatever education young Caesar had as a child he doubtless obtained, as was usual in those days, from itinerant teachers and from his parents. His father having died in 1745 when Caesar was in his seventeenth year, Nicholas

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Ridgely, prothonotary and clerk of the peace for Kent County at the time, was appointed his guardian at the first session of the Orphans' Court following the father's death. Being the oldest child, Caesar in all probability remained on his parents' plantation, assisting his mother in directing its cultivation. No letters, however, having been preserved from this period, we must be content with mere conjecture. Whether Caesar went to school after his father's demise is unknown.

Rodney entered public life at the age of twenty-seven with a commission as high sheriff of Kent County in October 1755. This appointment was renewed for the two following years. He served as register of wills for Kent from 1763 to 1778, as deputy recorder of deeds in 1765, and as recorder from 1766 to 1775. From 1767 through the year 1774 he was also clerk of the Orphans' Court and for a year or so, 1770 to 1771, he was clerk of the peace. He was justice of the peace in 1764 and 1766, third justice of the Supreme Court for the Three Lower Counties in 1769, second justice in 1773. He was appointed co-trustee with John Vining of the Kent County Loan Office in 1769, sole trustee in 1775 and 1777, and probably continued in that office until his death.

The House of Assembly of the colonial government, a unicameral body of eighteen delegates, six elected from each county every year in October, met at New Castle from 1704 to 1776. In 1758 Rodney was a delegate from Kent for the first time. Beginning with 1761, with the exception of the year of 1771, he was reelected and served fourteen terms until 1775, the year of the election of the last Assembly of the colonial régime, the final session of which was held in July 1776. In 1769 he was chosen as speaker of the Assembly. In this year he strove unsuccessfully to secure a law prohibiting the importation of slaves into Delaware. He was speaker again in 1773, 1774, 1775, and held that office when the Assembly adjourned *sine die*, to be succeeded by a state legislature constituted in accordance with the first state constitution adopted by the constitutional convention in September 1776.

During the colonial period, in the year 1762, he and Thomas McKean were commissioned by the Assembly to collect, revise, and publish the laws of the Government of the Three Lower Counties.

After the organization of The Delaware State, the General Assembly elected him, on February 21, 1777, second justice of the State Supreme Court. He declined this appointment, but accepted the office of judge of admiralty and was so commissioned by John McKinly, the first president of the State, on July 17, 1777.

The office of president of the State having become vacant through the capture of McKinly by the British in September 1777, the General Assembly on

March 31, 1778, elected Rodney president for a term of three years, and he held that office until his successor, John Dickinson, succeeded him in 1781.

In 1783 Rodney was elected to his last state office, as a member of the upper house of the General Assembly, then called the Legislative Council and, upon its assembling in October 1783, this body made him speaker.

Rodney's military service began in 1756, when, on the outbreak of the French and Indian War, he joined Col. John Vining's regiment of Kent County militia and was made captain of one of its twelve companies, the one organized in Dover Hundred. He saw no active service, however, this regiment not being sent to the front.

When the news of the battles of Lexington and Concord reached the Three Lower Counties, two regiments of militia had already been organized in New Castle County. Immediately thereafter, on May 25, 1775, two were organized in Kent. Rodney was commissioned colonel of the so-called "Upper Regiment" and John Haslet of the "Lower."

In September 1775 the Council of Safety met in Dover and appointed Rodney brigadier general of the Kent militia, consisting of two battalions, and of the western battalion of Sussex County. Under the new state government he was again commissioned for the same office in 1777 by President McKinly. After McKinly's capture by the British, the acting president, Thomas McKean, made Rodney major general of the state militia, an office which he held until he was made president of the State in 1778.

In the affairs of the revolting colonies Rodney took an active part from the beginning of their revolutionary activities. He was Kent's representative in the Stamp Act Congress which met in New York in 1765. On August 2, 1774, the members of the Assembly, meeting in New Castle as an extra-legal convention, elected him one of three delegates to the First Continental Congress.

In March 1775 he was elected by the Assembly to a similar office in the Second Continental Congress and again in October 1775. In December 1777 the General Assembly of the newly created State appointed him delegate to the Continental Congress then sitting at York, Pennsylvania, but, on account of his many other duties, he was unable to attend its sessions.

In February 1782, and again in February 1783, he was chosen by the General Assembly as a member of the Confederation Congress but, because of illness, never sat in that body.

Having thus briefly summarized Rodney's public activities in general, it remains to consider more in detail his outstanding services to both State and Nation.

When, in company with Thomas McKean, he represented the Three

Lower Counties in the Stamp Act Congress in October 1765, he participated in the drawing up by that body of an address to the King, a memorial to the House of Lords, and a petition to the House of Commons, remonstrating against the Stamp Act and other acts of Parliament and setting forth in thirteen declarations the American theory of the constitutional relationship of the colonies to the mother country.

The Stamp Act having been repealed by Parliament in March 1766, Rodney, McKean, and George Read were appointed by the House of Assembly the following June to prepare an address to the King expressing the loyalty of the Government of the Three Lower Counties to His Majesty and the gratitude of the people in the colony for the repeal of that act.

When the Townshend Act, taxing certain imports into the colonies, was passed in 1767, the House of Assembly, again aroused, adopted in its October session in 1768 a resolution that that act and others, having "a manifest Tendency to deprive the Colonists in America of the exclusive Right of Taxing themselves and thereby to shew their Affection and Loyalty to the best of Kings, are subversive of the natural, constitutional and just Rights and Privileges of the respective Assemblies, and pernicious to American Freedom." The House of Assembly further resolved to send a "humble and dutiful" petition "to our most gracious Sovereign, expressing therein our ardent Affection and Loyalty to his sacred Person," but at the same time "most zealously and firmly, but with the utmost Decency and Submission, to assert our inestimable Rights and Liberties; delivered from God and Nature, handed down from our Ancestors, and confirmed to us by the Constitution; in the most earnest Manner to supplicate Relief against the Said Acts of Parliament, and to implore a Continuance of his Fatherly Care and Tenderness for the Liberties and Happiness of this, and all our Sister Colonies." Thomas McKean, George Read, and Caesar Rodney were designated a Committee of Correspondence and instructed to draw up an address to the King agreeable to the resolutions. The address was transmitted to the Colony's agent in London, Dennys de Berdt, for presentation to the British Government.

After the British Parliament passed the Boston Port Bill in the spring of 1774, closing that port and placing an embargo on all imports and exports as a punishment for the Boston Tea Party, the suffering that ensued in that city, especially among the poorer classes dependent upon work in connection with ship building, shipping, and trade in general, was so acute that appeals were sent out to the other colonies for aid. In Delaware, subscription lists were circulated by county committees of correspondence, and the money collected was sent to the starving Bostonians—or used for the purchase of flour for them. It was furthermore urged by the people of Massachusetts that a general

congress be held in Philadelphia in September 1774, to discuss the American grievances in general, and to take some coercive action which might induce the British Parliament to repeal the Boston Port Bill as it had repealed the Stamp Act.

The question of sending delegates to Philadelphia came up in all the thirteen colonies in one way or another. In Delaware it was discussed in three mass meetings held consecutively in New Castle, Dover, and Lewes in June and July 1774. At these three meetings what proved to be almost identical resolutions were drawn up, directing the speaker of the Assembly, Caesar Rodney, to call a special meeting of that body to be held on August 1, 1774. Since only the proprietor or his deputy, the lieutenant governor, in Philadelphia, could call the Assembly together for a special session, Rodney was confronted with a dilemma. If he consented to call the Assembly, his act might be construed by John Penn, the governor, and by the British Government, as unconstitutional and revolutionary, and if he refused he might be dubbed a reactionary by the radical elements. Quickly making up his mind, he sent a circular letter to all the eighteen members of the Assembly. Nearly all the members responded and met in New Castle on the appointed day.

There was no thought at this time of separating from the mother country, but the colonies were thoroughly agreed on seeking redress of their grievances. The meeting in New Castle came to a quick decision. On the second day, August 2, it adopted a set of resolutions, instructing the three members of the body, who were selected to go to Philadelphia, what to do. These members were Rodney, McKean, and Read. Realizing that the meeting of the Assembly was irregular and that it was in reality a convention and not the Assembly (though its membership was that of the Assembly), Rodney signed the instructions to his two colleagues and to himself, not "Caesar Rodney, Speaker," but "Caesar Rodney, Chairman."

The three delegates proceeded to Philadelphia, and met with the delegates from the other colonies on September 5 in Carpenters Hall as the First Continental Congress. Rodney's appearance in Congress is referred to by John Adams in his diary for September 3. "Saturday. . . . This forenoon, Mr. Caesar Rodney of the lower counties on Delaware River, two Mr. Tilghmans from Maryland, were introduced to us. . . . Caesar Rodney is the oddest looking man in the world; he is tall, thin and slender as a reed, pale; his face is not bigger than a large apple, yet there is sense and fire, spirit, wit, and humor in his countenance. He made himself very merry with Ruggles and his pretended scruples and timidities at the last Congress."

The Delaware delegates assisted in drawing up the famous "plan of Association" which forbade the importation of British products into the colonies

after December 1, 1774, and the exportation of American products to Great Britain and her other colonies after September 1775, if meanwhile the British Government had not come to terms by repealing the Boston Port Bill as well as other obnoxious measures. Before adjourning, this Congress also agreed to assemble again on May 10, 1775, should the British authorities by that time still refuse to yield.

Of course, the embargo against British imports would have been a flat failure had not Congress called upon all the colonies to see to its enforcement. Consequently, in the Three Lower Counties, immediately after the return of the Delaware delegates from Philadelphia, mass meetings were held to appoint committees of inspection and observation to keep a vigilant eye on all merchants to prevent importation and sale of the proscribed goods after December 1. Rodney was a member of the committee for Kent County. There were bootleggers then as now, and some merchants sought to import, before December 1, large quantities of British goods in order to advance the price later when they became scarce, but when discovered the committees had full authority to deal drastically with such cases.

When the House of Assembly met in an adjourned session in March 1775, it approved the acts of the irregular meeting of August 1774, and approved also the report prepared by the three delegates to the First Continental Congress, Rodney, McKean, and Read. These gentlemen were reelected on March 29, 1775, to attend the Second Continental Congress, and received a new set of instructions, this time signed by Caesar Rodney as speaker. Although their appointment occurred only three weeks before the Battle of Lexington, the delegates to the Second Continental Congress were to "Avoid, as you have heretofore done, everything disrespectful or offensive to our most gracious Sovereign, or in any measure invasive of his just rights and prerogative." Indicating that the Assembly was in no mood to permit Pennsylvania to deny the right of the Three Lower Counties to act independently in the Congress, the instructions also included the following: "IV. If the Congress, when formed, shall not in every question to be voted by Provinces, allow this government an equal vote with any other province or government on this continent, you are decently but firmly to urge the right of this government in Congress with the other Colonies." That Delaware today is an independent State is partly due to this instruction. The delegates were moreover authorized to treat on behalf of the Government of the Three Lower Counties with any person authorized to speak for His Majesty, the King.

Delaware's three representatives joined with the other delegates in Philadelphia in May 1775 in organizing what was subsequently called the Second Continental Congress, this time meeting in the Pennsylvania State House, later to

become known as Independence Hall. George Read, in a letter to his wife dated May 18, 1775, gives a glimpse of a very busy Congress at this time, and also shows himself and Rodney as belonging to the same intimate eating club as Washington and other Virginia gentlemen. He wrote in part: "You too justly hint at my inattention to this kind of correspondence, but the life I lead here will in some measure account for it. I prepare in the morning for the meeting at nine o'clock, and often do not return to my lodgings till that time at night. We sit in Congress generally till half-past three o'clock, and once till five o'clock, and then [I] dine at the City Tavern, where a few of us have established a table for each day in the week, save Saturday, when there is a general dinner. Our daily table is formed by the following persons, at present, to wit: Messrs. Randolph, Lee, Washington, and Harrison of Virginia, Alsop of New York, Chase of Maryland, and Rodney and Read. A dinner is ordered for the number, eight, and whatever is deficient of that number is to be paid for at two shillings and sixpence a head, and each that attends pays only the expense of the day."

As already stated, the Kent County militia officers met in Dover in the same month and elected Rodney as colonel of the Upper County regiment and John Haslet as colonel of the Lower County regiment. Thus in the spring and summer of 1775, when the War of the Revolution broke out, and more than a year before the Declaration of Independence, we find Rodney not only speaker of the House of Assembly in New Castle and a member from Delaware of the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia, but also actively engaged as a ranking officer of the Kent County militia, and deeply concerned in the military defense of the Government of the Three Lower Counties.

Rodney was in Philadelphia in June when the proposal came up of appointing Washington (a colleague in the same Congress) commander-in-chief of the American forces. Together with Read and McKean, he voted for Washington.

In September 1775, the newly elected members of the Council of Safety, including Rodney, met in Dover to effect an organization and to coördinate the military efforts of the three counties. At this time, three brigadier generals were appointed, Dr. John McKinly for the New Castle militia, Caesar Rodney for Kent County, and John Dagworthy for Sussex County. To prevent any dispute, confusion, or jealousy from developing among the counties, a curious resolution was adopted, the gist of which was as follows: In case Sussex County were invaded and the militia of the two other counties went to that county's aid, the brigadier general, i.e., John Dagworthy, would be the ranking officer. Similarly, if the enemy were operating in Kent County or in New Castle County, the brigadier general of the militia in the county invaded

would be the ranking officer. Who should be the ranking officer should all three counties be invaded at once apparently was a problem that did not occur to the minds of the busy members of the Council of Safety. As a matter of fact, when the British in September 1777 actually invaded New Castle County from the direction of Chesapeake Bay, the militia of New Castle County failed to assemble in any appreciable number, and it remained for Rodney, now technically in command of all Delaware militia, since John McKinly had become president, to concentrate the Kent County militia near Noxentown in New Castle County in order to observe, and, if possible, harass the enemy on its southern or right flank. Rodney's correspondence with Washington, whose headquarters were then at Wilmington, clearly shows the Delawarean's earnest, though futile, efforts to be of assistance to Washington, his weakness being due primarily to the failure of the New Castle militia to respond to his or President McKinly's appeals.

But to return to Rodney's activities in the civil branch of government. He remained a member of the Second Continental Congress throughout the year 1775 and during the year 1776 until autumn. He therefore had a part in the work of sending an address to the King, another to the people of Great Britain, and a third to the non-revolting colonies, including Canada. When no concessions were forthcoming from the British Government, and when the radicals in Congress, like John Adams and Samuel Adams, were gaining steadily over conservatives like John Dickinson, Robert Morris, and George Read, Rodney and McKean found themselves more and more in sympathy with the former. This is borne out to some extent by John Adams himself, who, in discussing the question of foreign alliances in his *Autobiography*, wrote as follows: "When I first made these observations in Congress, I never saw a greater impression made upon that assembly or any other. Attention and approbation were marked upon every countenance. Several gentlemen came to me afterwards, to thank me for that speech, particularly, Mr. Caesar Rodney, of Delaware and Mr. Duane, of New York. I remember these two gentlemen in particular, because both of them said that I had considered the subject of foreign connections more maturely than any man they had ever heard in America; that I had perfectly digested the subject, and had removed, Mr. Rodney said, all, and Mr. Duane said, the greatest part of his objections to foreign negotiations. Even Mr. Dickinson said, to gentlemen out of doors, that I had thrown great light on the subject."

Being speaker of the House of Assembly at New Castle, Rodney presided over a session in June 1776 which, as has already been stated, gave new instructions to the delegates in Congress, permitting them to join with the other colonies "in forming such farther compacts between the United Colonies, con-

cluding such treaties with foreign Kingdoms and states, and in adopting such other measures as shall be judged necessary for promoting the liberty, safety, and interests of America, reserving to the people of this Colony the sole and exclusive right of regulating the internal government and police of the same." The second part of the instructions repeated the order of the previous year, namely that the delegates should maintain the right of the colony "to an equal voice in Congress with any other province or government on this Continent, as the inhabitants thereof have their *All* at stake as well as others." This resolution, which was passed by a unanimous vote, virtually empowered the three delegates from Delaware to give their assent to Richard Henry Lee's resolution, which the Virginia delegate had introduced in Congress on June 7, and to the Declaration of Independence. In the light of the Assembly's other resolution of the same day, supplanting the authority of the Crown in the Three Lower Counties, this resolution certainly did not authorize any of the Delaware delegates to vote against the proposal for independence which was then pending in Congress. Moreover, the Assembly followed the advice of Congress expressed in its resolution of May 15, 1776, that all colonies should set up independent governments if they had not already done so. In forwarding a copy of the resolution of Congress to his brother, Thomas, Caesar Rodney had written from Philadelphia: "Inclosed I have sent you the printed Copy of the Resolution of Congress mentioned in my last. Most of those here who are *termed the Cool Considerate men* think it amounts to a declaration of Independence. It Certainly savours of it, but you will see and Judge for Your Self." By passing a simple resolution at this June meeting of the Assembly, therefore, the Three Lower Counties to all intents and purposes declared themselves independent of the British King, for thereafter all officials in the three counties were to consider themselves as officers of the Government of the Three Lower Counties, not of the Crown. Caesar Rodney's hand in effecting all this is clearly seen in the correspondence.

The Assembly adjourned on June 22, whereupon the speaker proceeded to Sussex County at the very time Lee's resolution for separation lay on the table in Independence Hall in Philadelphia. Rodney in all probability knew that the calendar called for its consideration on July 1, but he was so much engrossed as a militia general in investigating a threatened Tory uprising in Sussex County, the news of which appeared even in a London paper later and heartened the British Government, that his return to Philadelphia had to be postponed. He had been to Lewes and other parts of Sussex County, and had returned to his home near Dover, when Lee's resolution was taken off the table early on July 1 and discussed in the Committee of the Whole House. The resolution passed the committee with nine states in favor, Pennsylvania

and South Carolina against, Delaware not voting on account of McKean's voting for and Read's against, and the New York delegates remaining neutral, being instructed by their Assembly not to vote either way. The jubilant radicals now pressed for a formal vote by the Congress immediately upon the dissolution of the Committee of the Whole House, but the chairman of the South Carolina delegation pleaded for a postponement of the vote until new instructions could be secured from his State. The radicals conceded the point and allowed a postponement of one day.

In the meantime, McKean, according to a statement by himself, had sent a messenger to Rodney, urging his immediate return to Philadelphia. Rodney must have received McKean's communication in the night of July 1 and 2, because it is known that, after his famous ride, he arrived in time to vote on Lee's resolution in the late afternoon of the second, thus causing Delaware to join the nine states which had voted for the resolution in the committee the day before. Pennsylvania's vote was also cast for the resolution when Robert Morris and John Dickinson stayed away from the session and permitted Benjamin Franklin, John Morton, and James Wilson to out-vote two die-hard conservatives, namely Humphreys and Willing. The South Carolina delegation also joined the majority, making the total vote for the resolution twelve states, New York still refraining from voting. The South Carolina people during the night of July 1 and 2 had decided to disregard their instructions to oppose independence. In such a manner was the separation of twelve American colonies from the mother country effected on July 2. New York made the vote unanimous on July 15.

Immediately upon the passage of Lee's resolution, Congress proceeded to consider Jefferson's draft of a declaration of independence, which should announce to the world the act of separation effected on July 2 and at the same time serve as a propaganda document, explaining to the world the reasons for the step already taken, with a view to gaining more adherents at home and in foreign lands, especially in France.

Caesar Rodney was present in Congress during the whole time the declaration was being discussed, i.e., on the second, third, and fourth, and of course voted for its adoption late on the fourth, just as he had voted for Lee's resolution on the second. He briefly tells about his arrival in Philadelphia and his actions in Congress in his famous Fourth of July letter which he sent to his brother, Thomas, in Dover, and which is one of the very few letters written by any of the Congressmen on the day of the adoption of the declaration. (See page 94.)

The summoning of the members of the Delaware Assembly to meet in New Castle on July 22, referred to by Rodney in this letter, was for the pur-

pose of winding up the business of the last colonial assembly, which had been elected in October 1775, and of arranging for the holding of a constitutional convention to frame a state government entirely independent of Pennsylvania, with respect to the executive as well as the legislative and judicial departments. Rodney went to New Castle and presided at this last session from July 22 to July 28. Then the Colonial Assembly adjourned forever. This Assembly passed a resolution calling for the election on August 19 of delegates to the constitutional convention to meet in New Castle on August 27. The resolution reads in full as follows:

The House taking into Consideration the Resolution of Congress of the 15th of May last for suppressing all Authority derived from the Crown of Great-Britain, and for establishing a Government upon the Authority of the People, and the Resolution of this House of the 15th of June last, in Consequence of the said Resolution of Congress, directing all Persons holding Offices Civil or Military to execute the same in the Name of this Government until a new one should be formed; and also the Declaration of the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, absolving from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and dissolving all Political Connection between them and Great-Britain, lately published and adopted by this Government as one of those States, are of Opinion that some speedy Measures should be taken to form a regular Mode of Civil Polity, and this House not thinking themselves authorized by their Constituents to execute this important Work,

Do Resolve,

That it be recommended to the good People of the several Counties in this Government to chuse a suitable Number of Deputies to meet in Convention, there to ordain and declare the future Form of Government for this State.

Resolved also,

That it is the Opinion of this House, That the said Convention consist of the Number of Thirty Persons, that is to say, Ten for the County of New-Castle, Ten for the County of Kent, and Ten for the County of Sussex; and that the Freemen of the said Counties respectively do meet on Monday the nineteenth day of August next, at the usual Places of Election for the County, and then and there proceed to elect the Number of Deputies aforesaid, according to the Directions of several Laws of this Government for regulating Elections of the Members of Assembly, except as to the Choice of Inspectors, which shall be made on the Morning of the Day of Election by the Electors, Inhabitants of the respective Hundreds in each County.

Resolved also,

That every Elector shall (if required by one or more of the Judges of the Election) take the following Oath or Affirmation, to wit;
I A.B. will to the utmost of my Power support and maintain the Independence of this Government, as declared by the Honorable Continental Congress.

Resolved also,

That it is the Opinion of this House, that the Deputies when chosen as aforesaid shall meet in Convention in the Town of New-Castle on Tuesday the Twenty-seventh Day of the same Month of August, and immediately proceed to form a government on the Authority of the People of this State, in such Sort as may be best adapted to their Preservation and Happiness.

Thus we see how important a part Caesar Rodney played in bringing about peaceably the political transition from the semi-dependent colonial establishment of the Three Lower Counties on Delaware to the independent status of the State of Delaware. He presided at the demise and burial of the old régime and took a very active part in arranging for the birth of the new régime: first, when, on June 15, as speaker, he presided over the Assembly which passed the resolution for supplanting the authority of the Crown by the authority of the Three Lower Counties; second, when, on July 2, he arrived in Philadelphia in time to vote with Thomas McKean on Richard Henry Lee's resolution, to wit: "That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent States . . ."; third, when, on July 4, he voted with Thomas McKean for the adoption of the Declaration of Independence; fourth, when he presided as speaker of the Assembly which passed the resolutions quoted above whereby provision was made for setting up the machinery of a state government; and fifth, when, on August 2, or some time thereafter, he affixed his signature to the parchment copy of the Declaration of Independence despite the fact that at that very time thousands of British soldiers had entered New York harbor on British transports, protected by a fleet of British warships, and that every man who signed the document laid himself open to charges of treason and was liable to be hanged.

Immediately after the adjournment of the Assembly on July 28, and after the campaign had begun for the election of delegates to the approaching Convention, Rodney was confronted by a strong opposition from the conservatives of Kent County. He naturally wanted to be elected a delegate, but as he was kept busily engaged in Philadelphia attending to the affairs of the newly born nation, he could not be on the spot to repair his political fences. His brother Thomas strove to get Caesar elected, but in vain. Consequently, he had no direct part to play in the Constitutional Convention in New Castle in August and September 1776. His correspondence, however, shows him in close touch with the situation. Both the president of the Convention, George Read, and Rodney's other colleague in Congress, Thomas McKean, who had also been elected a deputy to the Convention, wrote to Rodney from New Castle and Rodney wrote to them from Philadelphia.

When the Convention had adjourned and the campaign was begun to elect members to the new state legislature, a bicameral body, the conservatives in

chairman, got that body to appropriate \$500 for a monument. The legislative resolution, passed on February 20, constituted the members of the Rodney Club and others as a committee for securing the monument. This committee, with the money appropriated by the State and with \$500 additional given to the monument fund by the will of Mrs. Sally Morris of Wilmington, proceeded to the erection of the monument. It was unveiled with appropriate exercises on October 30, 1889. Governor B. T. Biggs presided at the occasion, and the Honorable Thomas F. Bayard delivered the oration.

On July 4, 1923, an equestrian statue of Rodney, showing him riding to Philadelphia to vote for independence, was unveiled in Rodney Square, Wilmington, by the citizens of the state of Delaware. The funds for this memorial were raised by a committee, the chairman of which was General James H. Wilson.

Again, in 1931, the legislature of Delaware decided to honor the memory of Caesar Rodney by appropriating funds for the erection of a marble statue of him to stand in the Hall of Fame in Washington.

In bringing this biographical sketch to a close one cannot better sum up Caesar Rodney's services as an outstanding founder and citizen of the State and the Nation than to quote the concluding lines from Mr. Bayard's oration at the unveiling of the Rodney monument at Dover:

What will be inscribed on this monument I know not, but are there words more fitting than those of Emerson?—

“Spirit that made these heroes dare
To die—and leave their children free,
Bid time and nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee.”

[*Bibliographical note:* In the preparation of the above biographical sketch the principal primary sources used, in addition to the Caesar Rodney correspondence, have been the following: *Journals of the Continental Congress*; *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*, E. C. Burnett, Editor; Kent County deed books, will books, and Orphans' Court books; Governor's Register; *Minutes of the Legislative Council, 1776-1792*; *Principles and Acts of the Revolution*, by Hezekiah Niles; *Delaware Archives*; *The Life and Correspondence of George Read of Delaware*, by William T. Read; *Life and Writings of John Dickinson*, by Charles J. Stillé; Reprints of the *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Government of the Counties of New Castle, Kent, and Sussex upon Delaware* for the year 1762 (reprinted 1930) and for the years 1765 to 1770 inclusive (reprinted 1931).]

CÆSAR RODNEY

1728 - 1784

PROCEEDINGS

ON

UNVEILING THE MONUMENT

TO

CÆSAR RODNEY,

AND THE

ORATION DELIVERED ON THE OCCASSION

BY

THOMAS F. BAYARD,

AT

DOVER, DELAWARE,

OCTOBER 30th, 1889.

WILMINGTON, DEL.:
DELAWARE PRINTING COMPANY,
1889.

THE HISTORY OF THE MONUMENT.

The home of Cæsar Rodney was at "Poplar Grove," St. Jones' Neck, Kent county, Delaware, where he died on the 29th of June, 1784. His place of interment was on the estate where he spent his days, and was unmarked save by a stone placed there recently by the Hon. Joseph P. Comegys, Chief Justice of the Superior Court of Delaware. In this neglected condition the grave of this distinguished Revolutionary statesman and warrior remained till the year 1887. In November, 1887, an organization was formed of young men of Dover to put a fitting monument over Cæsar Rodney's remains.

The organization thus formed took the name of "The Rodney Club." The officers originally chosen were—

President, WILLIAM G. KERBIN,
Secretary, HENRY RIDGELY, JR.,
Treasurer, ROBERT R. P. BRADFORD.

In September, 1889, Henry Ridgely was elected president of the "Club," *vice* William G. Kerbin, who had removed to New York; and W. Lee Cannon was elected secretary.

The movement at once received generous public support and universal commendation. The "Rodney Club" brought the matter to the attention of the Delaware Legislature, and the following joint resolution was passed at Dover, February 20th, 1889:—

WHEREAS, It is right and proper that patriots should be especially honored, and the remembrance of their good deeds preserved for the encouragement of patriotism in future generations; and as other States have taken measures to honor their patriotic sires, Delaware should not be derelict in her duty to those who in perilous times pledged their fortunes and their sacred honor, to gain and secure for us peace, happiness and prosperity, unexampled in the history of nations; and

WHEREAS, There is no fitter mode of expressing her appreciation

of their patriotism and of immortalizing their noble deeds and that of erecting monuments to their memory; and

WHEREAS, The remains of General Cæsar Rodney, member of the Continental Congress, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, one of the presidents of the Delaware State during the war for independence, an eminent, self-denying patriot, a sturdy advocate of American rights and liberties, lie in the Episcopal burying-ground, at Dover, without any stone to mark their resting place; therefore

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Delaware in General Assembly met:

That, J. M. C. Rodney, Esq., John R. Nicholson, Esq., McKendree Downham, and the "Rodney Club" consisting of Henry Ridgely, Jr., Robert R. P. Bradford, William G. Kerbin, George L. Whitaker, Peter L. Cooper, Jr., James H. Hughes, William Saulsbury, W. L. Cannon, Jr., R. H. Vandyke, and Nelson Spencer, and such others as they shall hereafter associate with them, are hereby appointed a committee to have a suitable monument, with appropriate inscriptions and devices, erected over the remains of General Cæsar Rodney in the aforesaid burying-ground.

Resolved, That the committee appointed by the foregoing resolution, or a majority of them, are hereby authorized to draw their order or orders on the State Treasurer for any sum or sums not exceeding in the whole the sum of five hundred dollars, for the purpose of carrying into effect the object of the resolutions aforesaid, and the State Treasurer be and he is hereby authorized and directed to pay the order or orders of the said committee so drawn on him, out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated; and it shall be the duty of the said committee, or a majority of them, to make report of their proceedings to the next biennial session of the Legislature, setting forth the expenditures consequent upon the execution of their duties under the provisions of these resolutions.

Anterior to the passage of the above resolution, the "Rodney Club" had removed the remains of Cæsar Rodney from the old homestead in St. Jones' Neck and had them deposited in the above mentioned Episcopal Cemetery in Dover.

In addition to the five hundred dollars thus secured from the State a like amount was given to the monument fund by the will of the late Mrs. Sally Morris, of Wilmington, Delaware, a daughter of his nephew Cæsar A. Rodney, and it was deemed advisable at once to proceed with the erection of the monument.

Wednesday, October 30, 1889, was fixed as the day of unveiling, and the HON. THOMAS F. BAYARD was chosen the orator.

OPENING CEREMONIES.

Henry Ridgely, Jr., President of the "Rodney Club," introduced Governor B. T. Biggs, who said:—

"By virtue of my office as successor to Cæsar Rodney in the executive office of the State, I have been invited by the "Rodney Club" to preside on this august occasion, and it now gives me pleasure to present to you the Rt. Rev. Leighton Coleman, Bishop of Delaware."

PRAYER BY BISHOP COLEMAN.

O Almighty and most merciful God, we, thy unworthy servants, pray Thee to be especially present with us at this time and bless the ceremonies in which we are engaged. We praise and magnify Thy holy name as for all Thy goodness toward us, so particularly for the blessings of civil and religious liberty which thou hast vouchsafed this nation, and for the labors of those among our forefathers whom Thou didst inspire and direct in laying the perpetual foundations of freedom, peace and prosperity. And herein we chiefly thank Thee for the good example and efficient services in this glorious work of him in whose honored memory we have set up this monument. We humbly beseech Thee that the devout sense of Thy gracious providence in our behalf may renew and increase in us a spirit of love and loyalty to Thee, a spirit of peaceable submission to the laws and government of our common country, and a fervent zeal for our holy religion which Thou hast preserved and secured to us and our posterity.

May we improve these inestimable blessings for the advancement of true knowledge and godliness, and show ourselves a people ever mindful of Thy favour and ready to do Thy will. Bless the President of the United States, the Governor of this State, the Judiciary, and the Legislature, and endue them with constant wisdom and fidelity.

Grant to our land, and especially to our own commonwealth of Delaware, honorable industry, sound learning and pure manners. Defend our liberties and preserve our unity. Save us from violence, discord and confusion, from ignorance, pride and prejudice. Purge us of corruption, intemperance and covetousness, and deliver us from every evil way. Fashion into one happy people, fearing God and working righteousness, the multitudes who come hither out of many kindreds and tongues. In the time of prosperity fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble suffer not our Trust in Thee to fail. All which we ask in the name and for the sake of our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who taught us when we pray to say

Our Father, Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Governor Biggs then introduced Mr. Bayard and said:—
 “Having been selected to preside over this highly cultured and intelligent audience, I would be remiss in duty did I not return my sincere thanks to the Rodney Club for so high an honor, so distinguished a compliment. The State of Delaware, though one of the smallest in the Union, has always been represented in the councils of the nation by men of intelligence equal to any other State.

“We have met here to-day to unveil a monument to one of the great men of the revolution, who was born in Dover about the year 1730. Any one familiar with the life of Cæsar Rodney cannot but believe that as a patriot he loved liberty, he fought for independence; and no man, living or dead, on the earth or under the earth, was his superior in every virtue which adorns and beautifies the human character. [Applause.]

“I will not longer trespass upon your patience. It is my privilege and pleasure to introduce to you a gentleman known to you all, one who has given twenty years of his life to the public service, four of which have been as Secretary of State of the United States. One hundred years ago, from the 30th of April last, his great-grandfather, Richard Basset, one of the signers of the Constitution, was elected a United States Senator from this State, and took the oath of office in the city of New York.

“The pure name and white fame of the Hon. Thomas F. Bayard is not confined to the North American continent, but has leaped over the two mighty oceans which wash our shores and is known all over Europe. It now gives me great pleasure to introduce to you the Hon. Thomas F. Bayard, who will now address you.” [Great applause.]

FELLOW CITIZENS OF DELAWARE, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
 GENTLEMEN OF THE RODNEY CLUB:

It would appear that William Penn had been of like mind with my Lord Bacon, who held it to be “a shameful and unblessed thing to take the scum of people, and wicked, condemned men to be the people with whom you plant,” and therefore when Penn came to let in the sunlight of liberty of the person in conscience and in conduct upon the colony he was planting on these shores, he sought as his companions and assistants men of character and substance; and he brought out of England men of good stock and standing and excluded “the scum and wicked, condemned men.”

Among those who in the same year, but not in the same good ship, the “Welcome,” that bore Penn and his shipmates up the Delaware bay and river in 1682, came William Rodney, of Bristol, who soon thereafter became a landholder in St. Jones, as it was then called, but since Nov. 25, 1682, has been the county of Kent, retaining the same boundaries.

William Rodney was the American progenitor of the family of that name, and his posterity have continued to dwell within the Delaware State, as valued and estimable citizens, contributing important service to the commonwealth. He was of an honorable and distinguished English ancestry and traced his descent from Sir Walter de Rodeney, who came from Normandy in A. D. 1139, in the suite of the Empress Maude, daughter of Henry I and wife of Geoffrey Plantagenet, Earl of Anjou. Sir Walter served in the war against Stephen, by which the succession to the crown of England was secured to Henry II.

In the subsequent history of England, the Rodneys proved themselves a valiant and honorable race, and these qualities of manhood were transmitted from generation unto generation, and in a marked degree to the American patriot in honor of whose memory we meet to-day, to raise an enduring monument to him for the conspicuous part he played in the great contest to assert on this side the Atlantic the same principles of civil liberty which his ances-

tors had fought for and gained in England. For it was the same spirit of courageous manhood that breathes in the great charter of English liberty which proclaimed itself nearly six centuries later in the American Declaration of Independence, and to the same political training and same stock of race and blood is mainly due the steadfast courage and persistent moral energy that lent vital force to these ideals, gave them power, and imbedded them in the constitutions of their governments on both sides of the Atlantic ocean.

When Washington, on April 18, 1783, issued from the headquarters at Newburgh on the Hudson, the order to the American armies upon the cessation of hostilities, with a prescient comprehension of the magnitude of the results that were to flow to the world at large from the victory God had vouchsafed to his country, he embodied a recommendation which to-day we should reverently follow, and which I will read to you in his own words:

"I cannot help wishing that all the brave men of whatever condition they may be, who have shared in the toils and dangers of effecting this glorious revolution of rescuing millions from the hand of oppression and of laying the foundation of a great empire, might be impressed with a proper idea of the dignified part they have been called to act (under the smiles of Providence) on the stage of human affairs; for happy, thrice happy, shall they be pronounced hereafter, who have contributed anything, who have performed the meanest office in erecting this stupendous *fabric of freedom and enterprise* on the broad basis of independence, who have assisted in protecting the rights of human nature, and establishing an asylum for the poor and oppressed of all nations and religions."

The words of Washington are ever to be read with reverence by his countrymen, for in them breathed the very soul of the revolution that made it possible for the inhabitants of this continent to become the masters of their own political destiny,

and in our contemplation of the great fabric and superstructure of empire, wealth, power, and all the forces of a progressive civilization which has been reared upon their work, let us be ever mindful that the foundations were laid in the solid personal virtues, the conscientious fidelity to duty, to Almighty God and their country, of a scanty handful of plain men around the tomb of one of whom we gather to-day in grateful remembrance.

Soon after the arrival of William Rodney in the province of Pennsylvania, he settled in St. Jones, now Kent county, and in the annals of the period we find his name connected with the local government. He took part in the separate organization of the government of the three lower counties of New Castle, Kent and Sussex, on the Delaware, then commonly styled "the territories," in contradistinction from the three "upper" counties, Philadelphia, Bucks and Chester, known, and called by William Penn the "province." We find Mr. Rodney's name in the memorial of the representative freeholders in the year 1700, when they endeavored unavailingly, but as it eventuated, fortunately, to re-establish a Legislative union with the province, under the liberal charter of Penn as it had existed under the settlement of February 1682; and when the three lower counties had organized a separate assembly for their own government in 1701, William Rodney was chosen Speaker of the Assembly.

His father, whose name also was William, had married Alice the daughter of Sir Thomas Cæsar, an eminent merchant of the city of London, and his son William died near Dover, Del., in the year 1708, leaving eight children and a considerable landed estate which was entailed, and by the decease of elder sons, finally vested in his youngest son, Cæsar, who continued his residence as a landed proprietor in Delaware until his death in 1745. The Christian name of Cæsar, the son of William Rodney, was derived from his great-grandfather, Sir Thomas Cæsar.

Cæsar Rodney, the eldest son of Cæsar and grandson of William Rodney, was born in St. Jones' Neck, near Dover,

in Kent county, Delaware, in the year 1728, and died at his residence, at Poplar Grove, in the same neighborhood, on the 26th of June, 1784, in the 57th year of his age. Left an orphan at the age of seventeen, he selected Nicholas Ridgely, Esquire, to be his guardian at an Orphans' Court held in Dover on February 27, 1745. This early step had a most fortunate influence upon his moral and intellectual training, for he was brought into the family and under the influence of an intelligent, honorable and upright man who wisely nursed his estate, carefully supervised his education and took an affectionate interest in his welfare.

Mr. Ridgely caused his ward to be instructed in the classics and general literature and in the accomplishments of fencing and dancing, to fit his bearing and manners becomingly to the station in life in which he was born.

Amid such domestic influences of morality, cultivation and refinement the youth of Cæsar Rodney was passed, and the effect of these advantages was made apparent in his career in life. His correspondence is that of an educated man, his chirography, of which I have seen several specimens, was clear and well-formed, with excellent power of expressing his sentiments. His personal disposition was extremely vivacious; of an active and vigorous nature he carried with him into whatever society he entered an influence at once engaging, attractive and impressive. His courage never faltered or failed, even "in the times that tried men's souls" and in its overflow was contagious among feebler spirits.

From his early manhood he attracted the respect and confidence of his fellow citizens, and civil distinction commenced upon his attaining legal capacity and continued throughout his life. He served in the legislative assembly of the State prior to the stamp act of Congress in 1765, when his usefulness was extended to a wider field. At the age of thirty he was chosen High Sheriff of Kent county, and upon the expiration of his term was made a Justice of the Peace and Judge of the Lower Courts. In 1762 he was selected by the Assembly to revise

and print the laws in conjunction with Thomas McKean, an important duty which was satisfactorily performed.

This may be regarded as his educational period preparatory to his chief work, and the real extent of his abilities and the true features wherein he excelled, were soon exhibited by his selection in association with Thomas McKean, as "Representative of the Freemen of the three lower counties on the Delaware to the convention proposed by the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, to all the other colonies to be held at New York on the first Tuesday in October, 1765," to consult together on the present circumstances of the colonies and the difficulties to which they must be reduced by the operation of the acts of Parliament in levying duties and taxes in the colonies, and to consider of a general, united, dutiful, loyal and humble representation of their condition to his Majesty and to the Parliament and to implore relief.

To comprehend the extent and nature of the services rendered by Cæsar Rodney and his compatriots, and the personal qualities they brought to the aid of the cause of popular self-government, it is necessary to glance at the condition of affairs.

Nowhere in the dominion of Great Britain was the sentiment of loyalty to the sovereign and fidelity to the Imperial government more thoroughly and sincerely evinced than in the American Colonies. Not only had these vigorous emigrants conquered for themselves homes in a wilderness and by their sharp axes, wielded with sinewy arms, let in the light of civilization to forests almost impenetrable, but when the counter currents of French and English ambition striving for control, had been transferred to this continent, the Americans, although left to shift for themselves against Indian assaults, and wholly neglected by the "Mother Country," as it was fondly styled, levied at their own cost armed forces to uphold British dominion in America and repel the military aggressions of France in her efforts to gain cis-Atlantic supremacy. When Benjamin Franklin, then in London as the agent of the colony of Pennsylvania, in February

1766, was examined before the House of Commons touching the wishes and feelings of the colonies in respect of the "Stamp act," he was asked: "Do you think it right that America should be protected by this country and pay no part of the expense." He replied: "That is not the case. The colonies raised, clothed and paid during the last year nearly 25,000 men and spent many millions." And he further testified in relation to the Indian and French wars: "I know that the last war is commonly spoken of here as entered into for the defence, or for the sake of the people of America. I think it is quite misunderstood. It began about the limits between Canada and Nova Scotia, about territories to which *the Crown* indeed laid claim, but which were not claimed by any *colony*, none of the lands had been granted to any colony and therefore we had no particular concern or interest in that dispute."

He might also have recalled the signal victory at Lewisburg achieved by a force composed chiefly of New England fishermen by which "the key of the St. Lawrence, the bulwark of the French fisheries and of French commerce in North America," as it is well styled by the historian Bancroft, passed under British control.

The Stamp Act had passed the House of Commons on March 22, 1765, by a vote of five to one, and in the House of Lords without even a division, and it was repealed in the month of March following, in consequence of the arguments presented and, still more, the manifestation of deep and determined feeling by the colonies against it. But the *principle* against which the colonies protested was not abandoned by the government by the repeal of this single act. Up to 1763 taxes had been laid by Parliament on the colonies, but not for revenue to the home government, but solely for local expenses and as regulations of trade.

But it was the passage of a resolution in 1764 by the British Parliament, after full debate, that it was their right to tax the colonies at will, and recommending under the power so asserted the laying of a stamp tax upon all writs and legal process and mercantile documents, that led to the

solemn protest by the colonies addressed to the Crown, and their counter assertion that "taxes could not be levied upon the people but by their consent in person or by deputation."

Thus, although the Stamp Act was repealed, the principle under which the tax had been imposed, and the claim of power it contained, was still insisted upon with a blindness and infatuation which nothing but the long abuse of power could account for.

Collisions between the officials who represented such claims of authority and the people who resisted became inevitable and frequent, until a sentiment of discontent gradually permeated the minds of the Americans and was not confined to the individuals or the localities that were the objects and scenes of injustice, but a common cause was created throughout the length and breadth of the colonies, to which adhesion grew gradually, but with a grave determination, so that the injury to any one was felt to be the injury of all.

These three lower counties on the Delaware were not governed under a Royal Charter as was Massachusetts and most of the other colonies, but our forefathers were living in happiness and safety under the benignant, wise and generous charter of William Penn, the Proprietary. They were apparently in the secure enjoyment of all and more than their progenitors had left Europe to secure. The promise of William Penn, written from London in April 1681, was indeed generous, but it had been more than fulfilled. He had written: "You shall be governed by laws of your own making, and live a free, and if you will, a sober and industrious people. I shall not usurp the right of any or oppress his person. God has furnished me with a better resolution and has given me grace to keep it. In short, whatever sober and free men can reasonably desire for the security and improvement of their own happiness I shall heartily comply with."

How well and faithfully he kept this promise let his subsequent charters of privileges to the inhabitants of the Province of Pennsylvania and the "Territories," the three

lower counties, attest. Not only was every birthright of free-born Englishmen amply approved and secured, but a freedom from the rule of classes and privileged orders was granted, to which English subjects elsewhere were strangers; local self-government in all its particulars and essentials was the wise basis, and anticipating those golden words placed by the hand of Jefferson nearly a century later in the Declaration of American Independence—Penn recognized that “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were ‘unalienable rights,’ and to secure *them* governments were established among men ‘deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,’” and so, in 1683, when he met the provincial council in which the three lower counties had been united, at their request, with the counties of Philadelphia, Bucks and Chester, each county having an equal representation of nine members, he told them “they might amend, alter or add for the public good,” and that he was ready to settle such foundations as might be for their happiness and the good of their posterity.

It is little to be wondered that the colony so founded in reliance upon all that is best in human nature should flourish and rapidly attract numbers to share its blessings and benefits.

Well might Edmund Burke speak of Penn’s charter to his colonists as “a noble charter of privileges, by which he made the people more free than any people on earth, and which by securing both civil and religious liberty caused the eyes of the oppressed from all parts of the world to look to his counties for relief. This one act of God-like wisdom and goodness has settled Penn’s counties in a more strong and permanent manner than the wisest regulations could have done on any other plan.” And the growth was rapid, from 3000 of Dutch, Swedes and English when Markham, Penn’s agent, came in 1681, to 4000 when four years afterwards the good Pastorius came to found Germantown, to 12,000 in 1688, when in honest exultation Penn exclaimed: “I have led the greatest colony into America that ever did any man upon a private credit, and the most prosperous beginnings are now

to be found among us.” At the time of his death in 1718, the population was supposed to number 40,000. The testimony of the venerable Bancroft may be well cited also: “The old Proprietary Government in an existence of more than ninety years, had now the admiration of the wise throughout the world, by its respect for civil and religious liberty, and had kept itself free from the suspicion of having instigated or approved the obnoxious measures of the British ministers, and had maintained the attitude of mediator between Parliament and America.”

Under such a beneficent government Caesar Rodney had been born and had lived, taking part in the affairs of the community in which there was no manifestation of discontent or a desire for a change of ruler.

The population of these counties at the breaking out of the War of the Revolution was estimated by the Federal Convention of 1783, including negro slaves, at about 35,000, and in all the conferences and conventions at any time called during the colonial period and in the Continental Congress each colony was an equal integer, with an equal vote on all questions. Thus, in the Stamp Act Congress, it was resolved that the committee of each colony shall have one voice only in determining any question that shall arise in the Congress, and in the Articles of Confederation of 1778 of the thirteen States it was provided in Article 5: No State shall be represented in Congress by less than two nor more than seven members. In determining questions in the United States in Congress assembled each State shall have one vote. Similarly, in the convention of 1787, under which a more perfect union was formed under the Federal Constitution, each State had an equal vote in the determination of all questions.

Thus an importance attached to the action and influence of this State disproportionate to the mere number of its inhabitants, but which has operated always for the promotion of the welfare of the Union. The character of the individuals chosen to represent the freemen of Delaware on

sundry important occasions in the history of the formation of our government, and in the stormy period in which our institutions had their birth, has added justly to the influence and reputation of the State in the federal councils; and as the stream cannot rise above its source, I am disposed to attribute the disposition of our citizens to select wise and honorable representatives to the good and substantial material of which the community was composed.

The Dutch, the Swedes and English were men of sturdy integrity and industrious lives. The churches built by them attest their piety to God, and the body of their laws exhibit their respect and appreciation of justice among men.

A sketch of the simple life of our ancestors in Kent county will not be out of place here, and by the kindness of Mrs. Henry Geddes Banning, of Wilmington, I have been allowed to transcribe it from the MSS. of her great-grandfather, Thomas Rodney, himself a brave soldier in the Revolutionary War, and a younger brother of Cæsar Rodney. I give it *verbatim et literatim*.

“The manners and customs of the white people when I first remember, were very simple, plain and social. Very few foreign articles were used in this part of the country for eating, drinking or clothing. Almost every family manufactured their own clothes; and beef, pork, poultry, milk, butter, cheese, wheat, and Indian corn were raised by themselves, served them with fruits of the country, and wild game for food; and cider, small beer, and peach and apple brandy for drink. The best families in the country but seldom used tea, coffee, chocolate or sugar, for honey was their sweetening. The largest farmers at that time did not sow over twenty acres of wheat, nor tend more than thirty acres of Indian corn, and there was very few of this sort, so that all the families in the country had a great deal of idle time, for the land being fertile supplied them plentifully by a little labor, with all that was necessary, nay with great abundance, more than enough, grudged nothing to those who happened to

want. Indeed, they seemed to live as it were in concord; for they constantly associated together at one house or another in considerable numbers, to play and frolic, at which times the young people would dance, and the elder ones wrestle, run, hop, jump or throw the disc or play at some rustic and manly exercises. On Christmas Eve there was an universal firing of guns, and travelling round from house to house during the holiday, and indeed all winter there was a continual frolic at one house or another, shooting-matches, twelfth-cakes, &c.

“This manner of life continued until the war commenced in 1755, but this occasioned a sudden and universal change in the country. Soldiers were raised, the people formed into militia, great sums of government money were expended, new taxes were laid, and a great variety of civil and military officers became necessary. Produce became more valuable, &c., &c., then in a few years the country became engaged in more pursuits and put on quite a new appearance, yet this operated chiefly on the younger people, and the old habits and customs gradually wore off, until they are at length almost forgot; for what little remained till then was expelled by the Revolution which had naturally wrought a far greater change than the former war.”

From the simple and happy pastoral life thus pictured by an eye-witness, Cæsar Rodney now emerged and with his colleague, Thomas McKean, took his seat in that convention known as the Stamp Act Congress, which met in New York, in October 1765. I have already read you the objects of that convention which was attended by delegates from nine States, New Hampshire, Virginia, North Carolina and Georgia not being represented but giving their written assent to what was done.

The history of this important congress has never been fully written, and the original records of its proceedings are doubtless to be found among the unpublished archives of the government at Washington, awaiting the day when the un-

blushing importunity of place-hunting and the lofty occupation it begets of office-peddling, shall have been sufficiently intermitted to allow the representatives of the American people time enough to enact measures for the intelligent editing of the documentary history of their government, and its publication for the instruction and edification of their constituents.

Happily for his own conscience, Cæsar Rodney left no personal diary, nor did he attempt any record of his own services or of his daily reflections or criticisms upon his associates and contemporaries, but simply went on doing his duty as conscience dictated, and died leaving an untarnished reputation and no literary sting to discredit those who survived him.

To his care and foresight we owe the procurement and preservation of an authenticated copy of the journal of the Stamp Act Congress, which was found among his papers by his nephew and chief devisee, Cæsar Augustus Rodney, afterwards Attorney-General of the United States in the administration of Thomas Jefferson, and who was United States Minister Plenipotentiary to Buenos Ayres, where he died in June 1824.

This important document was carefully published in Niles' "Weekly Register" in July 1812.

In the prefatory editorial the source of the information is fully set forth, and Mr. Rodney is described as the "estimable and patriotic Cæsar Rodney, one of the delegates and for many years the great prop and stay of Whiggism in the lower parts of his native State."

The MSS. is authenticated by the signature of John Cotton, Esq., the Clerk of the Congress, and was accompanied by a separate paper in the hand-writing of Mr. Rodney containing a list of the members.

The credentials of Rodney and McKean were signed by the individual members of the General Assembly of the three counties, that body not being in session at the time it was necessary to decide upon the question of taking part in the Convention.

The share of Rodney and McKean in this important Congress was conspicuous and influential, and the latter was selected, together with James Otis of Massachusetts, and Thomas Lynch of South Carolina, to prepare a petition to the British House of Commons.

Permit me to draw your attention to the address to the King which was adopted by the Congress—because it indicates the reluctance with which the colonists took any steps which might tend to disintegrate the Empire and establish themselves in independence. I will read the commencement only and conclusion, although the entire document is well worthy of perusal.

To the King's most excellent Majesty, most humbly sheweth :

That the inhabitants of these colonies unanimously devoted with the warmest sentiments of duty and affection to your sacred person and government, and inviolably attached to the present happy establishment of the Protestant succession in your illustrious house, and deeply sensible of your royal attention to their prosperity and happiness, humbly beg leave to approach the throne by representing to your majesty that these colonies were originally planted by subjects of the British crown, who, animated by the love of liberty, encouraged by your Majesty's royal predecessors, and confiding in the public faith, for the enjoyment of all the rights and liberties essential to freedom, emigrated from their native country to this continent and by their successful perseverance in the midst of innumerable dangers and difficulties, together with a profusion of their blood and treasure, have happily added these vast and extensive domains to the Empire of Great Britain.

* * * * *

Then follows a clear and dignified statement of their constitutional rights as British subjects, and the petition concludes :—

"The invaluable right of taxing ourselves and trial by our peers, of which we implore your Majesty's protection,

are not, we must humbly conceive, unconstitutional, but confirmed by the great Charter of English liberty. On the first of these rights the honorable House of Commons founded their practice of originating money—a right enjoyed by the Kingdom of Ireland, by the clergy of England until relinquished by themselves—a right, in fact, which all other of your Majesty's English subjects, both within and without the realm, have hitherto enjoyed.

“With hearts therefore impressed with the most indelible characters of gratitude to your Majesty and to the memory of the Kings of your illustrious house, whose reigns have been signally distinguished by their auspicious influence on the prosperity of the British dominions, and convinced by the most affecting proofs of your Majesty's paternal love to all your people, however distant, and your unceasing and benevolent desires to promote their happiness, we most humbly beseech your Majesty that you will be graciously pleased to take into your royal consideration the distresses of your faithful subjects on this continent, and to lay the same before your Majesty's Parliament and to afford them such relief as in your royal wisdom their unhappy circumstances shall be judged to require.”

* * * * *

It would seem impossible for a people to frame a supplication for simple justice and forbearance from useless oppression in more humble and affectionate phrase, and yet strange to say, the “timidity,” as Bancroft calls it, or “conscience” as the President of the Congress, Brigadier Timothy Ruggle's of Massachusetts, himself styled it, caused the latter to refuse to sign the papers for transmission.

Thomas McKean, in a letter to John Adams, of August 20, 1815, thus describes the incident :

“When the business was finished our President would not sign the petition and peremptorily refused to assign any reason until I pressed him so hard, that at last he said ‘it was against his conscience,’ on which word I rung

the changes so loud, that a plain challenge was given by him and accepted in the presence of the whole corps, but he departed the next morning before day without an adieu to any of his brothers. * * * * *

Mr. Robert Ogden, then speaker of the New Jersey Assembly, following the example of the President, declined to sign the petitions, although thereby warmly solicited by myself in private and also by my father-in-law, Colonel Borden, his colleague.

“The consequence of my mentioning this fact, as I returned to New Castle through New Jersey was to Mr. Ogden a burning in effigy in several of the counties, and his removal from the office of Speaker at the next meeting of the Assembly, and to me menaces of another challenge.”

Thomas McKean of New Castle, in Delaware, was of Irish parentage on both sides, and even before he had attained his majority became a practicing attorney.

It is impossible to disconnect his life and labors in the public service from that of Cæsar Rodney, so long as the latter lived.

Their association and confidential friendship antedated their joint services in the Stamp Act Congress, and they appear to have supplemented the designs and objects of each other throughout in the most zealous and efficient manner, notable instances of which I shall proceed to relate.

Of the reputation and services of Thomas McKean to the whole country it seems impossible to speak too highly, and he was the only man who, without intermission, served as a member of the Continental Congress from the time of its opening in 1774 until after the treaty of peace was signed in 1783.

During the whole of this eventful period he continued to represent the three lower counties on the Delaware, although in July 1777, he was selected for the high office of Chief Justice of Pennsylvania, and ably executed its duties in conjunc-

A week later he again wrote as follows :

PHILADELPHIA, June 13th, 1768.

DEAR BROTHER:—Yours of the 10th of this instant, I received by Mr. Cooper, and am pleased to find (by your expressions therein) that you have so just a sense of love and duty and gratitude, and do not doubt (if I am obliged to go to England) that by your diligence and prudent attention to business, you will give me sufficient proof of what you now only express. The Governor not only joins with the rest of my friends in pressing me hard to go to England, but of his own accord, assured me that I should have liberty to appoint who I pleased to conduct the business of my offices in my name during my absence. All my friends advised, that, previous to my going to England, I should consult Governor Hamilton. I took their advice and have been at Bush Hill three or four times. His behaviour to me on this occasion was so extremely kind and friendly that I shall be wanting, if I do not hold a grateful remembrance of it as long as I live. He said it was undoubtedly a cancer, and in a most dangerous place, and that he thought my only chance was to go to England, but by no means to trust to any person here. However in a few minutes after, he arose from his chair, took me by the hand and proceeded as follows: "Mr. Rodney I have a very particular respect for you, and will do everything in my power to serve you; I have brought over some of the same medicines that Guy made use of in curing my nose, with his directions for applying them. If you will apply to some Doctor to attend you, you shall have what you want of them, and I will visit you (myself) every day during the operation, that I may be the better able to inform you whether they have the same effect with you as they had with me." Perhaps you will think this a greater mark of friendship than I had any reason to expect from Mr. Hamilton, however it is even so, and to-morrow morning the operation is to be begun under the immediate care of Doctor Thomas Bond, with the approbation of all my friends here.

But if this fails of making a cure, and does not put me in a worse situation than I now am, I shall certainly go to England, after a two or three weeks' visit to my native Kent. I shall meet with no delay on account of cash, tho' it will necessarily require a large sum. But to conclude, my case is truly dangerous, and what will be the event, God only knows, I still live in hopes, and still retain my usual flow of spirits. My compliments Mr. and Mrs. Vining; tell Mrs. Vining, the cloud now hanging over me, tho' dark and dismal, may (God willing) one day disperse, and I may have the pleasure to carry Colly (who waits with patience) to Dover. Give my love to Sally, Billy, etc., and remember me to the Doctor, Mrs. Ridgely, Sally Gorrell, Betsy Fisher, and all enquiring friends. Pray give the enclosed paper to Doctor Ridgely, and at the same time tell him Governor Hamilton does not incline to sell his lot, but has left it to Mr. Magan. I shall take care to write to you by every opportunity.

I am your affectionate Brother,

CÆSAR RODNEY.

These letters written in the privacy of domestic intercourse and never before published, unconsciously portray the fortitude and cheerful courage of this true man; when it is considered that his physician had communicated to him what was virtually his sentence of death—not the quick, sharp pang, scarcely felt and little heeded in the hour of triumph, cheaply purchased with a life—but death by inches, the slow advance of an insidious and implacable disease. Nothing sensational is displayed, no upbraiding of fate or unmanly bemoaning, but a simple announcement of the dreadful truth, and the conclusion, "my case is truly dangerous, and what will be the event God only knows; I still live in hopes and still retain my usual flow of spirits."

His public duties anchored him fast in America, he never was allowed to visit England, and the remedies obtained in Philadelphia seem to have given him some relief and caused a temporary arrestation of the disease. ut like

a true soldier thenceforward he marched undismayed, his life dedicated only to the performance of his duty, until fourteen years after the Great Captain gave the final order of recall.

Mr. Banning, to whom the first letter was entrusted, was John Banning, Esq., of Kent county, the record of whose patriotic services in various important capacities will be found in the minutes of the council of the Delaware State from 1776 to 1792, of which he was a member, and lately published by order of the Legislature. Among his descendants now living in the State are the Ridgelys, of Dover, Mr. Henry Geddes Banning and Mrs. Sally Ridgely Elliott, wife of Isaac S. Elliott, of Wilmington.

After his return from Philadelphia, Cæsar Rodney, in 1769, was chosen Speaker of the Assembly, and as the unsettled question between Great Britain and Colonies never permitted repose, resistance and discontent grew apace, and the need of his courageous counsel became more urgent as the the arbitrary aggressions of the Crown continued to force the reluctant colonists to decide between resistance or unreserved and slavish submission.

The Stamp Act Congress had thus brought about colonial union. The vindictive legislation of Great Britain continued, and the town of Boston seemed especially marked for royal vengeance. The charter of Massachusetts was rudely violated in its most essential features; the port of Boston was closed to all commerce, and every safeguard to personal liberty and local self-government was abrogated.

Such action served to precipitate the inevitable conflict, and early in 1774, a general Continental Congress of the representatives of each colony was recommended by Massachusetts, and ready response soon came from every quarter.

No colony moved with more alacrity than Delaware, and by none was the manly determination to make the cause of Massachusetts their own, and to resist at the threshold all measures intended for their subjugation more distinctly and clearly avowed. The general meeting of the freeholders and

inhabitants of New Castle county was at the town of New Castle, June 29, 1774, Thomas McKean being their chairman.

The freeholders and inhabitants of Kent met in Dover, on July 20, 1774, and a like meeting was held by the free-men of Sussex county, at Lewestown, on July 23d. The tenor of the resolutions adopted in each county was substantially the same, and after the most express and solemn recognition of the sovereignty of George the Third, and promising due allegiance to his government, recited the various acts of Parliamentary oppression against Boston, so dangerous to the common cause of America. Each county appointed a committee of thirteen members to correspond with similar committees in the State and in the sister Colonies, and Cæsar Rodney was one of the number from Kent. On August 1st the three counties met in convention at New Castle and Rodney was made chairman.

The resolutions adopted on August 2, 1774, recite the history of American grievances with a vigor and dignity that characterizes the public utterances of the period.

It was at once unanimously resolved to instruct the deputies then appointed to attend the general Congress, and "that they do endeavor to prevail with the deputies from other colonies to adopt the following or similar resolutions."

The length of these resolutions forbids me to read them, as they are found in Vol. I, page 667, of the fourth series of the American Archives.

Nowhere is the American case more clearly and unequivocally stated, and I cannot forbear to recite the 7th and 8th resolutions as indicative of the unselfish action of the Delaware freemen and of their lofty determination to maintain the rights of others as well as their own.

7. That it is the indispensable duty of all the colonies, not only to alleviate the unexampled distresses of our brethren of Massachusetts Bay, who are suffering in the common

cause of America, but to assist them by all lawful means in removing their grievances, and for re-establishing their constitutional rights, as well as those of all America, on a solid and permanent foundation.

8. That it is our fixed, determined and unalterable resolution, by all lawful ways and means in our power, to maintain, defend and preserve our before-mentioned rights and liberties, and that we will transmit them entire and inviolate to our posterity; and, further, that we will adopt and faithfully carry into execution, all and singular, such peaceable and constitutional measures as have been agreed on by this Congress.

The men who led the councils of Delaware were well instructed in the English law and lived in obedience to its precepts, therefore when they met in popular convention they recognized "the most eligible mode of endeavoring to procure redress for their grievances would have been through their Legislative assembly," but as that body could not be convened until September 30th, following, and as the Proprietary (John Penn) had already refused to convene the Legislature of Pennsylvania, when so requested for the same purpose, the best and most proper mode was by this convention, and this characteristic resolution is to be found at p. 897 of the volume of the American Archives already cited. The three deputies to the Continental Congress were Cæsar Rodney, Thomas McKean and George Read.

This Congress met at Philadelphia on September 5, 1774, and was composed of 56 delegates, among whom was George Washington, of Virginia. Their sessions lasted until October 26, 1774, and their proceedings relate to all the measures of Parliament which were considered unconstitutional and subversive of the rights and liberties of the colonists as British subjects.

Among the remarkable state papers produced by this assembly is the "Plan of Association" signed by all the deputies, from which I select three of the resolutions, al-

though it is difficult to refrain from laying before you the noble document entire.

"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 more 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, as follows:

I. That from and after the first day of December next, we will not import into British America, from Great Britain or Ireland, any Goods, Wares, or Merchandise, as shall have been exported from Great Britain or Ireland; nor will we, after that day, import any East India Tea from any part of the world; nor any molasses, syrups, paneles, coffee, or pimento from the British plantations or from Dominica; nor wines from Madeira, or the Western Islands; nor foreign Indigo.

II. That we will neither import nor purchase any slave imported after the first day of December next; after which time we will wholly discontinue the slave trade, and will neither be concerned in it ourselves, nor will we hire our vessels, nor sell our commodities or manufactures to those who are concerned in it.

III. As a Non-Consumption Agreement strictly adhered to, will be an effectual security for the observation of the Non-Importation, we, as above, solemnly agree and associate, that from this day we will not purchase or use any tea imported on account of the East India Company, or any on which a duty hath been or shall be placed; and from and after the first day of March next we will not purchase or use any East India tea whatsoever; nor will we, nor shall any person for or under us, purchase or use any of those goods, wares, or merchandises we have agreed not to import, which we shall know, or have cause to suspect, were imported after

the first day of December, except such as come under the rules and directions of the tenth Article hereinafter mentioned.

IV. The earnest desire we have not to injure our fellow subjects in Great Britain, Ireland, or the West Indies, induces us to suspend a Non-Exportation until the tenth day of September, 1775, at which time, if the said Acts and parts of Acts of the British Parliament hereinafter mentioned, are not repealed, we will not, directly or indirectly, export any Merchandise or Commodity whatsoever to Great Britain, Ireland, or the West Indies, except Rice to Europe.

By this we see how gradually the union of the colonies was formed—not by any single act or declaration—but by the silent and natural growth of the unwritten laws of human sympathy and congenial association for noble and worthy ends.

“The sacred ties of virtue, honor and love of country” were the strong cords that drew the hearts of our forefathers together, and against such influences were arrayed then, as now, the mean and mercenary forces of society, trading then as now, upon the baser and purchasable elements.

Unhappy is that nation from whose people is banished a belief in the disinterestedness of public service, which is naturally accompanied by broad and liberal views, which do not measure or test great purposes by constant reference to one small object—personal advantage or profit.

This it is that makes mercenary politicians such unsafe leaders, and causes national interests so often to be led to their destruction by men of narrow understandings, incapable of taking any but mercenary and commercial views of questions of governmental policy.

The Delaware Assembly met at New Castle on March 13, 1775, and to them Rodney, McKean and Reed, made full report of their representative action in the Continental Congress of October previous, and laid before the Assembly the journal of the proceedings of that Congress.

On the next day these proceedings were deliberated upon

and *nemine contra dicente* it was resolved that the proceedings of the Congress, and especially the part therein by the Delaware representatives, be approved with thanks.

On the 11th of March, Cæsar Rodney, George Reed and Thomas McKean were again unanimously chosen to represent the government of the three counties at the American Congress proposed to be held in the City of Philadelphia, on the 10th of May next, or at any other time and place with full power to them *or any two of them* together with the delegates from the other American Colonies to concert and agree upon such further measures as shall appear to them best calculated for the accommodation of the unhappy differences between Great Britain and the colonies on a *constitutional foundation* which the House most ardently wish for, and that they report their proceedings to the House at their next meeting.

It will be observed how carefully all violence of language or intemperance of expression was avoided, and that no other settlement than on a “constitutional basis” was hinted at.

And this basis was of course the continuance of colonial relations to the British sovereign. At the same session petitions were however presented from the inhabitants, freemen of New Castle and Kent, praying for the establishment of a militia and the phraseology of the petition from Kent is noticeable and highly significant of what was then passing in the minds of men.

“That we conceive a well regulated militia composed of gentlemen freeholders, and other freemen, to be not only a constitutional right, but natural strength of a free government from the exercise of which a wise people will not excuse themselves in time of peace.”

The Assembly on the 29th of March, carefully prepared and considered, “paragraph by paragraph,” and inscribed upon their minutes the following instructions to their “Deputies to the general Congress” to meet May 10, 1776:

Instructions to the deputies appointed by this government to meet in general congress on the tenth day of May next :

I. That in every act to be done in Congress, you studiously avoid, as you have heretofore done, every thing disrespectful or offensive to our most gracious Sovereign, or in any measure invasive of his just rights and prerogative.

II. That you do adhere to those claims and resolutions made and agreed upon at the last meeting of the Congress ; yet, for the restoration of that harmony with the parent state which is so essential to the security and happiness of the whole British Empire, and which is so ardently wished for by this House, you may, on your parts, yield such contested claims of right as do not apparently belong to the Colonists, or are not essentially necessary to their well being.

III. If his Majesty should be pleased graciously to appoint any person or persons to treat with the Colonies on the present unhappy disputes subsisting between them and the parent state, you, or any of you the Congress shall nominate, may treat with such person or persons on behalf of the inhabitants of this government.

IV. If the Congress, when formed, shall not in every question to be voted by provinces, allow this government an equal vote with any other province or government on this continent, you are decently but firmly to urge the right of this government to an equal voice in Congress with the other Colonies.

The House adjourned till the fifth day of June next.

But events were moving more rapidly than could be provided for by formal resolutions. The Delaware Assembly adjourned on March 29th, and in three weeks afterwards the battle of Lexington was fought, and

“ By the rude bridge that arched the flood
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled ;
* * * The embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world.”

In June followed the battle of Bunker's Hill, and the season for argument and deliberation had passed and hotly pressing for its place came the demand for decisive action.

Men of action were called for by the times, and men of action responded to the call. As a poet of our own day has sung :—

Wanted, men—
Not systems fit and wise,
Not faiths with rigid eyes,
Not wealth in mountains piled,
Not power, with gracious smile,
Not e'en the potent pen—
Wanted, men !

Wanted, deeds—
Not words of winning note,
Not thoughts from life remote,
Not fond religious airs,
Not sweetly languid prayers,
Not softly scented creeds—
Wanted, deeds !

Cæsar Rodney was a man of action in an era of action ; born not out of his proper time, but in it ; and, being fitted for the hour and its work, he did it well. He was recognized, and naturally, at once became influential and impressive—distinguished for the qualities which were needed in the days in which he lived on earth.

He was possessed of a noble ardor ; his spirit was aflame and it never flickered or wavered throughout the long and weary conflict that followed.

He had served in the Continental Congress of 1774 with Washington ; he knew of Washington's utterance in the Virginia Convention early in 1774, when he was delegated to attend in Philadelphia :—

“ I will raise one thousand men, subsist them at my own expense, and march myself at their head for the relief of Boston.”

Moved by patriotic impulse, he had counselled the selection of Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the colonial forces, and from the beginning to the end of the conflict sought to hold up his hands and sustain him at all times and in all ways.

It is to the honor of Cæsar Rodney and his native State, that he gained and retained to the end the absolute confidence of Washington. Thanks be to God, my brother Delawareans, thanks be to God, the history of our little commonwealth in the war for American independence discloses the name of no venal or selfishly ambitious trader in his country's woes, and here at home, in the character and traditions of men of our own State, we and our children can look for exemplars of courage and fidelity equal to any in the broad land. Their numbers were few, and the trumpet of local and self laudation not so loud as may sometimes have been heard in other quarters, but every Delawarean may proudly look and ask the whole world to look, upon the unsullied record of our revolutionary ancestors, and find there abundant cause for honest pride and grateful remembrance.

Cæsar Rodney had the "*Suaviter in modo*" as well as the "*fortiter in re*."

He had valor, but he had that discretion which is its better and more unselfish part. He was liberal in his judgments and generous to his antagonists. Hence his power and success in allaying local irritations and disaffections; of composing strifes; of converting opponents into allies, and foes into friends.

I have diligently read all the documents within my reach which relate to the action of the inhabitants of these counties during the war for independence, and I concur in the statement made by our lamented friend Judge William G. Whitely, in his address before the Legislature in 1875, "that to Rodney more than to any other man in Delaware do we owe the position which our State and people took in that most important contest."

Three very interesting and characteristic letters of Cæsar

Rodney addressed to his brother, Captain Thomas Rodney, at Dover, written during the session of the Continental Congress at Philadelphia, in September 1775, are to be found in Vol. 1 of the 4th series of the American Archives, and portray the situation very clearly, and the lively interest and intelligent comprehension he had of the events then transpiring in Massachusetts, and the necessary consequences to all the colonies.

The stir of military preparations for a conflict, which filled the very air men breathed, but which had not been formulated into thoughts, much less into words, began here in Delaware before the battle of Lexington.

Already the preparations for the enrollment and equipment of the militia had been vigorously carried out, and in each county the election of field officers remained only to be held, in order to perfect the regimental organizations. New Castle county led off on March 20, 1775, by a meeting of all the company officers, at Christiana bridge, and the choice of field officers for two regiments.

For the Upper Division,

JAMES MCKINLEY, Colonel.

JAMES LATIMER, Lt.-Colonel.

THOMAS DUFF, Major.

For the Lower Division,

THOMAS COOCH, Colonel.

SAMUEL PATTERSON, Lt.-Colonel.

GUNNING BEDFORD, Major.

Kent followed by a convention at Dover, on May 25th, of the officers of more than twenty companies and for the Upper Regiment were chosen:

CÆSAR RODNEY, Colonel.

THOMAS COLLINS, Lt.-Colonel.

FRENCH BATTELL, Major.

For the Lower Regiment,

JOHN HASLET, Colonel.

WILLIAM RHODES, Lt.-Colonel.

ROBERT HODGES, Major.

Sussèx organized in a convention at Broad Creek on June 20, 1775, of which Colonel John Dagworthy was made chairman.

No election of field officers was made, but the minutes reported that "military preparations for self-defence against the bloody attacks of the infatuated British ministry were being carried out with great spirit, and that it was expected to have 1500 or more well-trained militia, and the committee was endeavoring to obtain the necessary supplies of military stores."

Cæsar Rodney was Speaker of the House at the time he was so chosen colonel of the upper regiment of Kent county, and there would really seem to have been no limit to his readiness to serve in any useful capacity, civil or military, and certainly none to the willingness of his fellow citizens to heap the honors, cares and responsibilities of office upon him. The General Assembly in 1777 chose him to be Second Justice of the Supreme Court, and subsequently Judge of Admiralty.

He was appointed in 1776 Brigadier-General, and as such was on duty with the army under Washington at Trenton and remained until February 1777, when he was allowed to return home and subsequently was made Major-General.

On this occasion he received the following letter from General Washington:

"Sir:—Lord Sterling did me the favor of sending to me your letter of the eighth instant to him, mentioning your cheerfulness to continue in service (though your brigade had returned home), and waiting my determination on that head. The readiness with which you took the field at the period most critical to our affairs, the industry you used in bringing out the militia of the Delaware State, and the alertness observed by you in forwarding on the troops from Trenton, reflect the highest honor on your character, and place your attachment to the cause in the most distinguished point of view. They claim my sincerest thanks, and I am happy in this op-

portunity of giving them to you, circumstanced as you are. I see no necessity in detaining you longer from your family and affairs which no doubt demand your presence and attention. You have therefore my leave to return."

Any biography of Rodney must be in substance a chapter in the history of his State and the confederacy of which she was a member, for his unceasing devotion never flagged, and, happily, never failed to receive public appreciation.

The most memorable act in Mr. Rodney's career must now be noticed. Together with George Reed and Thomas McKean he had been chosen as one of the Representatives of the three lower counties on the Delaware to the general Congress to meet at Philadelphia on May 10, 1776, and, as usual, accepted the duty.

I have read to you, and I fear at some trial to your patience, the expressions of attachment to the Crown which marked all the utterances of the colonists through the period of growing alienation, the result of which they might suspect, but were reluctant to admit.

The wisest men in the country were most restrained in their expressions, and formed their judgments under the deepest sense of a responsibility greater than which never rested upon a body of representative men.

Allow me to read to you an extract from a letter addressed by George Washington to a friend in the British army at Boston, written from Philadelphia, where Washington was in attendance upon the Continental Congress as a delegate from Virginia.

After defending the delegates from Massachusetts against the charge of being "rebellious," he goes on to say:

"Give me leave to add, and I think I can announce it as a fact that it is not the wish or interest of that Government (Massachusetts) or any other upon this continent, separately or collectively, to set up for independence; but this you may at the same time rely on, that none of them will ever sub-

mit to the loss of those valuable rights and privileges which are essential to the happiness of any free State, and without which life, liberty and property, are rendered totally insecure."

And he continues: "But I have done. I was involuntarily lead into a short discussion of this subject by your remarks on the conduct of the Boston people, and your opinion of their wishes to set up for independence. *I am well satisfied that no such thing is desired by any thinking man in all North America!* On the contrary, that it is the ardent wish of the warmest advocates of liberty that peace and tranquility upon constitutional grounds may be restored and civil discord prevented."

Washington wrote these words on the 9th of October 1774, and yet on the 15th of June following he was, on motion of Thomas Johnson of Maryland, seconded by John Adams of Massachusetts, elected by the unanimous vote of the Continental Congress Commander-in-Chief of the armies of the United Colonies, and at once accepted the duty and set out for New England.

But while determined to resist subjugation and loss of liberty, the hope was still widely prevalent among the colonists that some settlement on "a constitutional basis" as it was styled in the instructions to their deputies by the Delaware Assembly, might still be secured without resort to the dread arbitrament of war.

The history of that period contains abundant illustrations of the independence of the judgment of the representatives of the people, and the frank avowal of opinions which at the time were often unpopular but proclaimed nevertheless conscientiously and fearlessly.

He is the true public counsellor who will utter *vera pro gratis*, and who may displease, but never will deceive the people who trust him.

But equally with independent judgment and individuality in process of thought, we find splendid proof of self-

subordination and self-control which, when personal opinion and judgment has been over-ruled by a majority, are not to be deterred, by a false pride or narrow egotism, from lending cordial support to the measures which are the outcome of free and unfettered conference.

Deliberation has its proper season, decision must follow, and action is the final and necessary test.

In the perilous days of 1776 the colonists hesitated long, and sincerely sought to avert the necessity of making the momentous decision to which they had most reluctantly been driven.

The doubts were many and natural, the "hopes and fears that conquer hope," were indeed "an indistinguishable throng," and invested with such a trust can it be wondered that hesitation to take the final plunge, to "cross the Rubicon" agitated the souls of the forty-eight earnest patriots, who assembled in the Continental Congress, at Philadelphia, in May 1776?

As true and faithful patriots as any in the land were those members of the Congress who opposed the resolution to declare independence, or to sign the declaration when the resolution had been adopted.

There is no authentic report or record of the debates, and even the minutes of the proceedings in the secret, or in the public journal of proceedings are imperfect, fragmentary and palpably defective.

I possess a copy of the secret journals of the Continental Congress from its first meeting, May 10, 1775, until the dissolution of the Confederation by the adoption of the present Constitution of the United States.

Much confusion, contradiction, and no little misrepresentation, have naturally been the consequences of the publication of their recollections by individual members communicated many years after the occurrences and professing to relate their own share, and the share of others in the exciting transactions.

The following resolution, adopted November 9, 1775,

will show how stringently it was sought to maintain secrecy :—

Resolved, That every member of this Congress consider himself, under the ties of virtue, honor and love of his country, not to divulge, directly or indirectly, any matter or thing agitated or debated in Congress before the same shall have been determined in Congress; nor any matter determined in Congress which a majority of the Congress shall order to be kept secret; and that if any member shall violate this agreement he shall be expelled from this Congress and deemed an enemy to the liberties of America and liable to be treated as such; and that every member signify his assent to this agreement by signing the same."

Cæsar Rodney died in June 1784, soon after the independence of his country had been achieved, and during the struggle he was too much absorbed in gaining the victory to think of outlining his own laudation or preserving the muniments of his title to the applause and gratitude of mankind.

He left no memoranda or written account of the proceedings nor of the part he bore therein, and to the testimony of others we must resort to do his memory justice, and fortunately it is explicit and indubitable.

His mind was much disturbed by the conflict of arguments that presented themselves, and it is fairly pictured in an account written by his brother, Colonel Thomas Rodney, and which I have been permitted to transcribe from the original manuscript.

"In the year 1776, when independence began to be agitated in Congress, General Rodney, who, with Mr. McKean and Mr. Read, then representing Delaware in the Congress, came home to consult his friends and constituents on that important question.

"He communicated the matter to his brother, Colonel Rodney, and observed that he had a great deal at stake, and

that almost all his old friends in Congress were against it, particularly Andrew Allen, John Dickson, Robert Morris and his colleague, George Read, and that it must of necessity eventually injure the proprietor and all his friends, for whom he had a very great friendship and regard; that in every point of view the question was important, and it would be difficult to say what might be best; that on one side stood a doubtful experience and a bloody war, and on the other unconditional submission to the power of Great Britain; that those who were against deciding now argued that there was yet a possibility of reconciliation on constitutional principles, but if we declared ourselves independent all expectations of reconciliation would be cut off. On the other side, he argued that while we continued in our present situation no foreign nation could enter into alliance with us or afford us any public friendship; that all our dependence being on foreign firearms, ammunition and other supplies, we had no way to obtain them but in a clandestine manner, which could not possibly enable us to oppose the power of Great Britain; that she was exerting herself in every part of Europe to prevent our getting supplies; that she had declared us out of her protection, and was making every kind of exertion in her power to reduce us to unconditional submission; that all her conduct so fully induced this intention that no hope of reconciliation on constitutional principles could possibly remain."

With such contending forces in his mind, Mr. Rodney had left Philadelphia, where Congress was in session, and was actively exerting himself in Delaware to organize the community into military efficiency to subdue discontents and promote harmony of action in the cause of liberty.

Whilst he was so occupied in Kent and Sussex counties, the issue proclaiming the colonies independent was made in Congress, where Thomas McKean and George Read were in attendance, and their views were not in accord on this vital question.

On June 7th Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, offered a resolution, "that the United States are, and ought to be, free and independent States, and that political connection with Great Britain ought to be dissolved."

This resolution was discussed with closed doors and passed the next day by the very close vote of seven States to six.

The secret journal contains no note whatever of this resolution, nor of the appointment of the committee of which Thomas Jefferson was the chairman, to prepare a Declaration of Independence.

It was felt that unanimity was so requisite that the determination of the question was postponed until July 1st. On July 1st a vote was again taken, and nine colonies voted in favor and Pennsylvania and South Carolina against it.

The vote of Delaware was not cast, because McKean and Read voted on opposite sides, and the delegates from New York were excused from voting by reason of the doubtful nature of their instructions.

It was at this juncture that Thomas McKean, who strongly advocated the Declaration of Independence, dispatched a mounted messenger to ride post-haste to Dover for Cæsar Rodney, and bid him speed to Philadelphia, where on the 4th of July, the question was to be finally voted upon and determined.

I can discover no entry in the secret journal under any other dates between June 24th and July 17th, except July 8th and 11th (neither of which minutes contains any reference to the question of independence), either of Lee's resolution nor the declaration committed to Jefferson and his four associates for preparation.

But under the date of 19th of July the following resolution is recorded:

"That the declaration passed on the 4th, be fairly engrossed on parchment, with the title and style of 'THE UNANIMOUS DECLARATION OF THE THIRTEEN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,' and that the same, when engrossed, be signed by every member of Congress."

On the 2d of August the minutes state: "The Declaration of Independence being engrossed and compared at the table was signed by the members."

This last statement is inaccurate and misleading, as it is certain that several members whose names appear upon the document did not become members until the month of November following, so that the time when the respective signatures were made is not authenticated and many subsequently signed the Declaration who had voted against its adoption. But the share of our patriot, Cæsar Rodney, is the point now under examination. Eighty long miles lay between Dover in Delaware and Philadelphia. Mr. McKean's messenger could not have been dispatched until late in the afternoon of July 1st, after the adjournment, and it must have been a remarkable horse or a relay that could bring him to Dover before the night of July 2d.

At one of his farms, "Byfield" or "Poplar Grove," several miles out from Dover, he must have found Mr. Rodney, and when McKean's message was received, you may know how little time was there for dainty preparation, barely enough for tightening of saddle girths and buckling on of spurs, before the good horse stood ready to be mounted, and our hero began his immortal ride on that hot and dusty July day, to carry into the Congress of the Colonies the vote he held in trust for the people of Delaware, and which was needed to make the Declaration of American Independence the unanimous act of thirteen united States.

More than a century has rolled by since that eventful ride; rider and steed have long since turned to dust, but the echoes of those flying hoofs will reverberate in American ears like the footfalls of fate,

"Far on in summers that we shall not see,"

and the great heart of the nation will throb with emotion when the story is told, and told again, of the ride of Rodney bearing the message of the little State to her sisters in a glorious confederacy.

The genius of Longfellow and the skill of the sculptor have aided to perpetuate in verse and marble the memory of Paul Revere, of Boston, "the messenger of the Revolution," and his midnight ride before the battles of Concord and Lexington.

I rejoice that such just tribute should be rendered, nor would I take one leaf from that patriot's chaplet, nay, indeed would point to the example of the people of Massachusetts in thus commemorating, as is their wont, one of their own citizens, as worthy of being followed in this State, and it may well be asked if the ride of Paul Revere has been so kept in men's memories, why should not the infinitely greater and more important service of Rodney to the united colonies be even more impressively marked by us?

Within a few days a letter has been placed in my hands by Mr. John M. C. Rodney, of Wilmington, addressed to his grandfather, Cæsar Augustus Rodney, by Thomas McKean, dated at Philadelphia, August 22, 1813, which has never been published, although a letter of similar tenor was written by Mr. McKean to John Adams, in January 1814, and is to be found in the 10th volume of Mr. Adams' works. From the absence of any note or commentary by Mr. Adams on Mr. McKean's statements, it may be assumed that he concurred in them.

But here is Mr. McKean's account of his own and Cæsar Rodney's vote for the Declaration of Independence, or the resolution to declare independence on July 4, 1776:

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 22, 1813.

DEAR SIR:—Your favor of the 22d last month, with a copy of the journal of the Congress at New York, in October 1765, printed in the Baltimore "Register," came safe to hand. Not having heard of this publication, I had the proceedings of that body—not the whole—reprinted here about two months ago, from a copy I found in the 1st vol. of "American Tracts," contained in four volumes octavo, edited by L. Almon, of London, in 1767. Such an important

transaction should not be unknown to the future historian. I recollect what passed in Congress in the beginning of July 1776 respecting independence; it was not as you have conceived. On Monday, the 1st of July, the question was taken in the committee of the whole, when the State of Pennsylvania, represented by seven gentlemen then present, voted against it. Delaware, having then only two representatives present, was divided; all the other States voted in favor of it. Whereupon, without delay, I sent an express, at my own private expense, for your honored uncle, Cæsar Rodney, Esquire, the remaining member for Delaware, whom I met at the state house door, in his boots and spurs, as the members were assembling. After a friendly salutation, without a word on the business, we went into the hall of Congress together, and found we were among the latest. Proceedings immediately commenced, and after a few minutes the great question was put. When the vote for Delaware was called, your uncle arose and said: "As I believe the voice of my constituents and of all sensible and honest men is in favor of independence my own judgment concurs with them, I vote for independence," or in words to the same effect. The State of Pennsylvania on the 4th of July (there being only five members present, Messrs. Dickinson and Morris, who had in the committee of the whole voted against independence, were absent,) voted for it; three to two, Messrs. Willing and Humphries in the negative. Unanimity in the thirteen States, an all important point in so great an occasion, was thus obtained; the dissention of a single State might have produced very dangerous consequences.

Now that I am on this subject, I will tell you some truths not generally known. In the printed public journal of Congress for 1776, Vol. 2, it would appear that the Declaration of Independence was signed on the 4th of July by the the members whose names are there inserted, but the fact is not so, for no person signed it on that day, nor for many days after, and among the names subscribed, one was against it, Mr. Read, and seven were not in Congress on that day,

namely, Messrs. Morris, Rush, Clymer, Smith, Taylor, and Ross, of Pennsylvania, and Mr. Thornton, of New Hampshire, nor were the six gentlemen last named at that time members; the five for Pennsylvania were appointed delegates by the convention of that State on the 20th of July, and Mr. Thornton entered Congress for the first time on the 4th of November following; when the names of Henry Wisner, of New York, and Thomas McKean, of Delaware, not printed as subscribers, though both were present and voted for independence. Here false colors are certainly hung out; there is culpability somewhere. What I can offer as an apology or explanation is, that on the 4th of July, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was ordered to be engrossed in parchment, and then to be signed, and I have been told that a resolve had passed a few days after and was entered on the *secret* journal, that no person should have a seat in Congress during that year until he should have signed the declaration, in order, as I have been given to understand, to prevent traitors or spies from worming themselves among us. I was not in Congress after the 4th for some months, having marched with my regiment of associators of this city, as Colonel, to support General Washington, until a flying camp of ten thousand men was completed. When the associators were discharged I returned to Philadelphia, took my seat in Congress and then signed the declaration on parchment. Two days after I went to New Castle, joined the convention for forming a constitution for the future government of the State of Delaware, having been elected a member of New Castle county, which I wrote in a tavern without a book or any assistance. You may rely on the accuracy of the foregoing relation. It is full time to print and publish the *secret* journal of Congress during the revolution: I have thus answered your request, and trust it may reform errors. Accept, dear sir, my best wishes for your happiness.

THOS. MCKEAN.

Cæsar Augustus Rodney, Esquire.

I have a fac-simile of the Declaration of Independence upon which the names of the Delaware representatives all three appear, but in the first volume of the Laws of Delaware, at page 78 of the appendix, the declaration and the names of the signers are printed and that of Thomas McKean is omitted. It is true that at the end of the volume, in type so small as to be almost illegible, in the *addenda et errata*, an explanation is given, but as the volume of the laws was not published until 1797, it is proper that so serious and unjustifiable an omission should be emphatically corrected.

Mr. McKean's own letters are ample evidence of the fact, not only of his mere vote and signature, but that to his energy and influence the presence of Rodney at the supreme moment was in large measure due.

On July 27, 1776, the Delaware Assembly met and took into consideration the resolution of Congress for carrying out the Declaration of Independence and suppressing all authority of Great Britain and establishing a government upon the authority of the people.

A convention was called consisting of ten delegates from each county to meet in convention at New Castle on the 27th of August.

This convention met at New Castle on August 27, 1776, and agreed upon a constitution of the government of THE DELAWARE STATE, formerly styled the Government of the Counties of New Castle, Kent and Sussex upon Delaware.

This constitution, on September 20, 1776, and a notable Declaration of Rights and Fundamental Rules of the Delaware State, was promulgated September 11, 1776.

The provisions of this document are well worthy of study, and it will be found in full on page 79 of the appendix to the first volume of the Delaware Laws.

Of this convention George Read was president and James Booth, secretary.

If, as Mr. McKean states in the letter I read to you just now, he "wrote this constitution in a tavern in New

Castle, without a book or any assistance," it is a monument alike to his powers as a draughtsman and his knowledge of the common law of England.

In December 1777 Mr. Rodney was again chosen a Representative in the Continental Congress, thus combining civil with military duty, and performing both with ceaseless activity. This was the rule and not the exception. Thomas McKean's signature to the Declaration of Independence was delayed several months, because he had to march at the head of his regiment before the instrument could be engrossed. The minutes of the Delaware Council in January 1777, show that a messenger was dispatched with letters from the speaker to Colonel Collins and Captain Richard Bassett, members of the Council, requiring their attendance, if consistent, with the service they were then engaged in in the army under General Washington.

The geographical position of the peninsula on which the State of Delaware lies, renders the territory between the two great bays of the Delaware and Chesapeake, penetrated at countless points by estuaries, peculiarly assailable.

Few indeed were the homesteads which were not liable to sudden night attacks and depredation by parties landed from British armed vessels.

The strategical significance of the peninsula in those early days of imperfect and difficult lines of inland communication and transportation can well be comprehended, and the enemy having complete control of the water approaches, it became a cause of constant anxiety with Washington and his compatriots to anticipate and thwart their plans of attack.

The inhabitants of lower Delaware were peculiarly exposed, and were left entirely to their own means of protection.

We had no navy and I have been unable to discover that any armed forces from the Continental armies were ever during the war detailed for their defence and shall presently refer to the number of troops recruited for the Continental armies from this State, thus lessening their power for local self-defence. As early as May 10, 1776, Congress commu-

nicated to General Washington the results of an encounter in the Delaware River in which the British men-of-war, the *Roebuck* of 44 guns and the *Liverpool* of 24 guns, were driven by the fleet of armed boats called gondolas from the mouth of Christiana Creek down to Reedy Island.

But as these armed boats were maintained chiefly for the defence of the port of Philadelphia, they did nothing to protect the inhabitants of Lewes and other points in the lower Delaware. I find a letter from Col. Haslet to the Congress written from Lewes on April 9th, reporting the capture of a lieutenant and three soldiers from the *Roebuck*, they having been off on some expedition and driven on shore.

In his interesting and valuable compilation of the life and letters of George Read, Mr. William T. Read has published a letter written by Washington's order to General Read, notifying him that a fleet of thirty-six sail had just left Staten Island to effect an union with Lord Howe and seeking information as to their point of landing.

Their extensive water front was a constant invitation to attacks and emboldened the British emissaries and sympathizers. British vessels patrolled Delaware Bay, holding frequent communication with the shore, landing at night and causing terror to the inhabitants. Mr. McKean wrote to John Adams that when after the landing of General Howe at the head of the Elk River in August 1777, he (McKean) was executing the duties of the President of Delaware, that he "was hunted like a fox," was compelled to move his family five times in a few months, and at last hid them in a little log house on the banks of the Susquehanna, from whence they were soon obliged to move from fear of the Indians.

So open to assault from the sea was the peninsula, and liable to be occupied and made the base of hostile expeditions, that in 1781 when the expedition under Benedict Arnold was being fitted out at New York, and with which he so ruthlessly ravaged the country adjacent to the Rappahannock and James rivers in Virginia, it was feared that the landing would be on this peninsula; whereupon to prevent its occupation by the

enemy, Congress actually decided that the only measure was to denude the region in question of all its live stock, provisions and supplies, and starve the inhabitants in order to deprive the enemy of support in case they should decide to land.

A regiment of horse under Colonel Morland was charged with the execution of this order of devastation, but Rodney's arrival in Philadelphia and his representations and stont resistance caused a modification of the order and a reduction of the force to a single company. This company was ordered not to proceed further than Christiana bridge until the commander should have personally waited upon President Rodney at Dover and President Tilghman on the eastern shore of Maryland, and had learned their judgments in the matter, by which he was to be governed. This was the last of the proposition to desolate our own territory by the forces of our own government.

Although this liability to invasion all along our extended water front caused great anxiety and much groundless suspicion, and gave rise to many wild rumors of insurrection against colonial authority, yet I am bound to say that the records of these times, so far as I have read them, disclose a great alertness on the part of the colonists and prompt and vigorous investigation, which never ended in any very important discovery of danger.

Thus I find the case of Mr. Robert Holliday was considered of sufficient importance to record it in the American Archives, and its recital may give not an unfair idea of the action of the patriots of Kent towards suspected persons. On May 2, 1775, the Committee of Inspection at Dover had laid before them a letter from the President of the Committee on Correspondence, as follows, which may amuse as well as instruct as to the condition of affairs:

To the Committee of Correspondence for Kent county, on Delaware:

"I acknowledge to have wrote a piece (and did not sign it), since said to be an extract of a letter from Kent county,

on Delaware, published in Humphrey's "Ledger," No. 3. It was not dated from any place, and is somewhat altered from the original. I folded it up and directed the same to Joshua Fisher and sous. I had no intention to have it published, and further let them know the author thought best it should not be published, nor did I think they would. I am sincerely sorry I ever wrote it as also for its being published, and hope I may be excused for this my first breach in this way, and I intend it shall be the last. ROBERT HOLLIDAY."

Resolved unanimously, That this be not satisfactory, and that Mr. Holliday be requested to attend the Committee at their next meeting, on Tuesday the ninth instant, then to give further satisfaction for the gross misinterpretation of the people of this country, by said letter, from which an extract was published in Humphrey's "Ledger."

TUESDAY, May 9th, P. M.

The committee met according to adjournment, when Mr. Holliday appeared and offered to make the necessary concessions for his conduct.

On motion, *Resolved,* That a committee be appointed to draw up Mr. Holliday's concessions in writing.

This being done, Mr. Holliday waited on the committee with his concessions, drawn up in the form of an address, as follows:

To the Committee of Inspection for Kent County, on Delaware:

GENTLEMEN:—With sorrow and contrition for my weakness and folly, I confess myself the author of the letter from which an extract was published in the third number of Humphrey's "Ledger," said to be from Kent county, on Delaware, but at the same time do declare it was published without my consent, and not without some alterations.

I am now convinced the political sentiments therein contained were founded in the grossest errors, more especially that malignant insinuation that "if the King's

standard were now erected nine out of ten would repair to it," could not have been suggested but from the deepest insinuation. True, indeed, it is the people of this country have ever shown a zealous attachment to his Majesty's person and government, and whenever he raised his standard in a just cause were ready to flock to it; but let the severe account I now render to an injured people witness to the world that none are more ready to oppose tyranny or to be first in the cause of liberty than the inhabitants of Kent county.

Conscious that I can render no satisfaction adequate to the injuries done my country, I can only beg the forgiveness of my countrymen upon those principles of humanity which may induce them to consider the frailty of human nature. And I do profess and promise that I will never again oppose those laudable measures necessarily adopted by my countrymen for the preservation of American freedom, but will cooperate with them to the utmost of my abilities in their virtuous struggle for liberty, so far as is consistent with my religious principles.

ROBERT HOLLIDAY.

May 9, 1775.

Voted satisfactory.

Published by order of the committee.

THOMAS NIXON, JR., Clerk.

Another recorded case in Sussex was for the alleged selling of some few ounces of tea from a canister, and some words deemed disrespectful to the authorities, but I can find no report of armed resistance to the local authorities, nor do I think the temper of the times, nor the disposition of the inhabitants could have made this region a healthy or a happy home for the friends of King George after the war commenced.

When the Rodneys came here from England, in 1682, they brought with them family names, family traditions, and the military coat of arms of their ancestors.

I have here an emblazoned copy; it consists of an eagle rising, as the crest, with three eagles displayed on the shield and the legend, "*Non generant Aquila Columbas.*"

"Eagles do not beget doves," and assuredly there was much more of the eagle than the dove in Cæsar Rodney, and I suspect the same might be said of the great body of his compatriots.

The great American eagle has never been noted for progeny of a dove-like character.

The Rodney family, on both sides of the Atlantic, had the meaning of this fierce emblem and motto running in their blood. During the same years that Cæsar Rodney was lending himself, heart and soul, to beat back British oppression from these shores, his kinsman, George Brydges Rodney, Baron and Admiral Rodney, was a distinguished officer in the British navy, and in 1781 encountered and wholly defeated the French fleet under Count de Grasse in the West Indies.

It is also a fact, not without interest to Delaware, that the father of the pious, venerated late Bishop Lee of this State, was a midshipman in the British navy, and engaged in the battle referred to.

The name George Brydges Rodney descended lineally to our late venerable fellow citizen in New Castle, a descendant in the same degree as Cæsar Rodney, from William, the first comer.

On August 25, 1777, when Sir William Howe made his landing at the head of the Elk river, General Rodney was ordered by Washington, who had his headquarters then at Wilmington, to gather his Delaware troops in close proximity to the enemy, to hang upon his flank, observe and report his movements, harrass his outposts, and protect the surrounding country from marauding parties.

By order of General Rodney General Maxwell and a body of horse were posted at Cooch's mill, near the foot of Iron Hill, and another body of horse was posted at Aitkens' tavern to reconnoitre.

After an interview with General Washington at Wilmington Rodney was ordered to return to Middletown and await the arrival of a battalion of Maryland troops under Colonel Richardson.

This comprehensive and dangerous service Rodney proceeded to execute with his accustomed vigor, passing personally from point to point within his field of duty.

From the unpublished papers on file in the Department of State at Washington, I have been able to procure copies of three of Rodney's letters written at the time to General Washington, which will graphically convey to you the activity of the service of Rodney and the Delaware militia, and indicate his relations to his Commander-in-Chief at a critical period.

[CÆSAR RODNEY TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.]

NOXONTON, Sept. 4th, 1777.

DEAR GENERAL:—I took post in this place on Tuesday about 10 o'clock, being the most secure considering my forces not being joined as yet by more than forty or fifty of the New Castle militia, I have some more than four hundred all but those few above mentioned from Kent, I have have kept out scouting parties rather more than equal to the force I now have, and my light horse are every day within view of the enemy. The night before last they exchanged shot with and alarmed their camp at Canon tavern, and last night did the same at Aitkens' tavern. I have now two scouting parties of foot out, one of 20 and another of 50, the light horse just going out again. I intend, in order be the more convenient for this business, to move to Middletown to-morrow, and am in great hopes shall be joined in a few days by the militia from Maryland and this State, having advised Col. Gist of your instructions and my situation for that purpose. I am afraid the New Castle militia are so intercepted as not to have it in their power to get to me. Your deserters and our prisoners have been into me, these, considering the difficulty of sending to Wilmington, I have took out and given orders for safe keeping, indeed I have two of them at work repairing our arms in that county. From these deserters, from the view my parties have had of the enemy, and from some landholders of this neighborhood who

had been surprised into their camp and last night released, they seem determined to push immediately for Phila. Some of those last mentioned say the officers, upon being told that you had thirty thousand men under your command and could have as many militia more as you would be pleased to ask, said they wished most sincerely you had 100,000. I wish, hope, and verily believe, you have enough to frustrate the villianous attempts of those enemies of mankind who are a pest to good society.

I am, dear sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

CÆSAR RODNEY.

P. S.—One of my scouting parties came in this minute and the officer reports the enemy were striking their tents at Aitkens' tavern and preparing to march toward Christiana bridge at 7 o'clock this morning. C. R.

[CÆSAR RODNEY TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.]

MIDDLETOWN, September 6th, 1777.

DEAR GENERAL:—Immediately on the receipt of your letter of yesterday I dispatched one of my light horse with yours to Col. Richardson, who he fortunately found at the head of Sassafra. By the same hand I wrote to Col. Gist to obtain and give me the best information of the movements of the enemy's fleet, and have inclosed you his letter to me on that head. He mentions the rising and imboing of some torics, and refers to another letter sent herewith as to those mentioned to be in Kent on Delaware. I am apprehensive it must be without foundation, because I have very good intelligence from that quarter every day, and have heard nothing of it. When I arrived here yesterday was informed by a number of people that four hundred of the enemy had landed that morning at Town Point, the farthest point of land between Elk and Boheamy, I immediately sent a party off that way. The officer has returned and reports that he was down on the point and all through that neck, and that there were none of the enemy to be seen. I have a party of foot just setting out to take a view of the enemy about Aitkens'

tavern, where I am informed they still lie. I had forgot to tell you that the officer of the horse informed me he took a view of the Elk river, and that he saw but three or four vessels, small vessels of war. Before I left Wilmington I drew five boxes of cartridges; could not then obtain a wagon to bring them. The President promised to have them sent immediately; however, by some means or other, they are not come; for want of them I am much distressed, not having more than four rounds. I think the New Castle militia now may, and hope they will join me.

Sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

CÆSAR RODNEY.

P. S.—A person just come from Kent on Delaware, says there is a report there that a number of Tories on the borders of that county and Maryland have embodied, that some of them are taken, and that it is believed they were encouraged to it by the Methodists, many of whose preachers are in that quarter.

[CÆSAR RODNEY TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.]

NOXONTON, September 9th, 1777.

I am here in a disagreeable situation, unable to render you and the States those services I both wished and expected. A few days ago I moved from this to Middletown in order to induce the New Castle militia in this quarter, who had shown great backwardness, to turn out, especially as by that move most of their farms and property were covered. However, all this has answered no purpose, for, though I believe most of their officers have been vigilant, but very few have come in at all, and those few who made their appearance in the morning took the liberty of returning, contrary to their orders, in the evening. Their increasing the duty and setting so bad an example to the troops from Kent, about four hundred in number and the only troops I had with me, brought about so general discontent and uneasiness, especially as they were more immediately defending the property of those people, as caused them in great numbers to leave me; though

I must say the officers did all they could to prevent it. Finding this the case, paid Colonel Gist a visit myself to know his situation and when it might be possible for him to move forward with Colonel Richardson's battalion and the militia of the Maryland eastern shore, who let me know he was doing all he could to collect them and would move forward as soon as he should have it in his power. The two upper battalions of New Castle county have never even assigned a reason why they have not joined me. Under these circumstances I removed to Noxon Town, where the camp duty on the few I have with me is less severe, until the other troops mentioned shall be ready to move forward, and have wrote this day to Colonel Gist on that head. Yesterday evening I sent a party of my light horse to take a view of the enemy and gain intelligence. The officer with his men returned this morning and reports that he was in Aitkens' tavern house, past some miles through the late encampment of the enemy round about that place, saw and was among the fires they had left burning; that the extreme part of their right wing was at Cooche's mill, their left toward Newark. This intelligence makes me more anxious to collect and move forward such a body as would be able to render you signal service by falling upon and harrassing their right wing or rear. Be assured all I can do shall be done. But he that can deal with militia may almost venture to deal with the —. As soon as I can set forward shall advise you. God send you a complete victory. I am, dear sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

CÆSAR RODNEY.

Two days after the date of this last letter the battle of Brandywine was fought with serious disaster and loss to the American army.

The battle of Germantown followed on October 4th, and just before that time Rodney strongly urged the importance of the occupation of Wilmington and capture of the small British force in possession of the town, to induce a diversion of the enemy.

Friction or jealousy, however, between the officer in command of the local detachment of "regular" forces of our army and the militia under Rodney, defeated his plan, which was formed with a view to restore confidence among the inhabitants after the reverse at Brandywine.

On the 31st of March, 1778, General Rodney was elected president of the Delaware State for the term of three years, and as his letter of acceptance is so characteristic, I have copied it from the record.

WEDNESDAY A. M., April 1st, 1778.

Gentlemen of the General Assembly:

I received yesterday afternoon your message declaring me duly elected President of the Delaware State, and am fully sensible of the honor done me by the appointment; but as I am too conscious of my own inability to suppose your expectation will be answered by my acceptance, I hope I shall be excused. I think, nevertheless, that at a time like this, it is the duty of every member of society to take such part in the civil line as shall be assigned him by the government, if tolerably qualified; therefore if the General Assembly cannot fix upon some other person more equal to that important duty, I shall, though with the greatest diffidence, accept; in full confidence, however, that your honors will afford me every necessary aid in the due execution of the laws, and otherwise supporting the civil government as now established under the authority of the people; and as the provision made for the president is by no means an ample one; that the General Assembly would not wish to add to the sacrifice I have already made, by which more than ought to fall to the share of any one member of the community.

CÆSAR RODNEY.

Dover, April 1st, 1778.

His gubernatorial messages to the Legislature abundantly attest his unremitting activity in the cause of independence, and his correspondence with parties outside the State will show how important was the aid he rendered.

From the unpublished files of the Department of State I have copies of sundry letters from President Rodney during this period of office, addressed to General Washington and to the committee of co-operation, which may form an appendix to these remarks.

Two original letters have also been placed in my hands by Mr. John M. C. Rodney, one of Sept. 19, 1779, to Col. Craighead, and another of May 6, 1780, unaddressed, and I do not feel at liberty to withhold from you the contents of both, for Cæsar Rodney's own words, like his own deeds, tell best what manner of man he was.

DOVER, Sept. the 19th, 1779.

SIR:—About seven or eight days ago I wrote you on the subject of providing in time for the Delaware Regiment, and then inclosed you copies of letters from the Board of War, Clothier General and on that head. I now beg leave inclose you a copy of a late resolution of Congress I am just now furnished with, to the same purpose, and must beg leave, tho' perhaps unnecessary, to urge your immediate attention to this business that you do not neglect, as soon as possible, to lay a full state of it before the Board of War, and the Clothier General, and that you also furnish me with another, in order that I may be enabled to lay the same before the General Assembly at their next meeting, and urge their making ample provision for carrying the requisition of Congress into execution in future.

I am, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,
CÆSAR RODNEY.

Col. G. Craighead.

DOVER, May the 6th, 1780.

SIR:—I received a letter of the 24th ult. from the Baron de Kalb, a Major-General in our army, requesting an immediate supply of cash for the officers of the Delaware Regiment now moving to the southward, to be advanced them by this State in consequence of a resolution of Congress, to make good to the army the depreciation of the paper currency, as

it is highly probable the General will not join the troops before their embarkation at the head of Elk. I must beg leave to give the officers, thro' you, such answer as I should have given him. There is little doubt but the officers' wishes and perhaps their expectations are equal to their wants, if so, their disappointment must be great. I am well acquainted both with their wants and their worth, it is therefore with great concern I told you that no such resolution as above written has been communicated to me by Congress, and that there are no monies granted by the General Assembly of this State subject to my order, in favour of any person, save the State Clothier. Whenever I have it in my power, be assured I shall not want an inclination to serve the Delaware officers.

I am obediently,

C. RODNEY.

Cæsar Rodney was a moral force, and his spirit infused itself throughout the community in which he lived.

No accurate census of the population of the union was attempted until 1790, and the estimates prior to that date differ widely. In April 1783, in the diary of James Madison of the debates of the Congress of the confederation, a report of the grand committee is published, wherein the table of the population of the several States is given "upon the best information they could obtain;" four only of the States producing what they termed "authentic documents of the number." By this the total number of the inhabitants in the thirteen States was 2,359,300; Virginia being foremost in population, Massachusetts second, Pennsylvania third, and New York having fewer than Connecticut.

Delaware, the least of all, had but 35,000 souls, and of these 35,000 at least 2000 were negro slaves, leaving 33,000 white people of all ages. Assuming a numerical equality of the sexes, there were 16,500 males. By the present rule of draft and conscription, all males (not disabled) between the ages of eighteen and forty-four are considered as available for military service. This ratio by the census of 1880 was a fraction over twenty per cent. or one-fifth of the male population.

By the Delaware regulation in 1776 the age of military service was from sixteen years to fifty. If the *total* force, making no allowance for invalids under this *last* estimate, had been called out in 1783, Delaware would have contributed 2125 men, or under the present rule as to military age 1700 men.

There is, however, no authenticated and complete roster of the Continental armies of the revolutionary period.

In this State I know of no one with better faculty or more honest intent for an accurate ascertainment of the number of men who marched from Delaware to fight the battles of American independence, than the late Judge William G. Whiteley.

In a carefully prepared address at the centennial celebration in 1876, in Philadelphia, Judge Whiteley stated the number of men contributed by Delaware to the Continental army to have been 4728, exclusive of militia battalions and companies raised for home protection.

During the late war, to prevent secession, the vigorous epigram was attributed to General Grant that the government of the late Confederacy had "robbed the cradle and the grave" to fill their armies.

But it is submitted to you, the descendants of the "Delaware men of '76," can any record of military contribution surpass that of our forefathers?

And such troops were they! There is scarcely a battlefield all the way from Long Island to Camden in South Carolina, and back again to Yorktown, in which the bones of Delaware soldiers do not moulder. The testimony from all quarters of their courage and devotion is not a current—it is a torrent!

Shall we call a few of the cloud of witnesses? Let Washington, Green, DeKalb, answer. Let the report of every battle in which they were engaged speak for them. Few of these brave men survived the war; as usual, the most daring fell—and in the reaction of distress and poverty that succeeded the struggle, those who did survive returned to the

labor of supporting their families, often crippled with wounds or disabled by disease contracted in the campaigns through which they had passed.

Washington once bitterly described Conway, saying "that it was a maxim with him to leave no service of his own untold, nor to want anything that could be obtained by importunity."

To describe the troops from Delaware his language would have been entirely reversed, for not they—nor, alas! any one as yet for them—has told the true story of their services, and they never importuned, even for simple justice, the government they had served.

Colonel Thomas Rodney, brother of Caesar, himself a brave and good soldier, was captain of the company of Dover Light Infantry, at whose head he marched to join Washington's army before the battle of Trenton, and subsequently was engaged, together with the Delaware troops, at the battles of Princetown and Monmouth.

This Dover company, because of their excellence in discipline and equipment, were detailed for duty as General Washington's headquarters guard, and in the MSS. of Thomas Rodney I find the following reference to the Delaware Regiment:—

"The first Delaware Regiment when reviewed by Congress, at Philadelphia, was acknowledged to be the stoutest and best looking, as well as the best disciplined of any in the army, their conduct on Long Island in the first action against Howe, obtained them the first character; they were the last that maintained their ground against the enemy, and when they could stand no longer, being surrounded by far superior numbers, every other part of the field being lost, they fought their way, made a good retreat and brought off several prisoners. The chief honor of the day on this occasion was ascribed by the regiment to the spirited conduct of Captain Jonathan Caldwell of Kent; for the Colonel was absent and the Lieutenant-Colonel and Major were men of no previous

experience, so that by consent, as it were, Captain Caldwell, who had been an officer in the late war, and was a man of daring and undaunted spirit, was admitted chiefly to direct the regiment.

"The Col. Hazlett, being afterwards killed at Princetown, and the Lt.-Colonel and Major leading, resigned, the command of the regiment next year was offered to Captain Caldwell, but President McKinley having offended him in the manner of doing this, he refused it and left the regiment and retired.

"The command of the regiment then devolved on Col. David Hall, and such continued to be the spirited conduct of of the officers and men that they preserved their distinguished and superior character throughout the war. Adams, Stevens, and Holland, all brave officers, as well as the Col. Hazlett, at different times fell in the field of battle. Hall, Pope, Kirkwood, Patten, Sanghan, McKennan, Jaquett, Wilson, Learmotte, Cox, and in short almost every officer in the regiment, signalized and distinguished themselves in the course of the war. And such was their reputation that General Sullivan (who had often had the regiment under his command) declared in Congress in the year 1781 that they were far superior to any other corps in the army. And in fact they became as much distinguished as the tenth legion was among the Romans."

The surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown in October 1781, ended the last important battle of the Americans for independence.

The vigor of Rodney and his State did not abate, and on the 19th of June, 1782, I find among resolutions passed by the General Assembly unanimously, one to the effect:—

"That the whole power of this State shall be exerted for enabling Congress to carry on the war until a peace consistent with our federal union and national faith can be obtained."

Six months afterwards such a peace was obtained, and the provisional articles concluded in November 1782 were proclaimed by Congress in April 1783. The armistice declaring a cessation of hostilities was signed at Paris in January 1783, and on the 3d of September of that year the definitive treaty of peace was signed, in the first article of which his Britannic majesty acknowledged the thirteen States severally by name and as United States to be free, independent and sovereign States, and relinquished all claims to the government, proprietary and territorial rights thereof.

John Dickenson had succeeded Mr. Rodney as President of the State, and was in that office when the preliminary articles were agreed to, but it remained for Nicholas Vandyke, as President, to announce formally to the General Assembly, on June 5, 1783, the entrance of the United States to "an equal station among the nations of the earth."

In October 1783 Mr. Rodney, together with John Banning and Richard Bassett, was elected to represent the county of Kent in the Legislative Council, and by it unanimously chosen speaker.

On April 8, 1784, the minutes recite that the council met at the house of the Hon. Caesar Rodney, Esq., the speaker, he being too much indisposed to attend the usual place of meeting. On that day he signed a message to the House of Assembly, as speaker of the council, and this was his last recorded service.

The adjournment was to May 24th, when he was too ill to attend, and in a few weeks the cruel malady by which he had been so long afflicted ended his mortal life.

Caesar Rodney never married, and the happiness of conjugal life, which he was so fitted by his amiable disposition to enjoy, was denied him. There are certain confidences so purely personal that the right to have them maintained survives.

Mr. Rodney was too warm-hearted a man not to have cherished an attachment warmer and stronger than friend-

ship. Among his papers proofs of such a dedication of his love and devotion have been found, but it was not his happy fate to form the union which his heart desired.

It was said of Washington that God gave him no children in order that a nation might call him father; and may it not be said of Caesar Rodney that, although denied children he has to-day, in the young men of his native State, children of his example and character who cherish his memory with affection and gratitude?

Mr. Rodney's will is dated January 20, 1784, with a codicil of March 27, 1784, and the signature of the testator to the latter was affixed by Edward Tilghman, Jr., in the presence of the testator and by his express direction.

This inability to write indicates his extreme debility.

His will was admitted to probate on July 3, 1784, the anniversary of his memorable ride to Philadelphia, eight years before.

The instrument is unusually formal and verbose, covering twenty pages, with a codicil occupying three more. It recites all his civil and military dignities, among them that of signer of the Declaration of Independence, and, with the natural pride of a man well born, gives his line of descent from the first settlement of his ancestors in America.

The will testifies the benevolent nature of the man, giving legacies for charity and gratification, and carefully providing for the gradual manumission of his negro servants.

His chief solicitude was for his nephew, Caesar Augustus Rodney, and as to him his devise was most careful:—

"And it is my will and I do order that my brother, Thomas Rodney, have the management and direction of the lands, tenements and hereditaments and real estate herein before devised to his son, Caesar Augustus Rodney, and that during the minority of the said Caesar, or until the said Caesar die in his minority, and I do empower the said Thomas Rodney during the said time to farm, lease or let

to rent the same to the best advantage and take and receive the rents, issues and profits thereof upon the special trust and confidence that he apply the whole of the said rents, issues and profits in the improvement of the said estate and the education of the said Cæsar Augustus Rodney, paying, nevertheless thereout, the legacy herein before bequeathed to Christ's Church, in Dover (and that in three years at most after my decease), without interest, and reserving thereout a sufficient sum to purchase for the said Cæsar against the time he arrives at the age of twenty-one years, a good and complete law library. And it is my most particular wish and desire that my brother, Thomas Rodney, and those hereafter mentioned to succeed him in the power hereby given respecting the said estate, cause the said Cæsar Augustus Rodney to be brought up in the religion commonly called the Church of England, and be educated as liberally in classical learning, natural and moral philosophy and every other branch of literature that has a tendency to improve the understanding and polish the manners as reasonably as may be in America."

But, alas for human foresight! all of his discreet plans to protect his executors from embarrassment and secure the estate to his nephew were destined to defeat.

The consequences of a protracted and exhausting war, after so severe a strain upon the resources of the people, led to great public and private distress.

The sale of Mr. Rodney's landed estate was forced by his creditors for the payment of debts, and grossly sacrificed.

The curse was added of a depreciated paper money system, that blood poison of the body politic, which inflicted more injury and caused more distress and demoralization than the eight years of war.

A pleasing description of Mr. Rodney's personal appearance was given by his brother Thomas, from whose MSS. I here transcribe it:—

"Cæsar Rodney was about five feet ten inches high; his person was very elegant and genteel; his manners graceful, easy and polite. He had a good fund of humor, and the happiest talent in the world of making his wit agreeable, however sparkling and severe. He was a great statesman, a faithful public officer, just in all his dealings, easy to his family and debtors, sincere to his friends, beneficent to his relatives, and kind to his servants, and always lived in a generous and social style."

And now before I bring to a close a prolix and what I fear has been to you a tedious attempt to describe the life and services of Cæsar Rodney, I have a duty to perform which gives me especial joy and pride.

Since my arrival to-day in Dover, a document has been placed in my hands which may well be considered the jewel in Delaware's historical crown.

The parchment I now hold up before you is the original ratification of the constitution of the United States, by the Deputies of the State of Delaware in convention on the seventh day of December, seventeen hundred and eighty-seven, signed by all the delegates.

The words of this document and the names of its signers should indeed become "household words" in every home in the State; our children and our children's children should be taught what it means and all that it meant at that time.

To know what the prompt, unanimous ratification of Delaware carried with it, we must recall the perilous uncertainty between anarchy and settled government in which the fate of our country then hung. Washington wrote: "The constitution or disunion are before us to choose from." And again he wrote: "The political concerns of the country are suspended by a single thread."

Early in December, just as Delaware was about to give her decision, Monroe wrote to Madison: "The cloud which hath hung over us for some time is not likely soon to be dispelled."

At such a critical moment the voice of Delaware was heard as she led the way to the ratification of the new constitution which, as Thomas Collins, President of the State, well said in his Legislative message, "involved in its adoption not only our prosperity and felicity, but, perhaps, our national existence."

I trust steps will at once be taken to have photographic fac-similies of the ratification printed for dissemination among our people, and we may well congratulate each other that this precious document has been restored to the light and publicity.

To you, young gentlemen of the Rodney Club, and to those of your generation must soon be entrusted the control of the State he loved and served so well.

What lesson will you gather from his life? Let his objects, his methods, a consideration of his springs of action, inform you.

When political action and measures of government are proposed, or candidates are presented or present themselves, apply the test of Rodney, and ask: "Will this measure or this man's election promote the welfare and reputation of my State and country?"

Do not permit the great and real ends of free government to be obscured by the passions of party, or of petty factions or self-interest. Lift your minds into a higher and clearer and happier atmosphere.

In our day the creation of material wealth, the result of modern invention and the protection insured to it by a government of laws, have begotten luxurious living and a spirit of plutocracy, widely different from true republicanism, an insolent and miserable system, containing all the faults of an aristocracy and not one of its virtues. This to-day imperils the fabric of government reared by Rodney and his associates, and threatens to overflow our little State from exterior sources.

The presence and use of money gathered in richer centres to influence elections here is one of the features of plu-

ocratic aggression, against which we should be on our guard, and every man who loves the good name of Delaware should openly denounce it.

Power is given to Congress to fix the standards of weight and measurement, but other standards are as necessary, which no written laws can supply. I mean the standards of political morality, of personal and official character and competency. Popular conscience and the tone of the community must establish these, and upon those who assume the functions of leadership the chief responsibility of setting the example must fall.

There is a class of minds to whom poverty is never respectable, but always contemptible; who continually mistake bigness for greatness, and who count men and do not weigh them.

To such persons the simple lives of the patriots who pledged "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor" for the vindication of a principle will ever remain a sealed book.

When Ulysses was tauntingly asked what crops the sterile soil of Ithaca could produce he answered "*Men!*" And may not we of Delaware, descendants of the Blue Hen's Chickens of the Revolution, afford to smile at sneer or jest at our scanty area and population, and say our best crop is **MEN**—men like **CÆSAR RODNEY**?

What will be inscribed on his monument I know not, but are there words more fitting than those of Emerson?—

"Spirit that made these heroes dare
To die—and leave their children free,
Bid time and nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee."

At the conclusion of Mr. Bayard's address the meeting was adjourned to Christ Church Cemetery, where the monument was unveiled by members of the Rodney Club and dedicated by the president, after which the presiding officer said:—

"To all present, young and old, this monument, erected over the precious dust of Cæsar Rodney, may crumble and fade away, but the name of Rodney will live in the hearts of every Delawarean from generation to generation."

The following resolution was offered by Bishop Coleman and unanimously adopted :

Resolved, That the hearty thanks of Delawareans are due to the members of the Rodney Club for their patriotic and laborious efforts in behalf of this monument, and to the Hon. Thomas F. Bayard for his interesting and valuable historical discourse.

Benediction was then pronounced by the Rt. Rev. B. Wistar Morris, Bishop of Oregon.

The peace of God which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his son Jesus Christ our Lord ; and the blessings of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always. Amen.

CAESAR RODNEY, 1728-1784

Notes based mainly on William F. Frank's Caesar Rodney, patriot, c1975..

Preface: C.R. named "De's hero for all times and all seasons"

"De's patriot first, last, and for all time to come"

Had De had a poet of the stature of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Rodney's ride might have been eulogized as was Paul Revere's ride in Mass., April, 1775.

Movie and the play, "1776", made C.R. known to the nation.

Equestrian statue in Rodney Square, Wilmington, gives honor

C.R. was not a scholar and was handicapped by a facial cancer and severe asthma. His life of only 55 years ended soon after the War for Independence was won.

A - Ancestors and Early Life

1. William Rodney m. Alice Caesar, daughter of Sir Thomas and Susanna Caesar, who can be traced to an Italian Doctor, who moved to England in 1550 from Treviso, Italy. English spelling would have been "Rodeney."
2. Wm. migrated to America 1681 or 1682 to eastern shore, Md. Moved to Phila. and then to Sussex Co., then to St. Jones Neck, East Dover Co. in Kent Co. He married twice, had 9 children. Was active in the government of all 3 De counties.
3. Caesar, youngest son, b.1707 - m. Elizabeth Crawford, daughter of Christ Church clergyman, 8 children. Eldest was C.R. b. Oct. 7, 1728 on his father's farm at St. Jones Neck
4. C.R. was sent to Latin School in Phila. when a teenager of 14 yrs.
5. C. R.'s father died when C. R. was 17 yrs. Nicholas R'dgely was named as his guardian.

B - Political Life

1. C. R. at age 27 became high sheriff of Kent Co. and for the following 29 years served honorably in public office
2. At age 28 - Register of wills
3. 1766-1776 - Deputy recorder of deeds, then Recorder of deeds.
4. Clerk of Orphans Court in Kent
5. " " the Peace
6. Justice of peace
7. 1765 - Elected to the Stamp Congress
8. 1769 - as Speaker of the House he tried to get passed a law prohibiting importation of slaves into De
9. 1776 - Named to De Supreme Court while a member of General Assembl
10. June, 1776 - Was Speaker of De Assembly when it declared independence of 3 counties from British Crown
11. Served as Brigadier General and later Major General in De's militia during the Revolution
12. Served as Judge of De's Admiralty Court
13. With Thomas McKean C. R. was commissioned to codify De's laws - the first such code.
14. Served as delegate to 1st and 2d Continental Congress while continuing as speaker of De 's Assembly
15. Was President of De, 1776-1778

Note - C. R. held more public offices than any other Delawarean before or since his time.

C - Appearance and Personality

1. We have no authentic portrait of this energetic, but odd-appearing man. He wore a green scarf in public to hide facial cancer.
2. His statues portray him as tall, well-built with a very square-shaped face. The Rodney Square equestrian figure - dedicated July 4, 1923, was sculpted by James E. Kelly. Shows C. R. riding to Phila. and arriving July 4. (It is believed he arrived July 2.) In Rotunda of Capitol in Wash. D. C. the marble statue by Bryant Baker - June 26, 1934 - C. R. stands proudly erect, hat in one hand and the Declaration of Independence in other hand, with his sword reclining against his cloak.
3. C. R. was a man of great patience and forbearance - not a flaming militant. He respected conservative views and had tremendous faith in the future of De and his country. In face of many indignities by his foes, C. R. carried on his duties for the best interests of his nation and state.
4. Severe health problems, expressed in letter to his brother, Thomas June 7, 1768. Thomas urged C. R. not to worry about medical expenses and to consider going to England for treatment. Instead Dr. Thomas Bond of Phila. operated.

D - Personal Life.

1. C. R. never married. Left few letters. Tenderest letter to his Molly (Mary Vining), either May 27, 1761 or 1764. He expressed disappointment that Mary went to Phila. with the Chew family, when she had promised to go with him. The Riggely family is presumed to have a letter written to Mary, professing his love for her. Letters also reveal his great concern for his plantation on St. Jones Neck and for personal business affairs. Occasional references to his nephews.
2. C. R.'s Molly married the Rev. Charles Inglis, rector of Christ Church in 1764 and died within a year. (Inglis, a Loyalist, became the first Anglican Bishop of Nova Scotia.)
3. C. R. never forgot the Vining's and had a fatherly interest in Mary Vining, the beautiful niece of his Molly. She became his hostess in 1777 in Wilmington, where she enchanted French and American officers, including General "Mad Anthony" Wayne of Pa.

E - The soldier

1. At age 28 - Member of De's militia. No record of involvement in battle during the French and Indian Wars.
2. Revolutionary War - Brigadier General and Major General
 - a. Handled problems of feeding and clothing militia - also paying militia and the Continental troops from De
 - b. C. R. led troops into strongholds of Tory and Loyalist dissenters.
 - c. C. R. left the state Jan. 1777 to head De troops stationed at Trenton, N. J. under Geo. Washington. His chief function was to forward troops to Morristown, N. J. He was never happy in this situation. A letter from Geo. Washington, Feb. 18, 1777 eased his feelings.
 - d. C. R. later became Major General of De militia - Named by acting president, Thomas McKean. He continued until elected President of De State in 1778.

F - The Ride to Phila. -(C. R. left no written records.)

"Through agonizing summer heat, storms and rain, mud and rickety bridges the lone rider headed for Phila. July, 1776 to vote for a document that well might put a noose around his neck. Thus a soldier, politician, chief executive and delegate to the Second Continental Congress, captured the popular imagination of history and virtually canonized C. R. as the greatest Delawarean during the Revolutionary Era"

1. June 7, 1776 - Richard Henry Lee of Va. "resolved that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states." McKean and Rodney favored immediate independence. Read opposed.
2. C. R. called a meeting of Be Assembly in the old State House, New Castle. June 15, 1776 the Assembly authorized 3 delegates to vote as they pleased, declared the 3 counties to be independent, a "birthdate" of freedom. A provisional revolutionary government was set up with C. R. Chief executive. All claims of John Penn were wiped out.
3. Also June 15, 1776 counter revolutionary troubles developed in Sussex Co. aroused by Tories and Loyalists. C. R. returned home from Phila. before June 30th.
4. July 1 - Lee's resolution hung in balance.
5. July 2 - A decisive vote was scheduled. McKean sent a messenger to Dover, 80 miles away. Thomas Rodney reported to C. R. that 2/3 of his light infantry soldiers voted for independence, thus influencing his brother to return to Phila.
6. C. R. was 48 yrs. old and the ride strenuous. He called for his carriage, but may have changed to horseback. His route - St. Jones Neck to Dover, along King's HWY to Duck Creek Crossroads to Cantwell's Bridge (Odessa) to Black bird, St. Georges and on to Red Lion, Tybout's Corner to New Castle, to Wilmington and the ferry across the Chtistina River (now 3d St. Bridge), over the Brandywine, Naamans' Marcus Hook, Upland to Gray's Ferry and the post route to Independence Hall. There is no record of stopping to sleep. He must have changed hosses and had some food and dring.
7. C. R.'s vote for independence brought a unanimous vote by all delegates, excepting N. Y. delegates who abstained from voting for 10 days.

G - The Sarah Rowland Myth (Greatest damage to C. R. image)

1. Geo. Alfred Townsend and Katherine Pyle told story that C. R. was with a Tory woman in Lewes when he should have been in Phila. (Townsend's poem was orated in Georgetown, July 5, 1880. Miss Pyle accepted it and wove the story into her child's history, Once upon a time in Delaware, published 1911.) In Townsend's poem a Mistress Rowland was depicted as a Sussex Co. Delilah, feeding C. R. terrapin and wine, and not delivering messages to him. Her maid upset the Rowland plot by throwing a packet of McKean letters into Rodney's lap. C. R. was horrified and shocked! He immediately rushed to Phila. Many Suss:ex Countians still believe this story as true.
2. 1911 - Samuel Bancroft, Jr. checked authenticity of this tale. (He had financed the publication of Townsend's poems.)
3. Townsend confessed, but claimed he did have authority for C. R. starting his ride from Lewes. C. R.'s brother, Thomas however wrote in his diary that the "staft" was from C. R.'s farm near Dover.

4. 1889 - At the monument unveiling at Christ Church Thomas F. Bayard, Sr. U. S. Senator from De, U. S. Sec. of State and Ambassador to Great Britain didn't dignify the story and made no reference to it.
5. 1940's - Autograph collectors among Sam Bancroft's letters found Townsend's letter of confession.

H - Final Years of C. R.

1. By 1780's C. R. was weakening
2. 1783 - C. R. nevertheless was elected speaker of upper house (Today, Lieutenant Governor)
3. 1784 - The State General Assembly met at C. R.'s home. This was really a courtesy call.
4. C.R.'s funeral June 28, 1784. Buried on his home farm of Poplar Grove. Grave was unmarked for over 100 years until Chief Justice Comegys placed a small slab by grave.
5. 1887 - Rodney club organized to move remains to Christ Church.
6. 1889 - Monument placed in Christ Church graveyard.

I - C. R. Memorial at Christ Church

1. Concern whether or not C. R.'s bones rest there, because of deterioration at family plot.
2. March, 1978 - James B. Jackson of Dover (the Rodney collateral descendent) discovered the forgotten cemetery on the old Byfield tract (Historian Harold Hancock feels strongly that Byfield and Poplar Grove were the same) He concluded that it must be the family burial ground which is known to have been in use as early as 1708, when the emigrant William Rodney was buried there. The site from which C. R.'s remains were said to have been moved for transfer to Dover was on the "Burton's Delight" addition which Rodney himself had bought in 1763.
3. Other evidence to support Jackson's discovery-
 - a. Of 14 graves at the site, only one is a brick vault. It contains the skeletal remains of a middle-aged man. C. R.'s estate record notes a small expenditure to purchase "bricks" for C. Rodney's grave. No other brick vaults have been found.
 - b. C.R.'s will directs his brother Thomas to erect a brick wall around the family burial ground and evidently a foundation trench for such a wall was built. However, C.R.'s estate was so depleted there was not enough money to build a wall. His lands were finally sold at a sheriff's sale, on the 4th of July
 - c. The De Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs conducted an examination of the area. There could be a possibility that C. R.'s remains be moved to Christ Church.
4. For time being we should refer to the Christ Church grave site as a "Memorial" to C. R.

Note - Highly recommended for further study :
Ryden, George H editor, Letters to and from Caesars
Published by Historical Society, 1933

Rodney's grave -

It was nearly 200 years ago that Caesar Rodney, Delaware's most famous Revolutionary War hero, died and was buried.

It has been 90 years since his burial place was changed from the rural St. Jones Neck area outside Dover to the graveyard of Christ Episcopal Church, a block from The Green in the center of Dover.

And it has been nearly a week now since the public at large learned what a collateral descendent of Caesar Rodney had long suspected -- that Caesar Rodney's remains were almost surely not moved to Dover nearly a century ago. Instead they remain in a long-forgotten Rodney family plot.

How this major historical find came about is almost

as interesting as the discovery itself.

James B. Jackson of Dover is the Rodney collateral descendent whose long interest in Delaware historical research and the Rodney family in particular finally led to the discovery of the forgotten cemetery. It is on the old Byfield tract which was the home of the first three generations of the Rodney family in Kent County.

Despite all the evidence that the grave Jackson and his two sons discovered in March is actually that of Caesar Rodney, Jackson is reluctant to state categorically that the brick vault contains Rodney's remains. He wants to make sure that all possible objections and arguments to the contrary are heard before the claim is officially made.

Jackson chanced to look up specific information about the Byfield tract because of a question asked about the Rodney cemetery by Dr. Harold B. Hancock of Dover. Hancock is a Delaware historian and long-time friend of Jackson's who was writing an article on Rodney. A copy of a plot of the tract (the original is in Pennsylvania) had been transferred to the Archives in Dover, Jackson learned, and upon examination of it he was excited to find that it showed a cemetery.

He concluded that it must be the family burial ground which is known to have been in use as early as 1708, when the emigrant William Rodney was buried there.

The site from which Caesar Rodney's remains

were said to have been moved for transfer to Dover was on the "Burton's Delight" addition which Rodney himself had bought in 1763. The two graveyards are not far apart, but the one on Burton's Delight could hardly have been the Rodney family cemetery.

Other evidence supporting the likelihood that it is indeed Caesar Rodney's grave which has been discovered includes:

1. Of the total of 14 graves at the site, only one is a brick vault, and this one contains the skeletal remains of a middle-aged man. Caesar Rodney was 56 when he died and his estate record notes a small expenditure to purchase "bricks for C. Rodney's grave". No other brick

How the finding came about

*Of the 14 graves, only one is
a brick vault, and this contains the
skeletal remains of a middle-aged man.*

vaults have been found.

2. Caesar Rodney's will directs his brother Thomas to erect a brick wall around the family burial ground, and evidently a foundation trench for such a wall was built. What Caesar Rodney did not know at the time was that his estate was so depleted that there was not money enough to build a wall. In fact, Rodney's lands were finally sold at a sheriff's sale, on the Fourth of July, no less.

The archaeological examination of the area was conducted by Cara L. Wise, Daniel R. Griffith and Richard E. Artusy of the Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs. Ned Heite, state archivist, visited the site with Jackson after the actual discovery by Jackson and his two sons, C. Terry

Jackson II and Thomas C. Jackson.

Finding the burial ground has led to other investigation of the property, which is now owned by Island Farm, Inc., represented by Harry Bonk, who gave his permission. Traces of former houses on the property have been found.

Jackson expects that he and other collateral descendents of Caesar Rodney will confer at sometime to decide what should be done now. The prospect that the remains will be moved to the Christ Church graveyard is very much a possibility.

Jackson is in no way critical of Chief Justice Joseph P. Comegys, who back in 1787 had pointed out what he thought was Rodney's grave. Records

are collected and indexed now which were scattered in private hands then, he says, particularly those of Thomas Rodney, the brother whose journals and letters tell us almost everything we know of the man whose ride from Dover to Philadelphia on July 1 and 2, 1776, meant the crucial Delaware vote in support of the Declaration of Independence.

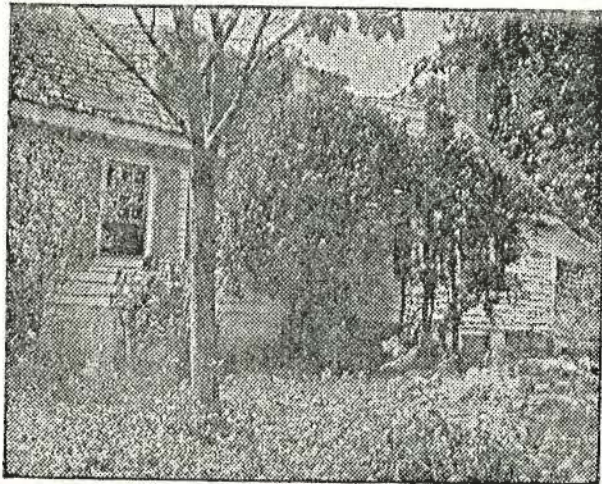
J.F.

DOVER POST,
DOVER, DELAWARE
31 MAY 1978

All evidence points to newly-discovered grave

V.F. CAESAR RODNEY

BY-FIELDS, HOME OF CAESAR RODNEY, NEAR DOVER



RODNEY'S RIDE

In that soft midland where the breezes bear
The North and the South on the genial air,
Through the County of Kent on affairs of State
Rode Caesar Rodney, the delegate.

Burley and big and bold and bluff
In his three cornered hat and suit of snuff,
A foe to King George and his English State,
Rode Caesar Rodney, the delegate.

Into Dover village he rode apace,
And his kinsmen know, by his anxious face,
'Twas matters grave had brought him there
To the Counties three on the Delaware.

"Money and men we must have," he said,
"Or the Congress fails and the cause is dead;
Give us both, and the King shall not work his will:
We are men since the blood of Bunker Hill.

Comes a rider swift on a panting bay, —
"Hello, Rodney! ho, you must save the day,
For the Congress halts at a deed so great,
And your vote alone may decide its fate."

Said Rodney then, "I will ride with speed,
It is liberty's stross, it is freedom's need, —
When stands it?" "To-night, not a moment to spare,
But speed like the wind from the Delaware."

"Ho, saddle the black; I've but half a day,
And the Congress sits eighty miles away;
But I'll be in time, if God give me grace,
To shake my fist in King George's face."

He is up; he is off, and the good steed flies
On the northward road ere the "Godspeed" dies.
It is gallop and spur as the leagues they clear,
And the clustering milestones move arrear.

It is two of the clock, and the fleet hoofs fling
The Fieldbury dust with a clang and a cling;
Three, and with slackened rain he gallops where
The road winds down to the Delaware

It is four as he spurs into New Castle Town,
From his panting steed gets quickly down,
"Ho, a fresh one, —haste, not a minute to wait,"
And on rides Rodney, the delegate.

It is five; and the beams of the western sun
Tinge the spires of Wilmington, gold and dun;
Six, and the dust of the Chester street
Flies back in a cloud from his horse's feet.

It is seven; the horse-boat, broad of beam,
At the Schuykill ferry, crawls ovr the stream;
But at seven fifteen, by the Rittenhouse clock,
He has flung his rein to the tavern jock.

The Congress has met, the debate begun,
And liberty lags for the vote of one, —
When, into the hall, not a moment late,
Walks Caesar Rodney, the delegate.

By Elbridge Streeter Brooks, of Somerville, Massachusetts,
Author, Editor, Literary Advisor D. Lothrop Company.
B. rn in 1846 Massachusetts.



CATALOGUE No. 1236

The Great Historical Sale

THE PAPERS OF

CAESAR RODNEY, of Delaware

Signer of the Declaration of Independence, Brig.-Genl. of Delaware Militia in the Revolution and President of Delaware

THOMAS RODNEY, of Delaware

Member of the Continental Congress, Colonel of the Delaware Militia in the Revolution and First Judge of the Mississippi Territory

CAESAR A. RODNEY, of Delaware

Attorneys General of the United States under Jefferson, Consul to Buenos Ayres

Sold by order of H. N. TWELLS, Administrator

AND

Oil Portrait of Caesar A. Rodney, by Chas. Willson Peale

Oil Portrait of Washington, by Anna Claypoole Peale

Ivory Miniature of Andrew Jackson, by Anna Claypoole Peale,

and Ivory Miniature of Capt. Rufus Green

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Chilad. July the 4th 1776

Sir I have inclosed you a summons directed to
the Sheriff to call upon the Members for our Com-
ty to meet in Assembly at Newcastle on the 22^d day
of this Instant which I hope you will have
put into his hands as soon as possible after it
comes to yours - I arrived in Congress / the detour
ed by Thunder and Rain / time enough to give my
Voice in the matter of Independence - It is now
determined by the thirteen United Colonies with
out even one dissenting Colony. We have now
got through with the whole of the Declaration, and
Ordered it to be printed. so that you will soon have
the pleasure of seeing it - Hand-bills if it will
be printed, and sent to the Armies, Cities, County
Towns &c. to be published or rather proclaimed
in form - Don't neglect to attend closely and
carefully to my Request and you'll oblige

Yours &c
Samuel Johnson