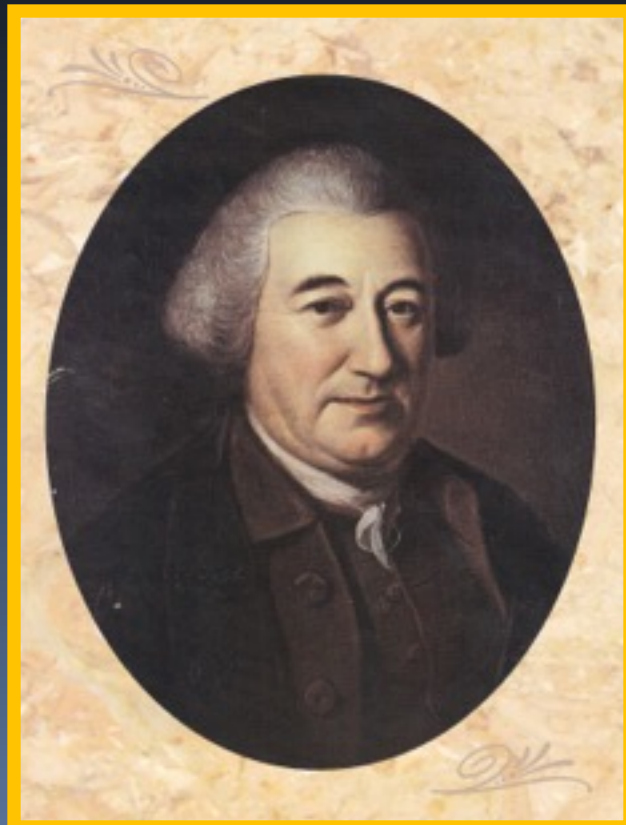


REMEMBERING JOHN HANSON



First President of the Original United States Government

His Life



Life of John Hanson

- Born 1715 in Charles County
- Served in the colonial Assembly
- Moves to Frederick, 1769
- Key militia organizer, financier and war materiel planner
- Brings Maryland into the union
- Solves western lands impasse
- Brokers Articles of Confederation
- First president, 1781-82
- Dies 1783
- Gravesite rediscovered 2011

Mulberry Grove
Hanson's ancestral home
at Port Tobacco, Maryland

Opportunity Moves West

The Monocacy Valley seen from Sugarloaf Mountain

- Frederick County defies the Stamp Act, 1765
- Largest, fastest growing, most populous county
- Settled by forward-looking immigrants
- Commercial and investment opportunities
- *Most powerful non-loyalist executive position in Maryland*
- County elects Hanson to every office he seeks

Military, Materiel & Money

Hanson Statue In the
United States Capitol



- **Hanson Arms Maryland**
Organized first two companies of soldiers outside of New England to reach Gen. Washington after outbreak of war
- **Bolsters Maryland War Financing**
Maryland General Assembly relies on Hanson in state's war financing. Gives much of his own money.
- **Recruits Throughout the War**
Maryland recruits more soldiers per capita than any other state

Keeps the Nation Whole Again



Hanson convinces Maryland to not ratify the Articles of Confederation until states with western lands cede them to the nation.

Maryland issues the Declaration of Maryland, dubbed the Hanson Plan.

His success at Second Continental Congress allows all 13 states to unite and form the first government.

Myth: No Hanson Plan

Ratification of the Articles of Confederation

Ratified March 1, 1781 *authorizing* the original government.
Article IX *creates* the first government November 5, 1781.
Hanson elected president unopposed that day.



John Hanson, quill in hand, is last to sign the Articles of Confederation.

Why Hanson As President?



- Kept Maryland in the Declaration of Independence
- Hanson Plan permitted ratification of the Articles of Confederation
- Hanson papers, biographies, family describe him as a modest bridge-builder with excellent people skills
- At 66, an elder among delegates

John Hanson's presidential portrait by Charles Willson Peale in the Independence Hall Collection

The Hanson Administration

The York County, Pennsylvania Courthouse where the Articles of Confederation were passed

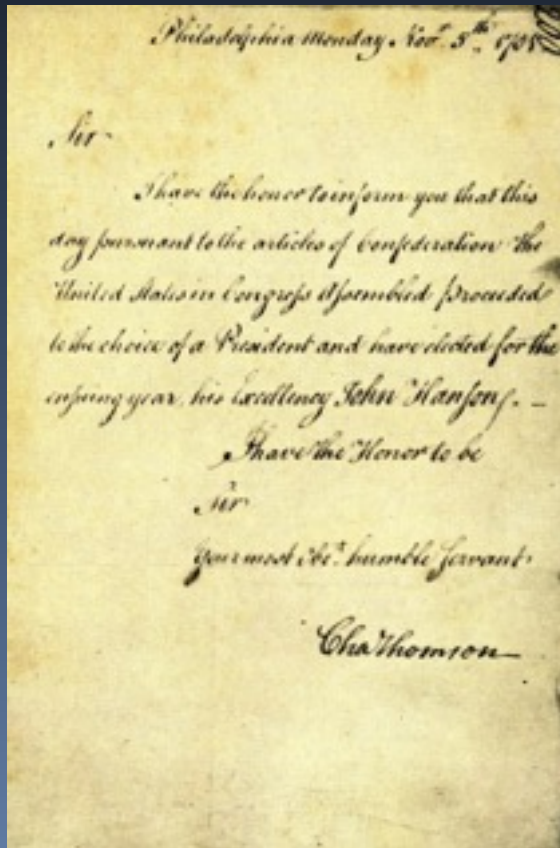


- Starts with a blank slate
- John Hanson is first Head of State
- Hanson appoints first Cabinet
- Government structure established
- Peace negotiations begun
- Foreign recognition established
- Nation's central bank founded
- National postal service founded
- Army and Navy nationalized
- State disputes adjudicated
- Hanson decrees annual Fourth of July and Thanksgiving Day

Myth: The body which Hanson headed was not a government.

Who Was the First President?

Official announcement
of Hanson's election



Philadelphia Monday, Nov. 5th 1789

Sir

I have the honor to inform you that this day pursuant to the articles of Confederation the United States in Congress assembled proceeded to the choice of a President and have elected for the ensuing year, his Excellency John Hanson. -

I have the Honor to be
Sir
Your most ob^d. humble servant.

Cha. Thomson

- John Hanson, 1781-1782
 - First president of original government, 1781-1788
 - Washington affirms reporting to Hanson
 - Hanson's son was Washington's *aide de camp*
- George Washington, 1789-1797
 - First president of second government under the Constitution, 1789-present
 - President Hanson's son and son in law were Washington electors, 1789 & 1793
- So Hanson preceded Washington
- Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln and other presidents say Hanson was the first president

From President Hanson
to President Washington

Three Consultative Bodies, Then Two Governments

- ▶ First Continental Congress: 21 days in 1774, 2 presidents
- ▶ Second Continental Congress: 1775-81, 5 presidents
- ▶ Interim Body: 249 days in 1781, 2 or 3 presidents
Government was not yet in existence nor was nationhood complete without it when these 10 served.

Myth: John Hanson was the 3rd president (or 4th or 8th or 9th)

- ▶ United States in Congress Assembled: 1781-88, 9 presidents
- ▶ Constitutional Government: 1789-present, 44 presidents

Library of Congress quotation for Senator Cardin:

"As the first elected president of our independent nation, President Hanson began the task of unifying the former colonies and providing for their common defense, communication, and economic growth."

The Uncounted Eight



Elias Boudinot
1782-1783



Thomas Mifflin
1783-1784



Richard Henry Lee
1784-1785



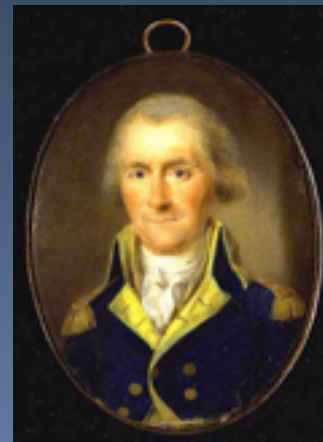
John Hancock
Too ill to serve



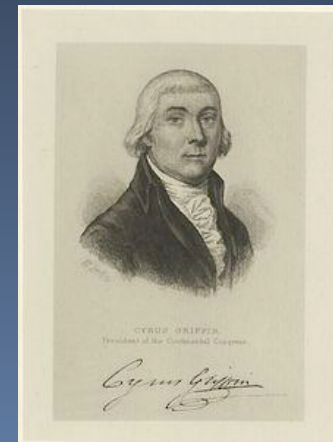
Dr. David Ramsay
1785-May 1786



Nathaniel Gorham
May-Nov 1786



Dr. Arthur St. Clair
1786-1787



Cyrus Griffin
1787-1788

First Government Successes



The John Hesselius portrait
of John Hanson in mid-life

- Launched national government
- Thus consummated nationhood
- Demonstrated a democratic republic
- Put the nation on the world stage
- Within one vote of abolishing slavery
- Abolished slavery in Northwest Territory
- Wrote a stronger Constitution
- Launched a stronger government
- Had no scandals

Why Change Governments?

The John Hanson
Presidential Medal



The original government lacked:

- Taxing authority, ability to fund itself
- Ability to amend governing Articles
- Strong executive prerogatives
- Legal enforcement authority
- Independent legislature or judiciary
- Separation of powers
- Checks and balances
- Ability to draft for the military
- Control over national commerce

Discoveries, Rediscoveries and Myths

Other Recent Internet Myths

Independence Hall in Philadelphia, a large brick building with a prominent clock tower and a steeple, set against a blue sky with some clouds. The building is surrounded by green trees and a clear view of the sky.

- Was not a Head of State
 - "... the President takes precedent of all and every person in the United States; next to him, members of Congress have precedence; then the Commander-in-Chief of the Army; then the great officers of Congress . . ."
- Immigrant grandfather an indentured servant from Barbados
 - Was a wealthy influential Englishman
- Signer of the Declaration of Independence
 - Key signer of the Articles of Confederation
- Pictured on back of \$2 bill
 - Shows signing of Constitution 4 years after he died
- Didn't establish official annual Thanksgiving observance
 - Issued presidential decree March 19, 1782
- Jane Hanson outlived all of their children
 - Nearly: Elizabeth only one surviving of 13

No Peace In Repose

The site of John Hanson's destroyed grave in the National Harbor development, Prince George's County, Maryland



- November 22, 1783. Hanson dies at nephew's Oxon Hill Manor and is buried there.
- 1971: Grave rediscovered
- 1984: Developer buys property
- 1985: Grave inspected & intact
- By 1987: Grave robbed
- 1993: Site bulldozed & paved
- 2011: Grave site rediscovered

Jane Hanson's Lost Grave

Mass grave where Jane Hanson rests in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Frederick, Maryland



- February 21, 1812: Dies at home in Frederick at 84, outliving 12 of her 13 children. Buried in Hanson crypt in old Episcopal grave yard.
- 1913: Reinterred to Mount Olivet Cemetery. Buried in unmarked mass grave with 285 others.
- June 6, 2011: Grave rediscovered
- 2014: Dedication of Jane Hanson National Memorial at Mount Olivet

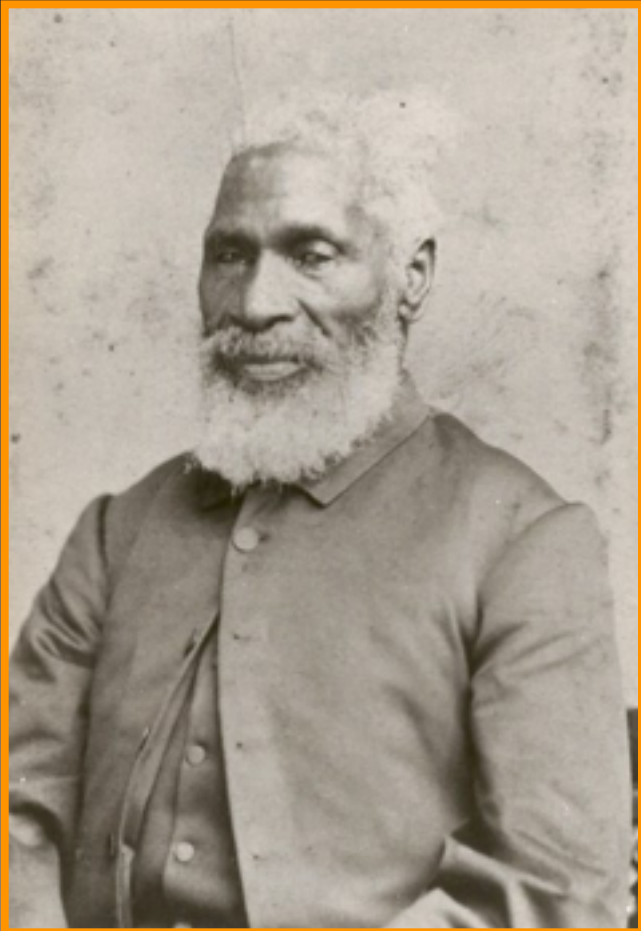
The Earliest First Lady

The John Hesselius portrait
of First Lady Jane Hanson
at about age 30



- Titled or not, all from Jane Hanson through today fulfilled the role
- 1857-1861: First use of "First Lady" not until President's Buchanan's niece
- Late 1800s: Regular unofficial use begins
- 1920s: Florence Harding becomes first First Lady to have office and budget
- 1930s: Eleanor Roosevelt is First Lady when the title is made official

Josiah and Josias



Famed Underground Railroad icon Josiah Henson is found to be almost certainly the son of Dr. Josias Hanson McPherson, cousin of President Hanson.

"As the first negro child ever born to him, I was his especial pet. He gave me his own Christian name."

A Hanson/Henson DNA match is being sought.

Again Remembered

Why John Hanson Has Faded In His Nation's Memory



John Hanson's eldest son, Chancellor of Maryland
Alexander Contee Hanson Sr., his wife Rebecca
and their children (by Rembrandt Peale)

- His papers lost
- Frederick home lost
- Grave destroyed
- Family line dies out
- Thin biographies
- Neglected 1780s
- Internet myths

John and Jane Hanson Tributes



United States Senator
Alexander Contee Hanson, Jr.

- Presidential portrait, Independence Hall, 1782
- Statue, National Statuary Hall, 1903
- John Hanson Society of Maryland, 1932-82
- Hanson bust at Mulberry Grove, 1951
- Swedish obelisk at Mulberry Grove, 1951
- John Hanson Highway, 1962
- John Hanson Memorial Association, 2009
- John Hanson National Memorial, 2011
- *Remembering John Hanson* biography, 2012
- *Remembering John Hanson* prizes, 2013
- Jane Hanson National Memorial, 2014



The John Hanson National Memorial

In the courtyard of the Frederick County Courthouse next to the site of John Hanson House

Other than National Statuary Hall, the only place Americans have ever had to honor their first president

Funded equally by private donations and the State of Maryland

Sculptor: Antonio Tobias Mendez



Dedicated August 4, 2012

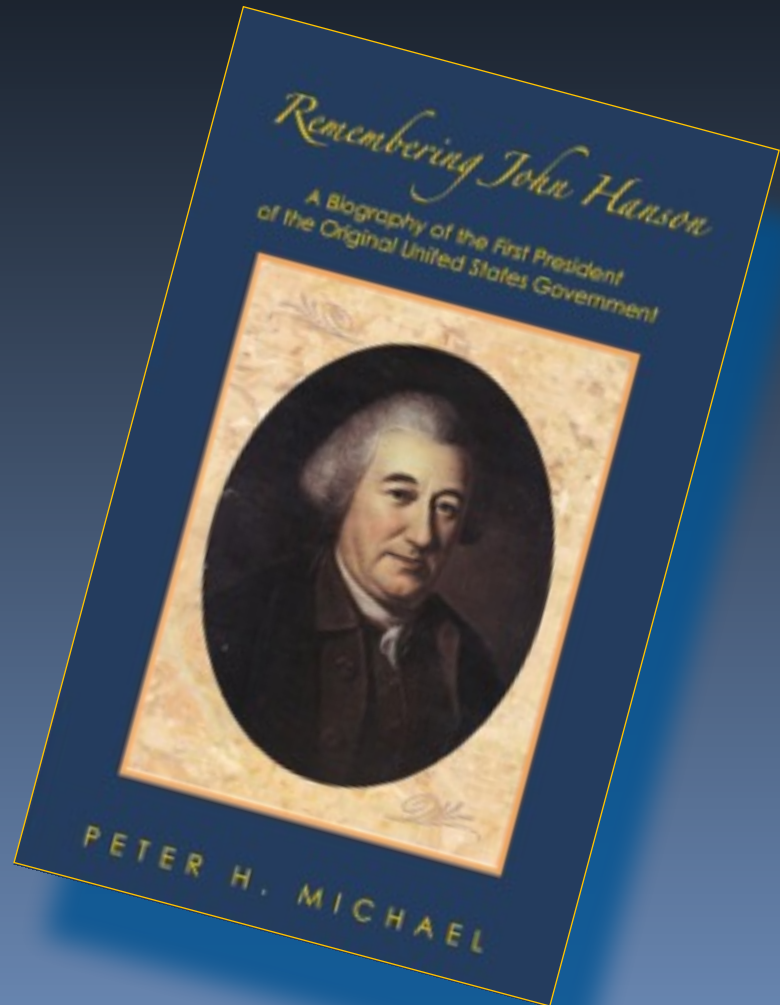
Maryland Senator Thomas Middleton,
a John Hanson relative, addressing the audience

Remembering John Hanson

Winner of the 2013 eLit Silver Award in Biography
and 2013 USA Best Book Award in Biography

Available wherever books are sold

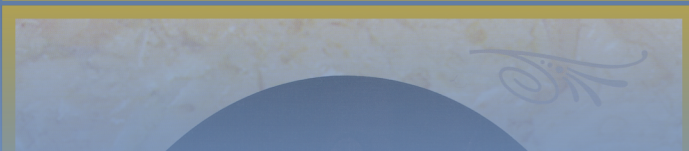
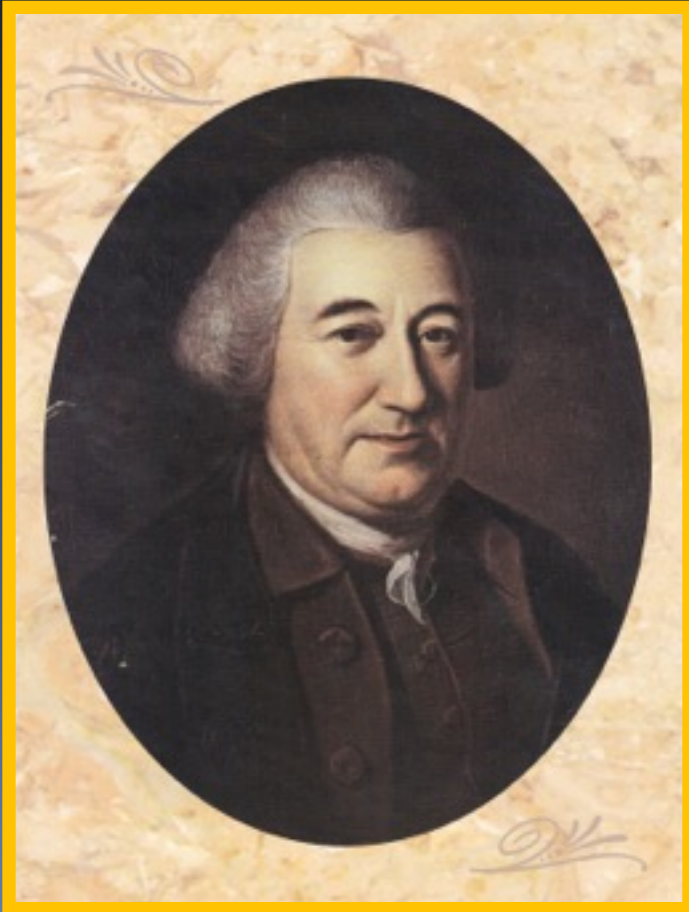
Print and e-book versions may be
purchased online and print versions
ordered anywhere books are sold



What You Can Do

- Tell the John Hanson story
- Dispel the myths
- Let friends, colleagues and family know of the new Hanson biography
- Donate to the Jane Hanson Memorial
- Visit JohnHansonMemorial.org
- Let us know your ideas

John Hanson's presidential portrait by Charles Willson Peale in the Independence Hall Collection



THANK YOU

The John Hanson Memorial Association

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