

Constitution

The backstory

Richard Henry Lee (1732-1794)



Richard Henry Lee was born January 20, 1732 in Westmoreland County, Virginia to Thomas and Hannah Harrison Ludwell Lee. At the age of 13, Lee was sent to Yorkshire, England to complete his schooling at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School. Less than ten years later, after returning from England, Richard became the justice of the peace in Westmoreland County in 1757. In that same year, Lee married Anne Aylett. They had six children, four of whom survived infancy. Anne Lee died in 1768 and Richard remarried in

1769. His second wife was Anne Pinckard, they had seven children, two of whom died in infancy.

In 1758 Richard Henry Lee was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses and became an early advocate for independence from Great Britain. One of the very first Committees of Correspondence was, in part, created by Richard Henry Lee. In 1774, Lee was chosen as a delegate to the First Continental Congress, and on June 7, 1776, in Lee's Resolution he motioned to declare independence from Great Britain, which led to the Declaration of Independence.

Lee was elected as the Sixth President of Congress in November 1784 and took office in January of 1785. Under Lee, congress passed legislation to establish the United States Dollar as the national currency. He also focused much of his time on how to pay off national debt from the Revolutionary War; he planned to do this by selling federal land rather than borrowing from other nations or establishing new federal taxes which he found abhorrent. Although Lee's plan did not work, the U.S. Survey system was born out of his idea.

Along with Lee's time in the First and Second Continental Congress and his time as President of Congress, he was also a United States Senator, and served as the President pro tempore during the Second Congress.

"It must never be forgotten...that the liberties of the people are not so safe under the gracious manner of government as by the limitation of power."

Who were the others responsible for starting the Committees of Correspondence alongside Lee?

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