

Henry Laurens



Henry Laurens, a Delegate from South Carolina; born in Charleston, S.C., March 6, 1724; received his early education in Charleston; went to England in 1744 to acquire a business education; upon his return to the United States in 1747 engaged in mercantile pursuits; served as lieutenant colonel in a campaign against the Cherokee Indians 1757-1761; member of the commons house of assembly in 1757 and reelected to every session, with one exception, until the Revolution; declined appointment to King's Council in Carolina in 1764 and 1768; member of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pa., 1772-1792; was in Europe from 1771 until December 11, 1774, where he placed his sons in school; returned to Charleston, S.C., in the latter year; member of the First Provincial Congress January 9, 1775; President of the Provincial Congress in June 1775; also president of the general committee and of the first council of safety in 1775; member of the Second Provincial Congress from November 1775 to March 1776 and president of the second council of safety in 1775 and 1776; Vice President of South Carolina from March 1776 to June 27, 1777; elected as a Delegate to the Continental Congress January 10, 1777, and served until 1780; served as President of the Congress from November 1, 1777, to December 9, 1778; elected Minister to Holland by the Continental Congress on October 21, 1779, and sailed for his post early in 1780; was captured on the voyage and held a prisoner in the Tower of London for fifteen months; released on December 31, 1781, in exchange for Lord Cornwallis; appointed one of the peace commissioners and signed the preliminary treaty of Paris on November 30, 1782; returned to the United States on August 3, 1784, and retired to his plantation, "Mepkin," on the Cooper River, near Charleston, S.C.; subsequently elected to the Continental Congress, to the State legislature, and in 1787 to the Federal Constitutional Convention, all of which offices he declined; continued as a planter until his death at "Mepkin," near Charleston, S.C., December 8, 1792; the remains were cremated and his ashes interred on his estate, "Mepkin," at the confluence east-west branches Cooper River, Berkeley County, S.C.

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