

## JOHN MORTON LIFE

**John Morton (1724 to 1777)**  
**Ann Justice (Justis, Justic) (wife, 1732 to 1799)**

### Signer of Declaration of Independence

Morton was elected to the First Continental Congress in 1774 and the Second Continental Congress in 1775. He cautiously helped move Pennsylvania towards independence, though he opposed the radical Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776. When in June 1776 Congress began the debate on a resolution of independence, the Pennsylvania delegation was split, with Benjamin Franklin and James Wilson in favor of declaring independence, and John Dickinson and Robert Morris opposed. Morton was uncommitted until July 1, when he sided with Franklin and Wilson. When the final vote was taken on July 2, Dickinson and Morris abstained, allowing the Pennsylvania delegation to support the resolution of independence. Morton signed the Declaration on August 2 with most of the other delegates.

Morton was chairman of the committee that wrote the Articles of Confederation, although he died, probably from tuberculosis, before the Articles were ratified.

### Legacy

He was the first signer of the Declaration of Independence to die and was buried in Old St. Paul's Church Burial Ground (also known as the Old Swedish Burial Ground) in the city of Chester, Pennsylvania.<sup>[8]</sup> Morton's grave remained unmarked until October, 1845, when the present-day 11-foot marble obelisk was erected by his descendants.<sup>[9]</sup>

The inscription on the west side of the memorial reads:

Dedicated to the memory of John Morton, A member of the First American Congress from the State of Pennsylvania, Assembled in New York in 1765, and of the next Congress, assembled in Philadelphia in 1774. Born A.D., 1724 - Died April 1777.<sup>[10]</sup>

The inscription of the east side of the memorial reads:

In voting by States upon the question of the Independence of the American Colonies, there was a tie until the vote of Pennsylvania was given, two members of which voted in the affirmative, and two in the negative. The tie continued until the vote of the last member, John Morton, decided the promulgation of the Glorious Diploma of American Freedom.

The inscription on the south side of the memorial reads:



John Morton's grave in the Old St. Paul's Church Burial Ground, Chester, Pennsylvania.