

Georgia's Signers Of The Declaration Of Independence

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First Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Savannah 10 August 1776

In February of 1776 Georgia nominated Archibald Bulloch, Button Gwinnett, John Houstoun, Dr. Lyman Hall, and George Walton as delegates to the Continental Congress. However, Bulloch felt he was too busy as president of Georgia to attend, and Houstoun believed he was of greater service by remaining in Georgia. Only Gwinnett, Hall, and Walton arrived in Philadelphia, barely in time to sign the Declaration of Independence.

The news that the united colonies had proclaimed their independence from Great Britain arrived back in Georgia on 8 August. On the day of its arrival in Savannah, more than a month after its adoption in Philadelphia, the Council of Safety read the copy of the Declaration and the accompanying letter from John Hancock, president of Congress. President Archibald Bulloch issued orders for the arrangements to be observed upon the promulgation of the Declaration, which occurred on Saturday, 10 August 1776.ⁱⁱ After great festivities and a public dinner that followed, the citizens formed a funeral procession and symbolically “buried” the Royal Government.

On 4 July 1777, the first anniversary of the signing, chance had the 4th Battalion Georgia Continental Line in Philadelphia while on its march south to Savannah. This command had been raised at Peekskill, New York, for service in Georgia. In celebration of the first anniversary of the Declaration, Congress put the new Georgia battalion into special service. The battalion officers formed up their men in front of the doors of the Congressional chambers, and the unit fired the *feux de joie* to set off a full day of celebration of the event. One year later, most of these soldiers were dead, the 4th Georgia having suffered terribly during the Third Florida Expedition.

Button Gwinnett

It has been stated succinctly that Button Gwinnett’s strange allure in history is derived from his bearing a famous name rather than the name of a famous man.ⁱⁱⁱ Certainly, his signature is highly-prized by autograph collectors, as we shall see. Button Gwinnett received baptism in St. Catherine’s Church, Gloucester, on 10 April 1735, the son of the Rev. Samuel Gwinnett, a clergyman of the Church of England and vicar of Down Hatherly in Gloucestershire, and his wife Anne (Eames) Gwinnett.^{iv}

Button Gwinnett’s parents apprenticed him in his youth to a merchant in Bristol. On 19 April 1757 Gwinnett married Ann Bourne in the Church of St. Peter’s parish. They ultimately had three daughters, Amelia, Ann, and Elizabeth Ann, but the family line is said to have failed by 1800.^v

Button Gwinnett traded in the colonies prior to his emigration, and he owned an interest in several merchant ships. In the early 1760’s he brought his family to Charleston, South Carolina. About two years later, he and his family arrived in Savannah. In 1765 he advertised himself as a dry goods merchant there, but soon failed in business. He settled for second best, borrowing money from Thomas Bosomworth to purchase St. Catherine’s Island, a large tract directly adjacent to Sunbury, Georgia’s second port of entry at the time. In 1767 Gwinnett received an appointment as justice of the peace in St. John’s Parish, and two years later that parish elected him to the Georgia House of Commons.

However, Gwinnett was a “chronic debtor,” and financial problems compelled his withdrawal from politics. During a climactic sequence of meetings in February and March of 1773, a group of his creditors, principally Alexander Rose and Robert Porteous, forced him to sell out. Gwinnett put his

plantation on St. Catherine's up for sale and disappeared from public view. He took no part in the Liberty movement leading up to the American Revolution. Ultimately, he and his family resided at Sutherland's Bluff on Bruo Neck in St. John's Parish.

In the summer of 1775 Gwinnett abruptly made an aggressive move out of obscurity and began organizing followers in the rural parishes of Georgia with the intention of breaking the political dominance of the Savannah-area coalition of "conservative" Whigs. His real motivation at the time, however, seems to have been financial.

In January 1776, upon Georgia's receiving authorization by the Continental Congress for a regiment of Continental troops there, Gwinnett managed to muster enough votes in the provincial Congress to defeat the well-qualified Samuel Elbert for command of the new unit. The conservative faction refused to accept this, since Gwinnett had no military experience whatsoever. As a compromise, Gwinnett withdrew his name and Lachlan McIntosh, not identified at the time with either faction, received the commission as colonel in command of Georgia's Continentals. Instead of the military commission, Gwinnett received the election as one of Georgia's members of Continental Congress—financially, an even more powerful position than colonel of a regiment. Once in Congress, Gwinnett served on the Marine Committee and the Committee to Study the Confederation of the States. Soon after signing the Declaration of Independence, Gwinnett returned home.

Back in Georgia, Gwinnett worked successfully to place more of his radical faction, which assumed the name of the "Popular Party," "Country Party," or "Liberty Party," in the General Assembly. The Radicals boldly accused the Conservatives of being Loyalists in disguise, and succeeded in electing Gwinnett the speaker and other Radicals to key positions.^{vi} History credits Gwinnett with primary responsibility for shaping Georgia's first constitution. He and his fellow Radicals crafted this document to openly favor their political allies and end the political dominance of the tidewater faction.

Following the "suspicious" death in February 1777 of Archibald Bulloch, president of the Council, Button Gwinnett succeeded Bulloch as president—and commander-in-chief of Georgia's military forces.^{vii} Learning that he had been accused in the Continental Congress of misappropriating money intended for Georgia, President Gwinnett intercepted the letter containing the charges and destroyed it. In response, Lachlan McIntosh complained of Gwinnett's high-handedness.

The new president answered by quickly making it known to McIntosh that the military—both Militia and Continentals—were completely subordinate to Georgia's civil government, which he, of course, headed. He claimed to be the "principal Leader" of all military forces in Georgia.^{viii}

Gwinnett decided to capture St. Augustine, guarded by its nearly impregnable citadel Fort St. Marks. He asked General Robert Howe, commander of the Southern Department, for more men. Howe regarded it as a foolhardy venture. Although Howe did order one battalion to garrison Sunbury, he took the remainder of his troops back to Charleston with him. "He came, he saw, and left us in low Estate," said Gwinnett, who proceeded aggressively with his plan without consulting COL Lachlan McIntosh, Continental commander in Georgia.

Disputes over command of the expedition against East Florida arose quickly, so the Georgia Council of Safety recalled both Gwinnett and McIntosh to Savannah. The Council then ordered COL Samuel Elbert, McIntosh's second-in-command, to conduct the expedition.

As a continuation of the struggle between the Radicals and the Conservatives for civil and military dominance, President Gwinnett and COL Lachlan McIntosh contended for the appointment as brigadier general of the Continental forces in Georgia, the contest becoming intensely partisan. McIntosh won the commission, and strong jealousies intensified.

Just at this critical moment, George McIntosh, brother of Lachlan, became involved in a very stupid business enterprise with two Tories. Gwinnett learned of the transaction, and striking without the advice of his Council had George arrested and placed in irons in the common jail, charged with treason.^{ix} There George remained month after month awaiting bail, which Gwinnett refused him "due to the nature of the charge." George McIntosh reported that he had not even been informed of the charges against him. Eventually, after Gwinnett left Savannah on other matters, the Georgia Council of Safety met and voted to

release McIntosh on £20,000 bail and presented him copies of the papers received from the Continental Congress in order for him to prepare his defense.

When the Council of Safety released McIntosh from jail, one of its specifications was that he would go to Congress to present his case, but required him to give security to the executive before departing. President Gwinnett having refused McIntosh a trial in Georgia, the latter set out for Congress without notifying him. On 8 May 1777 John Adam Treutlen surprised Gwinnett by being elected the first governor of Georgia under the new state constitution, succeeding President Gwinnett as commander-in-chief. As the new executive of Georgia, Governor Treutlen sent a guard which overtook McIntosh while on his way to Congress. The guard handcuffed McIntosh and delivered him to Congress as their prisoner—further humiliating the McIntoshes.

Georgia's new Assembly met under the Constitution of 1777, and it considered the recent, disastrous expedition to East Florida. After hearing both Button Gwinnett and Lachlan McIntosh, the Radical-dominated Assembly approved Gwinnett's conduct. Stung by this announcement, McIntosh called Gwinnett "A Scoundrell & lying Rascal" to his face and in front of the Assembly. Gwinnett quickly challenged McIntosh to a duel, and on 16 May the two antagonists met in a meadow southeast of Savannah, pursuant to the *Code Duello*.

The "turbulent and controversial" Dr. George Wells, a fellow Radical, acted as Gwinnett's second.* Joseph Habersham, a member of the conservative faction, acted as McIntosh's second. When the parties met for the duel, these seconds had not made all of the necessary arrangements. Asked what the distance should be, Gwinnett snapped, "Whatever distance the General pleases." McIntosh suggested eight or ten feet, to which at Habersham's request another pace was added. Gwinnett proposed that they should turn back to back, then whirl and fire, to which proposal McIntosh replied, "By no means. Let us see what we are about."

Afterwards, in her anguish at the death of her husband, Mrs. Ann Gwinnett wrote John Hancock in Congress blaming the seconds for being "cruel and bloodthirsty" in fixing the distance "at only 10 feet." She did not comprehend that the close distance was to ensure that the men, firing low, would not accidentally hit one another in the torso, a wound in the stomach being an agonizing death. At such a close distance, it was all but impossible to miss. It is clear that the two men intended to satisfy the requirements of honor rather than take one another's life. Both fired at the word, their pistols aimed low in an effort to strike a leg rather than a torso.

In fact, both received leg wounds, Gwinnett above his left knee and McIntosh through the thick of his leg. Modern examination of Gwinnett's remains revealed that McIntosh's bullet did not shatter the bone, but only lodged in it. Obviously, the two duelists were using pistols carrying a light or "dueling" charge, rather than a full charge of powder.*i

Their seconds had the two men removed to their respective homes. According to McIntosh, this apparently harmless and honorable resolution of their quarrel "seemed to give general satisfaction throughout the state." Dr. Wells, Gwinnett's second, reported that each had done his duty as a gentleman.

Gwinnett's wound became gangrenous, and he died three days later, on the morning of 19 May.*ii McIntosh argued that his death was due to incompetent medical care.*iii When he learned of Gwinnett's death, McIntosh turned himself in to Judge John Glen, and posted bond. Unsatisfied with the outcome of the duel, Dr. Lyman Hall and Joseph Wood, political associates of Gwinnett and members of the Executive Council, went before the Assembly and charged Judge Glen with neglect of duty because McIntosh had not been bound over for murder. Subsequently, General McIntosh went before a jury on the charge of murder, and the jury acquitted him.

Dr. Hall now assumed leadership of the Radical persecution of McIntosh, both in the Assembly and throughout the state, composing a petition which demanded McIntosh's removal from command. Styling themselves the Liberty Club, McIntosh's enemies circulated the petition in the several counties for others to sign. McIntosh's friends in Congress at the time, George Walton of Georgia and Henry Laurens of South Carolina, requested his transfer, rather than have Congress strip him of his commission.*iv On 6 August General McIntosh received orders to report to General Washington for

reassignment.

On 9 October the Continental Congress voted not to try George McIntosh, and referred to a committee the issue of returning him to Georgia for trial or discharge. However, George died before his case could be resolved.^{xv} General Lachlan McIntosh “abstracted” himself from military duties in Georgia, and left the state.^{xvi} Having gotten rid of the Continental Army commander in Georgia, the Radicals next forced the Continental Navy commander in Georgia, Commodore Oliver Bowen, to leave the state for his native Rhode Island.

In an effort to account for the money that the Continental Congress had given Gwinnett during the summer of 1776, a Congressional committee recommended that three South Carolinians be appointed to audit Georgia’s public funds. Following Gwinnett’s death, John Wereat, Continental Agent in Georgia, had Gwinnett’s properties sold at public auction to repay “money which belonged to the Continental Congress” received by Gwinnett and for which he had not accounted.”^{xvii}

The factional warfare originating with Gwinnett greatly detracted from Georgia’s preparations for military defense. The British easily captured Savannah in 1778 and eventually returned Georgia to Crown rule—the only state to be so completely reduced to colonial status.

In mentioning that a political clique had formed itself into a society named the Liberty Club, Hugh McCall recorded:^{xviii}

“It is worthy of remark, that governor Treutlen and the six members of the executive council, who voted for the measures of this [Liberty or Radical] party against general M’Intosh, all took protection afterward under the British government, except John Lindsay.”

Thus, the leaders of the Radical faction accused the Conservatives of being Tories, but when confronted by the stark results of what they themselves had brought about, they were foremost in signing the oath of loyalty to the Crown. Meanwhile, the surviving Conservative leaders continued the fight against the British. Button Gwinnett’s ambitious arrogance was the primary factor leading to this disaster. Hugh McCall summed up his character, “Gwinnett appears to have been a man of considerable literary talents, but hasty in his decisions, overbearing in his temper, and wild and excentric (sic) in his plans.”

Gwinnett’s Signatures, 1912–1927

In 1905 “S. Millington Miller, M.D.” published an article in *Collier’s* magazine “proving conclusively the authenticity” of the so-called “Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence.” In a subsequent issue of *The American Historical Review*, historian Alexander Samuel Salley Jr. of South Carolina denounced Miller’s article and exposed him as a fraud.^{xix}

In 1912 “Dr. S. Millington Miller of Philadelphia” appeared at the Public Library in Savannah, asking for a guide to Mulberry Grove, which he boldly asserted was “once owned by Button Gwinnett.” The librarian corrected him that Gwinnett had never owned Mulberry Grove, and Miller replied that Mr. [Van R.] Winkler, “a descendant of Button Gwinnett,” resided there, and he, Miller, wished to discuss a Gwinnett signature with him. The librarian again corrected Miller that Winkler was in no way related to Gwinnett.

Miller subsequently sought out Abram Minis’ aunt, said to possess a large collection of valuable documents, some perhaps bearing Gwinnett’s signature. Miller claimed he simply wanted to borrow some of them. Forewarned, she refused to let Miller see the documents.

Belatedly, William Harden, the public librarian and a fine historian in his own right, realized that Miller was the same person as the author of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence fraud. Harden immediately called his niece, a clerk at the bank in which the Telfair Academy had placed the Gwinnett signature for safekeeping. She replied that, indeed, Miller had just arrived, demanding to see the Gwinnett autograph. Likewise forewarned, she refused to produce it.

Next, Miller showed up in the office of the clerk of Superior Court of Chatham County, wanting to see some original records, again searching for Gwinnett autographs. Harden tracked him down to the office, and shouted to the clerk, “This is the man; he is a fraud and will steal. Don’t let him see any records in this building!” Miller responded, “Do you believe that lie about me?” Indignant, Harden “swung his mighty left, landing the open palm squarely upon the other’s cheek.” Miller staggered and retreated out of the courthouse to the corner of Bull and York Streets, with Harden in close pursuit. Outside, Harden again denounced Miller and ordered him to take the next train out of town.

Miller did leave town, but arrived in Brunswick in search of Dr. William Berrien Burroughs, also a collector of valuable documents, perhaps including a Gwinnett signature. Miller shoved aside Dr. Burroughs’ servant at the door and walked in on Dr. Burroughs. He introduced himself as Dr. S.M. Miller of New York and broached the topic of Gwinnett’s signatures. Burroughs refused to show him any of his collection, so Miller left.^{xx}

The value of the Gwinnett signatures increased to “fabulous” prices over the years. This was particularly so during the “Signers Craze” of the 1920’s, when autograph collectors began paying large sums for signatures. In 1926 the state of Georgia learned that a resident of Mobile, Alabama, possessed the Gwinnett *Bible*.^{xxi} This person was unable to explain his possession of the *Bible*, nor his possession of a letter from Lachlan McIntosh to Henry Laurens, the deposition of Joseph Habersham (as McIntosh’s second in the Gwinnett duel), nor the deposition of Dr. George Wells (as Gwinnett’s second in the duel), all documents directly relating to Gwinnett’s death.^{xxii} The state of Georgia tried unsuccessfully to obtain this *Bible*, and today its location is again unknown.

Somehow, Charles Colcock Jones Jr. secured Gwinnett’s last will and testament out of the office of the Ordinary (now Probate Judge) of Chatham County, Georgia, and the Pierpont Morgan Collection in New York came into possession of it. In April of 1927, despite direct testimony by authorities from the Georgia Department of Archives and History, including Ruth Blair, that the document had been stolen, a New York court ruled that even though it had been the object of theft, it legally belonged in New York.

Search for President Gwinnett, 1957–1964

In 1848 the committee of arrangements for the Signers Monument in Augusta, having been unable to locate Gwinnett’s last resting place, had Lyman Hall and George Walton re-buried there without Georgia’s third signer of the Declaration of Independence. In 1957 Arthur J. Funk of Savannah studied Gwinnett’s life and death, and made the logical deduction that he had been buried in Colonial Cemetery in that latter city. After a short search, he and others located what Funk believed were Gwinnett’s remains, due to the obvious damage to a femur.

Arrayed with Arthur Funk and Lilla Hawes, director of the Georgia Historical Society, were several other historians of considerable expertise. Together, they submitted the remains to experts for forensic examination, and the final report concluded that the remains Funk had located were, indeed, those of Button Gwinnett. In 1959 the mayor and aldermen of Savannah officially recognized Colonial Cemetery as the burial place of the long-lost Signer of the Declaration of Independence.

In 1960 the several patriotic organizations agreed to erect a suitable monument to Gwinnett in Colonial Cemetery. When news got out, the mayor of Augusta suggested that Gwinnett should be reburied in that city under the Signers Monument with Hall and Walton, and that city made a formal appeal for the remains. The Savannah-Chatham Historic Site and Monument Commission finally dedicated the memorial in Colonial Cemetery to Button Gwinnett on Victory Day, 19 October 1964.^{xxiii}

Lyman Hall

Lyman Hall was born in Wallingford, Connecticut, on 12 April 1724, son of John and Mary (Street) Hall. He studied theology, completing his education at Yale College in 1747 (B.A.) and 1750 (M.A.). He served as Congregational pastor in Fairfield, Connecticut, until dismissed from the church for

immorality (the precise nature of the charge is no longer known). Although subsequently reinstated, Hall next studied medicine with a Fairfield physician and apparently practiced in Wallingford.

He married first Abigail Burr, and second Mary Osborne, before moving to South Carolina, and later to Georgia before the Revolution. He practiced medicine in both places.

Doctor Hall was Georgia's sole representative in the Continental Congress in 1775. He brought 200 barrels of rice and £50 with him for the relief of the poor in Boston. Admitted to the Continental Congress as a delegate, Hall declined to vote because each colony had but one vote and he represented but one parish.^{xxiv}

Georgia returned Dr. Hall to the Continental Congress through 1780. He became one of Georgia's Signers of the Declaration of Independence, and made his last appearance in Congress in February of 1777. Such was his influence in the Continental Congress that other delegates complained that, unlike the other southern states, Georgia always voted in consonance with Connecticut. In 1783 Hall became governor of the state, serving as such until 1790.

In 1787 Dr. Hall served as executor of the estate of Button Gwinnett, and handled the sale of Gwinnett's property at Sutherland's Bluff.^{xxv} At the same time, Hall advertised the sale of his own plantation, Hall's Knoll, in Liberty County. He subsequently moved his residence to Shell Bluff in what was then Burke County.

Doctor Hall died at his home at Shell Bluff on 19 October 1790. His family buried him there in the family burial ground. Hall's second wife Mary (Osborne) Hall died there in November of 1793. Their only son John Hall, who died on 20 January 1792 in his 27th year, was also buried at Shell Bluff.

Search for Dr. Hall

Pursuant to an earlier, concurrent resolution, in 1847 the Georgia Legislature made an appropriation of \$1,500 for the removal of the remains of Georgia's Signers of the Declaration of Independence and the construction of a suitable "Signers" monument to them as Georgia's "Fathers of the Revolution."^{xxvi} Pursuant to the terms of this appropriation, in 1848 a committee of the City Council of Augusta had Doctor Hall's remains removed from their resting place at Shell Bluff, where they had reposed almost 60 years. These were then taken to Augusta for reburial under a monument "suitable to his accomplishments."

On 4 July 1848 in Augusta, a procession headed by the grand master of the Masonic Grand Lodge of Georgia, followed by the mayor, city council, and other dignitaries, and accompanied by martial music, proceeded to the site on Greene Street opposite the city hall and laid the cornerstone of the Signers Monument.^{xxvii}

As stated, the committee concluded that it could not locate the whereabouts of Button Gwinnett. Workmen finally finished what had become known as the Hall and Walton Monument in November of 1852, a granite obelisk.^{xxviii}

Hall's old marble tombstone was left behind at Shell Bluff. The inscription on it read:^{xxix}

*"Beneath this stone
Rest the remains of the Honorable
LYMAN HALL, Esq.,
Formerly Governor of this State,
Who departed this life the 19th of Oct., 1790,
In the 67th year of his age.
In the cause of America, he was uniformly
A Patriot.
In the incumbent duties of a Husband and a
Father, he acquitted himself with
Affection and Tenderness.
But, reader, above all, know from this inscrip-*

*tion, that he left this probationary
scene a true Christian and an
Honest Man.*

*To these so mourned in Death, so loved in Life,
The childless parent and the widow'd wife
With tears inscribes this monumental stone,
That holds his ashes and expects her own."*

Eventually, an "enterprising individual" appropriated Dr. Hall's abandoned tombstone as a barroom counter in a tavern in the eastern part of Burke County. Hopefully, the patrons of this barroom drank many toasts to the Declaration of Independence and to one who signed it.

In time, Hall's barroom headstone disappeared. In 1936 the Georgia Daughters of the American Revolution approved the following resolution: "That the grave of Lyman Hall in Burke county be marked, the necessary sum to be appropriated by the state conference." Thus, Dr. Lyman Hall now has two grave markers.

George Walton

George Walton (II) was born in or near Farmville, Cumberland County, Virginia, in late 1749 or early 1750, the date is uncertain. His parents, Robert Walton (II) (died 1750) and Mary (Hughes) Walton (1723–1756), having died when George was young, his uncle and aunt, George and Martha (Hughes) Walton raised him. They apprenticed him at the age of 15 as a builder under Christopher Ford, but secured a release from the indenture before his term expired. He moved to Savannah in 1769, and studied law in the office of Henry Yonge. He was admitted before the General Court of Georgia in 1772, and soon maintained a successful practice. He was secretary of the provincial assembly of July 1775. In December of that year he became president of the Council of Safety. In January of 1776 the assembly selected Walton as one of Georgia's delegates to the Continental Congress. He returned to Philadelphia at the end of June, taking his seat on 1 July, just in time to sign the Declaration of Independence.

In May of 1776 a British spy in Savannah submitted to Sir James Wright a secret report on affairs in Georgia. This spy reported that the Continental Congress had issued Georgia between £15,000 and 20,000 (sic) in paper money, but that "George Walton & some others are Supposed to have Purloined much of the Money that has been issued."xxx Walton returned to Philadelphia at the end of June, taking his seat on 1 July, just in time to sign the Declaration of Independence.

In June 1777, the governor commissioned Walton colonel commanding the 1st Regiment Georgia Militia. After the British landed at Savannah in December of 1778, COL Walton refused to subordinate himself and his militia command to his superior Continental commander. During their attack on the city, the British wounded Walton in the thigh and captured him. They held him prisoner until his exchange on 15 October 1779. In November of 1779 the newly-convened General Assembly in Augusta elected Walton governor of Georgia.

Suddenly, in an about-face he never explained, Walton sent a request to Congress that his former close friend Brigadier General Lachlan McIntosh be relieved of his command in Georgia. Walton supported this demand with a document allegedly signed by William Glascock, Speaker of the Assembly. Subsequently, Glascock repudiated this letter as a forgery, and McIntosh spent much of the rest of his life trying to clear his name. Walton never clarified his sudden antipathy for his former friend. Walton returned to the Continental Congress in 1780, and served there until September of 1781. He remained in Philadelphia until the war ended.

In 1783, while still in Continental commission, CPT William McIntosh, son of General Lachlan McIntosh, threatened to whip George Walton, now the new chief justice of Georgia. A few days later, CPT McIntosh met Walton on the street and horsewhipped him, his blows "well laid on." McIntosh went before a court-martial, charged under the Articles of War with "interruption of the civil police," but the results of this court are unknown.

Walton also planted rice, but was a failure in that enterprise. He subsequently moved to Augusta, where he again farmed. In 1787 George Walton and COL James Gunn fought a duel, in which Walton received a shot through his thigh.^{xxxii} Two years later the electorate again elected Walton governor. Late in 1795 Governor George Mathews appointed Walton to fill the unexpired term of James Jackson as U.S. senator from Georgia. Walton died on 2 February 1804 at his home near Augusta.

George Walton married Dorothy Camber. The British held her as a prisoner in the West Indies during part of the Revolution. She died in Pensacola, Florida, on 12 September 1832 at the residence of her son George Walton Jr., being buried in St. Michael's churchyard in the old burial ground in Pensacola.

George Walton and his wife Dorothy (Camber) Walton had two sons:

1. Thomas Camber Walton, born in 1776, became a lawyer, and died unmarried at Meadow Garden near Augusta on 13 December 1803.
2. George Walton Jr. (IV), born in 1786, died in 1859 at Petersburg, Dinwiddie County, Virginia. He graduated from Princeton. An act of the legislature assented to on 15 December 1809 admitted George Walton (IV) to the practice of law in Georgia. George Walton was elected to the Georgia legislature in 1810, and "served several sessions (1810, 1811, 1816, 1817, 1818, 1819) with credit." In 1821 he received the appointment of secretary of the Territory of Florida under the governorship of Andrew Jackson, and succeeded Jackson as governor of that territory. George married Sally Minge Walker. She died in Mobile in 1861. The children of George Walton Jr. and his wife Sally (Walker) Walton were:
 - 2-1. Octavia Celeste Walton, born in 1811, married in 1836 Dr. Henry Strachey LeVert (1804–1864) of Mobile, Alabama, and became a well-known writer. She was accomplished in the languages and music, and was a brilliant conversationalist, having traveled abroad extensively. "Madame LeVert," as she was known, died of pneumonia on Monday, 12 March 1877, at the residence of her daughter Mrs. Reab in Summerville. They had daughters, Octavia, Claudia, Sarah, and Ann Casanetta ("Carra Netta"), the last named marrying Lawrence Augustus Rigail Reab of Augusta. Lawrence A. Reab and his wife had an only child, George Walton Reab.
 2. Robert Watkins Walton, born in Augusta in 1812, served as a major in a Mobile regiment of volunteers in the Creek War, and mayor of Mobile, Alabama, at the time of his death, which occurred on 22 March 1849.

Conclusion

The youngest and one of the least-populated of the 13 colonies, Georgia was unable to prepare itself for revolution, could not defend itself when it came, nor free itself upon its subjugation. Of the five men Georgia selected to represent it in Congress in 1776, the two native-born delegates declined to attend, and the three delegates who had moved there as adults did so, but took no active part in the debates preceding the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

At this remote time it is difficult to understand some of the motives of those who represented Georgia during the signing, especially since neither we nor they could fully appreciate the revolutionary events occurring around them. Without knowing all of the facts, it is incumbent upon us to show them charity. Certainly, the appreciation of Georgia was such that its legislature named a county for each of the three men, and buried Hall and Walton under a monument to them as Signers of the Declaration of Independence.

It is a salient point that there are no living descendants of any of Georgia's three Signers of the Declaration of Independence.

ENDNOTES

- i** A Speech to The Descendants Of The Signers Of The Declaration Of Independence, Savannah, Georgia, 18 April 2009.
- ii** Orders in "American Independence," (*Savannah Daily Georgian*, 13 June 1829.
- iii** The Savannah-Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission, *The Burial Place Of Button Gwinnett. A Report to the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah* (1959), in the Bull Street Library, Savannah, Georgia.
- iv** The family name Gwinnett was originally the Welsh Gwynedd. Anne Eames had relatives in Herefordshire.
- v** Ann Gwinnett resided in Georgia as late as 1785. She married Peter Belin, and the two are said to have raised a family. In 1786 the South Carolina Assembly granted Peter Belin a franchise for constructing a water works for Charleston. Their descendants, if any, are presently unknown. Advertisement for the heirs of Ann Gwinnett in (*Savannah Georgian*, 8 November 1824).
- vi** Hugh McCall, *History Of Georgia, etc.* (1816, reprinted, Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Company, 1969), 461.
- vii** Hugh McCall, *History Of Georgia, etc.* (1816, reprinted, Atlanta: Cherokee Publishing Company, 1969), 331, 461; Kenneth Coleman, *Colonial Georgia; A History* (New York, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), 277. For information on Langworthy see Leonard L. MacKall, "Edward Langworthy And The First Attempt To Write A Separate History Of Georgia, With Selections From The Long Lost Langworthy Papers," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 7 (Savannah, GA: March 1923): 1–17.
- viii** Lyman Hall to Roger Sherman, 16 May and 1 June 1777, from the Pierpont Morgan Collection, quoted in Charles F. Jenkins, *Button Gwinnett* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1926), 226–30.
- ix** Gwinnett maintained to Hancock that he did not get the Council's consent because "a Number sufficient to make a board could not be convened that day." 28 March 1777, in Charles F. Jenkins, *Button Gwinnett* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1926), 215. Months later, Mrs. Ann Gwinnett, unaware of her husband's earlier explanation, wrote John Hancock that her husband had acted "without consulting Council, for that He knew would prevent His [McIntosh's] being taken." 1 August 1777, *supra*, Jenkins, *Gwinnett*, 237.
- x** Cashin argued that it was under Wells' medical care that Gwinnett's wound became gangrenous, resulting in the death of the latter. Edward J. Cashin, "George Wells" in Charles Stephen Gurr et al., *Dictionary of Georgia Biography*, 2 (Athens, GA: The University Of Georgia Press, 1983), 1044–5. However, the executor of Gwinnett's estate enumerated a payment of £5.13 to (Dr.) James Houstoun, and it is possible that Houstoun was the attending physician for Gwinnett. The Savannah-Chatham County Historic Site and Monument Commission, *The Burial Place Of Button Gwinnett. A Report to the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Savannah* (1959), in the Bull Street Library, Savannah, Georgia.
- xi** A report from Philadelphia on 19 July 1777 stated that General McIntosh had "entirely recovered" from the wounds he had received in an engagement with enemy and in the duel with Gwinnett. *The (Williamsburg) Virginia Gazette* (Dixon & Hunter), 1 August 1777.
- xii** *Virginia Gazette* (Dixon & Hunter), 20 June 1777.
- xiii** Hall to Sherman, 16 May 1777; McIntosh to Henry Laurens, 30 May 1777; and McIntosh to George Walton, 14 July 1777, all quoted in Charles F. Jenkins, *Button Gwinnett* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1926), 226–30, 253–8; statement of George Wells quoted in *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 43 (March 1960): 3–4.
- xiv** Up to this point there existed a strong, cordial relationship between Walton and McIntosh. For example, in June of 1776 Walton addressed McIntosh as "Dear Colonel, ... believe me to be your most affectionate friend," no merely formal salutation. Walton to McIntosh, Williamsburg, Virginia, 17 June 1776, "Geo. Walton, Of Georgia," *The Valdosta (GA) Times*, 7 April 1877 [from the *Augusta (GA) Chronicle and Constitutionalist*].
- xv** George McIntosh (1739–1780) died in 1780 before the fall of Charleston to the British.
- xvi** Alexander A. Lawrence, "General Lachlan McIntosh and his Suspension from Continental Command during the Revolution," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 38 (Athens, GA: June 1954): 111–5.
- xvii** Charles F. Jenkins, *Button Gwinnett* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1926), 175–6.

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- xviii** McCall, *History Of Georgia*, 461; Robert S. Porter, "A History of Cloy Lodge No. 280," *Masonic Messenger*, 89 (2) (Macon, GA: April 2005): 26; Treutlen's name on the public notice of loyalist petitioners, Charles Town, 3 July 1781, in *Royal (Charleston, SC) Gazette*, 7 July 1781 to 11 July 1781. Charles Town in South Carolina became Charleston in 1783.
- xix** S. Millington Miller, *Collier's*, 1 July 1905; A.S. Salley Jr. and Worthington Chauncey Ford, *Dr. S. Millington Miller and the Mecklenburg Declaration* (New York, NY: American Historical Association, 1906), reprinted from an article by A.S. Salley Jr. in *The American Historical Review*, 11 (3)(April 1906); Perry Young, "Flimflam Man S. Millington Miller and ... the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence" in *The (Raleigh, NC) News and Observer*, 25 September 1966 (which includes the account of William Harden's slapping Miller in the Chatham County Courthouse in Savannah); and Mark M. Boatner III, "Mecklenburg Declaration Of Independence" in *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution, Bicentennial Edition* (New York, NY: David McKay Company, Inc., 1975), 697.
- xx** Miller attempted to purchase old documents from Mrs. Charles Ashby (Rosa) Burroughs and Waring Russell, among others.
- xxi** Reputedly, he was Francois Ludger Diard.
- xxii** Charles F. Jenkins published a pamphlet telling what he knew of the Gwinnett *Bible* and presenting several possible explanations of how the *Bible* and documents went north. He added that the originals of the McIntosh letter to Laurens and the Habersham deposition were never found. Charles F. Jenkins, *The Gwinnett Bible* (pam., Philadelphia: n.p., 1926), in the rare book collection of the Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.
- xxiii** "Ready For Dedication," *Savannah Evening Press*, 5 October 1964; "Button Gwinnett Monument To Be Unveiled on Oct. 19," *Savannah Evening Press*, 6 October 1964.
- xxiv** *The (Charleston) South-Carolina Gazette*, 20 February 1775. 2 *Journals of the Continental Congress*: 44n.
- xxv** Notice of sales in (*Savannah*) *Georgia Gazette*, 16 August 1787. Earlier, in 1779, 30 of Gwinnett's slaves had been sold at auction in Charleston. *The (Charleston) South-Carolina and American General Gazette*, 25 February 1779 and 9 April 1779.
- xxvi** Appropriations, Sec. 35, *Ga. Laws, 1847*, 9 (which mentions only George Walton and Lyman Hall); "The Remains of Lyman Hall," (*Savannah*) *Daily Georgian*, 1 April 1848 (from the *Augusta Constitutionalist*).
- xxvii** "4th of July," (*Savannah*) *Daily Georgian*, 8 July 1848.
- xxviii** *Savannah (GA) Evening Ledger*, 10 November 1852.
- xxix** *Ibid.*
- xxx** 38, pt. 2, *Colonial Records of Georgia*: 112.
- xxxi** *The (Augusta, GA) State Gazette Or Independent Register*, 2 June 1787.