

The Convention, which met from August 14, 1776, about six weeks after the Declaration of Independence, through November 11, 1776, framed the Constitution that governed Maryland until 1851. The General Assembly established by the Constitution began meeting on February 5, 1777, but the Council of Safety continued to function as the executive body of the State until March 20 of the same year. On March 22, 1777, the Assembly adopted a resolution "for dissolving the Council of Safety and Vesting the Governor and Council with their Powers." The Governor and Council had qualified two days earlier on March 20, and they immediately began to perform the duties assigned to them.<sup>1</sup>

## GOVERNORS OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND

By the Constitution of 1776, sec. 25, the Governor was chosen annually by joint ballot of both houses of the legislature. He had to be over twenty-five years of age, and a State resident for five years preceding the election. He also was required to hold real and personal property in the State valued at over five thousand pounds current money, one thousand of which was to be of freehold estate (Const. 1776, sec. 30). The Governor was limited to three successive one-year terms. In the four years thereafter, he could not again serve (Const. 1776, sec. 31).

By an 1837 constitutional amendment, the State was divided into three gubernatorial districts (Chapter 197, Acts of 1836). The Governor was to be elected by popular vote from each district on a rotating basis, beginning with the Eastern Shore district. The first popular election for Governor was held October 3, 1838. The Governor's term was extended at this time to three years.

The Constitution of 1851 continued the system of gubernatorial election districts. It raised the minimum age for gubernatorial candidates to thirty. The Governor was required to have been a U. S. citizen and State resident for five years and a resident of the district from which he was elected for three years. His term was extended to four years (Const. 1851, Art. 2, secs. 1, 6).

In the 1864 Constitution, gubernatorial election districts were eliminated. Thereafter, the Governor was elected by vote of the entire State's electorate. The 1864 Constitution also eliminated the district

residency requirements for gubernatorial candidates (Const. 1864, Art. 2, sec. 5).

The 1867 Constitution required the Governor to have been a citizen of the State of Maryland for ten years, a Maryland resident for five years, and a qualified voter at the time of his election (Const. 1867, Art. 2, sec. 5).

The Governor was limited to two consecutive terms by constitutional amendment ratified in 1948 (Chapter 109, Acts of 1947).

By a 1970 constitutional amendment, the Governor was required to be a resident and registered voter of the State for only the five years preceding his election (Chapter 532, Acts of 1970).

### Elected Under the Constitution of 1776 by the Legislature for One Year.<sup>1a</sup>

1777-1779. Thomas Johnson. No Party. Born in Calvert County, November 4, 1732, the son of Thomas Johnson and wife Dorcas Sedgewick. Resident of Anne Arundel County when elected. Episcopalian. Married Ann Jennings. Died at Rose Hill, Frederick County, October 26, 1819. Buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Frederick.

1779-1782. Thomas Sim Lee. No Party. Born in Prince George's County, October 29, 1745, the son of Thomas Lee and wife Christian Sim. Roman Catholic. Married Mary Digges. Died at Needwood, Frederick County, October 9, 1819. Buried in the Mt. Carmel Cemetery, Upper Marlboro.

1782-1785. William Paca. No Party. Born near Abingdon, Harford County, October 31, 1740, the son of John Paca and wife Elizabeth Smith. Resident of Queen Anne's County when elected. Episcopalian. Married (1) Mary Lloyd Chew; (2) Anne Harrison. Died at Wye Hall, Queen Anne's County, October 13, 1799. Buried at Wye Hall, Queen Anne's County.

1785-1788. William Smallwood. No Party. Thought to have been born in Charles County in 1732, the son of Bayne Smallwood and wife Priscilla Heaberd. Resident of Charles County when elected. Episcopalian. Unmarried. Died at Mattawoman, February 14, 1792. Buried at Smallwood's Retreat, Charles County.

<sup>1</sup> For members of the Conventions of the Province of Maryland, 1774-1776, and the Councils of Safety, 1775-1776, see Edward C. Papenfuss et al., *A Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature, 1635-1789*, vol. 1 (Baltimore, 1979), pp. 68-75.

<sup>1a</sup> Under the Constitution of 1776, the Governor was elected annually on the second Monday in November. He could be reelected for two additional terms. Thomas Johnson, the State's first governor, was elected on February 13, 1777, after the Constitution of 1776 became operative.