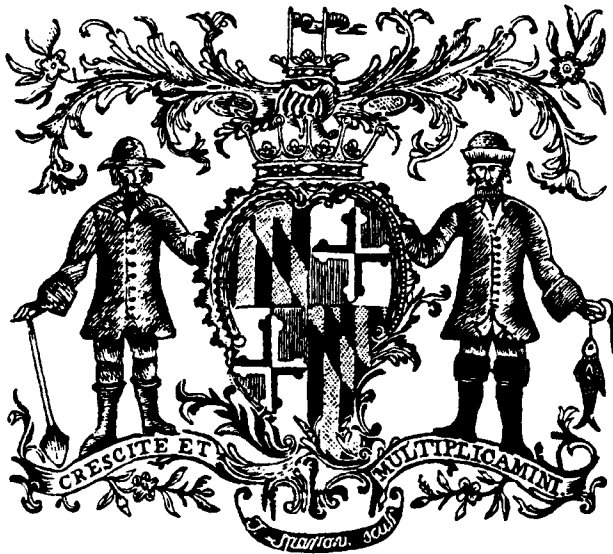


A
BIOGRAPHICAL
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LEGISLATURE,
1635-1789



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CHASE, SAMUEL (1741–1811). BORN: on April 17, 1741, at his mother's home near Princess Anne, Somerset County; eldest son. NATIVE: second generation. RESIDED: in Baltimore County, 1745–1759; Annapolis, 1759–ca. 1786; as state agent for the recovery of Maryland bank stock, Chase lived in London, England, from September 1783 until August 1784; in Baltimore City in his house at the corner of Eutaw and Lexington streets, ca. 1786 until death. FAMILY BACKGROUND. FATHER: Rev. Thomas Chase (ca. 1703–1779), born in England, educated at St. John's and Sidney Sussex colleges, Cambridge University. Immigrated to the West Indies to practice medicine. Returned to England and was ordained as an Anglican priest in February 1739. Immigrated in 1739 to become rector of Somerset Parish, Somerset County, from May 1739 to February 1744/45. Rector of St. Paul's Parish, Baltimore County, from 1745 to 1779. MOTHER: Matilda (?–by 1744), daughter of Thomas Walker (?–1744), of Somerset County, a planter and innkeeper, and wife Sarah Maddox. STEPMOTHER: Ann (?–1772), daughter of Thomas Birch, surgeon and male midwife of England. HALF BROTHERS: Thomas (ca. 1765–1773); George; Russell Birch; and Richard. HALF SISTERS: Anne; Elizabeth. FIRST COUSIN: *Jeremiah*

Chase (?–1755). OTHER KINSHIP: his second cousin was *Jeremiah Townly Chase* (1748–1828). MARRIED first, on May 2, 1762, Ann (?–1776), daughter of Thomas Baldwin, Gent., (?–1762), of Anne Arundel County, who died soon after his imprisonment for debt, and wife Agnes. Her sisters were Hester (?–1823), who married *Jeremiah Townly Chase* (1748–1828); Rebecca. MARRIED second, in 1784 Hannah Kitty Giles (?–1848). CHILDREN. SONS: Thomas (1764–1765); Samuel (1773–1841); and Thomas (1774–1826), who married in 1816 Matilda (ca. 1786–1829), daughter of *Jeremiah Townly Chase* (1748–1828). DAUGHTERS: Matilda (1763–?), who married in 1787 Henry Ridgely (1753–1811), lawyer and judge; Nancy (1768–1770); Fanny (1770–1771); Ann (Nancy) (1771–1852); Elizabeth (after 1784–?), who married first, George Dugan, and second, (first name unknown) Cole; and Mary (after 1784–?), who married in 1808 William B. Barney. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: Chase was guardian to his young half brothers and half sisters after his father's death. His move to Baltimore County in 1786 was said to have been caused by the need for greater income to support his family. PRIVATE CAREER. EDUCATION: received a classical education from his father; studied law in Annapolis under *John Hall* (1729–1797). RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION: Anglican, St. Anne's Parish, Anne Arundel County and St. Paul's Parish, Baltimore County. Delegate to diocesan convention, 1794, 1801. SOCIAL STATUS AND ACTIVITIES: Esq., 1769; Gent., 1779; member of the Forensic Club, Annapolis, 1761, expelled in 1762 for "extremely irregular and indecent" behavior. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: in 1790 *Alexander Contee Hanson* (1749–1806) said "that vile as Chase has been held by most of the better kind of his fellow citizens, he has been the mover of almost every thing this state has to boast of—Strange, inconsistent man!" Late in life, Chase wrote "A Course of Law and Literary Study," a five-year course of training for his law students. OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE: lawyer, admitted to the following courts: Annapolis Mayor's Court in 1761; Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Frederick, and Prince George's counties in 1763; Provincial Court in 1765; Chancery Court by 1768; Charles County in 1772. Chase was involved with *Allen Quynn* (ca. 1726–1803) and others in a saltworks on the West River, Anne Arundel County, 1777–1778. Quynn was a close associate with Chase in several ventures and handled Chase's business affairs when he was away from Annapolis in the 1770s and 1780s. Partner with *Thomas Dorsey* (?–1790) in the mercantile firm of John Dorsey & Co. from May 1778

until ca. December 1780. By 1789 the other partners in the company were insolvent; the partnership owed £42,000 when dissolved and had assets of less than £5,000. In partnership with *John Strett* (1750/51–1787), *Charles Ridgely* (1733–1790), *Benjamin Nicholson* (?–1792), *Darby Lux* (?–1795), and others in the purchase and operation of the Nottingham Ironworks Company, bought as confiscated property, 1782. Later Chase owned a wharf on the west side of Jones Falls, Baltimore City, and had a lumberyard built on the wharf in 1806 that dealt mainly in barrel staves. He had a “mud machine” built in 1809, and a device described as a “mud and pile driving machine with equipment” was valued at \$750.00 in his inventory at death. **PUBLIC CAREER. LEGISLATIVE SERVICE:** Lower House, Annapolis, 1765–1766 (Grievances 2, 3; Public Offices 2, 3; Laws to Expire 2, 3), Anne Arundel County, 1768–1770 (Grievances 2, 3; Public Offices 1; Laws to Expire 3, 4), 1771 (Elections; Grievances; Laws to Expire), 1773–1774 (Elections 1, Cv; Laws to Expire 1, Cv, 3); Conventions, Anne Arundel County, 1st, 1774, 2nd–3rd, 1774, 4th, 1775, 5th, 1775, 6th–8th, 1775–1776 (did not attend the 7th Convention), 9th, 1776 (Elections; resigned on August 27, 1776, because the opinions of his constituents concerning the establishment of a state government were “incompatible with good government and the public peace and happiness”; subsequently he was reelected and seated); Lower House, Annapolis, 1777, 1777 (Grievances 1; resigned from the 1777–1778 Assembly on November 22, 1777), 1779 (elected to the 3rd session of the 1778–1779 Assembly to fill vacancy; Elections 3), 1779–1780 (Elections 1–3), 1780–1781, 1781–1782, 1782–1783 (Grievances 1, 2; Manufactories 2), 1783 (elected, but did not attend), 1784, 1785 (Grievances; Laws to Expire), Anne Arundel County, 1786–1787 (Grievances 2), Baltimore Town, 1787–1788; Senate, Western Shore, Term of 1791–1796: 1791 (did not serve; probably declined). **OTHER PROVINCIAL/STATE OFFICES:** His long public career included the following positions: Provincial Committee of Correspondence, in office 1773–1775; 1st Council of Safety, Western Shore, 1775; agent for the recovery of Maryland bank stock from England, appointed 1783; Potomac River Commission, in office 1784–1785; Constitution Ratification Convention, Anne Arundel County, 1788; judge, General Court, 1791–1796 (resigned). **LOCAL OFFICES:** prosecutor, Mayor’s Court, Annapolis, appointed 1761; justice, Anne Arundel County, commissioned 1764 (quorum) and 1779 (“desires to be left out”); common councilman,

Annapolis, elected 1766; St. Anne’s Parish Vestry, Anne Arundel County, in office 1770–1773, 1774, and 1779; alderman, Annapolis, 1773–1779; recorder, Annapolis, in office ca. 1773–1786; churchwarden, St. Anne’s Parish, Anne Arundel County, 1774–1775; Committee of Observation, Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, elected 1774 and 1775; Committee of Correspondence, Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, elected 1774; justice, Orphans’ Court, Anne Arundel County, commissioned 1779; Maryland Senate elector, Anne Arundel County, elected 1786; chief justice, Court of Oyer and Terminer and Gaol Delivery, Baltimore Town, 1788–1789 (resigned), 1792—at least 1794; commissioner, Baltimore Town, 1788–1796. **OUT OF STATE SERVICE:** delegate, Continental Congress, 1774–1778 (elected in June 1774, December 1774, April 1775, August 1775, May 1776, July 1776, November 1776, February 1777, and December 1777), 1781 (elected in November 1781, but did not attend; resigned on May 31, 1782), 1783 (elected in November 1783, but did not attend), 1784 (elected in December 1784, but did not attend). Journeyed to Canada with *Charles Carroll of Carrollton* (1737–1832), Benjamin Franklin, and Rev. John Carroll on a congressional mission to enlist Canadian support for the revolt against Great Britain, 1776. Associate justice, U.S. Supreme Court, 1796–1811. Chase was impeached by the House of Representatives in 1804 for his supposedly improper judicial behavior during the Fries and Callender trials in 1800 and while instructing a grand jury in New Castle, Delaware, in 1800, and for his partisan remarks in his capacity as associate justice before a Baltimore grand jury in 1803. He was acquitted by the Senate on March 1, 1805. Among Chase’s defense lawyers were Robert Goodloe Harper, Philip Barton Key, and *Luther Martin* (1744–1826). The defense argued that any action which was not indictable was also not impeachable. Of the eight articles of impeachment Chase was judged guilty on three by only a two vote majority in each case. Chase’s impeachment is thought by some historians to have been the opening move in a Republican attempt to purge the Supreme Court of Federalists. **STANDS ON PUBLIC/PRIVATE ISSUES:** Chase took a leading role against the Annapolis government in a dispute over alleged violations of the city charter and the government’s denial of the citizens’ rights, 1763. Admitted leader of opposition to the Stamp Act, 1765. Opposed the poll tax for the support of the Anglican clergy in Maryland, 1772–1774. Joined *Baker Johnson* (1747–1811), *William Paca* (1740–1799), and *Thomas*

Johnson (1732–1819) in the successful defense of *Joseph Hanson Harrison* (?–1785) in a test case concerning the Fee Bill, 1773. Supported *Charles Carroll of Carrollton* (1737–1832) in his newspaper debate with *Daniel Dulany, Jr.* (1722–1797), 1773. Signer of the Declaration of Independence, August 2, 1776. Opposed ratification of the Federal Constitution, 1788. WEALTH DURING LIFE-TIME. PERSONAL PROPERTY: received a £125.0.0 legacy from his grandfather, 1770. Property in Annapolis valued at £969.13.4, including 5 slaves and 268 oz. plate, 1783. In 1789 he declared himself privately indebted for £2,000, even after having mortgaged all of his personal property; his assets were “good debts,” estimated at about £1,200.0.0, plus “some fees”; at that time he agreed to convey to *Thomas Dorsey* (?–1790) £600 current money, plus £3,400 worth of property, as his share of the debts of John Dorsey & Co. Received £643.15.0 current money, plus costs as his commission as agent for the recovery of Maryland’s bank stock in England, 1811 (this was about one-half the amount he had requested). ANNUAL INCOME: lawyer’s fees estimated at ca. £374.0.0, 1765. LAND AT FIRST ELECTION: 2,886 acres in Anne Arundel, Frederick, and Dorchester counties (1,318 acres by patent; 1,568 acres by purchase, 1763–1765), plus one-half interest in 5,449 acres in Frederick County by patents with *Thomas Johnson* (1732–1819) in 1764 and one-half interest in 1,660 acres in Frederick County by patent with *William Paca* (1740–1799) in 1764. Most of this land was acquired by speculating in proclamation warrants and by buying land from people unable to pay quitrents on their patents. SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN LAND BETWEEN FIRST ELECTION AND DEATH: continued to speculate, especially on land in Frederick County, by patents and purchases until 1776, obtaining an additional 6,000 acres by 1774. In 1769 sold *William Paca* (1740–1799) his share of the land held with him, plus some of the land patented with *Thomas Johnson* (1732–1819). Bought a lot in Annapolis in 1769, and began to build an impressive brick house, but was overextended and forced to sell the lot and unfinished house to *Edward Lloyd* (1744–1796) in 1771. Sold 559 acres in Dorchester County, and about 500 acres in Frederick County, 1771. Sold additional land in Frederick County, including more of the land patented with *Thomas Johnson* (1732–1819) in 1779. Invested heavily in acreage in Anne Arundel County with *Jeremiah Townly Chase* (1748–1828) in 1780, and began buying confiscated British property with notes secured by *Jeremiah Townly Chase* (1748–1828)

and *Allen Quynn* (ca. 1726–1803) in 1781. By the mid-1780s Chase was in severe financial difficulties and had to mortgage the confiscated British property, plus 3,500 additional acres of land in Anne Arundel County to *Jeremiah Townly Chase* (1748–1828) and *Allen Quynn* (ca. 1726–1803). He sold over 1,100 acres in Anne Arundel County to pay a debt owed to *John Beale Bordley* (1726/27–1804); sold his share of the land bought with *Jeremiah Townly Chase* (1748–1828) to pay debts owed to him; and conveyed over 500 acres in Anne Arundel County to pay debts owed *Allen Quynn* (ca. 1726–1803), and to secure further credit from him. Upon a petition from Chase in 1787, the state agreed to void his purchase of the confiscated British property, and in 1795 *Jeremiah Townly Chase* (1748–1828) and *Allen Quynn* (ca. 1726–1803) were able to release the mortgage. During the 1780s while he was selling land in other areas, Chase was acquiring land in Baltimore Town, and for the next ten years he continued to sell land in Frederick County while concentrating on the development of his holdings in Baltimore Town. He sold at least 10 lots and leased at least 23 others between 1801 and 1810. Shortly before his death, Chase conveyed at least 15 lots in Baltimore City to his sons and 21 acres to *Jeremiah Townly Chase* (1748–1828). WEALTH AT DEATH. DIED: on June 19, 1811, in Washington, D.C.; buried at Old St. Paul’s Cemetery, Baltimore City. PERSONAL PROPERTY: TEV, \$14,866.01 current money (including 15 slaves, 1 share in Washington Tontine, plus leases held on 26 acres on Whetstone Point valued at \$80.00 and 5 acres in Baltimore City valued at \$4,620.00); FB, estate overpaid \$1,740.62 with additional debts filed later in Chancery Court litigation. LAND: 1 lot and 2.75 acres, including “Chase’s Wharf,” and 6 acres on Whetstone Point, Baltimore City, plus ground rent on at least 10 lots in Baltimore City and possibly as much as 2,500 acres in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, and Frederick counties. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: income at time of death included \$1,177.00 per year from ground rents, plus his \$769.29 salary from the U.S. government.