

Timeline of John Hanson's Life, Roles In the Birth of the United States, Presidency and Remembrances Since His Death

Early and Midlife of John Hanson

April 3, 1715	Born at Mulberry Grove, the Hanson ancestral home in Charles County, Maryland, "about 2 or 3 in ye afternoon," son of Judge Samuel Hanson and Elizabeth Story Hanson, and grandson of his immigrant namesake
Probably ≈1730-35	Said to have studied at Oxford
1743	Marries Jane Contee Hanson
1750	Appointed as Sheriff of Charles County, Maryland.
1757-58, 65-66, 68	Represents Charles County in the Maryland Assembly
February 14, 1758	Appointed by Maryland Assembly to two finance committees beginning Hanson's role of increasing specialization and prominence in the field of public finance
During Hanson's time in the Maryland House of Delegates	Becomes a leader of the Country Party which seeks more colonial rights and stands in opposition to the Proprietary Party which owes allegiance to the Maryland Proprietor, the chief agent of the British government in Maryland
March 22, 1765	British Parliament passes the Stamp Act taxing the North American colonies
September 23, 1765	The Maryland Assembly meets to discuss the Stamp Act after having been forbidden by the British to meet in 1764
September 24, 1765	John Hanson one of seven appointed by the Maryland Assembly to draft instructions for the Assembly's delegates to the colonies' Stamp Act Congress
October, 1765	Stamp Act Congress, a meeting of the colonies to oppose the Stamp Act, meets
November 1, 1765	Stamp Act takes effect. British agents attempt to collect new taxes.
November 15, 1765	The Frederick County Court, governing body of Frederick County, Maryland, decides that businesses in Frederick County need not comply with the Stamp Act and becomes the first official body in the colonies to oppose the Stamp Act
November 23, 1765	Sons of Liberty of Frederick County holds a mock funeral of the Stamp Act
During this period	Stamp act riots occur in the colonies. The British governor of Georgia has to defend himself at gun point from a mob at the governor's mansion.
During this period	John Hanson among the most vocal in the Maryland Assembly opposing the Stamp Act and in advocating more independence for the colonies
March 18, 1766	Stamp Act repealed by the British Parliament
June 29, 1767	Britain passes Townshend Acts setting taxes on imports into the North American colonies, and creating admiralty courts to try colonists for defiance of the Acts.
Soon afterward	Riots and widespread defiance of the Townshend Acts ensue
June 22, 1769	John Hanson is one of 43 signers from the American colonies of the Non-Importation Resolution which prohibits "ships laden with goods from England to land at Annapolis, [Port] Tobacco Creek in Charles County, and elsewhere." Hanson oversees inspection of British ships putting into port at Port Tobacco where he resides at his Mulberry Grove home.
1769	Hanson becomes a charter member of the Association of Maryland Freemen

Fall, 1769	Becomes Deputy Surveyor of Frederick County, Maryland, which at that time comprised all of Maryland from Georgetown and Westminster west to present-day Garrett County and from the Potomac River to Pennsylvania
April, 1770	Britain repeals the Townshend Acts
Spring, 1772	Among many visits of the two men to each other's homes, Hanson confers with his old friend and protégé George Washington at Mount Vernon about the future of the colonies
1773	Apparently because he sees greener political pastures, Hanson moves to Frederick County

Hanson's Roles In the Drive for Independence

1773	Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania proposes that representatives of the thirteen colonies meet to discuss relations with Britain and more colonial autonomy
September 27, 1773	Samuel Adams of Massachusetts calls for a Continental Congress to be formed to discuss Britain's imposition of taxes on the colonies
December 16, 1773	Boston Tea Party occurs
March 24, 1774	In response, Britain imposes the Intolerable Acts on the North American colonies
May, 1774	New York City's Committee of 51 calls for a Continental Congress to respond to the Intolerable Acts
June 20, 1774	At a public meeting held at the Frederick County Courthouse, John Hanson, his son Alexander Contee Hanson and his son in law Dr. Philip Thomas are appointed as Frederick County's delegates to the General Congress at Annapolis
June 20, 1774	Hanson elected Chairman of Frederick County Committee of Observation, new county governing body, equivalent of today's Board of County Commissioners
Summer, 1774	First Continental Congress planned by Committees of Correspondence of the thirteen colonies
September 5, 1774	The First Continental Congress convenes in Philadelphia. Maryland represented by Samuel Chase, William Paca, Matthew Tilghman and John Hanson's Frederick friend and colleague Thomas Johnson. Georgia only colony not attending.
September 5, 1774	Peyton Randolph of Virginia elected president of the meeting
October 20, 1774	Articles of Association enacted, precursor to Declaration of Independence
October 22, 1774	Henry Middleton of South Carolina elected president, serves for four days
During assembly	Resolution passed to hold a Second Continental Congress in 1775. First assembly becomes known as the First Continental Congress.
October 26, 1774	First Continental Congress dissolves after 21 days
November 18, 1774	John Hanson re-elected to Frederick County Committee of Observation
November 18, 1774	John Hanson and other officials charged "to carry into execution the association agreed on by the American Continental Congress."
January 24, 1775	Another public meeting held at the Frederick County Courthouse, this time with Hanson presiding, puts into effect resolutions of the recent provincial convention for financing and formation of militias. Hanson re-elected at this meeting as a Frederick County delegate to the next provincial convention.

February 17, 1775	Hanson as presiding officer of the Frederick County Committee of Observation sends on behalf of the Committee £1,700 to Boston to support that city's ability to resist the British blockade of the port of Boston
April 19, 1775	Revolutionary War begins with the battles of Lexington and Concord
During Revolutionary War	John and Jane Hanson's eldest son, Alexander Contee Hanson, appointed by General Washington as Washington's private secretary during Revolutionary War, spends most of his service in the field. John and Jane Hanson's middle son Peter Hanson serves as an Army Lieutenant, dies in the battle of Fort Washington, New York, at age 25
	John and Jane Hanson's youngest son Dr. Samuel Harrison Hanson serves as surgeon on the staff of General George Washington, dies in war at age 24
May 10, 1775	Second Continental Congress convenes. Peyton Randolph elected president, serves thirteen days
May 24, 1775	John Hancock begins nearly two and a half years of service as president, succeeded in order by Henry Laurens, John Jay and Samuel Huntington
June 21, 1775	Hanson receives letter from Maryland's delegates to the Second Continental Congress requesting that Hanson organize militias to be sent to aid Massachusetts after the Battle of Bunker Hill. Same day, Hanson requests the Frederick County Committee on Correspondence to authorize the raising of the militia.
June 21, 1775	John Hanson elected Treasurer of Frederick County
June 22-July 18, 1775	Hanson personally organizes two companies of trained riflemen
During this period	Hanson persuades Frederick County Committee of Observation to pledge all county males as prospective soldiers if war should break out
During this period	Hanson organizes manufacture of arms, gun locks, gunpowder, ammunition and army equipment for the Continental Army
June 22-25, 1775	As Frederick County's Delegate, Hanson attends the General Congress also called the Convention of Maryland in Annapolis
July 26 – August 14, 1775	John Hanson serves as Frederick County delegate to the fifth Convention of Maryland
July, 1775	In the Convention of Maryland, Hanson, the first Delegate to do so, sets the example by publicly pledging that he and his followers will repel British by force if necessary and pledging to support opposition to the British
July 26, 1775	Convention of Maryland recognizes the Association of the Freemen of Maryland which vows to "repel force by force"
August 9, 1775	After a 22-day march, Hanson's rifle companies arrive in Massachusetts
September 12, 1775	Hanson re-elected to Frederick County Committee of Observation and re-elected president of the body. "The Committee . . . was the government of the area from the fall of 1775 until the state constitution went into effect in the spring of 1777." Hanson continues to serve as Treasurer of Frederick County.
January 20, 1776	Hanson appointed by the Maryland Council of Safety to collect donations from Frederick County residents to aid the colonies' fight against the British
June 17, 1776	Hanson persuades Freemen of Frederick County to issue a resolution urging the Convention of Maryland to recommend to the other colonies that the colonies band together in common cause against the British and authorize independence

June 28, 1776	Freemen of Frederick County Resolution adopted by the Convention of Maryland as the position of Maryland
July 4, 1776	The thirteen colonies declare their independence and collective nationhood
October 19, 1776	Hanson appointed to reorganize Maryland troops and encourage them to enlist for the duration of the Revolutionary War
November, 1776	John and Jane Hanson's son, Lieutenant Peter Hanson, is killed in the battle of Fort Washington, New York, the first of two Hanson sons to die in the war
November 10, 1776	Convention of Maryland adopts the Declaration of Rights and Constitution of Maryland, establishes a bicameral legislature of Senate and House of Delegates
December 17, 1776	Elections held for State positions
February 13, 1777	Frederick County's Thomas Johnson, a Hanson friend and political ally, sworn in as Maryland's first governor
November 15, 1777	Second Continental Congress passes the Articles of Confederation calling for the first national government to be formed
December 16, 1777	Virginia the first colony to approve Articles of Confederation
November, 1778	Frederick County returns John Hanson to Annapolis to serve as its Delegate in the new state legislature
May 21, 1779	Following Hanson's proposal of the Declaration of Maryland, Maryland instructs her delegates in the Second Continental Congress not to sign Articles of Confederation unless the new nation controls western lands
December 22, 1779	Hanson elected as one of five to represent Maryland at the Second Continental Congress with Hanson and Daniel Carroll the only two to attend and serve
Over next 14 months	John Hanson leads successful effort to get colonies with undefined western boundaries to cede territories to the nation beyond newly set western borders. Hanson holds out Maryland's ratification until agreement, solves western lands conundrum, establishes himself as statesman and bridge-builder. At first, Hanson and Daniel Carroll, Maryland's other Delegate to the Congress, act nearly alone but gradually all colonies agree with Hanson and the Declaration of Maryland.
December, 1779	Virginia agrees to discussions on ceding her western lands
March 7, 1780	New York, the fourth state to do so, agrees to cede her western lands
September 6, 1780	A Second Continental Congress committee recommends adoption of Declaration of Maryland also known in the Second Continental Congress as the Hanson Plan
October 10, 1780	Second Continental Congress passes resolution supporting the Hanson Plan
February 2, 1781	Based on New York's agreement to cede her western lands, Maryland withdraws its opposition and is the last colony to approve the Articles of Confederation
March 1, 1781	New York formally cedes her western lands

Formation of the First Government

March 1, 1781	John Hanson and Daniel Carroll of Maryland last to sign Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union bringing Maryland into the United States. Final paragraph of the Articles states, "The aforesaid articles of confederation were finally ratified on the first day of March 1781; the state of Maryland having, by their Members in Congress, on that day acceded thereto, and completed the same."
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March 1, 1781	Articles of Confederation thus ratified names the colonies collectively as the United States of America; provides for significant degree of sovereignty of states; central government funded by states; foreign relations, national coinage and declarations of war reserved to central government. Articles of Confederation establishes a new government, the United States in Congress Assembled, to come into being on the first Monday of November, 1781. Articles provide for election of presidents to one-year terms on the first Monday of each November.
March 1, 1781	Second Continental Congress passes into history.
March 2, 1781- November 4, 1781	On March 2, the Second Continental Congress is succeeded by the interim Congress of Confederation with scant powers and with same delegates and officers as from the Second Continental Congress
March 2-July 9, 1781	Samuel Huntington continues as president of the new body, serves 130 days. Congress of the Confederation meets once during this time on July 9 to elect a new president on Huntington's request.
June 29, 1781	John and Jane Hanson's son Dr. Samuel Harrison Hanson, is killed in the Revolutionary War less than four months before its end
July 9-10, 1781	Samuel Johnston elected President of the Congress of Confederation on July 9. Refuses to serve when learning of election on July 10 saying he does not want to preside over a temporary government which was not meeting often and only waiting for the United States in Congress Assembled to commence in 120 days.
July 10, 1781	Thomas McKean of Delaware elected "Provisional President" understanding that he would retire from the position upon the presidential election on the first Monday of November that year as provided for in the Articles of Confederation.
July 10-November 4, 1781	Thomas McKean of Delaware serves 118 days as President of Congress of the Confederation. Before November, had to be persuaded not to resign for the same reason which Johnston cited.
September 20, 1781	John Hanson's will filed in Frederick County
October 12 , 1781	Cornwallis surrenders at Yorktown. Colonies win independence.
November 4, 1781	Congress of the Confederation goes out of existence to be replaced by the United States in Congress Assembled largely with the same delegates

The Hanson Administration

November 5, 1781	United States in Congress Assembled, the nation's first government, springs into being
November 5, 1781	As its first act, the new United States in Congress Assembled unanimously elects John Hanson of Frederick, Maryland, to a one-year term as the nation's first president. Hanson becomes first president under any form of United States government elected to a stated fixed term. President Hanson becomes first in the nation's history to be recognized at home or abroad as head of state.
November, 1781	Ranks of government officials established as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ President of the United States ✚ Members of Congress ✚ Commander in Chief of the Army ✚ Secretary of the Congress [today's Speaker of the House] ✚ Cabinet Secretaries as below

During Hanson's term	Departments of the government established in the following chronological order which order is observed today in department seniority protocol and the line of succession to the office of President: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Foreign Affairs [became Department of State under the Constitution] ✚ Finance [became Department of the Treasury under the Constitution] ✚ War [Became Department of Defense in 1949] ✚ Marine [Became Department of the Navy under the Constitution. Absorbed into the Department of War in 1947] ✚ United States Post Office [became today's United States Postal Service]
During Hanson's term	United States Consular Service established
During Hanson's term	Hanson appoints three who negotiate a peace treaty with Great Britain
During Hanson's term	Position of Chairman of Congress created, predecessor to today's Vice President of the United States
During Hanson's term	Jane Contee Hanson becomes first to be referred to as First Lady
November 23, 1781	France formally recognizes United States, calls for an exchange of ambassadors
November 28, 1781	President Hanson and Congress receive General Washington and officially thank him for his service as Commander of the Army. Washington delivers Cornwallis's surrendered sword to Hanson and the Congress.
November 29, 1781	Upon his departure for France, the Marquis de Lafayette is given President Hanson's letter to Louis XVI, king and head of state of France, the first communication from a United States head of state to another head of state
November 30, 1781	Washington congratulates Hanson "on your appointment to fill the most important seat in the United States."
Before end of 1781	Four more nations recognize the United States. Our ambassadors are posted to these nations' capitals.
December 11, 1781	First United States census ordered
December 31, 1781	Bank of North America, nation's first central bank, chartered by Congress
December 31, 1781	Congress adjourns
January 2, 1782	Congress reconvenes
January 7, 1782	Bank of North America begins operation in Philadelphia
January 11, 1782	President Hanson informs the governors of the thirteen states regarding the nation's new protocols and procedures of diplomatic immunity
January 28, 1782	First Postmaster General of the United States appointed by President Hanson
January 29, 1782	President Hanson orders Major General Greene to mop up isolated British Army resistance in the South.
February 5, 1782	President Hanson orders Benjamin Franklin, United States Ambassador to France, to accept the loan which France has offered to the United States
February 11, 1782	United States Army uniforms standardized nationwide
February 22, 1782	Office of the Secretary of the United States, today's Secretary of State, created. Diplomatic protocols and procedures established.
April 10, 1782	Congress directs the newly created War Department to direct the building and management of barracks, arsenals, magazines, laboratories and foundries

April 15, 1782	President Hanson falls ill. Motions to name a temporary president and to elect a Vice President fail. Hanson's friend, Maryland Delegate Daniel Carroll, chosen by Congress to preside temporarily with title of Chairman until Hanson's return.
A few weeks later	President Hanson resumes his duties.
April 19, 1782	Holland recognizes the United States, receives John Adams as United States Ambassador, begins negotiating a loan to the United States
April 24, 1782	The Agent of Marine [the future office of Secretary of the Navy] reports to Congress on construction of ships for the new United States Navy
May 13, 1782	Hanson presides at the nation's first state dinner in honor of the French Minister, Chevalier de la Luzerne
June 20, 1782	Congress adopts the Great Seal of the United States. The Seal and its original impressing mechanism are still in use today.
June 24, 1782	President Hanson orders the governors of the thirteen states to take measures to suppress "illicit traffic and intercourse with enemies of the United States"
August 28, 1782	President Hanson settles a boundary dispute between states
September 14, 1782	President Hanson endorses ratification of a United States treaty with Holland
September 16, 1782	President Hanson orders Washington to exchange prisoners with Great Britain
September, 1782	The United States and Sweden recognize each other, enter into diplomatic relations, sign a Treaty of Amity and Commerce
October 18, 1782	United States Post Office established
October 23, 1782	Army Quartermaster Corps reorganized
October, 1782	President Hanson declares the last Thursday of November to be observed annually nationwide as Thanksgiving Day on the fourth Thursday of November
November 3, 1782	President Hanson's one-year term as president expires. He becomes the first president in United States history to have and serve a full fixed term as president. At age 67 and in poor health, he returns to his family in Frederick after spending nearly all of the previous 34 months in Philadelphia.
September 3, 1783	Treaty of Paris signed officially ending the Revolutionary War. Great Britain formally recognizes the United States.
November 22, 1783	John Hanson, aged 68, dies at the home of his nephew Thomas Hanson in Oxon Hill, Maryland. John Hanson's burial place is unknown to this day.
April 13, 1784	John Hanson's will proved in Frederick County Court. Most of his estate passes to his wife and then to their sole surviving son Alexander Contee Hanson. Hanson also mentions Dr. Philip Thomas and Thomas's children in the will.

The Transition to Constitutional Government

September 11-14, 1786	Meeting of Commissioners to Remedy Defects of the Federal Government, which came to be known as the Annapolis Convention, convenes in Annapolis to discuss ways to improve on the Articles of Confederation
July 13, 1787	In what is often regarded as its most important act, the United States in Congress Assembled unanimously passes the Northwest Ordinance providing for westward expansion, statehood and outlawing of slavery for new states created from the old Northwest Territory

September 17, 1787	Constitutional Convention, also known as the Philadelphia Convention, George Washington presiding, concludes meeting to improve upon the Articles of Confederation, signs the Constitution of the United States this day
September 20-28, 1787	Proposed Constitution read in Congress, debated, referred to the states
December 17, 1787	Delaware by a 30-0 vote is first state to ratify the Constitution
July 26, 1788	New York by a 30-27 vote becomes eleventh state to ratify. United States in Congress Assembled deems eleven states enough to adopt the Constitution.
December 23, 1788	Maryland gives ten square miles to the national government to establish a national capital city, later named Washington, District of Columbia
January 7, 1789	Presidential electors appointed by eleven states to choose the first president of the new government under the Constitution. Electors include Dr. Philip Thomas, President John Hanson's trusted son in law and aide de camp to General Washington during the Revolutionary War.
February 4, 1789	Electors choose George Washington President of the United States of America
March 4, 1789	The Constitution takes effect. The United States in Congress Assembled goes out of existence.
March 30, 1789	George Washington inaugurated for his first term as president
November 21, 1789	North Carolina is twelfth state to ratify the Constitution
May 29, 1790	Rhode Island the last [thirteenth] state to ratify by a 34-32 vote

Remembering John Hanson

February 21, 1812	Jane Contee Hanson, the nation's first First Lady, dies in Frederick at 85 outliving all twelve of her children. "Died this evening in the 85 th year Mrs. Jane Hanson relict of John Hanson, esq., a delegate to the old Revolutionary Congress."
November 3, 1812	Alexander Contee Hanson, Jr., grandson of President John and Jane Contee Hanson, elected from the third district of Maryland to the United States House of Representatives
December 20, 1816	Alexander Contee Hanson, Jr. begins service as a United States Senator
1864	President Lincoln signs into law Congress's provision for a National Statuary Hall to be created in the United States Capitol.
1898	First known biography of John Hanson, written by Douglas H. Thomas, published
January 31, 1903	Statue of President John Hanson, sculpted by Richard E. Brooks, presented by the State of Maryland and placed in Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol.
1930s	Three more biographies of John Hanson published
Mid-century	Various Maryland landmarks named for John Hanson
1973	Maryland Assembly passes bill declaring April 14 each year as John Hanson Day
1990s	Various myths and misinformation about John Hanson and the Hanson presidential record arise, make their ways onto the internet
February 25, 2002	Wikipedia entry on John Hanson begins, incorporates much of the myth and misinformation about Hanson from unreliable sources and contributors' personal guesses, nevertheless becomes top hit on Google searches for John Hanson

May 21-23, 2007

Edward Edelen, owner of Mulberry Grove, the John Hanson ancestral home, convenes group of officials, architects, historians and interested parties, launches planning of his forthcoming John Hanson Institute at Port Tobacco, Maryland, adjacent to Mulberry Grove

April 14, 2008

John Hanson Memorial Project launched in Frederick, Maryland. First private pledges of financial support received.