

STORIES of New Jersey

Breareley was obliged to remain away from his home in Trenton much of the time to avoid capture.

He was grand master of the Masonic order in New Jersey and two lodges were named in his honor. He also aided in compiling the prayer book published by the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1785.

Breareley continued politically active after signing the Constitution in 1787. He presided over the State Convention that ratified it. As a presidential elector he voted for Washington, and was appointed to the U. S. District Court in New Jersey. He died at Trenton in 1790 at the age of 45.

William Houston (1745-1788)

William Churchill Houston, another New Jersey delegate to the Constitutional Convention, born in 1745 in North Carolina, was graduated at 22 from Princeton and three years later became professor of mathematics and natural philosophy. He was a captain of the Somerset County militia in 1776, and a member of the Continental Congress and the New Jersey Council of Safety during the war. He was 41 when he served in the Constitutional Convention.

Houston was admitted to the bar in 1781 and became clerk of the Supreme Court of New Jersey, and receiver of Continental taxes at Trenton 1782 to 1785. There he practiced law and was agent for the sale of some Hunterdon County lands of the Bainbridge family. While serving a second term in Congress, 1784-5, he became interested in John Fitch's proposal to build a steamboat. It was probably through his arrangement that the delegates to the Constitutional Convention saw a successful trial of Fitch's craft. Houston attended the Convention only a short time, although he had been very active in the preliminary proceedings. Ill health caused him to leave the Convention before signing the Constitution but he signed the report to the State legislature. The cause of his departure was probably an attack of tuberculosis. He started south, but died on the way in 1788.

William Paterson (1745-1806)

In New Brunswick a tablet on a business building at 307 Burnet Street marks the site of the dwelling of William Paterson from 1784 to 1806. Paterson held many positions of distinction. He had been a member of the State Constitutional Convention of 1776 and served as Attorney General of the State through the troubled war years from 1776 to 1783, supporting Governor Livingston in his struggle to rid the State of the enemy at home--the Tories. He was a Constitutional delegate at 42. He became United States Senator in 1789 and succeeded Livingston as Governor in 1790. He served as Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, 1793 to 1806.

Paterson, born in Antrim, Ireland, in 1745, was brought to Delaware two years later. Subsequently real estate profits in Somerville enabled his father to send him to Princeton, from which he was graduated in 1763. He read law with Richard Stockton, a New Jersey signer of the Declaration of Independence, received an M.A. degree from Princeton in 1766, and with other students founded the Well Meaning Society, revived in 1769 as the Cliosophic Society,