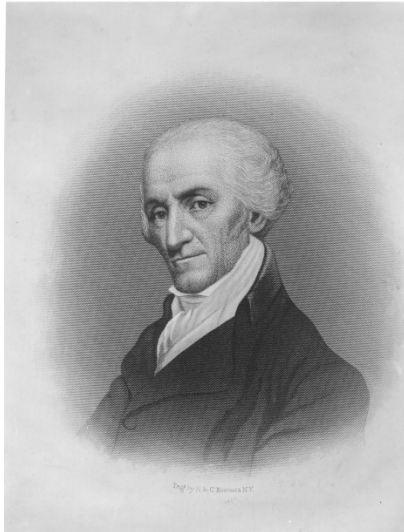


Elbridge Gerry

(17 Jul 1744 – 23 Nov 1814)

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress 1774-1989

A Delegate and a Representative from Massachusetts and a Vice President of the United States; born in Marblehead, Mass., July 17, 1744 pursued classical studies,



and was graduated from Harvard College in 1762 engaged in commercial pursuits; member of the colonial house of representatives 1772-1775 Member of the Continental Congress 1776-1781 and 1782-1785 a signer of the Declaration of Independence delegate to the constitutional convention of the United States held in Philadelphia in 1787 refused to sign the instrument, insisting it gave the President too much power, but subsequently gave it his support elected as an Anti-Federalist to the 1st and 2nd Congresses (March 4, 1789-March 3, 1793) sent to France with Marshall and Pinckney on a diplomatic mission in 1797 unsuccessful Democratic candidate for Governor of Massachusetts in 1801 and again in 1812 Governor of Massachusetts in 1810 and 1811 elected Vice President of the United States as a Democrat on the ticket with James Madison in 1812 and served from March 4, 1813, until his death in Washington, D.C., on November 23, 1814

interment in the Congressional Cemetery.

Grandfather of Elbridge Gerry a Representative from Maine and great grandfather of Peter Boelet Gerry a Representative and Senator from Rhode Island.

The National Intelligencer, Friday, November 25, 1814

The Funeral

In conformity with previous arrangements, the corpse of the late Vice President was, about one o'clock on yesterday, conveyed from Mrs. Wilson's to Congress Hall, in charge of the Committee of Arrangement (consisting of Messrs. Gore, Varnum, Smith, Anderson and Gaillard of the Senate, and Messrs. Wm. Reed, Findley, Macon, Tallmadge and Nelson, on the part of the House) and the Sergeant-at-arms and Door Keepers of both Houses.

At two o'clock, the Funeral moved from Congress Hall to the place of interment, in the following order:

The Chaplains to both Houses of Congress

Physicians who attended the deceased

Pall Holders

Mr. Tallmadge,	H	Mr. Wright
Mr. Macon	E	Mr. Findley
Mr. Brown	A	Mr. Nelson
Mr. Sevier	R	Mr. Brigham
	S	
	E	

The President of the United States (Madison)

The Sergeant-at-arms of the Senate of the United States

The Senate of the United States, as chief mourners, preceded by their Secretary
The Sergeant-at-arms of the House of Representatives
The House of Representatives of the United States, preceded by their Speaker and Clerk
The Heads of Departments
Foreign Ministers
The Officers of Government
Citizens and Strangers

On the arrival at the grave yard, an appropriate discourse was delivered by the Rev. Obediah B. Brown, when the mortal remains of the deceased Patriot were committed to the earth. He has departed from among us "loaded with honors and crowned with the blessings of his country."

The National Intelligencer, Thursday, November 24, 1814

This day we have a melancholy duty to perform. Another of the Worthies of the Revolution, the tried Patriot and consistent Politician, the second Officer of our Government, the venerable Gerry, is no more! Yesterday, between the hours of ten and eleven, he breathed his last.

His death was as sudden as it was unexpected. In apparent health he presided in the Senate during an arduous sitting on the preceding day fifteen minutes before his death, although in his seventieth year, he bade fair to outlive many of those who read these lines. At a few minutes warning, the thread of life was cut, and his spirit winged its flight to happier realms.

The circumstances of the Death of our lamented fellow-citizen, Elbridge Gerry, were nearly these. He breakfasted at the common table at his boarding house, at the usual hour, in apparent health, with the exception of a transient complaint of slight oppression at his breast. A short time afterwards, he went out on business to one of the public offices, a few yards distant only from his lodgings, where after a few minutes, he found himself indisposed, and intimated a wish to return to his residence. Being placed again in the carriage, he was reconveyed to his lodgings. On the arrival of the carriage there, he was found to be insensible, and expired immediately after, almost without a groan or sigh.

In consequence of the death of the Vice President of the United States, no business was yesterday done in Senate, and but little in the House of Representatives. None will be done in either house today. The Funeral is expected to take place at three o'clock this day.

In Senate., Wednesday, November 23

About the hour of meeting a report having reached the Senate Chamber of the death of the Vice President of the United States, the Members from Massachusetts, Mr. Varnum and Mr. Gore, proceeded to his lodgings to ascertain the fact and on their return, having announced the fact to the Senate, the following proceeding took place, on motion of Mr. Bledsoe.

The Senate, being informed of the Death of their distinguished fellow-citizen, Elbridge Gerry, Vice President of the United States, Do Resolve, That a committee be appointed, jointly with such committee as may be appointed on the part of the House of Representatives, to consider and report measures most proper to manifest the public respect for the memory of the deceased, and expressive of the deep regret of the Congress of the United States for the loss of a citizen so highly respected and revered.

Ordered, that Mr. Gore, Mr. Varnum, Mr. Smith, Mr. Anderson and Mr. Gaillard by the committee.

On motion of Mr. Bledsoe, Ordered that the Secretary inform the House of Representatives of the decease of the Vice President of the United States, and communicate the foregoing resolution.

House of Representatives, Wednesday, November 23

... The Secretary of the Senate was announced, and, in becoming terms, informed the house of the decease of the Vice President of the United States, and the resolution the Senate had thereupon adopted.

On motion of Mr. Findley of Pa. the business on hand was ordered to lie on the table.

On motion of Mr. Wm. Reed, Resolved unanimously, That this house doth concur in the resolution of the Senate for the appointment of a joint committee "to consider and report measures proper to manifest the public respect for the memory of the deceased," and expressive the deep regret of the Congress of the United States, for the loss of a citizen so highly respected and revered.

And then the house adjourned.

The National Intelligencer, December 1, 1814

From the Baltimore Patriot

Biographical Memoir of Elbridge Gerry

Late Vice President of the United States

Another of our Revolutionary worthies has ascended to join the band of deceased patriots, who have "become immortal in both worlds." An inflexible republican, a most active agent in emancipating our country from British thralldom, and a sage, who devoted a long life to public service, has departed in the person of Elbridge Gerry. Private esteem, joined in public duty, induces us to place at this time, before our readers, a sketch of a great and useful, a good and estimable, character. For the materials, we are immediately indebted to an article under the same title, which originally appeared in the Boston Patriot of March 3d, 1810.

Elbridge Gerry was born in the town of Marblehead, (Mass.) in the year 1746. His father was a respectable merchant, with a handsome fortune. He entered Harvard College early and received his first degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1762.

On leaving the seminary, he commenced business as a merchant and his correctness, assiduity and extensive information enabled him to prosecute commercial pursuits with success. His mind however was much occupied with the interesting politics of the then colony and as soon as his age would permit, he was elected by his native town, to the General Court and became an active and influential member. The business, in those days, was principally prepared in committees, and Mr. Gerry was associated with Adams, Hancock, Warren and others on most of the important ones. When hostilities commenced, he was a member of the committee of public safety and supplies, and gained both credit and public gratitude, by his talents and industry. An interesting anecdote is related of Mr. Gerry and some of his compatriots, which occurred the day preceding the battle of Lexington, which commenced the revolutionary contest. The committee had been sitting at Cambridge, and as Mr. Gerry, with Cols. Lee and Orne were far from home, they determined to remain until morning. In the middle of the night they were alarmed by the march of the main body of the British troops for Concord. When the troops came opposite the house, a detachment was unexpectedly ordered to surround it, and seize any of the committee who might remain. Fortunately tho' with difficulty, Mr. Gerry and his companions escaped in their shirts and concealed themselves till the search was over.

Mr. Gerry was the intimate friend of the illustrious General Warren the night before the eventful contest of Bunker Hill, the patriots passed together, in the same bed, and with a melancholy presentiment of his fate the last words addressed by the hero the subject of our memoir, were

"Dulee et decorum est

"Prop patria mori---

"It is sweet and becoming to die for our country."

Mr. Gerry, about this time was appointed Judge of Admiralty, but declined accepting the office, declaring his wish to take a more active part in the service of his country. He was accordingly elected to

the illustrious Congress, who guided our nation to Independence, signed the Declaration of it in 1776, and continued a member during the whole war. In the elegant language of the writer to whom we have alluded "In Congress as in the State Legislature, the assiduity, attention, and extensive information of this gentleman, caused him to be placed on all important Committees and his advice and opinion was respected as the cool and deliberate decision of an undeviating patriot. No difficulty deterred him no danger dismayed him. In the most trying moments, his courage and constancy remained unshaken, and his determination never for a moment wavered, to protect the independence, and maintain the freedom of his country. In Congress Mr. Gerry was the soldier's friend. Gen. Washington depended on no one with more confidence for the promotion of his plans, than on this gentleman, and his confidence was never disappointed. His speech in favor of compensation to the army, was considered one of the most powerful and splendid specimens of eloquence and patriotism. On all subjects of finance, Mr. Gerry was able and eminent. His clear and penetrating mind could unravel the perplexity of a system confused and entangled, and his invention and ingenuity drew forth the resources and ability of his country. To his great merit in the Revolutionary Congress, Gen. Washington, President Adams and other distinguished patriots have borne unequivocal and honorable testimony.

In the convention which framed the Constitution, Mr. Gerry appeared as a member from Massachusetts. Although convinced that a more energetic system than the confederation was needed, yet the propositions of Gen. Hamilton, of a monarchical and aristocratical cast, found in him a stern and strenuous opponent. Educated a republican, he would not bend to a single proposition, which tended to aristocracy. The result did not meet his wishes, and he was constrained to refuse his signature. It is remarkable, that some of the points for which he contended, have since been approved by the people and incorporated as amendments. Being chosen soon after as a member from Middlesex, he took occasion to remark in debate, that "the Federal Constitution having become the supreme law of the land, he conceived the salvation of the country depended on its being carried into effect." He continued in Congress for two successive terms, and then declined a re-election.

To end the *sui generis* controversy with France which comprised a war, in fact on both sides, without a declaration by either, President Adams appointed Mr. Gerry, in conjunction with Messrs. Pinkney and Marshal, to constitute a commission plenipotentiary to France in 1798. The acceptance of the office was a sacrifice of domestic comfort for a precarious chance of benefiting his country. We would, in a tribute to the patriot dead, tread lightly on such delicate ground as the motives of living statesmen. Suffice it to say, two of the ministers were supposed more willing to widen, than to close the breach. Mr. Adams, the ostensible idol of the then dominant party, shall be our witness of what was done by the illustrious object of our article. 'He [Mr. Gerry, says Mr. A.] was appointed and approved, and finally saved the peace of the nation, for he alone discovered and furnished the evidence, that X, Y and Z were employed by Talleyrand, and he alone brought home the direct, formal and official assurances, upon which the subsequent commission proceeded, and peace was made.'

When the American spirit was roused, and all parties united to resent the insulting attack by the British man of war, Leopard, on the United States frigate Chesapeake, on the 22nd of June, off the Capes of Virginia, Mr. Gerry, participating in the justly excited state of public sensibility, attended at the State-House in Boston, was called to the Chair, and gave an evidence of his patriotism, and an epitome of his principles, in the memorable expression, that if a man had but one day to live, he should "devote that day to the service of his country."

With this exception so honorable to his character from the period of his return from France until 1810, he spent his time in philosophic retirement and agricultural pursuits, at his farm in Cambridge. In the spring of that year he was run as Governor by the Republicans of Massachusetts against Mr. Gore, and chosen by a handsome majority. Of his official conduct as Governor, it is difficult to speak, without wakening, perhaps that spirit of political asperity, which we hope may sleep forever. Suffice it to say, his speeches to the Legislature were wise, patriotic and elegant that he was a strenuous advocate of the

union of the states, and of a cheerful aid of, and cooperation of the national government, for public purposes that the first year of his administration was marked by a most liberal and unprecedented political toleration and that in the second year, the appointments of a proportionate number of his political friends to public offices, was grounded on vacancies created by enacted laws, which laws, we verily believe, abstractedly considered, would be granted to be expedient by men of all descriptions. But we leave a topic on which we should fear to profane the obsequies of the dead by raising the spirit of altercation. The party opposed to him in the state prevailed--His country recognized his merits and his services, and elevated him to the second station in her gift. He conducted himself in that station with dignity and devoted attention to his duties, and he has died at his post in the discharge of his functions.

Of the private life of this gentleman, it is enough to say, he was respected, esteemed and beloved by those who knew him best. The sacrifices he made to public service were very great and although we know not the fact so well as to venture its positive assertion, we apprehend his patriotism might have left him

"Like rigid Cincinnatus, nobly poor."

Our article has extended beyond our originally proposed limits. We will study brevity and conclude by saying, that while this patriot has descended to the grave "full of years and full of honors," he has left his example as a legacy to his country and if it be followed, if public virtue, at this trying time, become the order of the day, the American name may become even more illustrious and the name of the Union soar

"Above all Greek, above all Roman fame."

The National Intelligencer, July 26, 1823

Monument to Elbridge Gerry

Congress, at their last session, passed an act directing the Superintendent of the Public Buildings to cause to be erected, in the burial ground of this city, a Monument, with a suitable inscription, over the Tomb of Elbridge Gerry, late Vice President of the United States and appropriated \$1,000 to defray the expense. This work is now completed, and we have been favored with the following description of it:

The Monument is chiefly in the antique style. The pedestal is pyramidal, after the manner of the Egyptian tombs a style comprising both strength and beauty, and particularly appropriate to sepulchres. On each of the corners is a fillet, or strip of linen, tied at equal distances, forming a row of puffs, which lie in a scotia cut out of the angle. A rich and massy leaf covers each extremity of the fillet and a second leaf falls off at the bottom, spreading itself over the angle of the base moldings. The ornaments of the frieze under the cornice are made up of foliage, and were all modeled from nature. They differ on each side. The first is an assemblage of parsley leaves, the second of tulips and their leaves, the third the amaranths, and the fourth the curled or yellow dock. Upon the parapet stand eight balusters, enriched with foliage, supporting the soffit and blocks. The urn resembles in form the Grecian vases, which have always been admired for their boldness and elegance of outline it is enriched with various kinds of leaves, among which the acanthus and white oak are most prominent. A towering and animated flame crowns the whole.

The Monument is of pure white marble, from Massachusetts--the native State of the distinguished patriot whose ashes it protects. It was designed and executed by Messrs. W. & J. Frazee, native artists, of New York.

The inscription is as follows (it was furnished by the friends of the deceased):

The Tomb of Elbridge Gerry, Vice President of the United States, who died suddenly, in this City, November 23d, 1814, on his way to the Capitol, as President of the Senate, aged 70. Thus fulfilling his own memorable injunction--"It is the duty of every citizen, though he may have but one day to live, to devote that day to the good of his country."

And on the reverse--

Erected by order of the Congress of the United States, 1823.

Washington Post, 1883 - John A. Joyce

A graduate of Harvard compatriot of Adams, Hancock, Ames and Warren. Elbridge Gerry was a member of the Continental Congress, 1776-1781 and 1782-1785. He was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and an unrelenting foe of George III. He was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of the United States held in Philadelphia in 1789 refused to sign the instrument at that time, insisting it gave the President too much power, but subsequently gave it his support. He served four years in the U.S. Congress, was Governor of Massachusetts in 1810 and 1811, and was elected 5th Vice President of the United States on the ticket with James Madison in 1812. He died on his way to the Capitol, on November 13, 1814.

He was intensely patriotic and devoted to the service of his country, and at one time said: "It is the duty of every citizen, though he may have but one day to live, to devote that day to the service of his country."

Ely, Selden Marvin, "The District of Columbia In The American Revolution and Patriots of the Revolutionary Period Who Are Interred in the District or In Arlington," Columbia Historical Society, Vol 21, pp. 128-154

In the Congressional Cemetery lie the remains of Honorable Elbridge Gerry, who was gathered unto his fathers in Washington during his second year as Vice-President, on November 23, 1814. The military services of Gerry are noted by Heitman. It is proper also to record that he was born at Marblehead, Massachusetts, July 17, 1744, graduated at Harvard, and became a member of the Continental Congress of 1776. He was also a member of the First National Congress of 1789, and was one of the envoys sent to establish relations with France in 1797. He was elected governor of Massachusetts in 1810, and Vice-President of the United States in 1812. His grave is covered with a handsome monument which was erected by an act of Congress in 1823.

Dictionary of American Biography

Elbridge Gerry, signer of the Declaration of Independence, was born in Marblehead, Mass., July 17, 1744, son of Thomas and Elizabeth (Greenleaf) Gerry. His father was a native of Newton-Abbot, England, and emigrated to America in 1730, settling at Marblehead, Mass., where he became a very prosperous merchant. Elbridge graduated at Harvard in 1762, and in his master's oration in 1765 he opposed the stamp-act and other revenue measures adopted by the mother country, that had proved oppressive to the colonists. He engaged in commercial pursuits, amassed a fortune, and represented Marblehead in the general court almost continuously, 1773-1814. He was appointed in 1773 with Hancock and Orne on the committee of correspondence that proved so efficacious in informing the distant colonists of governmental acts of oppression to the people. He supported Samuel Adams and was a delegate to the provincial congress that met annually at Cambridge and Watertown and was on a committee to collect ammunition and supplies for the militia. He drew the bill adopted in 1775 which established an admiralty court for the protection of privateers and the distribution of prize money, a movement that led to the establishment of a national navy. He was a delegate to the continental congress, 1776-80, and 1783-85. He was on the committee to provide supplies for the army and on the standing committee on the treasury. He was one of the first to advocate a Declaration of Independence,

seconded the motion for its adoption, and signed the document. With Morris and Jones he was sent by congress in 1778 to visit General Washington at his headquarters on the Schuylkill to determine the cause for delay in prosecuting a vigorous campaign, and their report was made a pretext for questioning the military ability of the commander-in-chief. This was no doubt encouraged by the extensively circulated "Conway cabal," and brought upon the New England delegates charges of complicity in a determined effort to supplant Washington by the promotion of General Gates. In 1779 when peace negotiations were opened, he insisted on the protection of the fishing rights of the colonies. As chairman of the treasury committee he investigated the accounts of Gen. Benedict Arnold in 1780, and thus gained the displeasure of that officer. He vacated his seat in congress in February, 1780, upon the ground that the sovereignty of Massachusetts had been violated by congress in refusing to order the ayes and nays on a question of order presented by him. In this he was sustained by the Massachusetts legislature, which formally protested against the action of congress. The general court returned him as a delegate in 1783. In the meantime he had been elected to both houses of the state legislature, but declined the senatorial honor, giving his services in the representative chamber. He was a member of the committee to arrange a treaty of peace with Great Britain. He opposed the organization of the Society of the Cincinnati as un-republican. In 1783 he was the chairman of two committees to examine sites for a Federal capitol. Upon the expiration of his term in congress in September 1785, he took his seat in the popular branch of the Massachusetts legislature. He was elected a delegate to the Federal constitutional convention in 1789, held in New York, and in that body directed his influence to prevent the incorporation of any monarchical features in the instrument, and when the constitution as adopted was presented, he joined Randolph and Mason in refusing assent to the instrument, upon the ground that it gave the President too much power. Upon his return to Massachusetts, he was refused an election to the state constitutional convention, but was invited to attend its sessions for the purpose of answering questions of fact in regard to the constitution, but when reminded of the limitations of his position, he withdrew. He was elected by the Republican party a representative in the 1st and 2d U.S. congresses, serving, 1789-93. President Adams appointed him with Marshall and Pinckney envoy to France to secure indemnity for French depredations on United States commerce. The conduct of Talleyrand toward the commissioners disgusted Marshall and Pinckney and they returned home. Gerry remained, hoping to prevent a war with France, but his efforts for peace were unsuccessful and the government recalled him. The Republicans of Massachusetts nominated him for governor, but in the election he was defeated by Caleb Strong by a small majority. He was elected, however, in 1810 and again in 1811. His dismissal of all the incumbents in the civil offices and appointment of Republicans, together with the redistricting the state in the interests of his party – the origin of the word "Gerrymander," as applied to political actions – lost to him the control of the state government which with the next U.S. congress passed over to the Federalist party. In 1812 his party made him their nominee for Vice President, and he was elected on the ticket with James Madison for President. He presided over the deliberations of the senate during the first, second and part of the third session of the 13th congress, up to the time of his death. He married Ann, daughter of Charles Thompson, clerk of the Continental congress, and she with six daughters and three sons survived him. He was a fellow of the American academy of sciences and received the honorary degree of LL.D. from Harvard in 1810. He died in Washington, D.C., Nov. 23, 1814, and was buried in the Congressional Burial Ground where the government erected a monument to his memory.

The Evening Star, Wednesday, April 30, 1902

(See Gen. Clinton for first part of the ceremony)

Gerry Remembered

The colors were also dipped over the nearby resting place of Elbridge Gerry, a former Vice President of the United States, who dropped dead on his way to the Capitol.
(See Gen. Clinton for remaining part of the ceremony)

Barthelmas, Della Gray, The Signers of the Declaration of Independence: A Biographical and Genealogical Reference, Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1997.

Elbridge Gerry (1744-1814), Massachusetts

Elbridge Gerry, merchant, statesman, governor of Massachusetts, vice president of the United States, was graduated from Harvard College in 1762, placing twenty-ninth in his class of fifty-two. He then entered his father's counting house and eventually became one of the wealthiest and most enterprising merchants in Marblehead, Massachusetts. The Gerrys owned their own vessels, in which they shipped dried codfish to Barbados and Spanish Ports, and returned with bills of exchange and goods.

Elbridge Gerry became a Master Mason in the Philanthropic Lodge, Marblehead, Massachusetts, in 1769. On December 1, 1771, a town meeting was held at Marblehead, brought about by the circular letter to the other colonies and the resolves of Samuel Adams' Boston Committee of Correspondence. Thomas Gerry, Sr., father of the signer, was moderator of the meeting. Elbridge and Thomas Gerry, Jr., were on the committee that crafted the fiery resolves which were adopted. All three of the Gerrys were members of the local Committee of Correspondence, appointed in the December 1 meeting. In May 1772, he was elected representative to the General Court where he met Samuel Adams and immediately fell completely under his influence.

Gerry was reelected to the General Court in May 1773 and immediately was placed on the standing Committee of Correspondence. He and the entire committee resigned in disgust in 1774, after a mob burned to the ground the smallpox isolation hospital which Gerry and other prominent men had built at their own expense. Public opinion protected the culprits from punishment as they had not understood that isolation would help prevent the spread of smallpox.

When the Boston Port Bill began to be enforced, Marblehead became a leading port of entry for patriotic donations. Elbridge Gerry and Colonel Azor Orne agreed to receive and forward these supplies to Boston.

In August 1774, he was elected to an Essex County convention and in October, to the first Provincial Congress where he was appointed to the Executive Committee of Safety. He was reelected to both positions early in 1775. British spies had learned that the Americans had amassed ammunition which they wanted to confiscate. They also wanted to capture Adams and Hancock and those allied with them. On the night of April 18, 1775, Gerry and two American colonels were in bed at the Menotomy Tavern on the road which the British took to Lexington, when Paul Revere made his famous ride. A detachment of redcoats came to search the house all three gentlemen escaped in their night clothes and hid in a nearby corn field. On June 16, 1775, the night before the battle of Bunker Hill, he met with General Warren.

Gerry spent the rest of 1775 raising troops, procuring ammunition, and other supplies for the Provincial Army, and collecting materials for fortifications. His business and shipping activities made him a valuable man for these tasks, and he worked with energy, economy, and efficiency.

He refused an appointment as admiralty judge of the province, and continued his work in the supply department until January 25, 1776, when he left Boston with John Adams to go to Philadelphia as a Massachusetts delegate to the Second Continental Congress. Gerry took his seat in the Continental Congress on February 9, 1776, and on the seventeenth he was appointed one of five members of a standing committee for overseeing the Treasury Board.

After the long debates of June 10, 1776, the question of independence was postponed to July 1 to give the middle colonies an opportunity to have authority to vote in favor of independence. Gerry was present on July 2, 1776, for the vote, but left Philadelphia, worn out by his labors. Only July 11, he wrote to John and Samuel Adams, requesting that they sign the engrossed copy of the Declaration of Independence for him, however, he signed in his own right when he returned to congress on September 3, 1776.

In January 1776, Gerry was reelected to the Continental Congress and continued in that service until 1785. He signed the Articles of Confederation on November 15, 1777, and was again a member of the Congress in 1782. On March 1, 1783, he was a member of the Confederation Congress.

It should be noted that Gerry's actions in Congress, like those of Robert Treat Paine and others, supported all resolutions against theatrical entertainments, horse racing and other such diversions. He was in agreement with those who recommended days of fasting, humiliation, and prayer.

Gerry's last appearance in Congress was on November 2, 1785. Early in 1786, he took his seat in the Massachusetts House of Representatives to which he had been elected in the spring of 1785. He was appointed to the Federal Convention of 1787 which framed the Constitution of the United States. At the start, he advocated a strong central national government, but he was opposed to the Constitution which was adopted. He believed that both the executive and the legislative branches were granted powers that were ambiguous and dangerous and he refused to sign it. He published his anti-Federalist beliefs as *Observations on the New Constitution, and on the Federal and State Conventions*.

The Republican Party elected Gerry to the first United States Congress after the Constitution was adopted. He was reelected in 1791, but refused to stand for election in 1793 and retired to his family and farm at Cambridge, Massachusetts.

On June 20, 1797, President John Adams sent him, with Charles C. Pinckney and John Marshall, to try to improve some post-war relations. France demanded a cash payment from the United States, and tried to force the three Americans to pay a personal bribe. They refused, and the XYZ Mission failed. Pinckney and Marshall departed but Gerry remained because Prince Charles de Talleyrand convinced him that France would declare war if he left. He refused to negotiate without full powers, but President Adams published the XYZ Dispatches and recalled Gerry. He arrived at Boston on October 1, 1798. President Adams did not name Talleyrand's three agents (Bellamy, Hauteval, and Hottinguer) when he made a formal report to Congress, but simply called them X, Y, and Z.

Gerry was elected governor of Massachusetts in April 1810. During his second administration, his famous "Gerry-mander" bill was repealed January 16, 1812. The bill had redistricted Massachusetts to give the Republicans a number of state senators in excess of their voting strength. In an election of April 1812, ex-Governor Strong defeated Gerry by a majority of 1200 votes in a total of over 100,000. Two weeks after leaving the governorship, on June 8, 1812, the Republican Congressional Caucus nominated him for vice president on the ticket with James Madison. Vice President Gerry took the oath of office on March 4, 1813, at his Cambridge home.

In 1892, a small bust of Gerry was placed in the Senate Chamber of the United States Capitol.

Additional Information

Elbridge Gerry was a small, dapper gentleman, possessed of pleasant manners, but never very popular because of his aristocratic traits. He had no sense of humor, frequently changed his mind on important issues, and was suspicious of the motives of others.

John Adams thought he showed an "obstinacy that will risk great things to secure small ones." However, in his favor, he was a conscientious businessman, who paid attention to detail. His patriotism and integrity could never be doubted.

Dr. Benjamin Rush wrote that he was "a genuine friend to republication forms of government." One of Gerry's own statements was "I hold it to be the duty of every citizen, though he may have but one day to live, to devote that day to the good of his country."

In May 1787, he purchased his beautiful estate in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a property which had been confiscated from a loyalist. This home, later named Elmwood, was owned by James Russell Lowell. Mr. Gerry had been well-to-do in 1800, but had suffered losses and left debts which consumed all his estate except the Cambridge home.

On November 23, 1814, in Washington, D.C., he died in his carriage on his way to preside over the Senate. He was seized of a hemorrhage of the lungs and died within twenty minutes. Congress paid his burial expenses, but the House rejected a bill introduced by Senator Christopher Gore and passed by the Senate, for paying the vice president's salary to his widow for the remainder of his term.

Gerry's monument in the Congressional Cemetery at Washington, D.C., bears this inscription:

The Tomb of
ELBRIDGE GERRY
Vice President of the United States
who died suddenly in this city on his
way to the Capitol, as President of the Senate
November 23, 1814,
Aged 70.

Genealogy

1. Elbridge Gerry, July 17, 1744-November 23, 1814, was the third son of Thomas and Elizabeth (Greenleaf) Gerry. He married, on January 12, 1786, Ann Thompson of New York, and to them were born three sons and six daughters.

His children were: Catherine, 1787 Eliza, 1790 Ann, 1791 Elbridge, 1793 Thomas Russell, 1794 Helen Maria, 1796 James Thompson, 1797 Eleanor Sandford, 1800 Emily Louisa, 1802.

THOMPSON

Ann Thompson, 1753-1849, wife of Elbridge Gerry, was the last surviving widow of a signer of the Declaration of Independence. She was buried in Old Cemetery in New Haven, Connecticut. Their daughter, Emily Louise (Louisa) died in 1894, and was the last surviving child of a signer.

Ann Thompson was the daughter of New York merchant James Thompson and Catharine Walton, born about 1729, who were married on the night of April 21, 1753. Catharine's sister Mary married in 1749, signer Lewis Morris.

Catharine Walton was the youngest daughter of New York merchant Jacob Walton and his first wife, Maria Beekman. Maria Beekman died before March 1760, and he married second, March 11, 1760, Miss Polly Cruger, daughter of Henry Cruger.

GREENLEAF

2. Thomas Gerry, a mariner, ca. 1710-1774, came from Newton Abbott, Devonshire, England, to America in 1730 as master of a vessel. On December 16, 1734, at Marblehead, Essex County, Massachusetts, he married Elizabeth Greenleaf, June 1, 1716-September 2, 1771. She was the daughter of Enoch and Rebecca (Russell) Greenleaf. Thomas Gerry married second, on May 6, 1773, Elizabeth Leman. He died July 13 (or 17), 1774. Grave records give his birth as March 15, 1702. His marriage record calls him Captain Thomas Gerry of Newton Bushel, Devon, England.

Most of the Gerry births in Devonshire took place at Wolborough and Newton Abbott. The only Thomas Gerry found was christened at Ashwater, Devonshire, on December 14, 1712, the father's name was Leonard Gerry.

Elizabeth Greenleaf, June 1, 1716-September 2, 1771, was the daughter of Enoch and Rebecca (Russell) Greenleaf, and was the mother of all the twelve children of Thomas Gerry. Enoch Greenleaf was born about 1665 and was the son of Enoch and Mary Greenleaf, of Malden, baptized March 20, 1617/8 in England, a dryer. He had an estate from his father in 1663 and removed to Boston.

Enoch Greenleaf was the son of Edmond Greenleaf of Newbury, a dryer, who came to America in 1635 with his wife Sarah More and their children who were all born in England. He removed to Boston about 1650 and died in 1671.

Sara (Sarah) More was baptized December 13, 1588, at St. Peter's Maldon, in Essex County, England. Her parents were Enoch and Catherine More who were married November 23, 1585. Catherine died or was buried October 11, 1593. Enoch More was baptized January 19, 1560/1. He was the son of Nicholas and William More. By 1599, Enoch had remarried and moved to Haverhill, County Suffolk, where he had two daughters baptized.

Nicholas More died in 1594. His will was written by his son Samuel as clerk, August 18, 1590, and proved in Chelmsford by Samuel as attorney for his mother, October 22, 1594. Enoch and Nicholas, Jr., were witnesses. William More's will was written in 1603 and proved in 1606.

Sara More and Edmond Greenleaf were married at the church of St. Giles, Langford, near Maldon, England, in July 1611.

Rebecca Russell was the daughter of Samuel, b. ca. 1645, and Elizabeth, b. 1653, (Elbridge) Russell, of Marblehead Massachusetts, in 1674. Elizabeth was the daughter of Thomas and Rebecca (surname unknown) Elbridge.

Thomas Elbridge, Boston, a merchant and joint grantee of the patents February 29, 1632, to Aldsworth. He was an alderman of Bristol. He was the son of Giles Elbridge, an alderman of Bristol by the president and council of New England for Pemaquid, Maine. He came about 1650 to dispose of that interest. He was associated with the first who owned a fire engine in the metropolis, in 1680. He died in 1682 his wife Rebecca died in 1684.