

## *Roger Sherman dies, July 23, 1793*

On this day in history, July 23, 1793, Roger Sherman dies. Sherman was undoubtedly one of the most influential Founding Fathers, even though he is little known today. Sherman was the only Founder to sign all four important founding documents, including the Articles of Association (1774), which boycotted English goods, the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation and the US Constitution.

Roger Sherman grew up in Stoughton (now Canton), Massachusetts, the son of a cobbler (a shoemaker). Roger received little formal education, but did have access to his father's library and that of a local minister who encouraged his private education.

When Roger was 20, he moved with his brother to New Milford, Connecticut, where they ran the town's first general store. Roger became involved in local politics and became the town's clerk, as well as the county surveyor. He also published his own almanac for a dozen years. In 1754, Sherman was admitted to the Bar of Litchfield, Connecticut.

Over the next 20 years, he served as a justice of the peace, a representative to the Connecticut assembly, a judge of the superior court, a state senator and a justice of the Superior Court of Connecticut. In 1761, Sherman left his law practice and moved to New Haven, where he opened a store catering to Yale students. He became New Haven's mayor for a time and was a long time treasure of Yale College, as well as a professor of religion at Yale.

When the American Revolution broke out, Sherman served on Connecticut's Committee of Correspondence. He was elected to the Continental Congress and served there for almost the entire war. While in Congress, Sherman served on the committees that wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation. Thomas

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Jefferson wrote of Roger Sherman, "That is Mr. Sherman, of Connecticut, a man who never said a foolish thing in his life."

After the war, Sherman served at the Constitutional Convention where he addressed the convention 138 times. He was instrumental in the Great Compromise between the small states and large states, which gave the states equal representation in the upper house, the Senate, and representation based on population in the lower house, the House of Representatives. He was also responsible for introducing the 3/5ths compromise which counted slaves in southern states as only 3/5ths of a person for purposes of representation in the House. This was a measure to weaken the southern states' voting power, not to denigrate slaves as is commonly thought.

Sherman went on to serve in both the House of Representatives and the US Senate. Sherman has been called, "the most influential member of Congress." John Adams said of Roger Sherman, he is "an old Puritan, as honest as an angel and as firm in the cause of American Independence as Mount Atlas." Sherman passed away in New Haven in 1793.