

seat in protest of it. His next public office was in 1779 as a delegate from Delaware to the Confederation Congress, where he worked on peace negotiations.

In addition to being a colonel in the Pennsylvania militia, he also enlisted as a private in the Delaware militia, during which time he served at the Battle of Brandywine. He was given a commission as a brigadier general. Although he did not serve as an officer in the Continental Army, he nevertheless was made an honorary member of the Society of the Cincinnati.

Dickinson suffered many hardships during the Revolution. In addition to being harassed by the Pennsylvania revolutionary government and others who questioned his patriotism for not signing the Declaration of Independence, because the British perceived him as the leader of the resistance, Tories attacked his property in Delaware in 1777 and the British destroyed much of his estate in Philadelphia. These setbacks did not affect his political involvement. He served as president of both Delaware (1781-1782) and Pennsylvania (1782-1785), he was unanimously elected president of the Annapolis Convention in 1786 to amend the Articles of Confederation, and he took part in the Constitutional Convention of 1787.

John Dickinson returned to Delaware after the federal convention and in 1792 served as president of the Delaware constitutional convention. Into his later years, he continued to write on causes of concern to him, such as American relations with France and education. He lived the remainder of his life in Wilmington, where he died on February 14, 1808.

Dickinson was not formally affiliated with any religious group, but he identified most closely with the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). He is buried in the Wilmington Friends burial ground next to his wife.

**Biographical note written by Jane Calvert, author of *Quaker Constitutionalism and the Political Thought of John Dickinson*.**

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## Scope and Contents note

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This collection documents John Dickinson's roles in politics, business, law, nation building, and the American Revolution. The collection is arranged in two series: "John Dickinson" and "Mary Norris Dickinson," with the bulk of the collection contained within the "John Dickinson" series. This collection was organized into its current arrangement, probably in 1978. Prior to that, the collection was described to an item level in a calendar created by John H. Powell. While the 1978 re-arrangement has resulted in the physical order of the calendar being unusable, the information contained therein is of the utmost value and a pdf version of the calendar is attached to this finding aid.

The "John Dickinson" series is divided into eight subseries: "Correspondence," "Revolutionary and Early National government papers," "Revolutionary War documents," "Delaware government documents," "Pennsylvania government documents," "Land and business records," "Collected essays, notes, and commonplace books," and "John Dickinson estate records."