



Significant Signers

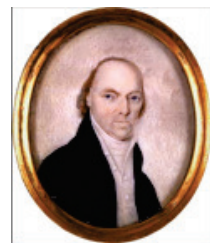
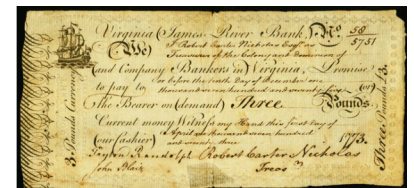
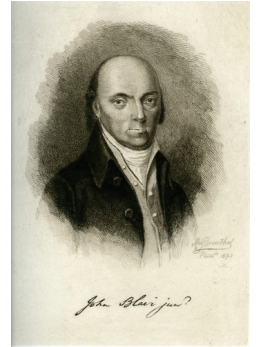
John Blair Jr.

By Jeffrey R. Paunicka

I try to add notes to my inventory that would make a difference to even the best collections. These notes are part of a series I have acquired that contain significant signers of great documents in history and Americana from the birth of our Nation in Colonial times. I am speaking of documents such as the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, Stamp Act Congress and the U. S. Constitution.

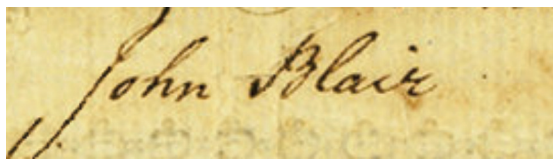
My series of articles called "Significant Signers" profiles great patriots that not only signed these important documents but also signed issues of Colonial currency. These notes were actually handled and signed by each patriot. The signatures were not printed by presses,

When the Revolution began, Blair became deeply involved in the government of his state. The legislature elected him to a judgeship in the general court in 1778 and soon thereafter to the post of chief justice. He was also elected to Virginia's High Court of Chancery (1780), where his colleague was George Wythe, later a fellow delegate to the Constitutional Convention. These judicial appointments automatically made Blair a member of Virginia's first court of appeals.



This edition covers John Blair (4/17/1732 - 8/31/1800) who was a founder, Patriot and signer of the United States Constitution. He is also noted for signing currency from Virginia. The notes he signed are from: 4/7/1762, 1770, 7/11/1771, 4/1/1773 and 6/1/1774. The notes

he signed are well worth having in a super collection.



In 1786, the legislature, recognizing Blair's prestige as a jurist, appointed him Thomas Jefferson's successor on a committee revising the laws of Virginia. While crossing on foot an old bridge over a flooded river en route home from the Convention, Blair and George Washington narrowly escaped accident when one of the carriage horses fell through the bridge



George Washington nominated Blair to the Supreme Court of the United States on September 24, 1789. The United States Senate confirmed his appointment on September 26, 1789. Due to the

system of seniority established in Judiciary Act of 1789, Washington did not sign Blair's commission until September 30. The Court's caseload during Blair's tenure was light, with only 13 cases decided over six years. Justice Blair participated, though, in the Court's landmark case of *Chisholm v. Georgia*, which is considered the first United States Supreme Court case of significance and impact.

Continued

Early Life and Family

John was born in Williamsburg in a prominent family. His father served on the Virginia Council and was, for a time, acting Royal governor. His granduncle, James Blair, was founder and first president of the College of William & Mary where he attended and earned an A.B. in 1754.

In 1755 he went to London to go to Law School and returned to begin practicing. He was elected to the House of Burgesses (1766–70). He went on to become clerk of the Royal Governor's Council, the upper house of the colonial legislature (1770–75).



Significant Signers John Blair Jr.

Continued

**VIRGINIA
FOR
CONSTITUTIONAL
LIBERTY**

Virginia Colonial Flag

Contributions to the Constitutional Convention.

Although a faithful attendee, Blair never addressed the Convention nor sat on any of its committees. When the question of how the President should be elected arose, he joined George Mason and Edmund Randolph in advocating election by the Congress, thus splitting the Virginia delegation. Coming to realize that his stand was weakening his delegation in the voting process and impeding the progress of the Convention, he abandoned his position and voted with Washington and Madison, whom, as a stalwart nationalist, he supported for the remainder of the Convention.



Blair resigned in 1796, and died in Williamsburg in 1800, aged 68. He was buried at the Bruton Parish Episcopal Church Cemetery in Williamsburg



Please do not miss the next installment of the “Significant Signers” series. Ask for a copy at the next show, call me or refer to my web page of articles at <http://www.oldbucks.com/page14.html>.

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About the Author

Jeffrey Paunicka is the President of Insight3, Portage Indiana. He has been actively involved with currency for over 52 years. He is a member of the Professional Currency Dealers Association (PCDA) and provides professional numismatic services. He holds an MBA from the University of Notre Dame. He can be reached at (574)315-0238.

