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Davis, the Lukens, the Jarretts, the Iredells, Lloyds, Spencers, McNairs, and other families, whose works have left a lasting impression upon the civilization of the century. To the strangers who are here to-day, on behalf of my old neighbors, I bid you a hearty welcome to the feast, both of mind and body, which now awaits you.

Robert Morris the Financier of the Revolution.

BY REV. D. K. TURNER, HARTSVILLE, PA.

(Hatboro Meeting, July 17, 1894).

Probably no one is mentioned on the pages of American history except Washington, to whom we are more indebted for the final result of the Revolutionary struggle than to Robert Morris, whose wisdom and foresight as a financier were of incalculable value in guiding the "Ship-of-State" through a sea of difficulties, which threatened to engulf it.

As he owned and managed for a considerable period an extensive estate in Bucks county, and founded one of its towns, which bears his name, it may not be amiss to dwell briefly on this occasion upon his life and character.

His father, whose surname was likewise Robert, resided in Liverpool, England, and was taught the trade of nailmaker, but had a partiality for mercantile pursuits, which the son seems to have inherited. When the latter was a boy of six years old, the family removed to America and settled on the eastern shore of Maryland. They had been in the New World about ten years when the father made a social visit to a vessel in the harbor, and on his taking leave a salute was fired from a cannon in his honor. The wadding struck him in the arm, causing a wound which proved fatal. This occurred in 1750, when Robert, Jr., was 16 years of age. Some time before this he was placed in the counting house of Charles Willing, of Philadelphia, where he soon displayed unusual industry and enterprise. In a few years a change took place in the firm and he entered into partnership with Thomas Willing and engaged in foreign and domestic trade. He made several voyages across

the ocean as supercargo, in one of which during the Seven-Years-War between France and England he was captured by the French and detained a long time as a prisoner. While in confinement he earned some money by repairing a watch, which he used in paying his passage home.

In 1769, when he was 35 years old, he married Mary White, a sister of Rev. William White, D. D., the first bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania, and chaplain to the Continental Congress. Before her marriage she is pictured in a fascinating light in a poem written by Joseph Shippen, on the belles of Philadelphia, indicating that she was sprightly and beautiful.

" In lovely White's most pleasing form,
What various graces meet ;
How blest with every striking charm,
How languishingly sweet."

Mr. Morris was successful in business and acquired a considerable fortune and a high reputation for ability in commercial transactions when the efforts of the British Parliament to oppress the Colonies began to arouse their indignant opposition. In 1765 the Stamp Act was passed. This was a measure to raise revenue from America, requiring that legal documents, bonds, deeds and contracts should be written on stamped paper or parchment, which must be purchased from the Royal Government. The Colonists insisted that England had no right to lay taxes of any kind upon them without their consent. As they had no representatives in Parliament they declared they could not be justly compelled to pay anything into the King's treasury, unless they chose to do so. All the payments they had heretofore made were in their view voluntary contributions. On the day the act was to go into operation the people manifested their grief and displeasure in the most decided manner. In Boston, Philadelphia and other cities the bells on the churches were muffled and tolled as if for a funeral, cannon were fired, flags were put at half mast for the death of liberty, processions paraded through the streets and orations were delivered against the tyranny of the ministry. In many places the stamps themselves were seized or were prevented from

being landed; the stamp officers were obliged to resign, or hide, to escape the vengeance of the populace, and at the same time numerous associations were formed by merchants, who agreed not to import goods from Britain until the odious act was repealed. In these displays of indignation against that measure, Robert Morris fully sympathized. He signed the non-importation agreement, though this course resulted in interruption of his business and severe pecuniary loss, and he was on a committee of citizens to compel John Hughs, the collector in Philadelphia, to desist from collecting the stamp tax. His standing in the city for energy and efficiency was almost unequalled, and in 1766, when still a young man, he was appointed warden of the port.

At the commencement of the struggle with the mother country he was forty-one years of age, and the commercial house, of which he was the head, occupied the first rank in wealth and extent of its operations both at home and abroad. During the long hostilities he took part in nearly all the proceedings of the United States, except those that were of a military character, and even in these he exercised much influence.

There was then no proper treasury of the general Government. Congress, the highest legislative authority in the land, passed bills for the discharge of trivial debts; \$16.39 for ferrriage, \$11.78 for meals for troops, \$22 for two sick men in hospitals, \$16 for a lost rifle, and so on through 1777 and part of 1778. The regular operations of taxation and providing for the support of the credit of the Nation did not exist. The compact, into which the Colonies entered to carry on the war, gave no power to Congress to levy taxes upon the inhabitants of the several States, or to borrow money by loans. Each Commonwealth was independent, and means to pay troops or to obtain arms and ammunition could only be obtained by the consent of the different legislatures. The people were almost universally opposed to being taxed, for the struggle was against taxation, and they had paid comparatively little to maintain the colonial officers and legislative assemblies. The annual cost of the civil establishment of all the Colonies together, previous to 1775, had been but \$300,-

ooo. They were not accustomed to heavy pecuniary public burdens. No one in New England paid half a crown, or 66 cents, per annum before the Revolutionary War to support the State. A fortnight before the battle of Bunker Hill the report that a man in Salem, Mass., had 500 pounds to lend to the Government was taken up with eagerness by the authorities, so limited were their resources. The Pennsylvania Assembly, by an Act in 1775, voted to lay a tax on real and personal property, but they did not order the collectors to collect it, and it was to be paid when the bills of the Colony to discharge its former debts were paid. In 1779 taxation had lain dormant in South Carolina four years, ever since the beginning of the war, and previous to that period it had been slight. The planters of the South had been somewhat isolated and in the habit of defending themselves and punishing offenders with little ceremony, and in the North the structure of courts and jurisprudence was simple and inexpensive.

Great Britain had indeed obtained large sums of money from the Colonies, but it was done indirectly, by duties on imports, tonnage and port dues. From these sources at the opening of the contest the crown received £80,000 annually. With the Declaration of Independence this at once ceased. It was not till after the present Constitution was adopted that the people of the United States paid for federal purposes as much as they had paid to the King. When he attempted to tax them in new modes for the maintenance of a power across the ocean, it is not surprising that they refused their consent. But the same discrimination to submit to unwonted imposts rendered it extremely difficult to Congress to realize funds necessary to defend the position they had assumed. The need of more troops and more money to arm, equip and pay them was constantly felt. The letters of Washington to Congress are full of urgent requests for more men and additional supplies of food, clothing and ammunition, and that body perceived the imperative necessity of acceding to his suggestions. They often applied to the States for assistance, representing the pitiable condition of the soldiers, and the imminent peril of the cause of liberty unless help were rendered, but frequently received little more than

empty resolutions in reply. Samuel Dexter, of Massachusetts, retired from public life because he could not consistently vote to raise an army without seeing measures inaugurated for its support. However patriotic Congress might be, it was destitute of power to coerce the States to undergo expenses which it did not approve, and its enactments had little more efficiency than so many recommendations. June 2, 1775, more than a year before Independence was declared, it resolved that no one should sell supplies to the British. The next day they voted to borrow £6,000, and to provide for the liquidation of the loan, but how payment was to be realized was not clear.

During the first part of the contest the principal reliance of the National Government was upon paper promises to pay, which were circulated as money, and as from necessity they were multiplied, until at the expiration of a few years they would purchase nothing and were worthless. February 17, 1776, Congress appointed a committee of five, one of whom was Mr. Morris, to superintend the department of finance, and in April following an effort was made to organize the treasury office under this committee. The same year it established a loan office, with a view of borrowing five millions of Continental dollars, at four per cent. interest, to be repaid in three years.

Mr. Morris was first elected a delegate to Congress from Pennsylvania in 1775, and subsequently to the same body in 1776 and 1777. He was the first from his State who signed the Declaration of Independence, though he had been doubtful whether the time chosen for its promulgation was appropriate. He saw the poverty of the Confederation and with his clear mercantile foresight feared the consequences of contracting debts which without foreign aid there was no prospect of paying. He served on various committees to provide military stores, including a committee to secure a navy for the defence of the coast. His voice was often heard advocating measures by which the States might be induced to furnish adequate pecuniary means for the prosecution of the war. In 1776 he was on a committee of secret correspondence with reference to securing assistance from European nations, and was intimately

associated in this task with Benjamin Franklin and John Jay. In the intervals of the sessions of Congress in 1776 and 1777 he was one of a committee of three, to whom was intrusted all its business. He wrote many long and important letters to Washington and to the representative of the United States in France urging the importance of prevailing upon that country to render help. Washington applied to him for £150 in hard money to be used in the secret service of the Government, and he undertook to supply it, though gold and silver were extremely scarce. Lieut. Col. Charles Lee, a retired officer in the British army, dissatisfied that he had not been promoted as he thought he deserved, determined to join the American cause. If he did so, his property would be confiscated and he would be reduced to poverty. As he was destitute of funds, Mr. Morris loaned him £5,000, that he might be able to transfer his allegiance to the side of the Union. Some months afterwards Lee, who by this time had been made a Major General in our army, wrote to a friend across the ocean, that "the affairs of Pennsylvania were in the hands of Robert Morris." Mr. Morris was a member of the Council of Safety, and before and after the war one of the most influential members of the Pennsylvania Assembly; his private business suffered much by his attention to public duties, and by his willingness to use his property and his credit for the benefit of his country.

In 1777 Congress realized more than ever the impracticability of meeting the large and increasing expenses of the war by the issuing of paper money, and it began to urge the States to tax their citizens. In September a committee was appointed, on which Mr. Morris was placed, to press this matter upon the immediate attention of the Legislatures. The same year a resolution was passed advising Washington to take supplies for the soldiers from the disaffected inhabitants, a plan which tended wherever it was carried out, to intensify their ill feeling toward the partisans of freedom. In 1778 considerable time was spent in devising schemes against the property of the Tories, and confiscation of their effects seemed to be almost the last resort. To employ the uncertain power of the Confederation to take what was needed from the Unionists was deemed unwise

and unsafe. In a letter to Franklin then in Paris, it is said, in explanation of the difficulty of gathering funds, "The contest being upon taxation, the laying of imposts except in the direct necessity would be madness."

Yet Congress was impressed with the vast importance of keeping up the conflict, and it asked the States to provide annually six millions of dollars for eighteen years commencing with 1779, and as this proposition was not accepted, in the early part of that year it made a call upon them for fifteen millions of dollars and in May for forty-five millions more. In 1780 it sent out a trumpet blast to all the Commonwealths for aid, and made apportionment of six million silver dollars, which might be paid partly in specific articles, as corn, oats and flour.

The value of the bills of credit and notes it had put forth, had fallen so low that it was useless to issue more. That was the most gloomy period in the Revolution. Many patriotic hearts were filled with overwhelming anxiety, lest after all the labors, sufferings, hardships, and battles of years the attempt to establish a free government on this continent should prove vain. The English saw the depressed condition of the Colonies with exultation. King George III said the distress in America would force his rebellious subjects to make peace. Washington himself was more alarmed than he had been at any previous time. He wrote in May, 1780, to Joseph Jones, a delegate from Virginia:

"Certain I am unless Congress are vested with powers by the several States competent to the great purposes of war, or assume them as a matter of right, and they and the States respectively act with more energy than they have hitherto done, our cause is lost. One State will comply with a requisition of Congress; another neglects to do it; a third excutes it by halves, and all differ either in the manner, the matter, or so much in point of time, that we are always working up hill. While such a system as the present one, or rather want of one, prevails, we shall ever be unable to apply our strength or resources to any advantage."

There was lamentable carelessness in many parts of the land about fulfilling the wishes of Congress, yet in some regions earnest and self-denying efforts were made to conform to them. In 1781 President Reed, of Pennsylvania, said that 4,000 persons in the State were suffering for want of provisions, and yet he urged the commissioners to bring in the taxes.

About that time Congress appointed a committee, in which President Reed was, to discover the reason why the taxes were not collected. After investigation they reported that it was due to the neglect of the proper officers. Even then all our countrymen were not disinterested patriots. The committee said, "not one-third of the taverns take out a license."

Continental property, no longer needed toward the close of the war, was sold by appraisement. Officers would sell to a friend a span of horses belonging to the Government for one-third of its value.

In Bethlehem a commissary on full pay was employed with an assistant to supply six Hessians, who worked about the town. Reed said, "a mulatto under the deputy commissary has acquired a handsome fortune, some declare £10,000 in specie. There have been at times twelve deputy quarter-masters in this one county alone."

Enforcing the payment of taxes caused great hardships to individuals and in many districts. One man in Pennsylvania with a small farm owed militia fines of twenty and one-half pounds, (\$57.00); to satisfy the debt the collector took away two horses and seven cattle. The collector of Caroline county, Va., reported that many of the people there were willing to pay the tax but had no money; they were willing to give up their property, and some had exposed it for sale, but no one had silver or gold to buy it with. In 1780 Mr. Morris, assisted by other citizens of Philadelphia, established a bank, by means of which 3,000,000 rations of provisions and 300 hogsheads of rum were forwarded to the army. In 1781, before Yorktown was captured, it was feared that Philadelphia might be attacked by the British, and Thomas Paine proposed that one-third or one-quarter of the value of the house rents should be levied on the inhabitants of the city for its defence, which it was estimated would amount to £300,000 or \$800,000.

The various schemes for providing money proved inadequate, and Congress therefore decided to place the financial affairs of the Country, in the hands of one man, who should be clothed with authority to devise and execute plans to replenish the exhausted treasury and revive the public credit.

For this duty in February, 1781, Alexander Hamilton nominated Robert Morris, who was unanimously elected with the title "Superintendent of Finance," which was abbreviated in common parlance to "Financier." His salary was to be \$6,000 a year, a small compensation for the services he rendered. Soon all the monetary operations of the government were under his control. A floating debt of \$2,500,000, weighed down the treasury, and more permanent obligations existed in the form of currency and certificates of loan to the amount of \$140,000,000, or counting twenty of paper for one of silver, seven millions in specie. There was no power in the Confederacy to oblige the States to assist in meeting its responsibilities and no regular, reliable source of income. No systematic assessment had been adopted for all parts of the land, and the States were jealous of each other, one afraid that it would pay more according to its population and resources than another.

Mr. Morris was from the first embarrassed with the general derangement of pecuniary affairs, enormity of expenditures, confusion, languor, complexity and consequent inefficiency of the operations of the Government. He wrote to Congress and to the States urgently requesting that their mutual accounts be settled, that he might know the liabilities of the Confederation. He stated that in his judgment the cost of the war was \$20,000,000 a year, and that the assessments should be paid in specie; that if they were contributed in old Continental paper, their cause was hopeless. He must abandon the system previously in use and enter upon a new course. He found the treasury empty, and discovered that public officials, clerks and employes had not been paid for many months, and that some of them were liable to be put in jail for debts they had necessarily contracted and had no means to satisfy. If he paid the salaries of those, who were about to be imprisoned and not others, there would be misunderstanding and hard feeling; so he paid them all from his own purse.

France acknowledged the independence of the United States and made an offensive and defensive treaty with us in 1778, and as hostilities arose with Great Britain in consequence, she sent a fleet and troops to our coasts to aid us, which proved most

timely and advantageous. But money was needed to recruit and support our own army. Not only military and naval assistance was required, but pecuniary funds also. Mr. Morris made efforts to secure a loan from France with indifferent success. He tried to obtain one of \$5,000,000 from Spain, but that country was not in circumstances to furnish it. At length he borrowed \$1,400,000 from Holland, which was the first loan our Government ever made from a foreign nation. He exerted a powerful influence in his own, as well as other States, in the way of inducing the people to comply with the demands of Congress. He pronounced specific supplies, grain, etc., to be burdensome and comparatively useless, and pressed the need of solid money. Albert Gallatin in 1796 wrote, that Pennsylvania had levied some enormous taxes during the war, as he thought, far beyond her ability, the arrearages of which were not yet fully paid, and this was largely through the persuasive eloquence of Mr. Morris.

Lord Cornwallis surrendered to the combined French and American forces October 19, 1781. The day before that important event Mr. Morris stated, that he could not command more than one-twentieth of the sum necessary for the current expenses of the year. He declared, that he had not, since his appointment as Superintendent of Finance, received a shilling from any State but Pennsylvania, and that only in paper money, and £7,500, in specie, which must be expended for contracts in the State. For general purposes almost nothing had come within his reach during a period of eight months. Yet the war must be prosecuted, the soldiers must have food, clothing, tents, arms and ammunition, and money that their families might be kept from starvation while they were in service, and all the other innumerable expenses of the National administration must be met. No other course seemed open to him than to purchase what was needed with his own private means and to enter into contracts on his personal responsibility. The campaign of 1781 was freighted with the gravest issues; multitudes of the people were becoming weary of war; preparations must be vigorously made for the destruction or capture of the British forces under Cornwallis, and Mr. Morris was obliged to take upon himself

the task. In the first part of the season he furnished the army several thousand barrels of flour and during the summer issued his own notes to the amount of \$1,400,000 to provide articles demanded. Marshall, in his "Life of Washington," says that it was due to Morris that the movement on Yorktown was not frustrated by lack of men, transportation and subsistence. Another writer says that "next to Washington the country owes the triumph of Yorktown to Robert Morris." Just before that event he obtained from the Chevalier Luzerne, a French nobleman, £20,000 in specie.

People had so much confidence in him that his own notes circulated more freely than those of the Confederation. Chastellux says that on the strength of his office as minister of finance his notes, bearing his own name alone, passed throughout the Continent as cash, and the Legislature of Virginia enacted a law making them legal tender.

Mr. Morris used every expedient possible to raise funds. He had faith in the ability of the country to pay ultimately all its indebtedness, but this was a season of poverty and sore distress. He applied to the Society of Friends for donations for the refugees from the South who had fled from the incursions of the British. They answered that they had contributed to the citizens of Charleston, South Carolina, and to the inhabitants of the frontier settlements during the French and Indian Wars and that it was not convenient for them to accede to his request now. In 1782 the quotas to be paid by the States came in so slowly that the general Government had not money sufficient to pay debts of the utmost exigency and to support its ambassadors in foreign lands, even with the help afforded by France.

Many of the people in districts in possession of the enemy suffered severely by the contest. Farmers, on the opening of peace, found their farms out of order, buildings dilapidated, fences gone, stock carried off, crops destroyed and utensils missing, and many of the churches were torn down or deserted. At the close of 1779 Mr. Tracey, a merchant of Newburyport, Mass., had lost forty-one ships. Facts like these account in part for the laxity of many of the States in contributing for

the Confederation. Their reluctant delays laid an enormous load upon the shoulders of Mr. Morris. But though the soldiers in numerous instances met with great losses and all were poorly supplied and meagerly paid, yet they behaved nobly. A French officer, who was in the Yorktown campaign wrote as follows: "I cannot too frequently repeat how much I was surprised at the American army. It is beyond understanding how troops, who were almost naked, badly paid, composed of old men, negroes and children could move so well, both on the march and under fire."

Mr Morris devised various forms of imposts upon the fitting out of vessels, and as no one had been appointed to regulate the affairs of the navy, Congress in 1781 resolved, that until such an appointment should be made, the duties of that department should be performed by the Superintendent of Finance, and for more than three years he was in charge of both the treasury and the navy, without increase of salary. Though he objected to this additional burden, yet he bore it, because it saved expense to the United States. Joseph Reed, secretary of Gen. Washington, wrote from London that Morris had "all the effectual powers of the Government of the Union in his hands." In 1781 he proposed to Congress the establishment of a mint, and through his efforts the bank of North America was incorporated and its operations sanctioned by the Legislatures of Pennsylvania and several other States, and it proved a powerful agent in relieving the Confederation of its embarrassments. In 1783, just before the ratification of the treaty of peace, he wrote to the President of Congress, that "as nothing but the public danger could have induced him to accept the office of Superintendent of Finance, so little apprehension was now entertained of the common enemy, that his original motives had ceased to operate; that circumstances had postponed the establishment of the public credit, and that it did not consist with his ideas of integrity to increase the national debt while the prospect of paying it was diminishing." He therefore resigned, but at the request of Congress remained in charge till November, 1784. At the end of the war the army would not disband unless the claims of the soldiers were

satisfied, and Mr. Morris became responsible for the amount necessary. This with other sums advanced made the Nation at his retirement a debtor to him of a half million of dollars, for which he trusted his successor would indemnify him, and which was all finally repaid. He was elected by Pennsylvania a member of the convention that framed the present Constitution of the U. S., and a member of the first U. S. Senate. When President Washington was about to organize his cabinet, he offered to Mr. Morris the position of Secretary of the Treasury, but he declined it. Upon being asked by the President whom he would recommend, he suggested Alexander Hamilton, who received the appointment.

When the sound of arms was no longer heard in the land, Mr. Morris formed a partnership with Gouveneur Morris, though they were not relatives, and engaged in commerce with China and India. They sent out in 1784 the first American ship that ever appeared in the port of Canton. His residence in Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War was on Front street below Dock street, facing the Delaware river, but subsequently it was on Market street, between Fifth and Sixth, and was the finest in the city. It was in this mansion that Gen. Washington, by the invitation of Mr. Morris, ordinarily took up his abode when in Philadelphia. The two eminent men were on terms of the warmest friendship, and there was no one whom the President held in higher esteem than the able and patriotic financier. At a reception on one occasion, when a large number of distinguished guests were presented to Washington, he bowed to them all, but shook hands with Mr. Morris alone. After the alliance was formed with France, he was visited by diplomats, noblemen and other foreign dignitaries, as the representative man of the city. In 1782 the Prince De Broglie took tea with him, and spoke of him in letters as the Controller General of the U. S. The Marquis De Chastellux says, "He is a large man, simple in his habits, lives in fine style. His house is like the residences of wealthy Englishmen." August 31, 1781, is represented in the journals of the time as a gala day in Philadelphia, when Washington came to the town with a large number of French officers. They first rode

to the city tavern, thence to the house of Mr. Morris, where they were appropriately entertained. This dwelling originally belonged to Richard Penn, grandson of Wm. Penn, but had received extensive improvements from its proprietor.

In 1795 Mr. Morris was persuaded by Monsieur L. Enfant, a French architect, to enter upon a scheme, which subjected him to great pecuniary loss, the building of a splendid mansion on a new site. He said he could sell his High street, or Market street property for \$80,000, and was told he could put up a magnificent structure for \$60,000. He therefore bought nearly the whole square bounded by Chestnut, Walnut, Seventh and Eighth streets, for £10,000, or \$26,600, and the architect proceeded with the work. The ground was twelve or fifteen feet higher than it is at present, and was a commanding location. Cellars of two and in some places three stories underground were dug with extensive vaults and massive arches; the superstructure was reared two stories in height with lofty ceilings; the whole exterior was faced with marble with much carved ornamentation in relief, and furniture was imported from Europe at lavish expense. The result was the most beautiful private dwelling in America. But Mr. Morris was often seen gazing at it with mortification and regret, and was heard to utter bitter exclamations at his own folly and the extravagance of the architect. Soon after this he was involved in financial troubles and the grand palace was seized by his creditors. But it was so far beyond the need of any one that no purchaser could be found even at a minimum price; it was therefore taken down at great cost; most of the cellars were filled up and the materials sold in lots to the highest bidder.

Toward the last part of his life Mr. Morris displayed less wisdom in the management of his own affairs than he had done previously in those of the Government. He purchased 2,500 acres of land in Bucks county along the Delaware opposite Trenton. The earliest date of his ownership is 1787, when Manassah Cutler mentions that he saw several long buildings, which Mr. Morris had erected. The place took the name of Morrisville. In the tract he had fourteen farms, a grist-mill, rolling-mill, wire-mill, snuff-mill, plaster-mill,

an iron-forge, a saw-mill, a brewery, a fine house for his own residence with suitable outbuildings, and a stone quarry. In 1794 he directed his son William, who was then in London to visit a Mr. Wood, who he understood could build a steam engine, and get him to come to America; and stated, that if the machinist had not money sufficient, he would furnish means to construct the engine and make the voyage; he cautioned him, however, not to attract the attention of the British Government, which would do everything in its power to prevent the growth of manufactures in the new Republic. The Duke De Liancourt, a French nobleman, gives a description of Morrisville, and remarks that Robert Morris owns the whole of it; and that he had started iron-works and other manufactures. All these enterprises failed to be remunerative; they were in advance of the times. The estimated value of the property was \$250,000; but on it were two mortgages, the first to the Insurance Company of North America for \$73,000, and the second for \$25,000 to George Clymer, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Morrisville is within the district originally chosen as the site of the capital of the United States. In 1784, while Congress was in session at Trenton, it appointed a commission of three members, one of whom was Mr. Morris, to procure land near the Falls of the Delaware for public buildings. It was to be not less than two, nor more than three, miles square, and they were authorized to erect suitable edifices in an elegant manner, and to draw on the treasury for \$100,000. It was understood that the spot for the Hall of Congress was to be the high ground west of Morrisville. Soon after Congress adjourned to New York and influence adverse to the plan arose. Washington was in favor of a more southern location, and it was finally decided, as a compromise between the North and South, that the seat of the National Government should be temporarily, for ten years, in Philadelphia, and permanently on the banks of the Potomac.

Besides the village bearing his name, Mr. Morris owned a tract which was called in an inventory of his possessions, the Neshaminy estate, and a farm of 110 acres in Plumstead town-

ship. With John Nicholson and James Greenleaf he organized the North American Land Company and bought millions of acres in different sections of the country at low prices, from a few cents to a dollar an acre. They had 4,300,000 acres in the region of the Genessee in New York State and vast tracts in Northampton, Luzerne, Washington and other counties of Pennsylvania. Greenleaf was an unprincipled sharper and through him Mr. Morris lost all he possessed. In 1798 Mr. Morris was arrested for debt by suit of Charles Eddy, whom he pronounced "the most hardened villian God ever made." Having no means to satisfy his creditors, he was confined in prison three years and six months.

It has been said with some truth that he used his private fortune for his country, but that in his time of trouble his country forgot him. Still it is proper to remark that his ultimate descent to poverty did not come from his connection with the Government, but from his own imprudent speculations. He wrote to a friend in England that "although he suffered much loss of property by the war, on the whole he had gone through the crisis about even. He had lost as many as 150 vessels and mostly without insurance, as he could not get it effected; but as many escaped and made excellent profits, his losses were made good to him, or nearly so." While he was in prison he was visited by Washington more than once, who still esteemed him a dear friend. He was released in 1801, and lived about five years after, dying in 1806, at the age of seventy-two. His wife survived him 21 years. They had seven children, sons and daughters, several of whom were sent to Europe to be educated in France and Germany.