Pierce Butler
Signer of the United States Constitution

July 11, 1744 – February 15, 1822



Source: *Senator Doug Mastriano (State Senate, Pennsylvania) – Facebook Post*

Pierce Butler played a pivotal role in shaping the early American republic. Born into the Anglo-Irish aristocracy, Butler initially came to America as a major in the British Army. He settled permanently in South Carolina after marrying heiress Mary Middleton, subsequently selling his military commission to become a prominent rice and cotton planter.

When the Revolutionary War erupted, Butler broke ties with the British Crown to join the Patriot cause, serving as South Carolina's Adjutant General. His defection made him a prime target. When British forces captured Charleston in 1780, Butler was aggressively hunted as a traitor, and his property was seized.

As a delegate to the 1787 Constitutional Convention, Butler signed the U.S. Constitution. Politically, he championed a strong central government but fiercely protected Southern plantation interests. He introduced the Fugitive Slave Clause and argued that the full-enslaved population should count toward Congressional apportionment, actively opposing the Three-Fifths Compromise. He later served as one of South Carolina's first U.S. Senators.

Butler eventually retired from his public duties and moved to his summer home in Pennsylvania. He is buried at Christ Episcopal Church in Philadelphia.

Butler was a pew holder, congregant and financial supporter of St. Michael's Church. A practically illegible plaque on the west wall of St. Michael's vestibule memorializes him. Butler's wife, Mary Middleton, is buried in St. Michael's churchyard.