

*Christ Episcopal Church Cemetery Inventory*

Lot Number: 110 Space: K

State and Water Streets, Dover DE 19903

**Walking Tour # 27**

Find A Grave # 2783

Name: **Caesar Rodney Monument**

Birth date: October 7, 1728 Death date: June 26, 1784 Burial Date: Not in this cemetery Age: 55

Spouse: none

Children:

Parents: Caesar & Elizabeth Crawford Rodney; grandson of Rev. Thomas Crawford, rector of Christ Church

Siblings: William Rodney, Thomas Rodney; Mary Rodney Gordon; Daniel Rodney; Elizabeth Rodney; Half siblings: Sarah Wilson; John Wilson; George (Rodney or Wilson) These siblings were named in his will (see following pages)

Residence: Dover, DE (St. Jones Neck – “Poplar Grove” , in the vicinity of Moore’s Lake, Dover , and “Byfield” family farm)

Cause of death/Burial/Obituary: Burial in Byfield Family Plot, Byfield Farm east of Dover, unmarked, exact location unknown

Service/occupation information:

Statesman: signer of Declaration of Independence, Governor of Delaware, 1756 – 1784, Delegate to Continental Congress, 1774, Captain, Delaware Militia  
see following pages for more information

Lot Owner: Christ Episcopal Church

Marker: Monument placed in Christ Church cemetery

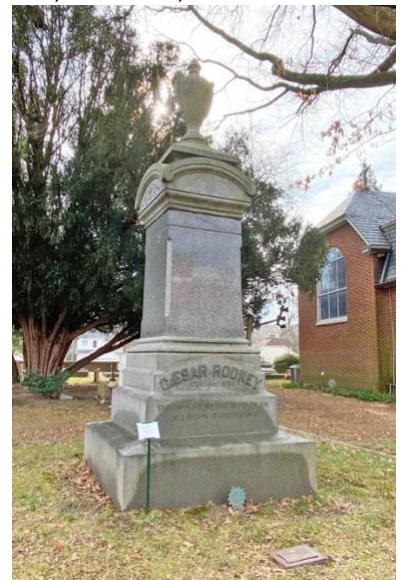
Inscription:

CAESAR RODNEY  
1728-1784  
Statesman, Soldier and Signer of the  
Declaration of Independence

DIMENSIONS: H approx. 12’; base is 6” square

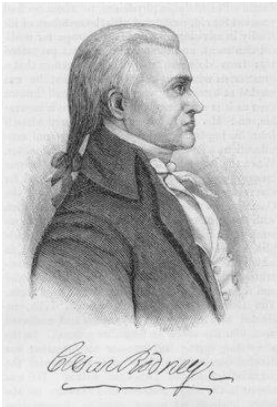
STYLE: Monument and veteran’s marker

No repairs needed



Inventory date: May 5, 2020 Recorder: Ellen Richardson

## List of beneficiaries from his will:



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**Rodney, Caesar.** (The Signer). Eldest son of Caesar Rodney, dec'd. Will. Made Jan. 20, 1784. Heirs: bros. William & Thomas; half-sister Sarah Wilson; half-bro. John Wilson; nephew Caesar Augustus Rodney; nieces Lavinia Rodney (dau. of bro. Thomas), Letitia Rodney (dau. of bro. William), Elizabeth Gordon (dau. of sister Mary, dec'd), Sarah Rodney (dau. of bro. Daniel); Caesar Rodney Wilson, son of half-sister Sarah Wilson; children of sister Mary Gordon; Wardens of Christ Church in Dover; George Read, Esq., & Finwick Fisher, merchant (both of N. C. Co.). Exec'r, bro. Thomas. Wits., Charles Ridgely, William Molleston, Edward Tilghman, Jr. Codicil, dated March 27, 1784. Wits., William Molleston & H. Matthews. Prob. Aug. 14, 1784. Arch. vol. A44, pages 246-247. Reg. of Wills, Liber L, folios 233-242.

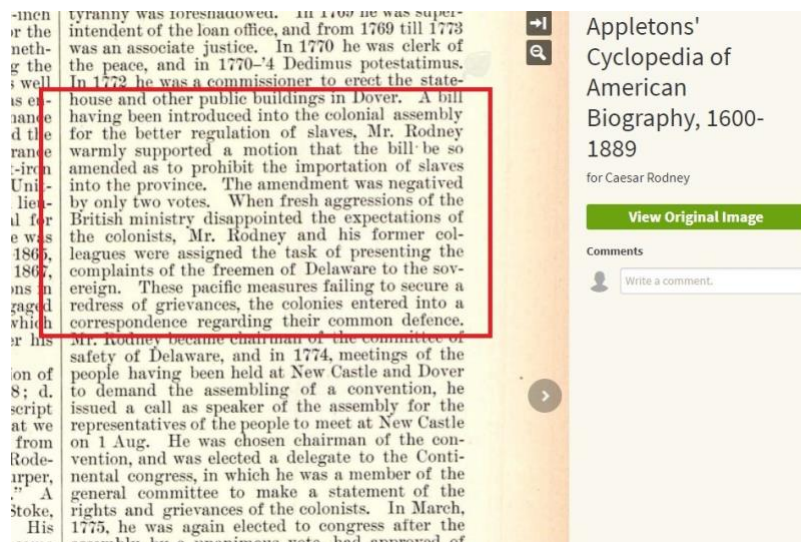
Retrieved from findagrave.com on January 14, 2021:

Declaration of Independence Signer. Born on a farm near Dover, Delaware, Caesar Rodney attended school briefly, but was taught at home by his mother. His father died when Caesar was 17, and as the oldest son, he took over the family farm, helping his mother to raise his six younger brothers and sisters. Thanks to his inheritance, he decided to devote a large portion of his life to public service. In 1755, he was chosen Sheriff for Kent County, Delaware. Over the next twenty years, he served as clerk of the Orphans' Court and served in the Delaware Congress. He was so highly respected that he was appointed to Delaware's Supreme Court, even though he had not studied law. Early on, Rodney supported the patriotic cause for independence. In 1774, he was selected as a delegate to the First Continental Congress, and again, for the Second Continental Congress. In 1776, he was suffering from cancer of the jaw, and returned to his home near Dover, Delaware. When the vote for independence neared, delegate Thomas McKean sent him a message to return immediately to the Continental Congress. Despite illness and a cold drizzling rain, he rode all night for 80 miles to Philadelphia, arriving just in time to vote. His vote for independence was absolutely critical, as the Delaware delegation was equally split between independence and remaining British, and Rodney's vote put Delaware squarely on the side of independence, two votes to one. After the Declaration of Independence, Rodney would recruit men to serve in the American Army, and even fought in the Army himself. From the spring of 1778 to late 1781, he served as Delaware's Governor. He died in June 1784, in his home in Dover, Delaware. Caesar Rodney never married. His younger brother, Thomas, whom he had helped raise, became a Delaware lawmaker and judge. Caesar also helped to raise Thomas's son, Caesar Augustus Rodney, who served as US Attorney General from 1807 to 1811.

Bio by: [Kit and Morgan Benson](#)

His nephew Caesar Augustus Rodney, son of brother Thomas, was the first US Ambassador to Buenos Aires, Argentina, after the US first recognized that country.

Caesar Rodney owned slaves, and opposed the continuance of brings slaves to this country. He supported a motion in legislation to prohibit the importation of slaves into the province. It was defeated by two votes.



Below is an interesting and entertaining description of his parents' wedding from "The History of a Prominent Kent County Farm" by James B Jackson. Excerpts of the description were taken from Caesar Rodney Sr.'s diary.

At noon on Wednesday the 18th young Rodney and Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of the Rev. Thomas Crawford, were married at the Crawford home on adjoining "Poplar Ridge". There was "a Grate Company which was fiddling, dancing, and verry merry", and the festivities continued on into the night and the next day, when the Reverend himself, a widower, took Katherine French for his own bride. The happy couples, their "Brides Men and Brides Maids" and celebrants then paraded through the neighbourhood with "a Drum and two Viol Ends before us". Then they all "Came Back ... sent (to George Nowell's?) for more Rum and Syder and Past the night away with the same Plesher as before". The "Company continued" into Friday, but finally broke up, and the newlyweds then "Got our super of oysters and Went to Bed quietly". Almost exactly a year later the young Rodneys had a more quiet celebration—on the birthday of their first son—his father's namesake, and destined for greatness.