



# Foundation Document Overview

## Thomas Stone National Historic Site

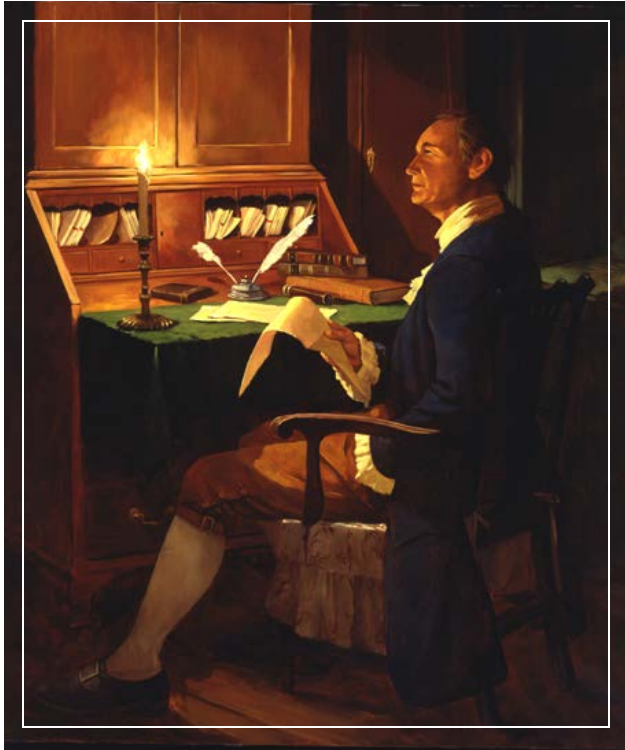
Maryland



### Contact Information

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## Purpose



*The purpose of THOMAS STONE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE is to preserve and protect the resources of Thomas Stone's plantation, known as Haberdeventure, and commemorate his service to the United States as a signer of the Declaration of Independence and member of the Continental Congress.*

## Description

Thomas Stone National Historic Site, known since the 1600s as Haberdeventure, is a 322-acre property located in Port Tobacco, Maryland. Established by an Act of Congress in 1978, the park preserves the home of Thomas Stone, one of four Maryland delegates to sign the Declaration of Independence.

Thomas Stone acquired the property on December 13, 1770, and used it as his primary residence until he moved his family to a new home in Annapolis in 1783. Thomas Stone built the existing central portion of the house at Haberdeventure. Successive generations of Stone family descendants owned and occupied the farm until 1936.

Port Tobacco is in southern Maryland in an area with historic roots dating from the mid-17th century. The region was settled slowly, with agricultural production being the prominent lifestyle, which continues today. Although within commuting distance of Washington, D.C., the area retains much of its rural character.



## Significance

Significance statements express why Thomas Stone National Historic Site resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- Haberdventure was the home of Thomas Stone who helped draft, and then signed, the Declaration of Independence. He was a member of the Committee of Correspondence for Charles County, Maryland, and later a member of the Continental Congress who helped draft the Articles of Confederation that created our national government and ultimately led to the creation of the United States Constitution.



## Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- **Choosing Revolution.** Choosing revolution, as Thomas Stone and many others eventually did, was not an easy or inevitable decision for most colonists. The outcome of a war with England was far from certain and regardless of who won, the lives of the colonists would never be the same. With safety, security, family, and fortune at stake, courage and personal sacrifice were tested no matter what side was chosen.
- **Paradox of Freedom.** Stone is representative of a culture that advocated a belief in “inalienable rights” and the pursuit of freedom for white males, while at the same time denying rights and freedom to others (e.g., the enslaved, women, Native Americans). This paradox solidified a course of American history in which all people did not, in fact, have the same rights and freedoms as Thomas Stone and the 55 other men who signed the Declaration of Independence.
- **Legacy of the Declaration of Independence.** Revolutionary in its own right, the Declaration of Independence was the first document in the world in which the inherent rights of individuals were proclaimed with the intent of replacing an unjust system with self-government. Based on the success of the American Revolution, the Declaration of Independence served as an inspiration for political, social, and cultural change around the world.



# Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **Home of Thomas Stone.** Thomas Stone acquired the plantation named Haberdeventure in 1770. Shortly after acquiring the property, he began building a house there, which would become the Stone family home until they moved to Annapolis in 1783. He would continue to own and visit Haberdeventure until his death in 1787. Haberdeventure would remain in the possession of Stone family descendants until 1936. Much of the Stone house burned in 1977. It was reconstructed in the early 1990s based on a 1902 photograph and does not solely reflect the Thomas Stone era.
- **Cultural Landscape.** The landscape surrounding Thomas Stone's home represents the rural setting that he and his family experienced while living on the property. The landscape retains the following elements thought to remain from Thomas Stone's occupancy: formal landscape terraces, road and path traces, and the cemetery.
- **Archeological Resources Related to the Thomas Stone Period.** Areas of the park, especially the outbuildings and yard spaces near the house, as well as the possible location of slave quarters, are believed to contain archeological resources from Thomas Stone's occupation. These archeological resources will provide additional information about Thomas Stone, his family, their enslaved workers, and how they used and developed the property.
- **Historic and Archeological Artifacts and Archival Material.** The park contains some artifacts and archival material related to Thomas Stone, his descendants, and other Stone family members including, Thomas Stone's desk, the family christening bowl, silver coffee service, and an 1818 copy of the Declaration of Independence.

Thomas Stone National Historic Site contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Stone Descendant Historic Structures.** Stone family descendants continued to own and shape the property until 1936. Existing structures thought to be constructed during this time include the Tenant House, Corn Crib, Tobacco Barn (restored by the National Park Service), and the stables.
- **Rural Character and Viewsheds.** Protecting the rural character of the surrounding lands is important in conveying the historic setting of the property.
- **Natural Resources.** The park contains a diverse natural community and provides important nesting and foraging grounds for a number of species. Previous studies have also shown the potential for paleontological resources within the park boundary.
- **Other Archeological Resources.** The park contains a number of resources associated with Stone family members who lived at Haberdeventure until 1936. The park may also contain archeological resources related to American Indian occupation of the land before European settlement. Archeological investigations have the potential to result in resources, which may provide information on how American Indians used the property.

