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Ade Hine Grettenberger
3rd Place

↑ ~~WORD COUNT~~

Thomas Lynch Jr.

Ⓟ ~~about 380~~

Part One

On August 5th, 1749, Thomas Lynch Jr. was born into a Christian, Episcopalian family, to Thomas Lynch Sr. and his wife Elizabeth, in Winyah, Georgetown, South Carolina. Thomas was his parents' only son, and had three sisters, Sabina, Esther and Elizabeth, and another half-sister, Aimeé Dé'lliard, after his mother died and his father remarried. Lynch Sr. owned a prosperous rice plantation, called the Hopeswee Plantation, where he and his family lived after his grandfather had emigrated to the colonies from Ireland. He was a wealthy man, which allowed his family access to higher education, and he was very involved with law and politics, which assisted in his being appointed a delegate of the Continental Congress in 1774. Thomas Jr., when he was of age, attended the Indigo Society School in Georgetown. Around 1764, he traveled to England where he enrolled in Eton College and Cambridge University and received academic honors. He then progressed to Middle Temple where he studied law and political philosophy. Around 1772, he returned to the colonies, an accomplished man, educated and sensible in his views.

Despite his years of studying law, he decided against any occupation involving it and became a rice planter. He married Elizabeth Shubrick, and they settled at Peach Tree Plantation which was gifted them by Thomas's father, and

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near Lynch Sr.'s own plantation. Thomas likely lived the most leisurely and happy part of his life on his plantation, which lasted nearly four years, nurturing and *caring for the plants and living with a loving wife. In 1773, he made an appearance* at a town meeting in Charleston, which was being held to discuss the political affairs between the colonies and Britain. There he spoke persuasively and patriotically, earning him respect and love from the assembly, which led, with the help of his education and his father's political influence, to his being elected a member of South Carolina's Provincial Congress. Later, he was appointed by them to be captain of the first South Carolina regiment, which, despite his father's hopes of him gaining a higher rank, Thomas was well-satisfied with. Sadly he wasn't able to continue this commission long, for, on his travels to gather recruits for his regiment, he was hit with a fever and became very sick, thus no longer capable of leading. Around the same time, his father, who was then serving at the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, was also struck with illness. Hearing of it, Thomas asked to be allowed to go and aid him; this request was at first denied, but soon after, he was called to Philadelphia to fill in for his father, who was too sick to serve in the Congress, and he ended up traveling there and being appointed a delegate for his colony. In 1776, in place of his father but with an earnest determination even in the condition of his own failing health, Thomas signed the Declaration of Independence. He was the second youngest delegate in the Congress at the age of 27, and was part of the only father-son duo to have served in the Continental

Congress. Afterwards, as his father was not recovering, the two set out to travel back home, but Lynch Sr. died on the journey, leaving his son grieved and exhausted by the illness from which he'd never fully recovered. He arrived home and retired from public life in 1777, suffering from weakened health. In 1779, upon the recommendation of physicians who suggested he might recover in a different environment, he and his wife set to travel to Europe. Before leaving, he'd written his will, requiring his sisters to change their surnames to Lynch in order to receive his inheritance. His sister Sabina did as requested, and received and managed the Peach Tree Plantation with her husband after Thomas's death. After embarking on the voyage, his ship disappeared, and Thomas and his wife were lost at sea, leaving no children, and no later records of their lives. At the age of 30, Thomas was the youngest of the Continental Congress to pass away.

*"In all the relations of life, whether as a husband, a friend, a patriot, or the master of a slave, he appeared conscious of his obligations, and found his pleasure in discharging them."*¹

¹ Charles A. Goodrich, Lives of the Signers to the Declaration of Independence

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Part Two

Mr. and Mrs. Lynch and family,

I am extremely sorry to hear of your late grievance, and wish to express my most sincere condolences. That the beloved Thomas Lynch and his wife should have passed on their voyage in such a fearful state as they were is a very tragic end indeed, and I heartily desire you all comfort. Thomas Lynch was a worthy man, commendable and honorable for his achievements and conduct. His years of dedication to education served him well, for it is rare that one finds a man so knowledgeable and wise as he was. His endeavor to assist his father even in his own weakened state was admirable, and we, as a state, should be proud of the man who, with failing physical strength, represented us with a resolute and persevering spirit. He was deserving of praise, and though his death is a great loss, we may hope and believe that he is now in peace, free from the earthly ailments he was known to suffer. May his acts of enduring courage and contribution to his country be made known throughout future generations, and may he rest.

I pray for your restored happiness.

All regards, *Mr. Andrew Raleigh.*

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