

years Paca did not cultivate a close relationship with him. Paca saw little of his daughter, Henrietta Maria, who had spent much of her life in the care of her Chew relatives on the Western Shore; in November 1794 she married Thomas G. Addison of Prince George's County. Thereafter Paca lived alone in Wye Hall with only his impetuous son for companionship. Late in the summer of 1799, at the age of fifty-nine, Paca became critically ill.

An anonymous acquaintance provided a description of his last hours:

During his illness he conversed with perfect resignation on his approaching dissolution and cheerfully submitted to sickness and death under a deep conviction of the unerring wisdom and goodness of his heavenly Father and of the redemption of the world by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To the faith and charity of a Christian he added the civil virtues of a gentleman. Fond as a husband, indulgent as a father, constant as a friend, and kind as a master.²⁵

William Paca died on October 13, 1799, and was buried on the grounds of Wye Hall. An intensely private man, Paca had nevertheless devoted nearly all of his adult life to public service. As a member of the Continental Congress, a Signer of the Declaration of Independence, governor of Maryland, and a state and federal judge, Paca had contributed as much as any man of his generation to the independence of the United States, thus ensuring that the American experience in democracy would succeed.