



Abraham Faw was born 14 May 1747 in Benken, Switzerland, the only son of Jacob Pfau and Catherine Disslin. He immigrated to America with his family through Holland and England, landing in Philadelphia in 1749 and finally settling in Maryland in 1750. He died 25 Jun 1828 in Alexandria, VA.

Abraham Faw was a patriot whose family had endured hardship by civil strife, land policy and craftsman guild domination of the economy in Switzerland. Nearly half their village immigrated together in groups, by design based on correspondences and recommendations from kinsmen back from America. Abraham was only two years of age when his family left Switzerland. They passed through Holland and London, England, where they were delayed by illness and the need to obtain the cost of passage to America and settled in Frederick County, Maryland.. He became a house builder, businessman, and politician in and around Frederick Town (now Frederick). Tradition has it that a local sign painter misunderstood the name Pfau and printed “Faw”. With characteristic

Swiss frugality, Abraham kept the change in name which he then brought to prominence as a leader in the Revolution. His close friendship with Maryland's first Governor, Thomas Johnson gave him entree to society and business at a time when German commerce and politics were still held in check by law and culture.

Patriot Faw served the Revolutionary cause in many capacities. In January 1775, Faw was appointed to the Frederick County Committee of Observation, charged to prevent any infractions of the Association and Resolves of the Provincial Congress. In 1777, the State of Maryland contracted with Faw to construct a “proper powder magazine” which, when completed, handled orders for powder from around the state. He was also engaged in the most important project during the war years in Frederick Town – construction of the military barracks. Built just south of the city, the barracks were originally designed to prevent the quartering of troops in private homes. In December 1780, Frederick Town learned that the barracks would be used to house the "Convention Troops," British soldiers who had been surrendered at the American victory of Saratoga. Hessian troops who had been captured at Yorktown were also brought to Frederick in January 1782.

Abraham Faw served in the County legislature from 1785-1789; was elected to the state legislature in 1787 where he served on the committee that passed - and he signed - Maryland's copy of the U.S. Constitution; and ran (unsuccessfully) as a candidate for the first U.S. Congress in 1788.

In 1794 Faw moved to Alexandria, Virginia. He was appointed as a justice for Alexandria County, District of Columbia in 1806 and 1821, and also served as a commissioner for the same county in 1812 and 1818. He died 25 June 1828 in Alexandria, VA.