THE FRAMERS OF THE CONSTITUTION. (1955)
We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.
The Framers of the Constitution

Prepared by the Staff of the
Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County
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Every American schoolboy learns that our Constitution was framed at Philadelphia in 1787 by the Constitutional Convention. However, the lives and careers of the Convention's fifty-five delegates are not so familiar.

The following article originally appeared in the MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN HISTORY, volume XIII, April, 1885. Martha J. Lamb signed the article.

The Boards and the Staff of the Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County reprint the article verbatim in the hope that it will be interesting and informative to Library patrons.
We are rapidly nearing one of the most important centennial anniversaries in our national history, that of the adoption of a form of government capable of holding forty republics in one solid and prosperous whole—embracing fifty-five millions of people, and territory in extent nearly, if not quite, equal to that of all Europe. The subject is one of living interest, and will be brought afresh to the reading public in all varieties of written language within the coming three years. Our blessings will naturally brighten in the unusual light, and with the new polish. We shall better comprehend the framework that has withstood the storms of a century, and be prepared for the more just appreciation of its stability—as the years roll on and the States roll in.

The achievement, however, that preceded and was vastly more remarkable than its adoption, was the production of the Constitution. Such a form of government had hitherto been unknown to the science of politics. The structure was a special creation, and at a time when the future of the country was mapped only in the imagination. Its life-giving force was the pressure of a great necessity. The confederation was too weak to bear its own weight. It had no power over commerce. It could not even levy taxes or enforce the payment of duties. As a bond of union in a time of war it had been sufficient, but was totally inadequate as a system of permanent government. The wisdom of two continents predicted disaster unless vigorous remedies were applied. American thinkers were divided on the most important questions at issue, but of one opinion as to the imminence of the danger. Some were for kingly rule; and some were in chronic alarm lest an English or French prince should be placed on an American throne.

From Virginia finally emanated an invitation for a meeting of commissioners from the several States to meet in Annapolis, for the purpose of discussing methods of regulating trade with foreign countries. The five central States only responded. The meeting was held on the 14th of September, 1786. Nothing of importance was accomplished by it further than a recommendation to Congress that authority should be given for the holding of a general Convention, for the specific purpose of revising the “Articles of Confedera-
tion." But the feeble successor of that renowned Congress which had brought into existence the thirteen States, was averse to excluding itself from the right to inaugurate changes in the government, and did not comply with the request with alacrity. It questioned the constitutionality of a Convention, until thoroughly alarmed at the riotous condition of affairs in Massachusetts; and when it yielded, and advised the States to confer power upon a special assembly to convene in Philadelphia on the 14th of May, 1787, the act was not performed with special grace. Thus when the delegates had been appointed by their respective States, the situation was far from enviable. America fixed its critical eye upon them, and a general distrust of the policy of their undertaking prevailed. Their genius in government-making was yet to be displayed; and it was well known that the little which could be borrowed from experience was foreign in its character and irreducible to the exigencies of affairs in the New World.

Our present concern is with the framers personally, rather than with the grand result of their summer's work. Each one of the illustrious fifty-five will furnish a prolific theme for future and elaborate study; but we group them for the advantage of renewing our acquaintance with them in one body, for convenience in portraiture, and for ready reference.

It would be difficult to find in any age or country of the world a more interesting assemblage of public characters. They were well educated, at least four-fifths of them were college bred, and in all branches of scholarship and gentlemanly culture they, as a rule, excelled. They were astute, discreet, energetic, disinterested. They represented the highest civil talent of their respective States, were familiar with the principles of ancient and existing confederacies, had nearly all acquitted themselves nobly in some arm of the public service, and were admirably prepared for serious, searching, conscientious, and discriminating investigation and deliberation. They were of conflicting opinions, and of all ages from twenty-five to four-score. Curiously enough at least one-third of the number were under forty; and only seven of the fifty-five had passed sixty. They assembled in Philadelphia in the leafy months of May and June, 1787. They came from all points of the compass; some journeying in their own chariots drawn by four and six horses, others in springless stages, and not an insignificant few on horseback. Philadelphia was in hospitable humor, proud of being chosen as the place for the Convention, and her private citizens graciously entertained the distinguished statesmen as far as practicable. Pennsylvania provided eight delegates, the largest number of any of the States,  

* The eight Pennsylvania delegates were: Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Mifflin, Robert Morris, George Clymer, Thomas Fitzsimmons, Jared Ingersoll, James Wilson Gouverneur Morris.
Virginia having only seven, although she initiated the movement. North Carolina, New Jersey, Maryland, and Delaware each sent five delegates. Massachusetts, South Carolina, and Georgia four; New York and Connecticut three; and New Hampshire two; Rhode Island was not represented. Each State acted its own pleasure in regard to the number of delegates chosen. New York struggled for five, but her inflexible Senate decreed there should be but three.

Dr. Benjamin Franklin, President of Pennsylvania, was the leading delegate from that State; and he was the oldest man in the Convention. He had recently returned from his ten years' absence in Europe, crowned with glory, and had been welcomed home with addresses of congratulation, in which he was styled "the great philosopher," "the great politician," and
"the illustrious and benevolent citizen of the world." He was quickly elected to the Presidency of Pennsylvania, an act which restored harmony to a community almost on the verge of civil war—and the day of his election was also the day of his inauguration. He resided in Market Street with his daughter and her seven beautiful children. His house was surrounded with pleasant and tastefully cultivated grounds. Prior to the meeting of the Convention he had added a new wing to his dwelling, in which he fashioned a commodious library, and contrived the "long arm" for taking books from high shelves, which he delighted in exhibiting to visitors. His public business not being arduous, he spent much time in his garden, and with his books, and in playing cribbage with his grandchildren. Writing to David Hartley of his domestic life at this period he said: "As to public amusements we have assemblies, balls and concerts, besides little parties at one another's houses, in which there is sometimes dancing, and frequently good music; so that we jog on in life as pleasantly as you do in England."

Washington, the conspicuous leader of the Virginia delegation, was the first of the Framers to arrive in Philadelphia, and with characteristic promptness on the precise day appointed. He left Mount Vernon in the latter part of April, traveling with his own equipage. At Chester, fifteen miles from the city, he was met by General Mifflin, Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly, and other gentlemen of distinction, and from Gray's Ferry was escorted by the city light-horse into Philadelphia—the bells ringing meanwhile—where public honors awaited him. His first act was to pay a visit of respect to Dr. Franklin.

The other delegates came slowly; day after day passed and still the majority of the States were not represented. In the mean time Washington was fitted by the leading residents; and according to the newspapers of the day, he "went out one evening when the weather was very tempestuous, accompanied by a brilliant crowd of his friends of both sexes, and proceeded to the University to hear a lady deliver a lecture on the Power of Eloquence." He was also the guest of honor at a stately dinner-party given by Dr. Franklin, on which occasion a cask of porter fresh from London was broached, and its contents, wrote Franklin, "met with a most cordial reception and universal approbation."

Franklin was then eighty-one years of age, and Washington fifty-five. Franklin was of average height, stooping a little as he walked, full, broad physique, and benign, spectacled countenance. His intellect was never clearer, more acute, more active, more fruitful. Washington stood six
feet and three inches in his slippers, as straight as an arrow, and was evenly developed. He had a long muscular arm, and a singularly large hand. His gravity and sublime self-poise were as notable as Dr. Franklin's wit, anecdotes and whimsicalities. Each of the two was gifted with worldly wisdom in liberal measure, and each had in his own line of the public ser-

![THOMAS MIFFLIN.](image)

vice won world-wide fame. To a country groping in the dark for political guidance the successful soldier and the eminent diplomat were radiant beacon lights. The Convention was not formally organized until Friday, May 25, and then, as soon as the preliminary business was concluded, it
adjourned until Monday. Pennsylvania gracefully proposed Washington as the President of the Assemblage, a ceremony that was to have been performed by Franklin in person, had not a severe rain storm prevented his attendance on the occasion. Robert Morris made the motion, which was promptly seconded by John Rutledge, of South Carolina, and Washington was placed in the chair. Franklin was in his seat on Monday, and attended the Convention regularly, five hours every day afterwards for four months, his friends declaring that he grew in health and vigor under the daily exercise of going and returning from his house to Independence Hall. The Convention bound itself to secrecy and proceeded to its work with closed doors, "lest the publication of their debates" says Mr. Bancroft, "should rouse the country to obstinate conflicts before they themselves should have reached their conclusions."

In the midst of this assembled greatness, Franklin in his well-fitting, picturesque costume was the observed of all observers—as he advocated a government unimposing, inexpensive. Thomas Mifflin, the general and statesman, but little more than half the age of Franklin, with his quick movements, his sanguine temperament revealing itself in every turn of his finely poised head, and his military bearing, attracted scarcely less attention. He had lived rapidly and learned much, and thus was older at forty-three than most men. He was of Quaker parentage, and when in the ardor of his patriotism he joined the Revolutionary army his peace-loving people "read him out of meeting." His importance in public affairs appears from his having been chosen president of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania in 1788, and governor of the State from 1791 to 1800.

Robert Morris, the great financier, was fifty-four, one year younger than Washington. He was large and florid, bright eyed, pleasant faced, magnetic, just as we see him in his portrait, and in the very prime of his noble manhood. He was a fluent and impressive orator, and whether in public speaking or in private conversation, overflowed with a rich fund of political knowledge and general and trustworthy information. He was born in Liverpool, coming to this country with his father, an eminent Liverpool merchant, at the age of thirteen, and was bred to mercantile pursuits. He had been one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and the magic of his genius had at a later moment lighted the impecunious pathway of the American Army on to victory. But for his magnanimity and fertility of invention, it is doubtful whether, after all, the Independence so dearly bought could have been maintained.

George Clymer, who occupied a seat next him, was also one of the signers. He was six years younger than Morris, of middle size, erect in
person, of fair complexion, and features radiant with intelligence, resolution and benevolence. He rarely made a speech, through extreme diffidence, but when he did his gifts of expression were wonderful, and no man in the Convention commanded a more attentive and appreciative audience. He was a close student, and wrote with grace and accuracy, and his opinions were always treated with respect. He was a refined gentleman of ardent attachments, and the delight of the social circle. It is said of him that he never was heard to speak ill of the absent or known to break a promise, and he was ever ready to promote any scheme for the improvement of the country in science, agriculture, polite learning, the fine arts, or objects of mere utility. Thomas Fitzsimmons was of Irish birth and forty-six; a prominent and successful merchant of the house of George Meade & Co., who in 1780 supplied the army with some $25,000. He had been a
member of the Old Congress, and was subsequently chosen to the first Congress under the Constitution. He was furthermore president of the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce. The name of Jared Ingersoll, following that of Fitzsimmons in the roll call, brings to mind some of the exciting incidents of the Stamp-Act rebellion, in which it will be remembered that his father, Jared Ingersoll, figured in the valley of the Connecticut. Belonging Connecticut’s agent in England he had ably and persistently opposed the passage of the odious bill; but when it became a law, he was duly qualified to officiate as stamp master. From New Haven, on his return from Europe, he started on horseback for Hartford. As he rode leisurely through the woods near Wethersfield, accompanied by a guard, he suddenly met five horsemen, who turned and joined his party. Ten minutes later he met thirty horsemen, who wheeled their horses in like manner. Not a word was spoken. All rode on together with the silence and solemnity and decorum of a funeral procession. On reaching a fork in the road they met a body of five hundred men, chiefly farmers, armed with ponderous white clubs, and led by an officer in full uniform. These knights of the forest opened a line from right to left, and received Ingersoll in the center with profound courtesy. Then martial music echoed through the woods and all moved forward; a halt was ordered in the broad street of Wethersfield. Ingersoll was there commanded to resign. He expostulated and said he must “wait to learn the sense of the Government.” “Here is the sense of the Government,” was the quick retort. “If I refuse to resign, what will follow?” he asked. “Your fate,” said the officer. “The cause is not worth dying for,” replied Ingersoll, after a moment’s hesitation, and wrote his name to the formal resignation prepared for him to sign. He was then required to shout “Liberty and Property” three times, after which ceremony he was escorted to Hartford. He rode a white horse, and as they ambled along some one asked what he was thinking about. “Death on a pale horse and hell following,” was his response. His son had been in London with him, and remained there to study law in the Middle Temple; in Paris afterwards he made the acquaintance of Dr. Franklin, who became very fond of him. He resided in Philadelphia upon his return to America, where he became a prominent jurist, and twice was attorney-general of the State; he also for many years was presiding judge over one of the courts. In 1812 he was the Federal candidate for Vice-President of the United States. At the time of the Convention he was thirty-eight years of age.

James Wilson was forty-five, a Scotchman by birth, but thoroughly American in all his attachments and sentiments. He had studied at Glas-
gow, St. Andrews and Edinburgh, and completed his legal education in the office of John Dickinson, of Delaware. He was a member of the Old Congress of 1775, and voted in favor of the Declaration. During the war he always considered the States, with respect to that war, as forming one community, and he did not admit the idea that when the colonies became independent of Great Britain they necessarily became independent of each other. He was a clear, sagacious, forcible political writer, and a statesman of high order. The eighth Pennsylvania delegate was Gouverneur Morris, a New Yorker by birth and ancestry and subsequent residence. He was one of the younger men, only thirty-five, and one of the most fearless, self-sustained, sharp-witted, clever, versatile and useful of the Framers.

Virginia’s representatives had been chosen with consummate discretion.* The central figure was Washington. Madison, who had already

* The Virginia Delegates were: George Washington, James Madison, George Wythe, Edmund Randolph, George Mason, James Blair and James McClurg.
displayed his statesmanship in a multitude of ways, and was a veteran
despite his having seen but thirty-six years, took a prominent part in all
the debates, speaking on every momentous question that came before the
Convention. He had been one of the signers of the Declaration, one of
the framers of the first constitution of Virginia, an active member of its
first legislature as a State, and a member of Congress. He had applied
himself untiringly to the study of government. His answers to the objec-
tions raised, when the scheme of preparing a new Constitution in place of
an amended Confederacy was fairly before the house, were among the ablest
of his efforts. At one time he had been a pupil of the eminent George
Wythe, Chancellor of Virginia; and now teacher and pupil were sitting
side by side, gravely working together on the solution of one of the most
difficult problems of the age. The Chancellor was a man whom once to
see was never to forget. He was of venerable aspect, aged sixty-one, and
the expression of his face told the story of his firmness and integrity. He
signed the Declaration in 1776, and was from first to last a courageous
champion of liberty—even before it became popular to oppose England.

Edmund Randolph, Virginia’s brilliant young governor, as yet only
thirty-four, with a reputation for ability equal to his high position, went
into the Convention in the firm belief that the prophesied downfall of the
United States could be averted by correcting and enlarging the Articles of
Confederation. He opened the business of the Convention on the 29th of
May, saying: “The Confederation was made in the infancy of the science
of constitutions, when the inefficiency of requisitions was unknown, when
no commercial discord had arisen among states, when foreign debts were
not urgent, when treaties had not been violated.” He explained the
defects in the Confederation, and proposed fifteen resolutions, which he
explained one by one. As an orator Randolph had exceptional command
of language, and his voice was musical and his gestures graceful. He was
large, portly, of commanding presence, with bright, animated, handsome
features, and most engaging manners. He voted against the new instru-
ment, but afterwards in the Virginia Convention urged its acceptance; and
when the new government was duly organized and in successful operation
he accepted the appointment of Secretary of State under Washington,
serving from 1794 to 1795.

By the side of Governor Randolph stood George Mason, an old-school
gentleman, majestic in size and of princely bearing, austere, courtly, self-
willed, his face browned with sun and wind, and his hair flecked with the
snows of sixty-one well rounded years. He was a man of profound learning and took a leading part in the debates, proposing many curious schemes. He advocated the election of President directly from the people, and for a term of seven years, with ineligibility afterward. He had a mortal hatred to paper money, and disapproved of the slave-trade. In a speech of blazing eloquence he said: "Every master of slaves is born a petty tyrant; this infernal traffic originated in the avarice of British merchants; the British government constantly checked the attempts of Virginia to put a stop to it;" and he thought the general government should have power to prevent its increase. He had fourteen years before given expression to

sentiments of a similar character in the Virginia legislature. He was dissatisfied with several features of the Constitution as it approached completion, and withheld his signature. "The government will surely end either in monarchy or a tyrannical aristocracy," he said. He did not hesitate to dissect and denounce the instrument before and after its adoption as the "sum of every evil." He built Gunston Hall, on the Potomac, where he spent the greater part of his life.

John Blair was a jurist of great acumen and ability, who had been chief justice of Virginia, and judge of the High Court of Chancery. He was of the same age as Washington, fifty-five. In 1769 he had been one of the
famous party of patriots who met at the Raleigh Tavern and drafted the non-importation agreement. His law studies were prosecuted at the Temple, London; and he was a man of wide reading and general culture. In 1789 President Washington appointed him justice of the United States Supreme Court. He was distinguished for the excellence of his private character, no less than for his public services. James McClurg was a physician, who took his degree of M.D. at Edinburgh in 1770, and continued his studies at Paris and London, where he published a medical essay that was so highly popular as to be translated into all the languages of Europe. He resided in Richmond, and aside from having risen to the head of his profession, had for a long time been one of the Council of State in Virginia. He had just passed his fortieth birthday. In the Convention his voice was often heard; one motion that he made was, that the term of the presidential office should be good behavior, "to escape corrupt cabals and yet preserve a good officer in place."

The first two months of the Convention were much occupied in discussing the terms upon which states as small as Delaware and Rhode Island could safely and justly enter a confederacy with such large states as Pennsylvania, Virginia and New York. The smaller were unwilling to be overshadowed or oppressed, and the larger declined to forego the importance due to their superior wealth and population. The small states demanded an equal representation in the national legislature, and the large states pronounced such a claim preposterous and unreasonable. They held it
to be manifestly wrong that a state sixteen times as large as Delaware should have only the same number of votes. The debates were eloquent and earnest, then hot and acrimonious. Washington with lofty and severe dignity in the chair, and Franklin with contagious good humor on the floor, tried in vain to cool the heats of disputation. Delaware, the smallest state represented, contended with the most spirit and persistence for an equality absolute and entire.* No compromise would be considered for a moment. With the larger states the contest was for power, with the smaller states for existence. George Read held his position with calm, judicial, convincing logic. John Dickinson was more intense and fiery in his arguments, spoke oftener, and on several occasions introduced a whole chapter of bitterness into his powerful speeches. George Read said—"The confederation was founded on temporary principles; to patch it up would be like putting new cloth upon an old garment. If we do not establish a new government on good principles, we must either go to ruin or have the work to do over again." He moved that the Senators should hold their office during good behavior, which was seconded by Robert Morris. The idea not being generally supported, he moved that the term of Senators be nine years, one-third going out triennially. Nathaniel Gorham, of Massachusetts, inquired: "What would be the situation of Delaware in case of a separation of the States? Would she not be at the mercy of Pennsylvania?" John Dickinson said that the proposed national system was like the solar system, in which the states were the planets, and should have free scope to move in their proper orbits. He declared that "rather than be deprived of equality in the legislature of the nation, he would choose to be the subject of a foreign power." The eminent chief justice of New Jersey, David Brearly, vehemently exclaimed: "If thirteen sovereign and independent states are to be formed into a nation, the states as states must be abolished, and the whole must be thrown into a hotchpot, and when an equal division is made there may be fairly an equality of representation. New Jersey will never confederate on the plan before the committee. I would rather submit to a despot than such a fate." Gouverneur Morris said, speaking for Pennsylvania: "If persuasion does not unite the small states with the others, the sword will." Madison encouraged the large states to oppose the demands of the smaller ones steadfastly. Others, among whom were Elbridge Gerry and George Mason, saw that there must be some compromise or secession would follow. It really seemed as if that one perverse rock was about to shipwreck

* Delegates from Delaware: George Read, Gunning Bedford, Jr., John Dickinson, Richard Bassett, Jacob Broom.
the whole fleet. But Delaware carried her point in the end. Franklin came to the rescue with an amendment, or accommodation, to prevent the dissolution of the Convention, and after considerable wrangling, the simple, sensible and satisfactory settlement of the vexed controversy was that every state should have equal representation in the Senate without regard to size, and in the House every state should have a representation proportioned to its population—and no ill-feeling ever resulted therefrom. “Thus,” writes James Parton, in his “Life of Franklin,” “Rhode Island and Delaware, Pennsylvania and New York were made equal members of the same confederacy, without peril to the smaller and without injustice to the larger. Of all political expedients (in a great emergency) this was perhaps the happiest ever devised. Its success has been so perfect as scarcely to have excited remark. The nation is as unconscious of the working of the system as a healthy man is of the process of digestion.”

George Read, the leader of the Delaware delegation, was the only Southern statesman who signed all three of the great state papers on which our history is based—the original Petition to the King of the Congress of 1774, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution. He was the eldest son of John Read, a public spirited and wealthy Southern planter, born in Dublin in 1688—a descendant of the eminent Read of Berkshire and Oxfordshire, England—who removed to this country, and died in 1756, possessed of several plantations in Maryland, as well as a handsome landed estate in Delaware. Among the fellow-pupils of George Read, in acquiring his education, were Hugh Williamson, Charles Thomson, the famous Secretary of Congress, Dr. John Ewing, the well known mathematician, astronomer and college president, and John Dickinson. In legal learning Read was excelled by none, and as soon as admitted to the bar rose rapidly to distinction. In 1763, at the age of thirty, he was appointed attorney-general by the crown, from which time he continuously held public office in Delaware until his death, in 1798, as chief justice of the State. He resigned his office of attorney-general to accept a seat in the first Continental Congress, and was subsequently elected to the second. Concerned in all the great measures of independence he was one of the “Fathers and Founders of the Republic;” but he was also in a peculiar sense the “Father of Delaware,” for he was the author of her first Constitution, in 1776, and of the first edition of her laws. He figured in her assembly not less than twelve years, was vice-president of the State, and at one period her acting chief magistrate. He penned the addresses from Delaware to the king, which Lord Shelburne said “so impressed George III. that he read them over twice.” He is the most con-
spicuous figure in the Delaware record, for Thomas McKean and John Dickinson were more closely allied to Pennsylvania than Delaware; and while Cæsar Rodney was prominent at the time of the Declaration, and afterwards as president of Delaware, his premature death in 1783 cut short his career. In person Read was tall, slight, graceful, with a finely-shaped head, refined features and dark brown lustrous eyes. His manners were dignified, bordering upon austerity—he could not tolerate the slightest familiarity—but courteous and at times captivating, and he dressed with the most scrupulous care. He commanded the perfect confidence
of Delaware, not only through his profound legal knowledge, sound judgment and impartial decisions, but through his severe integrity and estimable private character. Those who differed from him in opinion believed he was acting from a sense of duty, and declared “there was not a dishonest fiber in his heart or an element of meanness in his soul.” John Dickinson was fifty-five, one year older than Read. The character of this much misunderstood man was not a chapter of contradictions. His charming scholarship, gifts as a writer and forensic ability had been recognized long before his rare powers in public debate found expression and appreciation. In opposing and refusing to sign the Declaration of Independence he lost his popularity. But through the friendship and political and personal influence of George Read he was after a time restored to public life, and had been president successively of the states of Delaware and Pennsylvania prior to the Convention. He was tall, straight and thin, with pleasing address and polished manners, earnest, affectionate and tender-hearted. He was of a nervous temperament, exceedingly sensitive, and often over-anxious, even to timidity. Dickinson College, which he founded and liberally endowed, perpetuates his name and services to the country. Gunning Bedford, Jr., was the first cousin of Governor Bedford of Delaware, a handsome man of forty, and a fluent and agreeable speaker. He participated in the debates of the Convention, and on the question of representation expressed his views with warmth so near to intemperance that he was sharply censured. He was, soon after the Convention, appointed attorney-general of Delaware, and from 1789 to 1812 filled honorably the high office of judge of the United States District Court of Delaware. Jacob Broom was younger, only thirty-five, and less prominent. Richard Bassett was a lawyer of fine standing, who for some years occupied the bench; he was also governor of Delaware. His daughter married James A. Bayard.

In this connection it should be said of Delaware that she was the very first state to ratify the Constitution, “leading the way at the head of the grand procession of the thirteen states,” on the 7th of December, 1787, without asking for one amendment. Rhode Island, who was not represented in the Convention, was the last of the states to come into the Union, and before doing so sent in a polite request for twenty-one amendments.

North Carolina was not behind the other states in contributing merit to this august body. * Hugh Williamson, M.D., was by birth a Pennsyl-

vanian, a thorough scholar in divinity, in mathematics and in medicine. He was an accomplished writer on a great variety of abstruse topics. He had studied medicine in Edinburgh and Utrecht, and had served in the Continental army as chief of the medical department of the troops of North Carolina, under Governor Caswell. He was a bachelor of fifty years, who

lost his heart in New York while—two years later—a member of the first Congress under the Constitution, and married the daughter of Charles Ward Apthorpe. He had in the course of his useful career gained such a reputation for integrity that it was said no one dared approach him with either flattery or falsehood. The youngest man from North Carolina was William Richardson Davie, then but thirty-one, of commanding presence, an accomplished orator, with a voice of peculiar melody, and remarkably
winning and handsome features. He was a general favorite; one of the most affable, hospitable and delightful of companions. He was by birth an Englishman, but was graduated from Princeton College: he served as commissary-general of the Southern army under General Greene. At the end of the war he began the practice of law, and had already become one of the most distinguished lawyers in the state. He was for many years a member of the state legislature. In 1799 he was made governor of North Carolina, and was subsequently sent by the President on a mission to France. William Blount had been North Carolina's delegate to the Old Congress for several years. He was eminently qualified for the duties of a legislator. In 1790 he was appointed governor of the Territory of Ohio, and in 1796 was president of the convention to form the state of Tennessee, and subsequently was appointed president of that state. Richard D. Spaight had also been a member of the Old Congress. During the war he served as an aid of Governor Caswell, and was at the battle of Camden in 1780. The next year he entered the House of Commons of North Carolina. In 1792 he was chosen governor of the State. Alexander Martin was an ex-governor, and an ex-speaker of the Senate. He had been much in public life, and had commanded a regiment in the battles of Brandywine and Germantown. He was again chosen governor of North Carolina in 1789, and was United States Senator from 1793 to 1799. He gained in addition to this considerable distinction through his literary attainments.

The most notable and industrious delegate from Georgia was a son of her adoption, Abraham Baldwin.* He was a young Connecticut lawyer of thirty-three, a graduate of Yale, and four years one of its tutors (the brother-in-law of Joel Barlow), who at the request of General Greene had removed to Savannah in 1784. He was one of the best classical and mathematical scholars of the age. In the Georgia legislature he originated the plan of the State University, drew up the charter by which it was endowed with 40,000 acres of land, and with the aid of Governor Milledge carried it through successfully; after which he was several years its president. He had been a delegate to Congress since 1785, and was re-elected continuously until 1799, at which time he was chosen to the Senate, where he remained until his death in 1807. William Few was an able jurist, and had served in the Old Congress, afterwards becoming a Senator. William Pierce and William Houstoun were both men of eminence and influence. Pierce was a Virginian by birth, and in the war had been an aid to General Greene, and was now a member of Congress.

From South Carolina came a brilliant and accomplished delegation.* John Rutledge, who, like his brother Edward, had received legal training at the Temple, and become versed in all the intricacies of the English law, had been one of the active members of the Stamp Act Congress, held in New York twenty-two years before (in 1765), when but twenty-six years of age. He was now forty-eight. Of Irish descent, with the quick wit of the race, and possessed of marvelous boldness and decision of character, he had risen to a high place in the confidence of his state; indeed he was the pride of South Carolina. Washington said he was the greatest orator in the Continental Congress. At the time of his appointment to that Congress

* South Carolina Delegation: John Rutledge, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Charles Pinckney, Pierce Butler.
the Boston Port-bill had just been read in Charlestown, and expresses had been sent all over the state to call the general meeting of the inhabitants. Everybody was in a fever of excitement. When the question arose as to how far the delegates might go in supporting the people of Boston, John Rutledge exclaimed, with incomparable energy, "No instructions to the representatives, but full authority to exercise their discretion, and a pledge to the men of New England that South Carolina will stand by whatever her delegates promise for her." One of the opposition asked, cynically: "What shall we do if the delegates make an improper use of this large grant of power?" The answer came like the sharp crack of a volley of musketry—"Hang them!" The effect was irresistible, and the delegates did go to the Congress unhampered by directions and ready to help Boston as far as among the possibilities. Rutledge was re-elected to the Congress of 1775, and in 1776 was chairman of the committee that prepared the constitution of South Carolina, of which state he was elected the first president. In 1779 he was chosen governor, and clothed with dictatorial power. Retiring from the office in 1782 he was once more elected to Congress, and in 1784 made chancellor of the state, and was still holding that office when appointed a delegate to the Convention. With such wide experience in public affairs he naturally bore a prominent part in the work of framing the Constitution.

Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, son of Chief-Justice Charles Pinckney, was younger than Rutledge by seven years. He was an elegant scholar, and socially one of the most charming men of his day. He was educated at Westminster and Oxford, England, read law at the Temple, and spent some months in the Royal Military Academy at Caen, France. Returning to South Carolina in 1769, he established himself in the practice of law; but during the war he passed through every vicissitude of a soldier's life. His celebrity at a later day is well known. He declined successively the places of judge of the Supreme Court, Secretary of War, and Secretary of State offered him by Washington; but in 1796 accepted a mission to France, which, however unsuccessful, gave him great renown. He was President-General of the Cincinnati from 1805 to 1825. His kinsman, Charles Pinckney, was but twenty-seven when he came into the Convention, yet his education and his ability won a high place for him among the law-makers. He spoke with great force and effect upon nearly all the important questions before the Framers, who lost sight of his youth in the maturity of his thought. In the debate on Slavery he took
part with fervid eloquence. He had been four years in the Old Congress prior to the Convention; and subsequently was governor of South Carolina, in the United States Senate at three different periods, and minister to Spain, where he negotiated a release from that power of all right and title to the territory purchased from France by the United States. He was a
gentleman of varied culture and great polish of manners. Pierce Butler was a learned and popular man of forty-three, of Irish birth, and of the family of the Dukes of Ormond. He, too, had been a member of the Old Congress. When it was proposed in the Convention that persons fleeing from justice should be delivered up on demand of the executive of the state from which he fled, Butler proposed that “fugitive slaves should be delivered up like criminals,” but afterwards withdrew his motion, and
offered another in its place. When the new government was organized, South Carolina sent him to the United States Senate.

From New Hampshire came John Langdon, subsequently three times governor of that state, a severely practical republican, of sterling good sense, social habits and pleasing address.* He was forty-eight, while Nicholas Gilman, his colleague, was but twenty-five. It was John Langdon who furnished means to equip Stark's Militia in the dismal days prior to the battle of Bennington, pledging his plate among other personal valuables for the purpose. Young Gilman was already a member of the Old Congress, despite his boyish appearance, to which he had been chosen in 1786, and he subsequently served in both houses of the national legislature.

The quartet from Massachusetts were strong mentally, morally and politically.† Caleb Strong, born in Northampton thirty years before the breaking out of the Revolution, a graduate from Harvard, and a student of law in all its varied features, was admirably fitted for the important constructive work before the august body. He was a statesman of inflexible adherence to principle, a man of spotless private character, affected no elegance of style, was tall, angular, with a somewhat large head, dark complexion, hair but slightly powdered resting loosely on a high, thoughtful brow, from beneath which blue eyes of singular beauty beamed with gentleness and kindly warmth. There was firmness in the expression of his face, however, and in the study of his portrait one is not surprised to learn of his high-handed action twenty-five years later when, as governor of Massachusetts, during the war of 1812, he denied the right of the President, upon constitutional grounds, to make requisition upon the state for troops. In

* New Hampshire delegates: John Langdon, Nicholas Gilman.
† The Massachusetts delegates: Caleb Strong, Elbridge Gerry, Rufus King, Nathaniel Gorham.
marked contrast, as far as concerns personal appearance, was Elbridge Gerry, aged forty-three, one year the senior of Caleb Strong, who was small and slight of stature, and of extreme urbanity of manner. He, too, was a graduate of Harvard, was a master in questions of commerce and finance, and had seen much service in the councils of state. He was in Congress from 1776 to 1785, and signed the Declaration of Independence. He was subsequently in the Federal Congress some four years, was sent on a mission to France, served as governor of Massachusetts and Vice-President of the United States. Nathaniel Gorham was a merchant of Boston, and familiar through his own experience with commercial affairs in all
countries. He had been a member of the Old Congress, of which he was
president in 1786. In the Convention he served on some of the most im-
portant committees, and his opinions were held in great respect. He was
the oldest of the Massachusetts delegates, having reached his fiftieth year.
Rufus King was the youngest, being only thirty-three. He was already a
legal luminary, and his vigorous oratory and rare combination of personal
and intellectual endowments made him a notable figure in the Convention.
His voice, like that of Madison, was lifted in every debate, and his influ-
ence was very great. His subsequent life was closely identified with New
York, where he married and made his permanent residence. His public career covered a
period of more than forty years, six of which were spent at the
Court of St. James as minister to England. He was a scholarly
politician and an accomplished diplomatist; as a man he was
universally respected and be-
loved.

Connecticut sent three of
her brightest and best men.†
William Samuel Johnson, sixty
years of age and a college pres-
ident (having just been elected
to preside over Columbia Col-
lege), was not only an eminent
lawyer and a judge of dis-
tinction but one of the most
accomplished scholars of his
time in science and in literature. He was the son of Rev. Samuel
Johnson, D.D., first president of Columbia (King's) College, and with
the exception of Rufus King was the only New England Episcopa-
lian in the Convention. He had been an important member of the Stamp
Act Congress of 1765, and assisted in writing its address to the king; he
was the able agent of Connecticut in England before the war, where
Oxford made him a doctor of the civil law, and where he was on intimate

friendly terms with Dr. Samuel Johnson, and the privileged guest in the cultured circle of which that literary colossus was the acknowledged chief. On his return to Connecticut he was made judge of the Superior Court, and subsequently was the leading commissioner in adjusting the territorial disputes with Pennsylvania. He also served in the Old Congress from 1784 to 1787. Roger Sherman was six years older than Johnson, and in many respects the most remarkable man in the Convention. No one cer-

ROGER SHERMAN.

tainly had had so broad an experience in legislation. He was sent to the first Continental Congress in 1774, and to every other Congress to the end of his life. He was the only Northern statesman, as George Read was the only Southern statesman, who signed all three of the great state papers which gave birth and power to a mighty empire; Sherman did more, for he signed in addition the Articles of Confederation—which he helped to construct; he was the only American statesman who attached his name to the four important documents. The son of a New England farmer,
Sherman was bred to industry, hardly ever knowing an idle hour. He studied law under many difficulties; but few excelled him in acumen and sound judgment, as soon as he had once established himself in practice. In the language of Mr. Bancroft, "The country people among whom he lived gave him every possible sign of their confidence. The church made him its deacon; Yale College its treasurer; New Haven its representative, and, when it became a city, its first mayor, re-electing him as long as he lived. For nineteen years he was annually chosen one of the fourteen assistants, or upper house of the legislature; and for twenty-three years a judge of the Court of Common Pleas, or of the Superior Court." His knowledge of human nature seemed intuitive; he was calm, grave, self-poised and saturated through and through with practical wisdom. According to Jefferson he was a man "who never said a foolish thing in his life." He was tall, well-proportioned, of fair complexion, but by no means handsome. In the Convention he never wearied his hearers with long speeches, "but would seize on the turning-point of a question and present it in terse language, which showed his own opinion and the strength on which it rested." Oliver Ellsworth, subsequently chief justice of the United States, was only forty-two, but, like his colleagues, rich in experience. After two years in Yale he graduated from the College of New Jersey; was early admitted to the bar, and became state attorney and a member of the General Assembly of Connecticut, taking part in all the revolutionary political discussions and measures. He was a member of the Old Congress for several years, and in 1784 was appointed judge of the Superior Court. He was an unassuming man, always self Possessed, cautious, and independent in utterance whenever his opinions were once formed. No one was more impressive and convincing in debate. In his private character he combined all the charms of the best species of good-breeding with the excellences of the Christian gentleman.

At the head of the New Jersey delegation* stood her famous war governor, William Livingston, who had reached his sixty-fifth year. He had been an eminent member of the New York bar as early as 1752, and was one of the most caustic and forcible essayists in the country; he was also one of the few poets of his time. It was next to impossible for him to make a speech that was not seasoned with dry humor and stinging satire. He was probably the best classical scholar in the assemblage. He had through a long career of active public and political service acquitted himself with honor. He had been a member of the first and second Conti-

* The New Jersey delegates were: William Livingston, William Patterson, Jonathan Dayton, David Brearly, William C. Houston.
nental Congresses, and from 1776 until his death in 1790 was governor of New Jersey, conducting her affairs, particularly during the Revolution, with great judgment and energy. He was a most ardent hater of all monarchical forms, a political prophet, and a sagacious adviser. David Brearly, the chief justice of New Jersey, was a much younger man, only forty-one,

and an able, active, and important member of the Convention. William Patterson was one year his senior, a man of great learning and many accomplishments. He was a lawyer, admitted to the bar in 1769, and a member of the New Jersey constitutional convention in 1776, after which for ten years he was attorney-general of the state. When the new government went into operation he was elected to the Senate, and in 1791 became governor of New Jersey. He subsequently was appointed a justice
of the Supreme Court. In 1798 he revised by legislative authority the laws of New Jersey. Jonathan Dayton was a young lawyer of much promise, aged twenty-seven, a native of Elizabethtown. From 1795 to 1799 he was speaker of the House of Representatives; and during the next six years was United States Senator from New Jersey.

The most prominent of the Maryland delegates* was Luther Martin, attorney-general of the state, a lawyer of commanding influence, and a violent politician. He grew exceedingly warm over the question of equality of votes, and on one occasion declared that "each state must have an equal vote or the business of the Convention must come to an end." He was a pungent political essayist, and wrote on many subjects. In his celebrated report to the Maryland legislature on the doings of the Convention, he said there was "a distinct monarchical party" in that body. He opposed the Constitution with all his strength. Twenty years later, at the age of sixty-three, he was a firm personal and political friend of Aaron Burr, whose acquittal he was instrumental in procuring when tried for treason, in 1807.

John Francis Mercer was a shrewd and capable young man of twenty-nine, a graduate of William and Mary's College, and a Virginia delegate to Congress from 1782 to 1785. He was subsequently a member of Congress from Maryland, and the governor of Maryland from 1801 to 1803.

Daniel Carroll was a cousin of Charles Carroll, the signer, a well-educated gentleman of thirty-two, who did not, however, arrive in Philadelphia until the 9th of July. He was sent to Congress in 1789, and in 1791 was one of the commissioners for surveying the District of Columbia, his farm occupying a portion of the site of the present city of Washington.

James McHenry was two years the senior of Carroll, thirty-four. He was the aide-de-camp of Lafayette in the war, with rank of lieutenant-colonel, and a delegate to Congress from 1783 to 1786. In 1796 he was appointed Secretary of War, serving in that capacity from 1796 to 1800.

Daniel Jenifer, of St. Thomas, was sixty-four, nearly twice as old as either of the three last named Framers. He signed the Constitution, as did both McHenry and Carroll. He was in Congress two years. It is a noteworthy fact that all but twelve of the fifty-five Framers of the Constitution had at some period been in the Continental or Old Congress.

New York, the Empire state, conscious of her prospective importance, jealously resisted the national scheme.† Of her three delegates Robert Yates and John Lansing were notably in favor of preserving the individual

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* The Maryland Delegation were: Luther Martin, John Francis Mercer, Daniel Carroll, Daniel Jenifer of St. Thomas, James McHenry.
powers of the State. Yates had been in public life many years; was in the famous Committees of Safety, in the Provincial Congress of New York, and in the convention that framed the state constitution in 1777; had also been a judge of the Supreme Court and chief justice of the state. He was fifty years of age, and distinguished for his moderation and impartiality. John Lansing studied law in Chief Justice Yates' office. He was thirty-three, brilliant and versatile; was seven years in the state legislature, four years mayor of Albany, and in the Old Congress from 1784 to 1788. He was appointed chief justice of the state in 1798, and from 1801 to 1814 was chancellor. Both Yates and Lansing vigorously opposed the Constitution, and when it was found impossible to patch up the Articles of Confederation to meet the emergency, they took the ground that the
Convention was transcending its powers in attempting to construct a new instrument, and went home.

Hamilton, undaunted at being thus left alone to represent so large and important a state, marshaled his marvelous gifts and forces into full play. By the action of the majority of her delegates New York had lost her vote in the Convention, and little dreamed that the boldness, energy, acute sense, and well-balanced intellect of her youthful statesman, was to overbear by eloquence, interpret essential needs by illustration, usurp powers with imperious will, and then convince by argument a large proportion of her population that he was in the right, and compel in the end a public recognition and justification of his conduct. But such were the facts. He was but thirty, and in size probably the smallest man in the assemblage. Yet in certain respects he was the greatest of them all. He unquestionably evinced more remarkable maturity than was ever exhibited by any other person at so early an age in the same department of thought. His views, although held with great tenacity, were also held in subordination to what was practicable. Franklin opposed every proposition that tended
towards arbitrary government. He thought the Chief Magistrate should have no salary and little power, and that the government should be a simple and ingenious contrivance for executing the will of the people. He said that ambition and avarice, the love of power and the love of money, were the two passions that most influenced the affairs of men, and argued that the struggle for posts of honor which were at the same time places of profit, would perpetually divide the nation and distract its councils; and that the men who would thrust themselves into the arena of contention for preferment would not be the wise and moderate, those fitted for high trusts, but the bold, the selfish and the violent, and that in the bustle of cabal and the mutual abuse of parties the best of characters would be torn in pieces.

Hamilton went to the other extreme. He did not want a monarchy, but he was for having a perpetual senate and a perpetual governor. The great principle he cherished acknowledged the inalienable right of the individual state to control absolutely its own domestic and internal affairs, because better able to do it intelligently than any outside power, but which also recognized the desirability and necessity of a central government that should settle and determine national questions. To embody such a scheme, with all its delicate details and shadings, in a written document, was the puzzle of puzzles. The prudence of Franklin was one of the great influences that ruled the hour. His well-timed anecdotes and quaint observations created many a burst of genuine merriment, despite the serene grandeur and dignity of the presiding power. The day after Hamilton was deserted by his New York colleagues, Franklin, in a characteristic speech, attributed the "small progress made to the melancholy imperfection of the human understanding;" and urgently recommended that the sessions be opened every morning with prayer. The builders were some weeks in hewing their timber after this. All through the hot July and August days the work went on. Washington was a close observer and could give excellent advice, but he was wholly innocent of constructive aptitudes. Madison's far-reaching logic and Rufus King's magnetic efforts were of the first consequence. Gouverneur Morris demolished many impracticable notions. But Hamilton, with less direct agency than some of the others in framing the chief provisions of the structure, was essentially the guide of the workmen. Never untimely obtrusive with his opinions, nor backward about giving expression to them when discussion was in order, he brought all the political systems of the civilized world into grand review, and with deferential, courteous and yet authoritative air compelled the ear of the Convention.
Whenever the frame-work misfitted he came to the rescue. In the early days of September the instrument had so far assumed shape that light began to gleam through the shadows. A committee of five—William Samuel Johnson, Hamilton, Madison, Rufus King and Gouverneur Morris—were appointed to revise its style and the arrangement of its details. Amendments, however, were proposed, discussed and adopted until the very last day of the session. A series of concessions greatly facilitated the final work, some of the most prominent of the Framers yielding points for the general good which they had hitherto held with great tenacity. Washington, Franklin, Hamilton and others accepted certain features they did not approve, because they believed it was the best government that the genius of America could frame, or that the nation could be induced to experiment upon. The finishing touches to the document were delegated to Gouverneur Morris, whose graceful pen gave to the substance its order and symmetry, and to the text its distinguishing elegance. Finally, as the delegations came forward in procession to sign the Constitution, Hamilton inscribed upon the great sheet of parchment the name of each state in its regular order. New York not being regarded as officially present the registry reads: “Mr. Hamilton from New York.” During the performance
of this ceremony Madison writes that the irrepresible humor of Franklin found expression in pointing to a sun painted upon the back of Washington's chair, remarking with a smile that painters had generally found it difficult in their art to distinguish a rising from a setting sun. "I have often and often," he continued, "in the course of the session, and the vicissitudes of my hopes and fears as to its issue, looked at that sun behind the President without being able to tell whether it was rising or setting; but now I have the happiness to know that it is the rising sun."

Mr. Bancroft says: "The members were awe-struck at the result of their councils; the Constitution was a nobler work than any one of them had believed it possible to devise. They all on that day dined together, and took a cordial leave of each other."

Such an assemblage for such an object the world had never before witnessed. In parliamentary talent and civic wisdom it proved itself superior even to that famous Congress which twelve years before occupied the same hall, and upon which Pitt lavished his rhetoric of praise. When the Constitution was subsequently submitted for the ratification of the several states, the debates in popular meetings and in state conventions summoned to the front every giant mind. But the Framers had built their foundation upon solid rock. They had grasped the principles of freedom and invested them with the breath of perpetual life. They had produced a written instrument—capable of taking in whole sermons between its lines—which was an exact form of government, to be deliberately adopted by the American people themselves, for public administration. The value of their legacy, to a countless posterity, is beyond measurement or expression. The Framers of the Constitution must ever preside in the national memory; and this great and prosperous country is their everlasting monument.

Martha J. Lamb