

reasoned, cajoled, threatened, and bargained amongst themselves. The result was a Constitution which the people, in fact, by democratic processes, did accept, and a new and far better national government was established. . . .

To conclude, the Constitution was neither a victory for abstract theory nor a great practical success. Well over half a million men had to die on the battlefields of the Civil War before certain constitutional principles could be defined—a baleful consideration which is somehow overlooked in our customary tributes to the farsighted genius of the Framers and to the supposed American talent for “constitutionalism.” The Constitution was, however, a vivid demonstration of effective democratic political action, and of the forging of a national elite which literally persuaded its countrymen to hoist themselves by their own boot straps.

## What Happened at the Constitutional Convention

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Meeting at the Pennsylvania State House (Independence Hall), the Constitutional Convention found a quorum on May 25 and sat until September 17. Fifty-five delegates participated in its work, though there were seldom more than forty in the room for any single session. Representing every state except Rhode Island, the delegates comprised a good cross-section of the early national elite. Lawyers (34), merchants (7), farmers (27), public creditors (30), and public servants (10), nearly all were wealthy men, and most had taken generally conservative positions in their states. Yet members came from a variety of local factions and from all the major regions of the several states except the west. The nation might have organized an equally impressive meeting from the ranks of leaders who did not attend. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson were representing the United States abroad in 1787. John Jay and Samuel Adams were passed over. Patrick Henry “smelt a rat” and turned down his election. Still, most states attempted to select their most experienced and best, usually with slight regard to factional considerations, and they succeeded well enough that Jefferson described the roster as a gathering of “demigods.” George Washington was present. Inevitably, he was quickly chosen to preside.

Among the delegates as well was young James Madison, Jefferson’s close friend, an influential member of the Annapolis Convention, and long a leading advocate of national reforms. Madison had led Virginia, which had led the other states, in organizing the convention and selecting delegates whose talents and distinguished reputations signaled a profound commitment to its work. In the weeks before the meeting, he had taken careful notes on ancient and modern confederacies and prepared a formal memorandum on the “Vices of the Political System of the United States,” thinking problems

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through to a degree that no one else had done and urging other members of his delegation to arrive in Philadelphia in time to frame some introductory proposals with which the meeting might begin. Virginia’s seven delegates assembled daily while they waited for the full convention to obtain a quorum, agreeing on a set of resolutions that might serve as a preliminary basis for discussions. Speaking for the delegation as a whole, Governor Edmund Randolph introduced these resolutions on May 29, as soon as the convention had agreed upon its rules. . . .

A solemn sense of high responsibility and urgent, common purpose was indispensable to the Convention’s great achievement, not least because most delegates were only partially prepared for the enormous changes sketched by the Virginia Plan. Seizing the initiative for radical reform, Madison’s proposals demonstrated an instinctive grasp of several broad, though hazy, understandings that would limit and direct the course of the proceedings. Leaders of a democratic Revolution, including thirty veterans of the war, the delegates had not forgotten the complaints and hopes that had propelled them into independence. Nearly all of them had come to think that an effective central government would have to have, at minimum, an independent source of revenues, authority to regulate the country’s trade, and power to compel obedience to its legitimate commands. Nearly all agreed, as well, that powers that the colonies had stubbornly denied to England would have to be accompanied by careful checks against the possibility of their abuse. Many, nonetheless, were far from willing to consent to the specific kinds of checks proposed by the initial resolutions. The Pennsylvanians and Virginians were prepared from the beginning to insist that powers of this sort could be entrusted only to a well-constructed, fully representative republic. Overawed by the Virginia Plan, accepting many of its goals, and unprepared to offer comprehensive counterresolutions, dissenters were uncertain how to counter its proponents in debate. They nevertheless objected from the start that the convention was empowered only to reform the present federal system, not to overturn it. The framing of the Constitution thus became a complicated story of a fundamental conflict that occurred within the context of a common quest. . . .

Between May 30 and June 13, the Committee of the Whole conducted a complete consideration of the Randolph Plan. During these two weeks, with Madison and James Wilson of Pennsylvania at their head, a brilliant group of delegates from larger states developed a compelling case for radical reform. Distinguishing between a “national” government and one “merely federal,” Wilson, Madison, Randolph, George Mason (Virginia), Gouverneur Morris (Pennsylvania), and others argued that the fatal weakness of the old confederation was its unavoidable dependence on the thirteen states for revenues and for a host of intermediary actions necessary to enforce its laws and treaties. Lacking independent means to carry its decisions into action, they explained, Congress had been baffled by the states even when its measures were supported by a huge majority and undeniably were within its proper province. Paper grants of new responsibilities would only add new sources of frustration if the states retained the power to ignore or counteract

the central government's decisions; and yet a federal power to compel the states might introduce a constant threat of war between the union and its members. The inescapable necessity, the nationalists maintained, was to abandon the unworkable idea of a government over governments, a sovereignty over sovereignties, and give the central government the courts and other independent means to act directly on the individual members of society. Revolutionary principles required, however, that any government possessing the authority to reach the people's lives and purses would have to represent its citizens immediately and fairly. Given the necessity for larger federal powers, the traditional equality between the states would have to be abandoned in order to preserve equality among the people and majority control. . . .

But as the skeleton of the Virginia Plan acquired some flesh and as it grew increasingly more difficult to settle lesser questions while the great ones went unanswered, the confrontation that had loomed from the beginning could no longer be contained. New Jersey's delegates demanded a decision on apportioning the Congress, insisting on June 9 that proportional representation would destroy the smaller states and place the whole confederation at the mercy of a coalition of its largest members: Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Ten of thirteen states, warned William Paterson, would certainly reject this scheme. If he could not defeat it in the hall, he would oppose it in his state. New Jersey would "never confederate on the plan before the committee."

. . . James Wilson answered Paterson in kind. "If the small states will not confederate on this plan," he assured them, Pennsylvania and some others "would not confederate on any other." The division that would dominate proceedings for the next five weeks had burst into the open. It would prove the clearest, most dramatic, most persistent argument of the convention—the single conflict over which the gathering repeatedly approached collapse.

For all its threatening potential, nevertheless, the clash between the small states and the large cannot explain developments between May 30 and June 13. It was not the only conflict that emerged, nor can an exclusive emphasis on conflicts and divisions properly illuminate the course of the proceedings. The Constitutional Convention was successful, in the end, because its battles almost always raged in multiple dimensions, because the push-and-pull that marked its course was never simply a result of clashing interests, and because the men involved were more than merely clever brokers for their states. . . .

The first two weeks of the convention seem most helpfully described as an initial exploration during which a complicated pattern of divisions rapidly emerged within a framework of evolving, general understandings. Like Madison, most delegates had come to Philadelphia as worried by conditions in the states as by the problems of the union. They readily agreed with the Virginian that the will of unrestrained majorities was often inconsistent with the rights of the minority or long-term public needs, and that the early Revolutionary constitutions had neglected dangers of this sort by trusting

too much power to the lower houses of assembly. . . . Everywhere, as Elbridge Gerry phrased it, the country seemed to suffer from "an excess of democracy." Good government appeared to have been sacrificed to revolutionary fears of unresponsive rulers.

Few members of the Constitutional Convention carried their alarm about majority misrule so far as to suggest nostalgia for aristocrats or kings. Most genuinely shared the people's fierce commitment to a democratic system. Yet nearly all were powerfully determined not to replicate the errors they believed had been committed in the early Revolutionary constitutions. Here, again, the resolutions of May 29 successfully defined the boundaries of disagreement. Sound republics, they suggested, must be built upon two legislative houses: one elected by the people; the other chosen in a manner that would shield its members from the whims of the majority and thus assure continuing protection for the rights of the minority and continuing attention to the nation's long-term needs. The legislature should be counterbalanced by a forceful, separate executive, and the judiciary should be independent of them both. Through almost four months of often bitter quarrels, there was never any serious dispute about these fundamental principles of governmental structure. . . .

The Virginia Plan survived its first examination fundamentally intact. . . . Wilson, Madison, and their lieutenants made it clear that what they wanted was to build a wise and energetic central government upon a broadly popular foundation, blending a responsibility to the majority with multiple securities against an overbearing, popularly elected lower house. Impressed by their analysis of the debilities of the existing system, the convention speedily agreed to substitute a complex and authoritative central government for the present, feeble, unicameral regime. Sharing their dissatisfaction with the constitutions of the states, it worked from the beginning to establish genuinely independent, fully countervailing branches.

Through these early days, Madison and Wilson towered over the convention like a team of titans. . . . Still, the nationalist assault by no means carried everything before it. Although the smallest states seemed relatively isolated in the earliest debates and were severely beaten on the matter of the lower house, the fierce resistance vocalized by Paterson and [George] Read [of Delaware] became increasingly imposing as it coalesced with opposition based on different concerns. Three delegates—no more—were rigidly committed to a "merely federal" system, but [Robert] Yates and [John] Lansing could control New York while Luther Martin often managed to divide the Maryland contingent. For each obstructionist, moreover, there were several others for whom the pervasive fear of popular misrule, which made the resolutions of May 29 a universally attractive model for republican reform, could also reinforce a natural reluctance to surrender local powers to a national majority. Although the delegations from Connecticut and South Carolina were especially inclined to be distrustful of a scheme that would erect a stronger central government on greater popular involvement, almost every delegation was composed of men who differed widely in their judgments of the people's competence as well as in their willingness to shift

additional responsibilities to federal hands. As the smaller states discovered partial allies, sometimes here and sometimes there, it seemed increasingly unlikely that a national republic could secure approval both from a majority of states and from the representatives of a majority of the people. Even optimistic nationalists resigned themselves to a campaign that promised to extend throughout the summer.

Confronted with so many overlapping fears, the democratic nationalists encountered rising opposition during the convention's first two weeks and suffered one decisive check. The Virginia Plan provided for election of the senate by the lower house from persons nominated by the states. On June 7, over loud objections from Madison and Wilson, majorities in every delegation disapproved this proposition in favor of election of the senate by the legislatures of the states. . . . Many . . . were forcefully impressed by the insistence of John Dickinson (Delaware) and Roger Sherman (Connecticut) that selection by the local legislatures could collect the sense of states as states, assure a federal harmony, and offer firm securities against potential federal usurpations.

Committed nationalists were deeply disappointed. Fearing that selection of the senate by the states would build into the system exactly the flaw that was destroying the confederation, they also rightly sensed that an insistence on a federal role for states as states would reinforce demands for an equality between them. On June 11, just before the crucial votes, Sherman urged that representation in the lower house might be appointed to free population, while every state might retain an equal vote in the senate. By moving to revive an old confederation formula, which counted a slave as three-fifths of a man, Wilson promptly headed off an argument that might have split the large-state coalition. But the overwhelming vote for proportional representation in the lower house was followed by a very close decision on the senate, where Sherman's motion for equality was narrowly rejected, 6 to 5: Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland, aye; Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, no. A combination of concerns had joined to check the nationalist momentum. Two days later the Committee of the Whole reported its amended resolutions to the House, but the convention then immediately adjourned in order to permit opponents to prepare alternatives to the Virginia Plan.

William Paterson's New Jersey Resolutions, introduced on June 15, were thrown together quickly by the coalition that had voted for an equal senate days before. This coalition was united only by its opposition to the Randolph Plan, and its proposals did not represent the real desires of any of their framers. As Dickinson suggested in a private talk with Madison, many members from the smaller states were not opposed in principle to an effective, "national" system. . . . Under the New Jersey Plan, the general government would still have had the power to impose a stamp tax, postal duties, and an impost, to compel compliance with its requisitions, and to regulate the country's interstate and foreign commerce. Federal laws would still have overridden local legislation. A separate executive and federal courts would

still have shared authority with Congress. For Luther Martin and the two New Yorkers, this was clearly rather much. For Dickinson and others, just as clearly, Paterson's proposal that the legislature should remain a single house, in which each state would keep its equal vote, was mainly an attempt to force concessions from the other side. . . .

It soon became apparent that the conflict over representation overshadowed every lesser disagreement. The convention managed, with increasing difficulty, to confirm its preference for a bicameral regime. It voted once again for popular election of the lower house and state election of the upper. It reached agreement on a two-year term for representatives and six years for the senate. At every step, however, members fearful of a wholly national plan attempted to insert provisions that would give the states a larger role in paying or selecting federal officials. Small-state delegates attempted a variety of schemes that might disrupt the large-state coalition. Though Madison and Hamilton insisted that the small states need not fear a combination of the large, because the most important differences within the union were between the North and the South, William Samuel Johnson of Connecticut responded that a general government was being framed for states as well as people and that even Mason had admitted that the states should have some means to guarantee their rights and place within the system.

By the end of June, when the Convention voted 6-4-1 (as usual) for proportional representation in the lower house, the meeting was approaching dissolution. At this point Connecticut again proposed the compromise that Sherman had suggested weeks before, putting the proposal now in the language of an ultimatum. Remarking that the union might be "partly national," but should continue "partly federal" as well, Oliver Ellsworth said that he was not entirely disappointed that the meeting had approved proportional representation in the lower house, which would conform to national ideas and offer safety to the larger states. But he could see no ground for compromise and no alternative to the collapse of the convention and the union if the larger states would not concede an equal senate. . . .

With the meeting at a deadlock and the large-state coalition showing obvious internal stress, Charles C. Pinckney recommended the appointment of a grand committee to devise a compromise. Only Madison and Wilson disapproved, fearing that the tide was turning irreversibly toward an accommodation—as, indeed, it was. Voting for a member from each state, the meeting chose a grand committee that included Ellsworth, Bedford, Paterson, Yates, and Martin, but not a single member from the larger states who had not hinted at a commitment to conciliation. . . .

To Madison and Wilson, the result was not a compromise at all, but a surrender to the smaller states—and one that seriously marred the symmetry of the evolving system. In exchange for equal representation in the upper house, the smaller states accepted proportional representation in the lower and agreed to give the lower house exclusive authority over money bills. This last provision, Madison and Wilson argued, might rob the senate of the power to restrain the lower house on matters where restraint was needed, but it would not prevent minorities from using their position in the senate

to defeat the national will. Pleading with the smaller states to give up their demand for a concession plainly incompatible with democratic principles and larger federal powers, the leading nationalists continued to oppose the compromise throughout the next two weeks. They swam against a swelling current.

During these two weeks, the meeting saw a jumble of confusing motions and appointed two additional committees to distribute seats in the first house of representatives. Regional considerations, which had lurked beneath the early 6-4-1 divisions—in which all the southern states had voted with the large-state bloc—now bubbled to the surface. In arguments about a periodic census and admission of new states, as well as in maneuvers over seats in the lower house, members hostile to the three-fifths rule or fearful of the west confronted Southerners who realized that they would be outnumbered 8 to 5 in the projected senate and insisted on provisions that would guarantee their speedy reinforcement from the west, which was a southern section at that time. The smaller northern states proved willing to concede a little on these points in order to secure their more immediate objective. Meanwhile, it became increasingly apparent that several influential members from the larger states were less and less inclined toward a continued confrontation. Not only did they realize that the convention's work would surely be rejected if the smaller states walked out, but some of them conceded that a senate that would represent the states as states might help maintain a federal equilibrium while standing at a proper distance from the lower house. . . . On July 16, the convention voted 5-4-1 for the committee's compromise proposal: Connecticut, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, aye; Pennsylvania, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, no; Massachusetts divided.

The decision of July 16, as Randolph quickly noted, was not as narrow as the margin might suggest. New York, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island were unrepresented. All would probably have favored equal representation in at least one house. In addition, several moderates from Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Virginia sympathized with those in Massachusetts, Maryland, and North Carolina, who had voted for the Connecticut plan. The large states held a caucus in the aftermath of the decision. Wilson, Madison, and others still preferred to try to face the small states down. The caucus failed to reach agreement. All the members from the larger states returned to the convention, and the smaller states were satisfied from that point forward that opponents of the compromise would make no serious attempt to countermand the vote.

Randolph also said that the decision of July 16 "embarrassed the business extremely." Every previous decision, he explained, had been directly influenced by the supposition that proportional representation would prevail in both branches of the legislature; all would have to be thought through again in light of this new ruling. The implications, for that matter, were even more profound than the Virginian immediately perceived. With the adoption of the Great (or Connecticut) Compromise, every delegate was forced to make new calculations as to how the actions of the central government might touch his state or section. Assured an equal vote in one part of the Congress, the

members from the smaller middle states, as Dickinson had predicted, immediately began to favor ample federal powers. Southerners, by contrast, suddenly became more wary, especially of the enormous powers that the gathering had earlier intended for the senate. . . .

Amazingly, on first appearances at least, the members needed only ten more days to reach agreement on the basic features of the Constitution. As Randolph failed to see, however, the decision that the general government would represent both individuals and states prepared the way for resolution of more than just the conflict over representation. Both the large states and the small, the North together with the South, could now anticipate control of one part of the legislature. With every state and section armed with a capacity to counter threats to its essential interests, every delegate felt freer to address the national ills that none of them denied. . . .

Among remaining difficulties, the most perplexing centered on the powers and selection of the chief executive. From July 17 through July 25, the convention literally revolved around these questions. . . . Madison reviewed the options on the 25th. Election by the legislature, he explained, might introduce intrigues and render the executive incapable of acting as a check on legislative usurpations—plainly so if the executive was eligible for reelection. Election by the local legislatures or the state executives, however, might introduce the influence of the very bodies whose "pernicious measures" the convention still intended to control. Two alternatives remained: election by electors chosen by the people, which had been suggested on July 19 by King and Paterson, but handily defeated; or direct election by the people, which he had come to favor but which seemed to put the smaller states, together with the South, at a considerable disadvantage. Hugh Williamson (North Carolina) suggested that the disadvantage to the smaller states could be corrected if the people were required to vote for more than a single candidate. Morris added that the citizens might cast two ballots, one of which would have to be for someone from another state. Yet, reinforced by Gerry, Mason still insisted that the people were least qualified to make a good selection. On the 26th the meeting came full circle to the proposition with which it had started: selection by the national legislature for a single term.

Few were really satisfied with this "solution." . . . Discontent with state equality, fear of legislative domination, and a wish to make it possible for an experienced executive to succeed himself, which seemed impossible to reconcile with legislative choice, were moving Madison and other large-scale nationalists toward popular election and larger executive powers. Yet fear of an elective monarchy, distrust of popular election, and sheer impatience to complete the meeting's tasks still counterbalanced these considerations. On July 24, the House had chosen a Committee of Detail to put its resolutions into order. Now, the members eagerly agreed to an adjournment until Monday, August 6, in order to allow ten days for this committee to report.

. . . John Rutledge (South Carolina), Edmund Randolph, Nathaniel Gorham (Massachusetts), Oliver Ellsworth, and James Wilson assumed responsibility for much more than a careful ordering of the decisions reached

in the convention by July 26. In sessions from which only fragmentary records still survive, the Committee of Detail apparently assumed—without objection from their tiring colleagues—that they were free to make significant contributions of their own. Taking note of nearly everything that had transpired in the course of the deliberations, the committee added numerous details to the convention's resolutions and offered several significant additions. Besides providing more elaborate descriptions of executive and judicial powers, their report advanced a new procedure for resolving arguments among the states and recommended that agreement by two-thirds of Congress should be necessary for admission of new states or passage of commercial regulations. It inserted prohibitions of a tax on exports or on interference with the slave trade, which Pinckney had demanded as conditions for his state's agreement. Most significant of all, it offered an enumeration of the powers of the central government, a matter that the full convention had repeatedly postponed, and introduced a range of prohibitions on the sort of local legislation that Madison had planned to counter by a federal veto on state laws, a power that the full convention had decisively refused. . . .

*Complicated, often heated arguments concerning these provisions dominated the convention through the second half of August. Though Madison and Wilson joined with King and Morris to condemn the ban on export taxes, protesting that it would deny the government an easy source of revenues and an important weapon in its efforts to compel the Europeans to relax their navigation laws, the planting states were virtually unanimous in their insistence on this prohibition. Georgia and the Carolinas, though opposed by the Virginians as well as by the antislavery members from the North, were equally insistent on prohibiting congressional restrictions on the slave trade, making this an absolute condition of their states' approval of a plan. On August 21 the compromisers from Connecticut and Massachusetts voted with the Southerners to reaffirm the prohibition of a tax on exports, 7 states to 4 (New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, no). Sherman, Gerry, Ellsworth, Gorham, and their colleagues indicated, though, that they expected their conciliatory efforts to be met in kind, that they had voted to accept the South's demands in expectation that the Southerners would now prove willing to protect New England's vital interests. On August 22 Morris moved referral of the slave trade, export taxes, and commercial regulation to another grand committee, where these subjects might provide materials for a "bargain" between the North and the South. Several Southerners approved.*

The August compromise between the North and the South, Massachusetts and South Carolina, was second in importance only to the bargain of July 16 to the completion of the Constitution. On August 24 the grand committee chaired by William Livingston of New Jersey reported a proposal to prohibit legislative interference with the slave trade until the year 1800, to reaffirm the ban on export taxes, but to strike the clause requiring two-thirds of Congress for the passage of commercial regulations. On August 25, Pinckney moved extension of the prohibition until 1808, Gorham seconded the motion, and the prohibition carried 7 states to 4 (New Jersey,

Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, no). . . . Then, on August 31, on Sherman's motion, the convention voted to refer all postponed questions to still another grand committee. The procedure had become the members' standard strategy for handling issues too complex or too divisive for resolution by the whole.

Chaired by David Brearley of New Jersey, the Committee on Unfinished Business (or on Postponed Parts) untangled the convention's last remaining snarls, the knottiest of which was certainly the long-debated question of a sound executive. . . . Reporting on September 4, . . . the Brearley committee sought to cut this knot by recommending an election for a four-year term by electors chosen in such manner as the local legislatures should direct. Each state would be entitled to as many electors as the total of its seats in Congress, and each elector would cast two ballots, at least one of which would have to be for someone from another state. If a single candidate obtained an absolute majority of the electors' votes, he would be president. If not, the president would be elected by the senate from the five who had the highest totals. (In either case, the person placing second in the voting would become vice-president, an office first suggested and defined by this committee.) Both the cumbersome procedure and the introduction of an officer who was essentially superfluous were carefully contrived to balance the demands of the larger and smaller states. . . .

Some of these details proved problematic. Assuming that the college of electors would seldom show an absolute majority for any single person, most members realized that the committee's plan was meant to give the larger states the largest role in making a preliminary nomination, from which the senate, dominated by the smaller states, would make the final choice. Since the smaller states would have a disproportionate advantage even in the number of electors, several members from the larger states objected. . . . In an excellent example of the way in which the delegates had periodically applied collective wisdom to a common problem, these difficulties were resolved by shifting final choice of the executive from the senate to the house of representatives, which would vote by states on this occasion, and by narrowing to three the individuals from among whom the selection must be made. . . .

September 10 saw final pleas for reconsideration of some features over which several members had become increasingly alarmed. Randolph said that he had introduced "a set of republican propositions" on May 29, but that these resolutions had been so disfigured in the course of the convention that he might "dissent" from the completed plan unless the meeting would provide that state conventions could propose amendments to a second general convention, whose alterations would be final. Sharing Randolph's dread of hazy wording and majority control of commerce, together with his fear that an objectionable senate might combine with a powerful executive to overbalance the people's representatives in the lower house, Mason argued on September 12 that the convention also ought to add a bill of rights. Gerry readily agreed.

Responding partly to these fears, the members did consent to substitute

two-thirds of Congress for the three-fourths previously required to override a presidential veto. But with Sherman pointing out that nothing in the Constitution would repeal state declarations or infringe the liberties that they protected, the states unanimously declined to draft a bill of rights. As the convention speedily considered the report of the Committee of Style—obviously eager to adjourn, repeatedly refusing to consider major changes—the final drama was at hand. Mason failed to win insertion of a clause requiring two-thirds of the Congress for the passage of commercial regulations until 1808 (by which date, he may have hoped, the planting states would get their reinforcements from the west). Randolph moved again for a procedure under which the plan would not be ratified until a second general convention could consider changes recommended by the state conventions, warning that he could not sign without some such provision. Concluding that the finished plan “would end either in monarchy or a tyrannical aristocracy,” Mason followed with a similar pronouncement, as did Gerry. Randolph’s motion was unanimously defeated. Every delegation present voted to approve the finished Constitution and to order it engrossed. . . . Of the forty-two still present on September 17, . . . all but three felt able to subscribe their names to the completed work. Whereupon, as Washington confided to his diary, “the members adjourned to the City Tavern, dined together, and took a cordial leave,” nearly all of them agreeing with the venerated Franklin that the emblem on the chair in which the general had presided over their deliberations—testifying by his presence to the gravity of the occasion and the possibility that great executive authority might be entrusted to great virtue—was, indeed, a rising sun.

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